Vietnam to invest in Hoang Anh Gia Lai Myanmar Centre project

Hoang Anh Gia Lai Myanmar Centre will include hotel rooms, conference rooms and others, business centre with shopping malls and sale centres, restaurants and recreation centre, offices and apartments.

The phase one of the construction project is set to complete in 2015 and phase two in 2017. The project is aimed to contribute to development of tourism sector in Yangon, commercial hub of the country. — MNA

By: Moe Thuza Soe

U Kyaw Zaw Naing.

The bored pile-type bridge is 2000 feet long including the length of its approach roads. It can withstand 75 tons load, and its water clearance is 82 feet in width and, 10 feet and six inches in height.

MNA

New Ngamoyeik (Parami) Bridge put into service

Yangon, 19 Dec—

New Ngamoyeik (Parami) Bridge was inaugurated at the pavilion on Parami Road in Dagon Myothit (North) Township, here, this morning.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe spoke on the occasion.

Afterwards, Yangon Region Development Minister U Hla Myint reported to the Chief Minister on the construction work.

Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint, Region Minister for Forestry and Energy U Kyaw Soe and Region Minister for Planning and Economy U Than Myint formally opened the bridge. Soon after the chief minister had unveiled the stone inscription of the bridge, he strolled along the bridge.

The bored pile-type bridge is 2000 feet long including the length of its approach roads. It can withstand 75 tons load, and its water clearance is 82 feet in width and, 10 feet and six inches in height.

MNA

Public service newspapers to prioritize “prestige and profit”

The state-owned newspapers are embracing the change with attempts to adjust themselves to reforms as public service media. Governing body of the government-run papers Myanma Alinn, Kyemon and The New Light of Myanmar Dailies has been formed. To explore which measures the governing body is taking, The Myanmar Dailies has been published.

Myint Pe and U Kyaw Zaw Naing. Here is the excerpt:-

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Myint Pe and U Kyaw Zaw Naing.
Mobile book-borrowing system introduced to students in Mandalay

Mandalay, 19 Dec — Mobile book-borrowing system was introduced to teachers and students of Basic Education High School No. (29) in Pygyidagun Township of Mandalay on 14 December.

With the aim of cultivating reading habit of local people, book corners are being kept open at bus terminals, railway stations and airports in States and Regions and book shows are occasionally organized by Information and Public Relations Department. Mobile book-borrowing system is aimed at accelerating the habit of borrowing books from the library among the students, thereby contributing to broadening their horizons.

Moreover, poem and essay contests, and story-narration competitions are being organized in libraries of district IPRDs.

Roofing for Mandalay football stadium in preparation

Mandalay, 19 Dec — So far, construction of stands has been completed for the football stadium being built by Max Myanmar Construction Company in Mandalay. Plans are underway to fix the roofs of the stadium where women football matches will be held in XXVII SEA Games.

The stadium is being constructed on the area of 89.09 acres on Thazin and Ngwah streets between 68th and 73rd streets in Chammyathazi Township of Mandalay. The stadium with an area of 288,282 square feet is 80 feet high and it has a football ground with an area of 76,826 square feet and a 1408-foot long and 32-foot wide running track between the stands and the football ground.

Nearly 1500 local and foreign workers are striving for timely completion of construction works, meeting 102nd Corp in the compound of Paukchaung monastery in Meiktila in 1982. Besides, a Japan-Myanmar Friendship stone pillar, a prayer hall and a pagoda were also built there. Japanese bone collecting teams and Japanese visitors went to these two places to hold memorial services while they were in Meiktila.

Kyemon

Monuments for fallen Japanese soldiers in WW II

Meiktila, 19 Dec — Meiktila was ruled by Japanese army with more than 200,000 troops during the period from 1942 to 1945. Hundreds of Japanese soldier were killed while the town was under heavy bombardment of British and Allied Forces. In 1970, a Japanese bone collecting team visited villages in Meiktila. The team collected the bones of fallen Japanese soldiers with the help of a map and organized memorial services for them.

The team set up a monuments in commemoration of fallen soldiers in the compound of Shwekyuau monastery in Paukchaung ward in Meiktila in 1972. The stone inscription set standard day in, day out under the supervision of engineers.

