True patriotism

* 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.

President U Thein Sein receives US Senator Mr John Sidney McCain and party

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Jan—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein received a delegation led by US Senator Mr John Sidney McCain at the Credentials Hall of the President Residence here at 10am today. Also present at the call together with President U Thein Sein were Union Minister for Industry U Soe Thein, Union Minister at the President Office U Thein Nyunt, Union Minister for Labour and for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Aung Kyi, Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung, Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Khin Yi, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Maung Myint and departmental heads.

US Senator Mr John Sidney McCain was accompanied by Senators Mr Joseph Isadore Lieberman, Mr Sheldon Whitehouse, Mrs Kelly Ann Ayotte and Charge d’Affaires as of US Embassy to Myanmar Mr Michael E Thurston. They had a cordial discussion on cooperation between the two countries.—MNA

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein and party pose for documentary photo together with US Senator Mr John Sidney McCain and party.—MNA
Union Education Minister inspects BEHSs in Kamayut, Insein townships

NAI PYI TAW, 22 Jan—Union Minister for Education Dr Mya Aye, accompanied by directors-general and deputy directors-general of No. 1, 2, and 3 Departments of Basic Education, inspected the school buildings to be repaired at Basic Education High School No. 2 in Kamayut Township yesterday. After hearing the reports presented by the headmistress, the Union minister gave necessary instructions.

He also visited Insein BEHS No.6 and headquarter on preparation for securing high pass rate of the school and left necessary instructions.

Self-reliant asphalt road commissioned in Homalin

NAI PYI TAW, 22 Jan—A ceremony to inaugurate Khangkhazin self-reliant asphalt road was held in Khopewai Ward in Homalin of Hkamti District on 2 January morning. Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Aye of Homalin Township, Township Development Affairs Committee, Executive Officer U Kyaw Kyaw and Road Construction Committee Chairman U Thaung Kyi formally opened the road.

Traffic rules talked at Mawlamyine University

NAI PYI TAW, 22 Jan—Under the supervision of Mon State Traffic Rules Enforcement Supervisory Committee, Mon State Traffic Police Force gave a talk on traffic rule at Mawlamyine University on 19 January. Afterwards, police officers gave talks on traffic rules for vehicles and pedestrians.

Faculty members and students of the university viewed round documentary photos on traffic rules displayed in the campus.

Golden oldies ready to shine at Zaykabar Myanmar Open

YANGON, 22 Jan—Veterans Boonchu Ruangkit of Thailand and Filipino Frankie Minoza will be eyeing to rewrite the history on the Asian Tour when they play in the Zaykabar Myanmar Open presented by Air Bagan next month.

Boonchu and Minoza, aged 55 and 53 respectively, are hoping to roll back the years and overtake the record set by Choi Sang-Bo of Korea, who became the oldest winner on the Asian Tour at the age of 50 years and 145 days when he won the 2005 Maekyung Open.

They will be joined by a strong line-up of players in the US$ 300,000 event staged at the Royal Mingalardon Golf and Country Club which include reigning Order of Merit Champion Juvic Pagunsan of the Philippines and defending champion Tetsuji Hiratsuka of Japan.

Japanese Yuta Ikeda, a multiple winner from Japan, Ricard Karlberg of Sweden, the 2010 Asian Tour Rookie of the Year and Angela Que of the Philippines will also be feature in the event which returns on the Asian Tour schedule after a one-year break.

He played in three Asian Tour events last year, where he made all three cuts highlighted by a sixth placing at the Hero Indian Open, Boonchu will be delighted to return to the Myanmar Open, which has been a hunting ground for him, as he finished in tied 28th place in 2010 and tied eight in 2005.

Minoza is one of Asia’s living legends. The veteran star has won titles across the region since the early 1980s and in 2007, he showed that he could still perform at the highest level by winning once on the Asian Tour and Japan Golf Tour.

Idea, a nine-time winner in Japan, will spearhead a strong cast of Japanese players in the Zaykabar Myanmar Open. He will be looking to emulate the success of Hiratsuka as he seeks a first victory in Myanmar.

The Zaykabar Myanmar Open presented by Air Bagan is a US$ 300,000 full fledged Asian Tour event which will be staged at the highly-rated Royal Mingalardon Golf & Country Club from 2 to 5 February and is sanctioned by the Asian Tour and Myanmar Professional Golfers Association.
Karzai says he’s met with Afghan militant faction

Karzai, 22 Jan—Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Saturday that he personally held peace talks recently with the militant faction Hizb-i-Islami, appearing to assert his own role in a US-led bid for negotiations to end the country’s decade-long war.

Karzai made the announcement hours before he met with American special representative Marc Grossman to discuss progress and plans for bringing the Taliban militancy into formal talks for the first time.

“Recently, we met with a delegation from Hizb-i-Islami ... and had negotiations,” Karzai told a meeting of the Afghan parliament. “We are hopeful that these negotiations for peace continue and we will have good results,” he added.

Karzai’s statement was a reminder that any negotiations to end Afghanistan’s war will be more complex than just talking to the Taliban’s Pakistan-based leadership, headed by Mullah Mohammad Omar. The two other main militant factions in the country have their own leaders and agendas.

Hizb-i-Islami is a radical militia that controls territory in Afghanistan’s northeast and launches attacks against US forces from Pakistan. Its leader, powerful warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, is a former US ally now listed as a terrorist by Washington.

Based over the Pakistani border, Hekmatyar has ties to al-Qaeda and has launched deadly attacks on US troops in Afghanistan. Fighters loyal to Hekmatyar also have strongholds in Baghlan, Kunduz and Kunar provinces in the north and northeast of Afghanistan.

Irani’s Gulf smugglers feel blowback from tensions

KABUL, 22 Jan—By dawn, the unmarked speedboats from Iran pull into port. By dusk, they are racing back across the Strait of Hormuz loaded with smuggled consumer goods ranging from Chinese-made shoes to cut flowers from Holland.

Even as sanctions squeeze Iran ever tighter, there’s one clandestine route that remains open for business: A short sea passage from Iranian markets because of international

Afghan President Hamid Karzai, right, delivers a speech at the opening of the second year of the Afghan parliament in Kabul, Afghanistan, on 21 Jan, 2012. Karzai announced to parliament on Saturday that he has taken the lead in peace negotiations with the Hizb-i-Islami insurgent faction, meeting personally with radical Islamist militia representatives to push ahead with the peace process. —INTERNET

Moscow, 22 Jan—Visiting former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger and Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin discussed global issues Friday, and vowed to enhance ties between the two countries.

Without giving details of the talks, Putin’s spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the “private meeting” lasted some 40 minutes, local press reported Saturday. Interfax news agency said Kissinger described the bilateral relations as “of key global importance” and expressed hope they would keep improving.

The pair met frequently in recent years, as Kissinger once called Putin “extremely intelligent” in 2007, while Putin said in 2009 that the two could “understand each other well” and can find compromise. Russian media noted that Friday’s meeting came just weeks before the 4 March presidential elections, in which Putin is seeking a third term as president.

Putin meets Kissinger on global issues, bilateral ties

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Third smallest baby ever leaves US hospital

Los Angeles, 22 Jan—A baby believed to be the third smallest birthweight infant ever to survive left hospital in Los Angeles, doctors and the proud parents said.

Melinda Star Guido was born last August, 16 weeks early, weighing only 9.5 ounces (270 grammes) — less than a can of soda of the same size — and has spent nearly five months in a neonatal intensive care unit.

“I am so excited to finally have my baby come home,” said her mother Haydeé Ibarra, 22. “We have waited almost five months for this moment. It is so wonderful and we are ready to bring Melinda home.” She is the third smallest baby to survive, according to Global Birth Registry Figures cited by LA County health officials.

Dr Ranganayam Ramaswamy, neonatology chief at the LA County-USC Medical Center, said she wasn’t initially sure if Melinda was going to survive beyond a few days.

“This doesn’t happen every day. In my 30 years here, this is the first time it ever happened that we were able to discharge a baby who weighed less than 400 grams, or 300 grams,” he said.

Fourth smallest baby ever

Melinda Star Guido is picked up by her mother Haydeé Ibarra as her father Yovani Guido looks on after she was discharged from Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center five months after her birth, on 20 January, in Los Angeles, California. Guido was born 24 weeks early, weighing 9.5 ounces, and was the third smallest baby born in the world.

Two die of A(H1N1) swine flu in Mexico

Mexico City, 22 Jan—An outbreak of A(H1N1) swine flu claimed the lives of two people — 19 and 21 years old — in Mexico’s capital in the first weeks of the year, health authorities said on Saturday. The health secretary of Mexico’s Federal District, Armando Ahued, said there were 138 confirmed cases of the flu, including 110 cases of A(H1N1), a novel strain of the swine flu that was first detected in 2009.