Kyemon

Twelve houses reduced to ashes in Dagon Myothit (South) Tsp

Yangon, 19 Dec — A fire broke out at a house on Tharaphi street in Dagon Myothit (South) Township of Yangon East District at 1:45 am on 16 December.

A fire started from the kitchen of the house. Thanks to collaborative efforts of firefighters and local people accompanied by 14 fire engines and administrative vehicles, the fire was under control at about 2 am.

Twelve houses were reduced to ashes in the that rendered fire 79 people of 14 households homeless.

A temporary relief camp is being kept open for the fire victims who are being provided with health care and relief supplies.

Kyemon

MCPA to hold AGM on 29 December

Yangon, 19 Dec — Myanmar Certified Public Accountants Association will organize its 8th annual general meeting at Yangon Training Centre at No (1/19), Office of Auditor-General of the Union on Thakhin Mya Garden Street, here, at 9 am on 29 December.

As election of new executive members will be held at the meeting, members of the association are invited to attend the meeting without fail. Those wishing to be executives of the association are to attend the preliminary meeting to be held at the same venue at 1.30 pm on 22 December.

MNA

Talks on solar system given in Dawei

Dawei, 19 Dec — With the aim of increasing the public awareness of solar power, renewable energy that can contribute towards environmental conservation, London- and Berlin-based Relitec Co., Ltd conducted a talk on solar system at Padaetha Photo Lab in Dawei on 15 December.

Director Mr. Richard Schlicht and U Than Aye of the company explained how to apply solar system for household and commercial use through visual aids. Businessmen who are dealing with electrical appliances and electronics and local people packed into the lab to take part in the talks. The solar system has been installed at the Padaetha Photo Lab in Dawei and it cost US$80,000 (about K 68 million) for initial installation.

Kyemon

Makeshift bridges emerge along Sittoung river

Yedashe, 19 Dec — When Sittoung river waters receded in the second week of December, makeshift bridges have emerged in some parts of the region along the river for the convenience of local people who live on the east bank and west bank of the river in their health, education, social and economic matters.

“We face long delays in crossing the river by boat and crossing the river in a boat is dangerous at night”, a local said. Makeshift bridges enable local people to transport their agriculture produce to other parts of the region.

Kyemon
US, British leaders discuss hot-button issues

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec—US President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron on Tuesday discussed a number of hot-button issues including Syria, Afghanista-n and Iran.

In their video confer- ence, the two leaders ex- pressed “concern” about the continuing violence in Syr- ia, where conflict between the government and opposi- tion forces has entered its 21st month without signs of abating.

Obama warned once again the Syrian govern- ment against using chemi- cal weapons in the conflict and urged the government to secure the deadly weap- ons, the White House said.

On Afghanistan, the two leaders focused on negotiations of a US-Af- ganistan bilateral security agreement, as American and NATO forces will withdraw most of their combat troops from the Asian na- tion by the end of 2014.

“They agreed on the need to find a way forward on Middle East peace that stops the cycle of counter- productive unilateral ac- tions by the Israelis and Palestinians, and brings the parties back to the negoti- ating table,” the White House said in a statement.

The Palestinians won an upgraded status of non- member observer state through the UN General Assembly late last month despite vehement opposi- tion from the US and Israel, while Israel has reacted by unveiling plans to build more houses in settlements in east Jerusalem and the West Bank, making the prospect of renewed direct talks ever more remote.

“All, the two lead- ers agreed on the need to continue implementing sanctions, which are hav- ing an important effect, while pursuing diplomatic engagement to resolve the international community’s concerns about Iran’s nu- clear programme,” the White House said.

The Obama adminis- tration set a March deadline late last month for Iran to begin “substantive coopera- tion” with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) over its nuclear programme or face the UN Security Council.

Iran had one-day talks last week with IAEA ex- perts in its capital of Tehe- ran, the first since August, which the Islamic republic described as “constructive.”

Bomb alert prompts planes’ evacuation in Paris Airport

PARIS, 19 Dec—A Turk- ish Pegasus passenger plane was evacuated on Tuesday at Paris’ Orly airport due to a bomb alert, the daily Le Par- isien reported.

The 146 persons were evacuated at 2:15 pm local time (1315 GMT) following an anonymous threatening phone call to the Embassy of France in Turkey.