Nationwide, 333 cases of the virus have been confirmed, the federal government’s health secretary said earlier in the week, without saying how many deaths had been attributed to it. The latest victims were a 19-year-old and a 21-year-old who died in separate hospitals.

“The tendency toward an increase in flu cases is normal because January is the month with the lowest temperatures,” said Ahued adding that the incidence of flu should begin to subside in February.

The first outbreak of the A(H1N1) virus occurred in April, 2009 in Mexico and quickly became a global pandemic that claimed the lives of 17,000 people. In Mexico alone, more than 1,250 people died.

No formal bid yet for bankrupt Saab

Stockholm, 22 Jan—The receivers for bankrupt car maker Saab are talking with several bidders and would like to sell the Swedish company as a whole, but there have been no formal bids yet, they said on Saturday. Saab was declared bankrupt in December after frantic rescue efforts by its former owner, Swedish Automobile.

Chinese group Zhejiang Youngman Lota Automobile could make a fresh bid in the coming week, sources have told Reuters.

“We have had discussions with a number of interested parties. Some of them are interested in the factory as a whole and some of them are interested in parts of it,” Hans Bergvist, one of the receivers, told Reuters in a telephone interview.

“There have been no formal bids,” added fellow receiver Anne-Marie Pouteaux. General Motors, which still licenses technology to Saab, blocked earlier rescue efforts, saying it did not want to help competitors.

Swedish newspaper Dagens Industri has reported Turkish private equity firm Brightwell, as well as Indian utility vehicle maker Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd, are also interested.

A Saab logo covered with rain drops is seen on a vehicle in Zurich, on 24 June, 2011. —Reuters

European rating agency could launch in 2012

Milan, 22 Jan—Plans to launch a European ratings agency to compete with S&P, Moody’s and Fitch are at an advanced stage and a new private institution could start business as soon as the first half of this year, German businesses Rolande Berger told an Italian newspaper.

“The proposed model is of an agency where the service is paid by the clients, who have an interest in having reliable and objective results,” Berger said.

No formal bids for bankrupt Saab

Frankfurt, 22 Jan—German utility RWE expects to issue 1.8 billion euros ($2.33 billion) worth of hybrid bonds in various currencies over the course of this year, effectively rolling over debts maturing in the same amount, in order to maintain its current credit rating. “I don’t expect any problems this year with refinancing,” Chief Financial Officer Rolf Pohlig told German business daily Boersen Zeitung in an interview published on Saturday, ruling out any new share sales.

“Hybrid bonds have the advantage that under certain circumstances, rating agencies classify one half as debt and the other as equity,” he said. In December, RWE sold the equivalent of 15 percent worth of its stock mainly through a capital increase — but fell 400 million euros short of raising the targeted 2.5 billion euros in fresh equity that it wanted to retain its A- credit rating. RWE considers a single A rating to be benchmark for European utilities, and the current negative outlook given by both Standard & Poor’s and Moody’s puts it towards the bottom of its peer group that includes E.ON, Iberdrola and EDF.

As a result of the December stock sale, in which investors were entitled to the full dividend for 2011 even if some had only owned RWE stock for less than a year, many deaths had been attributed to it. The latest victim was a 19-year-old and a 21-year-old who died in separate hospitals.

“The tendency toward an increase in flu cases is normal because January is the month with the lowest temperatures,” said Ahued adding that the incidence of flu should begin to subside in February.

The first outbreak of the A(H1N1) virus occurred in April, 2009 in Mexico and quickly became a global pandemic that claimed the lives of 17,000 people. In Mexico alone, more than 1,250 people died.

A person holds a reproduction of a patient’s skull at the Ghent University hospital, in Ghent, Belgium, on 7 January. Turkish surgeons on Saturday successfully performed the country’s first-ever face transplant, the Anatolia news agency reported.

“Turkish surgeons carry out country’s first face transplant

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A boy is vaccinated against Influenza A(H1N1) swine flu in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, in 2011.

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The recharging system of German power supplier RWE is pictured during the International Motor Show (IAA) in Frankfurt, on 14 Sept, 2011. —INTERNET
Endangered turtle to be tracked in Cambodia

BANGKOK, 22 Jan—One of the world’s most endangered turtles has been released into a Cambodian river with a satellite transmitter attached to its shell to track how it will navigate through commercial fishing grounds and other man-made hazards.

The 75-pound (34-kilogram) southern river terrapin — one of about 200 adults remaining in the wild — waddled into the Sre Ambel river in southwestern Cambodia this past week to the cheers of local residents and conservationists.

The New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society said the female terrapin was given to the Cambodian government and Wildlife Reserves Singapore, a zoological enterprise, last year instead of being sold to traffickers.

The group said the female terrapin was given to the society to cater to demand for turtles and other species in the country’s population of 150,000 being sold to traffickers.

The turtle project is being run by the Wildlife Conservation Society in cooperation with the Cambodian government and wildlife conservation groups.

Wildlife Conservation Society, a 75-pound (34-kilogram) river terrapin, one of only some 200 adults remaining in the wild, waddles on sand as it is released near the Sre Ambel river in Cambodia. — Internet

The first-ever satellite monitoring of the species hopes to determine how the turtle will fare among fisherman as well as areas threatened by sand mining and conversion of mangrove forests into shrimp farms.

A small population of the species was found in 2000 in Sre Ambel after being considered locally extinct for many years. Following the brutal rule of the Khmer Rouge in the mid-1970s that left the country devastated, poor rural dwellers scoured mangrove forests for wildlife, much of which was sold to traders connected to China.

In this photo taken on 16 Jan, 2012, provided by The Wildlife Conservation Society, a 75-pound (34-kilogram) southern river terrapin, one of only some 200 adults remaining in the wild, waddles on sand as it is released near the Sre Ambel river in Cambodia. — Internet

Where many wild animals from turtles to tigers are believed to possess medicinal and sex-enhancing properties, the turtle project is being run by the Wildlife Conservation Society in cooperation with the Cambodian government and Wildlife Reserves Singapore, a zoological enterprise. — Internet

Games company reveals details of Resident Evil 6

LONDON, 22 Jan—The games developer announced they are currently working on the new instalment of the popular zombie series. An official trailer for the game was released on Thursday (19 January), and hinted that parts of it will be set in China. Resident Evil 6 is due to be released on 20 November for consoles, with a PC version of the game to follow soon after. Capcom said Chris Redfield and Leon Kennedy — characters from previous games in the series — will star alongside a number of new characters in RE6.

Speaking about the game’s plot, the company said: “It has been ten years since the Raccoon City incident and the President of the United States has decided to reveal the truth behind what took place in the belief that it will curb the current resurgence in bioterrorist activity.”

“To due by the President’s side is his personal friend and Raccoon City survivor, Leon S. Kennedy, but when the venue suffers a bioterrorist attack, Leon is forced to face a President transformed beyond recognition and make his hardest ever decision.” — Internet

Resident Evil 6 will be released in November 2012, Capcom have confirmed. — Internet

Kodak sues Samsung over image patents in latest lawsuit

NEW YORK, 22 Jan—Eastman Kodak is using Samsung over claims its patents have been infringed. The US camera and printer maker said the complaint relates to five of its digital imaging technologies. It is the latest in a series of patent lawsuits filed by the firm since the start of the year. Kodak said on Wednesday that it was seeking bankruptcy protection. That followed an announcement in July that it was looking to sell or license about 1,100 digital imaging patents. The latest alleged infringements include technology to make an electronic camera capable of “automatically transmitting images… to a service provider using a network configuration file,” and having a “communications interface for selectively transmitting images over a cellular phone network and a wireless LAN network to a destination.”

Samsung launched its AllShare Play cloud storage service, which allows its cameras to upload pictures to remote servers after they are taken, earlier in the month.

The South Korean firm could not be reached for comment. Samsung settled a previous dispute in 2010 after its Blackjack II camera was accused of infringing Kodak patents. It agreed to a cross-licensing deal which involved it paying royalties to its rival. Further financial details were not disclosed. Kodak has also filed lawsuits against Apple and HTC involving the same five patents. — Internet

US, Russia to conduct joint Antarctica inspection

WASHINGTON, 22 Jan—The United States and Russia will jointly inspect foreign facilities in Antarctica to make sure environmental and other responsibilities under the 1959 Antarctica Treaty are being met, the State Department said Saturday.

A US-Russian team will travel to Antarctica January 23-28 to check foreign stations, installations and equipment, it said. “The US-Russianteam will review adherence to treaty parties to their obligations, including with respect to limiting environmental impacts, ensuring that Antarctica is used only for peaceful purposes and that parties honor the prohibition of military activity,” it said. This would be the first joint inspection ever by either country to review compliance with the 1959 treaty and its environmental protocol. The last US inspection was in 2006. Currently 49 nations are signatories of the treaty, which sets aside Antarctica as a scientific preserve where military activity is banned.

Signed in 1991, the environmental protocol provides for environmental impact assessments and waste management, and designates protected areas in order to safeguard the pristine region’s marine environment and its flora and fauna. — Internet

A village of tents, where scientists sleep, is seen in front of the Belgian Princess Elisabeth polar station in Antarctica in 2009. The United States and Russia will jointly inspect foreign facilities in Antarctica to make sure environmental and other responsibilities under the 1959 Antarctica Treaty are being met, the State Department said Saturday. — Internet

McAfee tackles ‘spam hijack’ flaw in anti-malware code

LONDON, 22 Jan—A leading anti-virus software firm has flagged a flaw in one of its programs that has exposed its customers’ computers to the risk of being hijacked by spammers. McAfee said it planned to release a patch for its SaaS for Total Protection service by the end of Thursday. The software is marketed as a “peace of mind” solution offering “complete email and web protection”. McAfee said there had been at least one related attack, but stressed that users’ data had not been put at risk. The problem was exposed on British art firm Kaamos Limited’s blog earlier this week.

Keith and Annabel Morrigian posted a warning to other owners of the product after receiving a message alerting them to the fact that their server had been sending out spam emails. They said that further research had revealed their server had been sending out the equivalent of what would have been 10 months’ worth of normal traffic in one day. After linking the botnet attack to a problem with their anti-malware software’s “Rumor Service” they said that they had alerted McAfee to the problem on 5 January.

One affected business said its email address had been blacklisted as a result of being hijacked. — Internet

The ability of Samsung’s cameras to upload pictures to remote servers after they are taken. — Internet

The South Korean firm could not be reached for comment. Samsung settled a previous dispute in 2010 after its Blackjack II camera was accused of infringing Kodak patents. It agreed to a cross-licensing deal which involved it paying royalties to its rival. Further financial details were not disclosed. Kodak has also filed lawsuits against Apple and HTC involving the same five patents. — Internet

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The New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society said the female terrapin was given to the group last year instead of being sold to traffickers who have decimated the country’s population of turtles and other species to cater to demand for exotic wildlife in China.

The southern river terrapin, once considered the sole property of Cambodia’s kings, only survives in the wilds of Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia, the group said in a statement.

The population in the Sre Ambel river is estimated at less than 10 nesting females. But it said the terrapins have an excellent chance of recovery because coastal mangrove forests in the region are among the largest and most pristine in Southeast Asia, spanning some 175 square miles (45,000 hectares).

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Media

Singapore PM hopes for Year of the Dragon baby boom

SINGAPORE, 22 Jan—Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Sunday he hoped "fervently" that Singaporeans would boost the city-state’s stubbornly-low birth rates in the coming Year of the Dragon.

In his Lunar New Year message sent to the media, Lee—a father of four—said growing Singaporean families was an "important priority" and that more local born babies were needed to maintain Singapore’s national identity. "I fervently hope that this year will be a big Dragon year for babies... This is critical to preserve a Singaporean core in society," he said. "We do not want to rely more and more heavily on immigration, nor do we want to see our population shrinking year by year." The Year of the Dragon is regarded as the most auspicious to have a baby because it is the only mythical creature among the dozen animals that represent each year in the Chinese cosmic cycle. Superstitious Chinese believe children born during the Year of the Dragon—the symbol of ancient emperors—will possess courage and wisdom and bring luck to the entire family.

In his speech, the prime minister quoted some of the achievements of his government’s economic policy and celebrated the labor policy agreement signed with employer’s associations and one of the two Portuguese trade union federations. According to Passos Coelho, the main reason for the structural reforms is the Portuguese economy’s urgent need to get more competitiveness.

"We are doing this for you, not for us," he said. "As we struggle against more structural changes, as we struggle against the demon of uncompetitive labor costs and the demon of irresponsible fiscal policy, we need to get more competitiveness."

In this photo taken on 17 Jan, 2012, Leila Laurentius, left, and her sister Saroya embrace their mother Zinnia Ricot at their home in Calebasse, on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Internet

Growing the world’s most expensive lemons

JERUSALEM, 22 Jan—In a region where most land is desert and droughts are commonplace, growing a tree is not a guilt-free pleasure. The joy we felt in watching our lemon tree being manoeuvred off the back of a flatbed truck by two barry delivery men was surely very similar to the joy you would feel in growing it from seed. It just took half an hour, rather than half a lifetime.

There is an economic issue admittedly. So far I have harvested only four of my lemons and I think they have cost about £100 ($155) each. But the children are able to eat them and enjoy the free pleasure. The joy we felt in watching our lemon tree being planted and the first flowers and then fruits. The beauty of the lemon tree and the happiness it brings to the whole family.

Kevin Connolly’s lemon tree has pride of place on his balcony. Internet

Pressures on rival Palestinians may lead to collapse of entire political platforms

GAZA, 22 Jan—The divided rival governments of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are facing heavy pressures, with the Palestinians calling on them to immediately achieve full political and national reconciliation, otherwise the whole political system of the Palestinians might soon collapse. Observers are increasingly slamming the two existing governments—one in the West Bank ruled by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and the other in the Gaza Strip ruled by Islamic Hamas movement—as the efforts to achieve an internal reconciliation between them have been going too slow.

Since 2007, the two governments have been working separately in running the Palestinians’ daily affairs amid an obvious internal division, with each government establishing its own ministries that follow two different policies, strategies and attitudes.

A prominent Palestinian politician told Xinhua that "our political system is facing a real danger amid difficult choices... Unfortunately, we are expecting more and we will pay a heavy price before the reconciliation is fully implemented."

In the West Bank, the caretaker government of prominent Palestinian economist Salam Fayyad is currently facing heavy criticism, due to corruption cases of two of its ministers, the government’s attitude between them have been heavily slammed by unions and corporations.

Reunited Haiti family carries on 2 yrs after quake

CALEBASSE, 22 Jan—The American missionaries arrived in a beige bus in the days after the earthquake, promising a better life for the children in this village of the mountains above Haiti’s capital.

In his speech, the prime minister quoted some of the achievements of his economic policy. In his list of victories were the 4.4 percent of the GDP structural defects and the curve that points out to a 2.6 percent primary structural surplus. He also quoted the Bank of Portugal report that points out to an external balance of trade very near to a surplus. Among the structural reforms, he emphasized two aspects: the labour market reform and the justice reform.

On the justice reform, Passos Coelho said that companies need a stable environment. The aim of the reform will be to give more competition. "Our courts are far from competition. There are contradictions in our economic ambition that urgently need to be removed."

Gingrich win in South Carolina prolongs GOP race

COLUMBIA, (The United States) 22 Jan—Republican voters in South Carolina have thrown open the party’s presidential nomination race by giving former House speaker Newt Gingrich a clear victory in the party’s first primary in the South on Saturday.

Gingrich’s win with some 40 percent of the vote was the third by a different candidate from the first three primaries, the first time this has happened in recent history. Former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney won the New Hampshire primary, and former Pennsylvania senator Rick Santorum won Iowa’s caucuses.

That means more uncertainty at least until the next primary in Florida, and possibly beyond that. The victory for Gingrich also implies trouble for Romney, a multi-millionaire candidate who struggled in debates leading up to the primary over whether he should release his tax returns.

Thomas Mann, a US politics expert, said Romney, in his own halting and confusing way, had “effectively released his tax returns by acknowledging that his effective tax rate was around 15 percent.”

Romney made the acknowledgement in the past week during a campaign event, after being pressed during a debate to release his tax returns. Xinhua

Newt Gingrich (C), former US House of Representatives Speaker, speaks during a victory party in Columbia, South Carolina, the United States, on 21 Jan, 2012. Newt Gingrich won the South Carolina Republican primary earlier Saturday. Xinhua
I do not have a head for heights. And paradoxically, I love flying. I dreamt of it since my childhood years, maybe as a superman or a bird or something. I never look down when I am in an elevator. My knees may be trembling or my hands may be wet with clammy sweats. I have such a conflicted attitude. As a frequent traveler, I could no longer evade trip by air. I happened to take a flight to the eastern Shan State at Sun Far Ticketing Agency. Unfortunately, there is no direct flight to Tachilek on Thursdays as its airport is under repair on Thursdays and Fridays. Sun Far offered an option to me, saying they are providing free-of-charge transportation services to Tachilek from Kengtung Airport on these days. I happily accepted the offer.

Isn’t it a surprise experience to explore more of Shan Plateau by traveling by bus?

Myanmar Airways flies the route and Sun Far provides services, both ticketing and on-board, under a joint venture by the two groups. I had already heard about the news of the national flag-carrier, both good and bad. Most were about courage or expertise of the crew. The joint venture between the state-owned airline and the leading private tour agency is assumed to be the early sign of a new trend of state-owned enterprises towards turning a profit in upcoming fiscal year.