“The aircraft was towed to a specific zone in the air- port where it will be inspect- ed by a team of dog han- dlers,” Le Parisien quoted a close source to the affair as saying.

France has been under- high risk of terrorist attack as response to its military and political support to tackle Is- lamist insurgents in Afghan- grid and the Sahel region.

Kurdish troops fire on Iraqi army helicopter in dispute

BAGHDAD, 19 Dec—Troops from Iraq’s autono- mous Kurdistan opened fire on an Iraqi army heli- copter on Tuesday, under- scoring tensions between Baghdad’s Arab-led central government and the Kurdish region, officials said. Iraq’s government and self-ruled Kurdistan last month both sent troops from their respective ar- mies to reinforce positions around towns in disputed areas where they both claim control as part of a broader feud over oil and territory.

Kurdish Peshmerga officials said on Tuesday they fired on an Iraqi mili- tary helicopter near S Kirkuk, to keep the aircraft from taking surveillance pictures of their military positions.

“We opened fire at an Iraqi military helicopter fly- ing over our forces,” said Anwar Ohman, deputy minister for Kurdish mili- tary affairs. “This is a clear message that next time our response will be tougher.”

A local mayor in the area confirmed the incident. But there was no immediate response from the Iraqi cen- tral government. The grow- ing rift between Baghdad and Kurdistan is the most challeng- ing test to Iraq’s federal unity since the last American troops left a year ago, removing a buffer of US military presence from an area long seen as a flash- point for conflict.

News of the clash came just hours after authorities announced Iraq’s President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, had been hospitalized following a stroke that had left him in a critical but stable condition.

A veteran Kurdish poli- tician, Talabani has been a key mediator between Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki’s central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government who are grow- ing further apart over how to control oil wealth and the disputed territories between their two regions.

Iraqi armed forces and Kurdish Peshmerga have faced off before only to back off before any major confrontation and US offi- cials have been in talks with both regions to try to ease tensions between them.

The ethnically mixed, disputed areas are a swath of “land separating Iraq from the territory admin- istered by ethnic Kurds in the north, and they include the sensitive city of Kirkuk, which sits atop some of the world’s largest oil reserves.

Solders stand on Yi Yang, one of the three visiting Chinese navy ships, upon their arrival in Sydney, Australia, on 18 Dec, 2012. Three Chinese navy ships returning home from counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden have arrived in Sydney as part of a four day port visit, local media reported on Tuesday.

Reuters

Honduras congress passes law to purge police corruption

TEGUCIGALPA, 19 Dec—Honduras’ congress passed a law on Tuesday to purge the police of corrup- tion, a victory for the ruling Liberal party and President Porfirio Lobo after a recent conflict with the Central American country’s highest court.

The law will require officers to undertake lie de- tector tests, drug screening and a probe of their per- sonal wealth to determine if they can remain in the po- lice force. According to the United Nations, Honduras has the highest per capi- tain homicide rate in the world, with 86 murders for every 100,000 inhabitants.

This initiative was declared unconstitutional by four Supreme Court judges last month, prompt- ing lawmakers to dismiss the justices and name their replacements on 12 De- cember. Alfredo Saavedra, the head of the opposition Liberal Party, said the dismis- sals of the judges was “a blow to democracy” and that it undermined the inde- pendence of the court.

Lobo had accused the judges of attacking institu- tions amid his growing be- lief there is a conspiracy to remove him from office in a coup similar to the ouster of former President Manuel Zelaya in June 2009, which plunged the country into a political crisis for months.

Reuters

UN condemns deadly attacks on health workers in Pakistan

UNITED NATIONS, 19 Dec—UN Secretary-Gen- eral Ban Ki-moon and two UN agencies on Tuesday condemned the “senseless and inexcusable” killing of at least six people work- ing on a polio vaccination campaign in Pakistan in the past 24 hours, a UN spokes- man said here.

“The secre- tary-general joins the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF (the UN Chil- dren’s Fund) in condemning these senseless and inexcus- able attacks on health work- ers,” Martin Nesirky said at a daily news briefing.