I have to confess that I recalled some prayers just after boarding the Fokker and jokingly smiled at how lucky the plane. The whole feeling was much different than I expected. I was flying and no more frightening. I got the window seat. The only thing I could define on the earth from there were those green mountains of Bago Yoma and Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, straight and stretching. Cordial and also grasp the meaning of the town that “Kengtung” is derived from “Nongtung”. Nongtung lake at its heart is a local landmark. Some say the lake is formed by water run from cooking rice to be offered to the Lord Buddha. “Nong” means “gathered” and “tung”, “water”. Another version also says “Nongtung” means “iced water”. Other significant tourist attractions are Lone Tree Hill and Maha Muni Buddha Image to which you pay homage once, you get another chance to revisit the town, many travelers believe.

The road to Tachilek is narrow and surrounded by vast mountain ranges, with some decorated with terrace cultivation and some deforested. Shelves of firewood were found frequently by the road. Here and there are bare hills which brought sweet faces of stewardsess to my mind. Let me explain. I have learnt they wear makeup heavily at risk of their lovely faces. But the key to their services I think is sweet smiles they wear, not makeup. Does it deserve sacrificing? I prefer to see air hostesses with plain pretty faces wearing chic smiles. The bus stopped at Mongphyat for dinner. The night had fallen when we crossed Tahlay, a quake-hit town. We are used to praise it as a phoenix rising for its rapid rejuvenation from the strong earthquake. The phoenix was sleeping when I touched it.

We arrived at Tachilek, one of the easternmost towns of Myanmar, late at night. The festival was starting. Tachilek is celebrating Lahu Traditional New Year from 19 to 21 January. “There are three key new year festivals in Tachilek, one of Lahu, another of Akha and one more of Shan,” a local friend of mine said. Tachilek is home to various national races. Shan, Akha and Lahu constitute most of the population. As peace has been restored in the border town, traditional New Year festivals have been allowed to celebrate for about three years, he added. Most kids were flying hydrogen balloons on their return from the festival. I found the same scene in Bagan at Ananda Pagoda Feast on Full Moon Day of Phaung. Maybe from different topographies, what children mostly want is simply the same thing. Origin, race, colour and others are what men use to distance themselves away from others. Through rose-coloured glasses, definition of happiness for the entire mankind may be the same. A couple of big names and Lahu national singers entertained festival-goers. Fireworks were set off as the midnight neared. Vendors displayed their booths of traditional and Thailand-made products on the playground where the festival was held. Baiti is the most luxurious luxury in Tachilek. Some shops do not even know the exchange rate and only accept Baht. Most can speak Thai. I surfed TV channels at the hotel only to learn all were in Thai and Chinese languages. That is common among border towns that similar culture is shared. Tachilek shared borders with Thailand and Laos, forming a region known as “Golden Triangle”.

Earlier in the next morning, I visited Friendship Terminal. The Mekong River is streaming and over which commuters to Mae Sai of Thailand and Thai visitors, locally known as Farangs, are streaming. The name “Tachilek” is interrelated with the river. It is derived from Mezali (Cassina siamea) tree, which is called “Tachilek” in Shan language, at the bank of Mae Sai River. I found a number of school buses, heading Mae Sai, passing the bridge. Also Farangs and their cars are allowed to visit Tachilek. I felt sad to say goodbye to Tachilek all too soon. I pretty enjoyed the short sojourn there.

On my return trip, I took the same flight as I did the previous day. The same flight and the same crew, it gave me same pleasant experience as the previous day. I boarded off in Mandalay International Airport where I was picked up by the free-of-charge bus of Sun Far. The bus reached downtown Mandalay after an hour drive. It was an almost night. The cultural city was bustling with motorbikes. I visited Maha Myat Muni Buddha Image, locally known as Phayagyi. I then proceeded to Kywesekan express terminal, one of three terminals in Mandalay. The cramped terminal was heavily crowded.

I took the bus bound for Nay Pyi Taw, the capital of Myanmar. My journey was started from the commercial hub, destined for the easternmost part of the country and finished at the administrative city. New friends I won along the trip introduced themselves as Aukthar, lower Myanmar, or Taungpawtha, dwellers in hilly region, or Anyarthar, upper Myanmar. But, I saw no difference.

An orange vendor passes over Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge.
MMCWA provides mobile health care in Toungoo Township

YANGON, 22 Jan—MMCWA provides mobile health care in the rural areas of Toungoo Township yesterday morning.

Village of Toungoo Township yesterday undertook mobile health care in Hsutat. Village health subcommittee and K 1 million for providing health care of the aged former personnel, and wellwishers donated cash to the funds of the association.

Insee Diamond Cement hosts Thank You Party

YANGON, 22 Jan—Insee Diamond Cement Public Company Limited hosted a Thank You Party of Insee Diamond Cement at Chatrium Hotel, here, on 16 December. Chairman of Tun Akaree Co Ltd U Tun Lwin and Executive Vice-President (Marketing & Sales) of Siam Cement Public Co Ltd Ms Chartana Sukumanont extended greetings. They presented prizes to top dealers of Insee Diamond Cement and gifts to customers. Siam City is targeting to claim a leading role in Myanmar’s cement market.—NLM

University of Pharmacy (Yangon) celebrates 20th anniversary

YANGON, 22 Jan—A ceremony to mark the 20th anniversary of the University of Pharmacy (Yangon) in Webagi Myothit of North Okkalapa Township was held at the university this morning.

On the occasion, Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe delivered an address, saying that the University of Pharmacy (Yangon) was opened at the building of former BOC College in Yangon University campus in 1992 and then it was moved to Webagi Myothit in North Okkalapa Township in 2002. The art of pharmacy is playing a key role not only in the production of pharmaceuticals for development of industrial sector of the State but also in the upgrading health sector of the people, he said. He urged faculty members to uplift their pharmacy education and pharmacy profession and to turn out qualified new generation pharmacists.

Pharmacy Minister for Health Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin made a speech. Rector of the university Prof Dr Daw Marlar Myint and an old student spoke words of thanks.

Later, the Chief Minister and party viewed round the documentary photos displayed at the hall.

Pwintbyu Township opens rural health branch

PWINBYU, 22 Jan—A self-reliant rural health branch was opened in Shwehlay Village of Pwintbyu Township on 6 January.

Township Education Officer Daw Aye Than presented a certificate of honour to land plot donor U Than Naing-Myothit and 15 bags of cement. He also donated K 100,000 to its fund.

Rural school gets new building

THAZI, 22 Jan—A ceremony to hand over new school building to Ministry of Education was held at Basic Education Primary School in Pinnom Village of Thazi Township on 27 December afternoon.

Mandalay Region Hluttaw representative U San Tun and township level departmental officials formally opened the new building.

Well wisher U Ohn Myint handed over documents related to the building to Township Education Officer Daw Than Aye Aye. Later, wellwishers donated cash to the funds of the school.—Township IPRD

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New school building opened

MAHLAING, 22 Jan—A new building of Basic Education Primary School was opened in Awzachan Village of Mahlaing Township on 2 December 2011.

Pyithu Hluttaw representative A Ye Aue Maik of Mahlaing Township donated K 100,000, 15 bags of cement and 10 dozens of exercise books to the headmistress. Township Education Officer Daw Aye Than presented a certificate of honour to land plot donor U Than Naing-Daw Tin Tin Mya.

Local authorities formally opened the school building that measures 90 feet long and 30 feet wide.—Myanma Alin

Clinic for Sangha opened

HINTHADA, 22 Jan—The Jivita Gonyi clinic that will give health care services to members of the Sangha free of charge was opened at Mogau Monastery in Hintada on 17 January afternoon.

Clinic for Sangha opened

PWINBYU, 22 Jan—A self-reliant rural health branch was opened in Shwehlay Village of Pwintbyu Township on 6 January.

Township Education Officer Daw Aye Than presented a certificate of honour to land plot donor U Than Naing-Daw Tin Tin Mya.

Local authorities formally opened the branch that measures 90 feet long, 20 feet wide and 10 feet high, built at a cost of K 3.5 million contribution of the people.

The building of health branch is 30 feet long, 20 feet wide and 10 feet high, built at a cost of K 3.5 million contribution of the people.

The clinic was built with contribution of K 10 million by well wisher U Win Thein-Daw Aye Aye Khaing of Mandalay and other donors.

The clinic is being kept open from 1 pm to 4 pm daily three weeks a week under supervision of the 10-member committee of townsenders.—Myanma Alin

Union A&I Minister visits 400-ton Ayeya Hintha Rice Mill

YANGON, 22 Jan—Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing together with Deputy Minister U Khin Zaw yesterday morning delivered an address at the opening of former personnel’s office of Irrigation Department and ceremony to pay respects to above 75 years old personnel at the office in Mayangon Township.

The Union minister presented K 1 million for providing health care of the aged former personnel, and wellwishers donated cash to the funds of the association.

Irrigation Department Director-General U Kyaw Myint Hlaing formally opened the office of the association.

Next, the Union minister inspected storage of rice to be exported and production process of 400-ton Sankhe Rice Mill of Ayeya Hintha Co in Hlinetha Industrial Zone.

The rice mill can mill 400 tons quality rice per day.

The Union minister and party viewed Palethwe rice, Palethwe hybrid paddy seeds and Armos fertilizer at 100-acre Palethwe hybrid paddy plantation near Kyaiksagaing Village of Taikkyi Township.

At 4 pm, he visited the Paddy Research Training School in Mayangon Township.—MNA

Kachin State’s Anti-Human Trafficking Committee meets

NA Pyi Taw, 22 Jan—Kachin State Anti-Human Trafficking Committee met on 19 January at State General Administration Department in Myitkyina.

Chairman of the committee State Commissioner U Min Chit Oo called for prevention and fight against trafficking in person and rescue of trafficked persons and effective implementation of rehabilitation works.

The committee vice-chairman commander of the State Police Force Police Colonel Myint Ewin explained formation of anti-human trafficking squad.

Next, personnel elaborated on instructions of the central committee meeting held in Na Pyi Taw, probing of cases and educative works, and cooperation of respective departments. The committee chairman highlighted the issue as a national duty.—MNA

Insee Diamond Cement hosts Thank You Party

YANGON, 22 Jan—Siam City Cement Public Company Limited of Thailand and its Myanmar sole distributor Sinpoonchai Company Limited (Bangkok) and Tun Akaree Company Limited hosted a Thank You Party of Insee Diamond Cement at Chatrium Hotel, here, on 16 December.

Chairman of Tun Akaree Co Ltd U Tun Lwin and Executive Vice-President (Marketing & Sales) of Siam Cement Public Co Ltd Ms Chartana Sukumanont extended greetings. They presented prizes to top dealers of Insee Diamond Cement and gifts to customers.

Siam City is targeting to claim a leading role in Myanmar’s cement market.—NLM

Ayeya Hintha Rice Mill

The Jivita Gonyi clinic that will give health care services to members of the Sangha free of charge was opened at Mogau Monastery in Hintada on 17 January afternoon. —Myanma Alin
Winners in Development of School Libraries and Reading Habit...

(from page 16)

He also presented six Sky Net Receivers for BEHSs in the township through the headmasters.

The Yangon Region minister and officials then presented prizes to award winners in contests at high school, middle school and primary school levels.

The chairman of Myanmar Library Foundation donated publications for school and ward libraries in the township through officials.

First prize winners demonstrated their talents and video documentary was shown.

The ceremony concluded with the singing of a song by students.

Union Minister U Kyaw Hsan cordially greeted those present at the ceremony. —MNA

Literary talks held in Dabayin Township, Sagaing Region

YANGON: 22 Jan—Members of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association, writers Chit Naing (Psychology), Myinmu Naing Moe and Maung Sanda (Lewe) gave literary talks to aid development of rural libraries and encourage reading habit of rural people.

They gave literary talks in Mankyisauk Village, Dabayin Township, Sagaing region on 9 January, in Aungtha Village of KhinU Township on 10 January, listened by local villagers and enthusiasts of the surrounding villages.

Likewise, Myinmu Naing Moe and Maung Sanda (Lewe) gave literary talks in Pegyigyun Village of Hinthada Township in Ayeyawady Region on 9 December, in Thenyayysaing Village in the township on 11 December and Oatpon Village on 30 December last year.—MNA

Hand-made Paper of Shan State

About 11 miles from Hispaw in Shan State South lies Kyinhti Village beside Mandalay-Lashio Union Highway. Farming and orange is the economic mainstay of the village.

Besides, there is a traditional cottage industry there which is production of Shan paper or Mongkai paper in which every house in the village is engaged for extra income. Shan paper is made from the bark of tree called “Sar”. Such trees grow wild naturally.

First, the bark is dried in the sunlight, which is then boiled in the water with ashes. Not an easy task this process is as it needs to cook the bark until it becomes tender. The boiled pulp is then rinsed to clear the ashes, which is pounded on the rock with a wooden mallet.

The next step is to cut neither-thick-nor-thin cloth into square according to the paper size desired. If the cloth is coarse, the paper made is rough and if it is smooth, it cannot be soaked and thus paper of middle class is used in this stage. This cloth is then stretched and tied to bamboo splints. The next is the preparation of a small vat of the same size as the screen.

The screen is immersed in the small vat and then pounded “Sar” pulp is poured down on it from the bamboo container in which the pulp is soaked well. Then, it is taken out of the container along with the screen, which is put under the sunlight to let the water drain out. This process only lasts for a day with enough sunshine. The next step is to rub the paper with tea cup or polished wooden rod. Then the paper is peeled away from the screen.

It is the handicraft of Shan State and the whole production process is made by hand, said 77-year-old Shan paper manufacturer Daw Nai Ying.

Shan paper or Mongkai paper is manufactured over one million sheets per month. Previously, there were two kinds of paper, but now only one kind priced at K 6000 to K 7000 for 100 sheets. It enjoys high demand in market thanks to its considerable tear-off resistance.

Soaking “Sar” pulp in bamboo container.

Making of screen.

Shan papers drained and dried in the sunlight.

The final step, peeling the paper from cloth.

Being the open season, as the time now is, foreign tourists are visiting the work sites of Shan papermaking industry. Some Shan villages make the paper to be thick enough to use as bed sheets whereas some use it as waterproof wear after coating with lacquer. The paper is called Mongkai paper for its originated in Mongkai Township.

Having observed this farming, it would much facilitate the implementation of rural development and poverty alleviation scheme.

Translation: TKK

Myanma Alin
22-1-2012

Byline & Photos:

Sai Tha Hlaing (Orange Land)

MLF Patron Union Information and Culture Minister U Kyaw Hsan awards Ma Thet Oo May, first-prize winner in basic education primary level poem recitation contest.—MNA

Literary talks held in Dabayin Township, Sagaing Region
Crews contain Reno fire that claimed 29 homes

RENO, 22 Jan—As rain helped crews surround a blaze that killed 29 homes and forced thousands to flee, the family of the blaze’s only known fatality said on Saturday that prosecuting the man who admitted to starting it “wouldn’t do any good.”

June Hargis, 93, was found dead in a studio apartment next to her daughter’s home in Washoe Valley, where the fire started Thursday. Sheriff Mike Haley said her cause of death has not been established, so it’s not known if it was fire-related. No other fatalities or major injuries were reported.

Fire officials say an “extremely remorseful” elderly man admitted on Friday to accidentally starting the fire when he improperly discarded fireplace ashes outside his home in the valley’s north end. Hargis’s son, Jim Blueber, 68, told The Associated Press that he didn’t think filing criminal charges against the elderly man would do any good.

“I just want him to know I forgive him, and my heart goes out to him,” he said.

His sister, Jeannie Watts, 70, had returned home from an errand to find the apartment “ruined” and knocked out power to her home in the valley’s north end.

“Everything is already gone,” Watts said.

“She’ll pay the rest of his life for that,” she added.

Three dead in fire at NY house rented by students

POUGHKEEPSIE, 22 Jan—A fire tore through a private home being rented by Marist College students near campus early Saturday morning, killing three people, authorities said.

The victims were identified as two female Marist students in their early 20s and one male, who was not a student at the school. Their names have not been released. Four other people in the house escaped without serious injuries.

Marist College spokesman David Murphy said the fire started at around 3:00 a.m. in the house, which is adjacent to the school’s accounting building.

Police chief Thomas Mao said at least 30 fire personnel responded to the blaze. Two other Marist students in the house died.

“After the first few minutes, we knew there were problems,” Murphy said.

The 30-year-old man and his two roommates had been fraternizing with other students at an off-campus house. They had just returned to their own house to change clothes when the fire began.

“We had a lot of people tonight,” Murphy said.

In a statement on Saturday, the off-campus house on Fairview Avenue was being rented by six female Marist students, Town Police Chief Thomas Mao said.

At the time that the fire was initially called in 911 by a passer-by at about 1:30 a.m., Mao said seven people were in the house — four residents and three male guests.

The police chief said the group had gone to bed about an hour before the fire was called into authorities.

“Twas no issue that they were aware of in the house that remained went to bed,” he said, basking his comments on interviews with the four survivors.

At least two people jumped through a window to safety after realizing that the house was engulfed in flames, he said.

The first firefighters to respond to the emergency call tried to get into the house, but were forced back by the heat and flames, said Chris Maeder, chief of the Fairview Fire District, one of a handful of agencies that responded to the emergency call.

One victim was found on the second floor of the house, one was downstairs and the third was under “considerable collapsed rubble” when rescued, Maeder said.

The four survivors were taken to a hospital, where they were treated and released.

Storm blankets Northeast with a few inches of snow

PHILADELPHIA, 22 Jan—A few inches of snow coated the Northeast on Saturday in a storm so rare this season in the East that some welcomed it.