The secretary-general would meet on Tuesday with the Pakistan perma- nent representative to the UN, Masood Khan, who will take over the rotating presidency of the Secu- rity Council next month. Despite growing tensions amid his growing be- lief there is a conspiracy to remove him from office in a coup similar to the ouster of former President Manuel Zelaya in June 2009, which plunged the country into a political crisis for months.

Wang Chen (C), director of China’s State Council Infor- mation Office, speaks handshakes with a guest during the New Year reception held by the China’s State Council Infor- mation Office in Beijing, capital of China, on 18 Dec, 2012.

Xinhua

A specialist group of Chinese Communist Party (CPC) (R) promote the spirit of the 18th CPC National Congres- ses in Moscow, Russia, on 17 Dec, 2012. The specialist- ist group of Chinese Communist Party held meetings with the United Russia Party and Russian Communist Party here on Monday, publicizing the spirit of the 18th CPC National Congress.

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Xinhua

UN, Masood Khan, who will take over the rotating presidency of the Security Council, said in a statement.

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Xinhua

FCC to delay Google anti-trust probe decision

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec—The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which had been expected to wrap up an anti-trust probe into Google within days, will now delay its decision for weeks, a source said on Tuesday.

Google has been accused of giving competitors in lucrative areas like travel a lower ranking in search results, thus making it harder for them to find them. Google has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

The agency’s antitrust chief, Joaquin Almunia, gave Google a month to come up with detailed plans to resolve the two-year investigation before deciding to take legal action against it. Google’s critics have accused the giant on Tuesday in a parallel investigation into the Google’s corporate policies.

The European Commission has been examining informal settlement proposals from Google since July but has not sought feedback from the complainants, suggesting it is not convinced by what Google has put on the table so far.

Google’s critics have accused it of a long list of wrongdoing—everything from putting its own products high up in search results to bringing them business to “scraping” reviews of hotels and restaurants from other sites for its own products.

Google has reportedly been prepared to make some changes to its business practices to secure an FTC investigation but had balked at allowing regulators to interfere with its search algorithm. The company was also apparently prepared to make concessions on certain patent infringement lawsuits.

US reaches e-books settlement with Penguin

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec—The Justice Department said on Tuesday it has reached a settlement with Penguin Plc’s Penguin Group in the government’s investigation of alleged price-setting in the e-book market.

The Justice Department had accused Apple and five publishers in April of illegally colluding on prices as part of an effort to fight Internet retailer Amazon.com Inc’s dominance of e-books. Apple is accused of convincing the five publishers to use the “agency model,” that allows publishers to set the price of e-books, and in turn Apple would take a 30 percent cut. Hachette, HarperCollins and Simon & Schuster opted to settle with the Justice Department in April but Apple, Penguin and MacMillan said they would fight the allegations.


Under the terms of the settlement announced on Tuesday, Penguin will drop any agreements with Apple and other ebook sellers that prevents price discounting and it will not be allowed to reinstate the deals for two years.

The settlement terms were similar to ones that the Justice Department reached with other three publishers in April. The impetus for the settlement could well be a joint venture of Penguin and Random House announced in October by Penguin owner Pearson’s and Random House owner Bertelsmann.

Instagram tests new limits in user privacy

SAN FRANCISCO, 19 Dec—Instagram, which sparked suspicions this week that it would sell user photos after revising its terms of service, has sparked renewed debate about how much control over personal data users must give up to live and participate in a world steeped in social media.

In forcefully establishing a new set of usage terms, Instagram, the massively popular photo-sharing service owned by Facebook Inc, has claimed some rights that have been practically unheard of among its prominent social media peers, legal experts and consumer advocates say.

Users who decline to accept Instagram’s new privacy policy have one month to delete their accounts, or they will be bound by the new terms. Another clause appears to waive the rights of minors on the service.

And in the wake of a class-action settlement involving Facebook and privacy issues, Instagram has added terms to shield itself from similar litigation. All told, the revised terms reflect a new, draconian grip over user rights, experts say. “This is all uncharted territory,” said Jay Edelson, a partner at the Chicago law firm Edelson & Partners.

“If Instagram is to encourage as many lawsuits as possible and as much backlash as possible then they succeeded.” Instagram’s new policies, which went into effect January 16, lay the groundwork for companies to begin generating advertising revenue by giving marketers the right to display profile pictures and other personal information such as who users follow in advertisements.