“We’ve been very lucky, so we can’t complain,” said Gloria Fernandez of New York City, as she shoveled the sidewalk outside her workplace. “It’s nice, it’s flurrying and it’s on the weekend,” she said of the snow, which hadn’t fallen in the city since a rare October storm that dumped more than 2 feet of snow in parts of the city since a rare October storm that dumped more than 2 feet of snow in parts and knocked out power to nearly 3 million homes and businesses in the region.

By midafternoon, 4.3 inches of snow had fallen in Central Park and 3.4 inches at LaGuardia Airport in New York. Most of eastern Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia, and central New Jersey saw about 4 inches of snow, with a few places reporting up to 8 inches. Flurries and freezing rain fell around Washington, D.C.

In Massachusetts, the National Weather Service says 11 inches fell in the Bristol County town of Acsuhnet. Cape Cod saw high totals, including nearly 10 inches in Bourne, noteworthy in a season marked by a lack of snow throughout the Northeast.

The fast-moving storm left several inches of snow in Rhode Island, where the coastal area took the hardest hit. More than nine inches fell in North Kingstown. Little Compton in Newport County was also hard hit, as eight inches fell there. The storm was expected to move out to sea overnight.

Road conditions were fair Saturday, officials said. Crews in Pennsylvania and New Jersey began salting roads around midnight and plowing soon after. By midmorning, the snow had turned to sleet in Philadelphia north through central New Jersey and had stopped falling altogether by early afternoon.

“It’s a fairly moderate snowstorm, at best,” said weather service forecaster Bruce Sullivan.

Few accidents were reported on the roads, helped by the weekend’s lack of rush hour traffic, but New Jersey transportation spokesman Joe Dee cautioned drivers to build in more time for trips.

“Concentrate on driving,” said Dee. “Though temperatures will warm up this afternoon he said, forecasters expect the wet ground to freeze again overnight.

Customer shoots robbery suspect at SC Waffle Shop

SPARTANBURG, 22 Jan—Authorities say a customer at a South Carolina Waffle Shop pulled a gun and shot one of two men trying to rob the restaurant.

The Greenville News reports that the shooting took place early Saturday morning inside a Waffle Shop off Interstate 85 in Spartanburg County. Coroner Rusty Clevenger identified the dead man as 19-year-old Dante Lamont Williams of Roebuck, who was shot in the head and body.

Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright declined to identify the customer, citing concerns for his safety. Authorities said the customer had a concealed weapon permit and tried to hold the two men at gunpoint until officers arrived, but that one suspect began to point his gun at the customer, who then fired shots. The second robber fled and is being sought by authorities.

14 Indonesian, Korean crew rescued in Philippines

MANILA, 22 Jan—A cargo ship loaded with iron ore has listed off the eastern coast of the Philippines, and passing tows have rescued 14 crewmen.

Philippine coast guard operations officer Mark Angue says the Panamanian-registered M/V Sun Spirit began to list on Saturday off Catanduanes Province and sent a distress signal. The coast guard immediately deployed three ships and a helicopter for a search and rescue. Angue says the coast guard later learned that the 12 Indonesian and two Korean crewmen abandoned their China-bound ship, which came from the central Philippine province of Leyte.

Coast guard Admiral Ramon Livad says a passing Philippine cargo ship rescued 11 of the crewmen while a fishing boat saved three others. It’s unclear whether the disabled ship sank.

Passenger boat sinks off Iran, 15 missing

TEHRAN, 22 Jan—A passenger ship carrying 22 people sank off the Iranian coast near the port of Bandar Abbas on Saturday, the official IRNA news agency reported.

The report did not give the cause of the incident but said so far only seven people had been rescued.

Local ports official, Ali Akbar Safaei, said the boat was travelling from the Island of Hormuz to Bandar Abbas. Rescue efforts were continuing, he said.

A man cries after putting his grandmother’s coffee mug out of the rubble of her home on 21 Jan, 2012, in Pleasant Valley, south of Reno, Nev.

The exhibition “Western Mythology and Legend: Select Works from the Lowere Museum” will open to visitors in Taipei on 20 January, Xinhua

PHILADELPHIA, 22 Jan—A fire tore through a private home being rented by Marist College students near campus early Saturday morning, killing three people, authorities said.

The victims were identified as two female Marist students in their early 20s and one male, who was not a student at the school. Their names have not been released. Four other people in the house escaped without serious injuries.

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Dublin to deliver their premature babies. I said the unit was the only part of the Royal Jubilee Maternity Hospital as quickly as possible of infection and are able to fully re-open the neo-natal unit at complete.

A team of specialists is working to identify the Beolfast breathing difficulties and tissue damage. The infection can circumstances such as this, there is currently extra pressure All the babies in the unit are being tested to see if they have confirmed cases.

More foreign capital expected in Indonesia on credit rating hikes

JAKARTA, 22 Jan—Indonesia is going to enjoy more foreign capital inflows as the Southeast Asian largest economies got credit rating hikes to investment grade from two rating agencies, spurring the much-needed infrastructure development in the country. Moody Investor Service on Wednesday upgraded the Indonesian government foreign-and-local currency bond ratings to Baa3 from B1, putting Indonesia’s outlook at stable following the similar suite by Fitch’s rating agency on 15 Dec that raised the country’s credit rating from BBB- to BB+, putting Indonesia in a par with India.

The decision of the two agencies, Moody’s and Fitch, to upgrade Indonesia’s rating from BBB- to BB+ is a recognition of the country’s economic performance and political stability. The upgrade will make it easier for Indonesia to attract foreign investment, particularly from emerging market economies.

South Korea decrtes US washing machine probe

SEOUL, 22 Jan—South Korea objected strongly on Saturday to a planned US investigation into imports of Korean washing machines which could trigger huge import duties, saying the action was unfair. The US Commerce Department said on Friday it was launching the probe, requested by Whirlpool Corp. that could lead to import duties on more than $1 billion of washing machines from South Korea and Mexico.

The action comes despite the two countries signing a free trade agreement last year. The century-old American manufacturer, which could trigger huge import duties, saying the action was unfair.

The US Commerce Department said on Friday it was launching the probe, requested by Whirlpool Corp. that could lead to import duties on more than $1 billion of washing machines from South Korea and Mexico. The action comes despite the two countries signing a free trade agreement last year.

The US Commerce Department said it also accuses Mexican suppliers of undercutting US prices by 27 percent to 72 percent. South Korea’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade said it had “raised strong objections to the unfairness” of the probe, via a letter addressed to the Commerce Secretary and a series of high-level official talks.

In addition, the ministry will call on the US side to proceed with fair and objective probes,” the statement said.

In October, the US Commerce Department set preliminary anti-dumping duties ranging up to 17 percent on imports of bottom-mount refrigerators from South Korea and Mexico, which totaled more than $3 billion in 2010.

US imports of residential washers from South Korea and Mexico were valued at an estimated $69.1 million and $450.2 million, respectively, the department said.

Whirlpool is taking this legal action to protect its 23,000 US employees and the communities in which they work from practices used by Samsung and LG that violate US and international trade laws, the company said in a statement.—INTERNET
Italian divers find body in cruise ship corridor

ROME, 22 Jan—The body of a woman wearing a life vest was recovered by Italian coast guard divers Saturday from a narrow underwater corridor of the capsized cruise ship Costa Concordia, raising the death toll to 12 in the week-old accident that has sent some light fuel spilling into the Mediterranean off Tuscany. Coast Guard Capt. Cosimo Nicastro told The Associated Press that the victim was found during a particularly risky inspection of an evacuation staging point at the ship’s rear.

‘The corridor was very narrow, and the divers’ lines risked snagging’ on objects in the passageway, Nicastro said. To permit the coast guard divers to get into the area, Italian navy divers had preceded them and setting off charges to blast holes for easier entrance and exit, he said. The woman’s nationality and identity were not immediately known. Before the corpse was found, 21 people were listed as missing. One of the women on the list is a Peruvian crew member, the others are passengers.

Three bodies were found in the waters near the ship in the first hours after the accident, since then the rest of the victims have all been found inside the Concordia, apparently unable to get off the ship during a chaotic evacuation via lifeboats and later by helicopters. Some survivors jumped off and swam to safety.

The Concordia hit a reef and ran aground on Jan. 13, while passengers dined, about two hours after the ship had set sail from the port of Civitavecchia on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Costa Crociere has said the captain had deviated without permission from the vessels in an apparent maneuver to be close to Giglio, a Tuscan island, to impress passengers aboard.

DNA was planted, says man cleared of N Ireland shootings

DUBLIN, 22 Jan—A man cleared of shooting dead two British soldiers in Northern Ireland claimed on Saturday that his DNA was planted in the getaway car used in the attack.

Colin Duffy, 44, said on a latex glove inside the car used in the attack and on a seat of the getaway car used in the attack.— Internet

Soldier killed as bus collides with military truck in Philippines

MANILA, 22 Jan—One soldier died and another was injured when a military truck was sideswiped by a passenger bus in Magalang town in Pampanga Province on Sunday, a military spokesman said.

The driver of the bus was detained at the Magalang police station, facing a charge of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, physical injuries, and damage to property.

‘Before the impact, the truck driver, sensing the danger coming from the two buses that were apparently trying to get ahead of one another, reduced his speed to give way but was hit on the left side,’ said Ileto, adding one of the soldiers died upon arrival at a nearby hospital. Another wounded soldier was in stable condition.—Xinhua

Cargoes ship tilts off central Philippines, crew safe

MANILA, 22 Jan—Some 18 crew members were safe after the cargo ship filled with cement tilted in waters off central Philippines on Sunday morning, officials said.

Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said they had received a distress call from cargo ship Seaford 2, which was carrying 47,000 bags of cement.

Initial investigation from the coast guard showed the ship left from Iligan City in southern Philippines and was headed to nearby Culasi, Antique Province when the incident happened.

PCG officials were looking into the possibility of strong waves that broke a hole on its side of the ship, causing water to enter.

Meanwhile, the coast guard is trying to prevent oil spill as the ship has 7,000 liters of gasoline.—Xinhua

Syria seizes Lebanese boat, family says man killed

TEHRAN, 22 Jan—Syrian forces killed a Lebanese fisherman and wounded another when they seized a boat suspected of smuggling off the Lebanese-Syrian coast on Saturday, a relative said.

Syria’s state news agency SANA said the sailors were smugglers and that Syria’s naval patrol tried to stop the boat but was fired on by other nearby Lebanese vessels. It said two of the men on the seized boat were wounded by friendly fire.

The border areas between Lebanon and Syria are known for smuggling, and Syrian security services have become especially sensitive to contraband runs since a revolt against President Bashar al-Assad erupted 10 months ago. Syria complains that its neighbors are not clamping down on smuggling of weapons or people who are destined for insurgents. Residents in Lebanon’s northern coastal town of Arida said they heard gunfire offshore but did not see who was shooting.

They said they later saw a Syrian boat towing the Lebanese fishing boat toward the nearby Syrian port of Tartous. Syrian authorities did not report any deaths to SANA but the agency said two wounded sailors were in hospital. It said a third man had been “turned in to concerned authorities.”—Reuters

FARC attack on Colombia radar delays flights, drug fight

BOGOTA, 22 Jan—An attack by Colombian FARC rebels on a radar installation in Cauca Province delayed flights in the south of the Andean nation as well as some bound for neighbouring Ecuador and Panama, the civil aviation authority said on Saturday.

Guerrilla fighters from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia launched homemade missiles and gas cylinders at the installation, killing a police officer guarding the radar, officials said. The attack underscores the ability of the FARC, as the drug-funded group is known, to harm the nation’s economic infrastructure and

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Purchase of winning $14M ticket a mistake

A Wisconsin man says it took him several days to realize he held the winning ticket to a $14.3 million lottery jackpot.

Napolean Elvord of Madison claimed the Megabucks prize Friday, the Wisconsin State Journal reported.

Elvord bought the ticket to last Saturday’s drawing at the convenience store at Kelley Williamson Mall, where he buys coffee more than once daily. Store employees knew he had sold a winning ticket and asked Elvord if at least twice if it was him, being told it was not both times.

It turns out Elvord thought the big jackpot was for Wednesday’s drawing — and was trying to buy a Powerball ticket when he purchased the winner. He finally dug up the ticket sitting on a table at his home and took it to the state Lottery office, where he learned he was the big winner.

Fleeing man allegedly flipped off deputies

Authorities in Florida said a man who fled the scene of a crash led deputies on a chase that ended with him flipping the bag his middle fingers.

Levy County sheriff’s deputies said 62-year-old actor Roy Thomas Willard, 62, of Morriston, fled the scene of the crash Wednesday in his Nissan Titan and made multiple illegal U-turns while fleeing pursuing deputies, the South Florida Sun Sentinel reported Friday.

Willard eventually stopped his vehicle and displayed his middle finger to deputies. He was ordered to exit the Nissan and responded by flipping the bird with his other hand, the arrest report said.

Willard, who was charged with fleeing and attempting to elude a police officer and resisting arrest with violence, apologized to a deputy when he arrived at the jail, the report said.

Rashida Jones unveils her rom-com at Sundance

PARK CITY, 22 Jan— Rashida Jones was almost upstaged by her famous father, Quincy Jones, at the Sundance premiere of her film, "Celeste and Jesse Forever," but the actress and screenwriter didn’t mind. “He’s what he is and he will always be and has always been, way before I was here,” Jones said Saturday. “I feel lucky to hang out with him. And we’re different, too. People like us for different reasons.”

She added that her dad loved the film, which explores the nature of relationships, marriage and its meaning in society.

Jones’ first screenwriting effort (with co-writer Will McCormack) emerged from “pain, lots of pain.”

“We’re both very deeply feeling people, and we love to talk about relationships and love and feelings,” she said. “We like to be as inappr. as possible when things are grave and difficult, so I think it probably came from that place.”

The premiere was her father’s first actual visit to the state.

South African law would jail meteorologists for weather forecasts

Weather forecasts are often unreliable but would you send your local weather forecaster to jail for 10 years? A newly proposed law in South Africa would punish unauthorized weather forecasts with jail time and fines, according to the Nature Network.

The law would require state-sanctioning for any weather forecasts issued outside of the government’s South African Weather Service (SAWS).

As written, the South African Weather Service Amendment Bill would affect not just TV weathermen and online weather sites but also community-based weather services. First offenses would be punished with a fine or up to 5 million rand (about $630,000) or five years in jail. The fines and jail time would be doubled for subsequent offenses.

Previously, it was inaccurately reported by several news outlets that meteorologists would be punished for issuing inaccurate forecasts. The proposed law, if passed, would affect weather outlets, including the SA Weather and Disaster Observation Service (SAWDOS), which relies on weather reports submitted by the public. SAWDOS was recently credited with issuing timely warnings for three storms that may have helped to mitigate property losses and damage.

Richard Gere attends his first Sundance Festival

PARK CITY, 22 Jan— Richard Gere once saw Utah from horseback while moving cattle, but his trip to the Sundance Film Festival to premiere “Arbitrage” is his first actual visit to the state.

The 62-year-old actor says it “sounds ridiculous,” but he was moving cattle when he first met his wife, Carey Lowell.

He was in Park City Saturday to promote “Arbitrage,” a thriller about the lure of money and power and how it affects one’s personal values.

The film stars Susan Sarandon, Nate Rock and Laetitia Casta. The Sundance Film Festival continues through 30 Jan.

Rap group 2 Live Crew to reunite, tour this summer

PARK CITY, 22 Jan— The rap group that created controversy in the early 1990s with songs like “Me So Horny” is reuniting and hitting the road.

Luther Campbell said Saturday that 2 Live Crew is back together and will tour this summer. The rapper and producer made the announcement at the Sundance Film Festival, where he is promoting his appearance in the short film “The Life and Times of Uncle Luke.”

The 51-year-old entertainer describes the offbeat film as “an art piece” that he did to help young filmmakers who were inspired by his hip-hop work. But his mind was on getting back with the old crew. “I just can’t wait to just start practicing,” he said. “That’s going to be a blast.”

So why be “As Nasty As They Wanna Be” the title of the group’s 1989 album that a judge deemed obscene, a ruling later overturned by the United States Court of Appeals?

Not really, Campbell said. — Internet

In this photo taken by AP Images for Fender Music Lodge, Luther Campbell is seen at the Fender Music Lodge during the 2012 Sundance Film Festival on 21 Jan, 2012 in Park City, Utah. — Internet
Blackburn holds Everton 1-1 in Premier League

London, 22 January— Blackburn dropped into the Premier League relegation zone on Saturday despite snatching a 1-1 draw at Everton thanks to David Goodwillie’s fortunate second-half equalizer.

An attempted goaline clearance by Australia midfielder Tim Cahill, who put Everton in front, hit Goodwillie flush in the chest and rebounded into the back of Everton’s net in the 72nd minute.

Cahill had headed the ball home from close range in the 24th for his first Everton goal in 13 months, although there was a suspicion of handling from Marouane Fellaini in the buildup.

Once Everton’s most reliable source of goals, Cahill hadn’t scored since netting in a 1-0 win over Manchester City in December 2010.

“I think he’s looked more likely to score in recent weeks. He’s been playing better and coming into a little bit of form,” Moyes said.—Internet

Tim Cahill’s clearance crushes David Goodwillie and into the net.

Totti breaks goal record as Juve go clear at top

Rome, 22 January— Francesco Totti set a new single-club scoring record in Serie A as Roma thrashed Cesena 5-1 on Saturday, while Juventus put daylight between themselves and the rest in a 2-0 success at Atalanta.

Club captain Totti scored twice inside the opening eight minutes. Oriano Fabio Borini, Juan and Miralem Pjanic scored the other goals, with Eder netting for Cesena, who remained rooted in the bottom three.

It meant the 35-year-old reached 211 top-flight league goals for the capital club, surpassing the 210 that Swedish goal machine Gunnar Nordahl managed for AC Milan more than 50 years ago.

“It’s what I’ve always wanted, to wear this shirt and beat this record,” Totti said.—Internet

AS Roma’s forward Francesco Totti (R) kicks the ball in front of Cesena defender Maurizio Lauro during their Italian Serie A football match at the Olympic stadium in Rome.—INTERNET

Lionheart Clijsters outstages Li at Australian Open tennis

Melbourne, 22 January— Defending champion Kim Clijsters battled back from a painful ankle injury to oust China’s Li Na in three thrilling sets Sunday as Rafael Nadal remained in clinical form at the Australian Open.

In an enthralling day at sun-drenched Melbourne Park, Czech player Tomas Berdych’s win over Nicolas Almagro was met with deafening boos, and Juan Martin del Potro, Victoria Azarenka and Agnieszka Radwanska all went through.

Belgium’s Clijsters looked on the verge of quitting when she rolled her left ankle in the first set, and despite gaining her teeth and playing on she looked down and out facing four match points in the second-set tiebreak.

But the despairing Li Clijsters saw all four, culminating in a brave drop-and-lob combination — and the Belgian took the set as she flustered Li netted, and then went long.

Kim Clijsters of Belgium wins over Li Na of China in the Australian Open women’s singles match against China’s Li Na on 22 January. —INTERNET

Heidar Helguson, Akos Buzsaky & Tommy Smith go on target to keep Latics rooted to foot of Premier League

London, 22 January— Mark Hughes enjoyed his first Premier League win at the helm of Queens Park Rangers with a comfortably 3-1 victory over the league’s basement club Wigan Athletic.

Goals from Heidar Helguson, Akos Buzsaky put the home side two in front in a scintillating first half performance. The first-time first Bolto have scored three goals in a league game against Liverpool since 1950.

was an appeal for a penalty after the ball brushed Zat Knight’s hand in the box but referee Kevin Friend was unimpressed with his impassioned pleas. This was the first time Bolton have scored three goals in a league game against Liverpool since 1950.

Tommy Smith then scored a wonder goal with 10 minutes left to gift Hughes’ men all three points.

Rangers were gifted the penalty when James McCarthy handled in the area and

Tommy Helguson converted the penalty.

Buzsaky fired home a stunning free-kick that went in off the post.

A Hugo Rodallega free-kick pulled a goal back for Wigan before Smith sealed the win with a long-range effort.—Internet

Bleasdale vaults into Olympics contention

London, 22 January— Britain’s Holly Bleasdale laid down an Olympic Games marker on Saturday when she went second on the all-time list of women’s indoor pole vault performers.

The 20-year-old leapt to 4.87 metres at meeting in Lyon with only world record holder Yelena Isinbayeva (5.06m) having gone higher indoors in the history of the sport.

And only Isinbayeva (5.06m), Jennifer Suhr and Svetafeofanova have bettered the mark outdoors.

The British girl had already cleaned 4.71m last month, but on Saturday she improved her own UK record by one centimetre with 4.72m and then raised the bar to 4.80m to regain the world-leading mark.

Bleasdale then progressed to 4.87m before failing at an optimistic 5.01m.

The British vaulter has improved rapidly this season after failing to achieve a single height in qualifying at last year’s outdoor world championships in Daegu. She is currently training in France alongside men’s European champion Renaud Lavilhan and is building towards the world indoor championships in Turkey in March.—Internet

Britain’s Holly Bleasdale, pictured here in 2010, laid down an Olympic Games marker on Saturday when she went second on the all-time list of women’s indoor pole vault performers.—INTERNET

It proved a dramatic tipping point as errors flowed from the racquet of French Open champion Li, who was broken immediately and then couldn’t claw her way back despite pleas from her coach and husband Jian Shang.

Li recovered to break at Clijsters served for the match but the Belgian made no mistake on her next service game, clinching a famous win on her second match point when the Chinese player netted.

“It has to be,” said a disbelieving Clijsters, when asked if it was her greatest comeback. “I can’t believe I won. I knew before the match it was going to be a tough match... but I didn’t expect this.”

The result was a carbon-copy of last year’s gripping finale when Li, as the first Chinese player in a grand slam singles title match, took the first set but then fell to pieces as Clijsters came roaring back.

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Wozniacki beats Jankovic to enter
Australian Open Quarterfinals

MELBOURNE, 22 Jan—Top seed and World No.1
Caroline Wozniacki survived mid-match jitters to beat
Serbian Jelena Jankovic and advance to the last eight of the
2012 Australian Open.

Danish superstar Caroline Wozniacki brushed aside
the Serbian challenge of Jelena Jankovic to advance to the
quarterfinals of the 2012 Australian Open, season’s first
Grand Slam event being played here in Melbourne, Australia.

Wozniacki opened the match on a scintillating note
and reeled off six games in a row to serve Jankovic a bagel.
Other winners of the day were third seeded Belarussian
Victoria Azarenka who breezed past Iveta Benesova 6-2,
6-2 and Pole Agnieszka Radwanska, who humbled German
Julia Goerges to make the final eight cut.—Internet

Traffic rules talked in
Kengtung

KENGUTUNG, 22 Jan—An educative talk on traffic rules
was given at Basic Education High School No. 2 in
Kengtung on 10 January.

Officials of Taunggyi and Kengtung traffic police
units and Kengtung Township Directorate of Road
Transport Administration explained car accidents in three
years and traffic accidents in Shan State with the use of projector.

Manchester City 3-2 Tottenham

Mario Balotelli nets stoppage-time penalty to
foil Spurs’ comeback in sensational second half
minutes later, scrambling in from a corner.
Spurs responded immediately as Jermain Defoe
capitalised on an error from Stefan Savic to beat Joe Hart
to the ball and pass home into an empty net. Moments later,
Gareth Bale looked to have completed the comeback for
the visitors with a fantastic strike from outside the area as
his left footed curler sailed into the bottom corner
give City the three points.
Roberto Mancini made one change to the team that
beat Wigan on Monday with the fit-again Micah Richards
replacing Pablo Zabaleta in the starting line-up while
Balotelli calmly slotted home the decisive penalty to
give City the points.
Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann receives US Senator Mr John Sidney McCain and party

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Jan—
Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann received a delegation led by US Senators Mr John Sidney McCain, Mr Joseph Isadore Lieberman, Mr Sheldon Whitehouse and Mrs Kelly Ann Ayotte at Zabuthiri Hall of Hluttaw Building here at 11.30 am today.

The US senators were accompanied by Charge d’Affaires ai of US Embassy to Myanmar Mr Michael E Thurston. They held discussions on further strengthening ties and friendship between the two countries and cooperation between the two parliaments in a cordial manner.—MNA

Union Minister for Information and for Culture U Kyaw Hsan presents prize to Maung Lwin Moe Aung of Bothtaung BEHS-6 in middle school level essay competitions.

MNA

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MNA

Winners in Development of School Libraries and Reading Habit Festival awarded

Patron of Myanmar Libraries Foundation Union Minister for Information and for Culture U Kyaw Hsan addressed prize-presentation ceremony of the festival.

The ceremony was also attended by Yangon Region Minister for Finance and Revenue Daw San San Nwe, departmental heads, officials, members of social organizations, departmental personnel, headmasters and headmistresses, students, parents and invited guests. Schoolchildren opened the ceremony with a song.

The Union minister in his speech said MLF is initiating school-based programmes for cultivating reading habit of people and students and will continue to do the same in many townships of Regions and States. Youths are strength of the future nation, he said. He urged youths to master academic subjects, emphasizing three points—to get down to further reading, to instil themselves good morals since young, to build up physical and mental fitness, and to extend social sphere, to develop knowledge to intelligence, through innovation to be able to serve the interests of the country and to cultivate nationalistic fervour. Efforts for establishing self-reliant libraries and providing assistance to libraries to meet five standards for their endurance are being carried out, he went on.

He underscored the need to cooperate in the stride by the entire people as development of libraries and reading habit is a national responsibility in the interest of the State and the people.

Chairman of Myanmar Libraries Foundation U Maung Maung explained about formation, aims, duties, and works of the foundation.

The Union minister then presented prizes to winners in essay, extempore and poem reading contests.

The Union minister accepted donations of stationery, cash and publications for six BEHSs in Bothtaung Township from Eleven BEHSs in Bothtaung Township from Eleven Media Group, Seikku Cho Cho Publishing House, U Hla Tun Aung (Maung Maung Tun Aung-Health), Pyinnya Shwetaung Publishing House, U Maung Myo (Maung Myo Two Cats Publishing House).

(See page 9)