The new terms, which allow an advertiser to pay Instagram “to display your username, likeness, photos (along with any associated metadata)” without compensation, triggered an outburst of complaints on the Web on Tuesday from users upset that Instagram would make money from their uploaded content.

The uproar prompted a lengthy blog post from the company to “clarify” the changes, with CEO Kevin Systrom saying the company had no current plans to incorporate photos taken by users into ads. Instagram declined comment beyond its blog post, which failed to appease critics including National Geographic, which suspended new posts to Instagram. “We are very concerned with the direction of the proposed new terms of service and if they remain as presented we may close our account,” said National Geographic, an early Instagram adopter.

Consumer advocates said Facebook was using Instagram’s aggressive new terms to push the boundaries of how social media sites can make money while its own hands were tied by recent agreements with regulators and class action plaintiffs.

ITC judge sides with Apple against Google on phone patent

SAN FRANCISCO, 19 Dec—Google’s Motorola Mobility unit cannot assert a patent against Apple Inc which covers a sensor that stops phone users from dialing wrong numbers on touchscreen devices, a US trade judge ruled.

In an entry on the US International Trade Commission docket on Tuesday, Administrative Law Judge Thomas Pender ruled the Motorola patent invalid.

“A Google trademark is reflected in Apple logo in this photo illustration taken in Berlin, on 31 August, 2012. REUTERS

“We’re disappointed with this outcome and are evaluating our options,” a Motorola spokeswoman Jennifer Weyrauch-Erickson said. An Apple spokeswoman declined to comment. Apple has been litigating around the world against various manufacturers of products that operate on Google’s Android operating system.

Google acquired Motorola Mobility for $12.5 billion this year, partly for its library of telecomms patents. The ITC, a US trade panel that investigates patent infringement involving imported goods, is a popular venue for patent lawsuits because it can bar the importation of infringing products and because it issues decisions relatively quickly.

Pender ruled that Apple had not violated three other Motorola patents, and ordered Pender to further examine the touchscreen sensor patent. The full ITC will now review Pender’s latest ruling.

Asian shares, euro rise on hopes of US “cliff” deal, BOJ easing

SINGAPORE, 19 Dec—Asian shares rose and the euro hit multi-month highs on Wednesday as signs of progress in resolving the US “fiscal cliff” budget crisis and expectations of more aggressive monetary stimulus from the Bank of Japan lifted riskier assets.

The gains in Asia came after Wall Street’s $500 rose more than 1 percent, completing its best two-day run in a month, on growing confidence a deal can be reached in Washington to avoid a raft of painful spending cuts and tax rises due to take effect from January, where no budget agreement.

“What is important, and what is driving the market higher, is that the two parties are now in constructive discussions over specific tax levels and spending programmes, and working towards a common middle ground,” said Cameron Peacock, a strategist at IG Markets in Melbourne.

Industrials commodities such as oil and copper consolidated earlier gains, while gold recovered some lost ground but remained not far above its lowest in nearly four months as progress in the US budget talks limited its safe-haven appeal.

Tokyo’s Nikkei share average rose 1.3 percent, topping 10,000 points for the first time since April, as the Bank of Japan (BOJ) was starting a two-day policy meeting.

The BOJ will ease monetary policy and consider adopting a 2 percent inflation target in January, double its current price goal, sources say, after pressure from the incoming prime minister, Shinzo Abe, for stronger efforts to beat deflation.

“The market is already in overbought territory, but investors are increasingly being alarmed that there is a risk of not having Japanese stocks in their portfolios,” said Hiroyuki Ishiyama, chief strategist at SMBC Nikko Securities. Australian shares rose to a 17-month high, led by miners and banks.MSCI’s broadest index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan gained 0.3 percent, while S&P 500 futures were flat.

The euro rose as far as $1.3250 on electronic trading platforms, its highest since late 2011, and against the yen it fetched 98.87 yen, its highest since late August 2011.

Unless US fiscal cliff talks take an unexpected turn for the worse, we believe that EUR/USD will meet our 1.3300 year-end target,” analysts at BNP Paribas wrote in a note.

Oil held steady, with Brent crude rising a few cents to around $108.88 a barrel and US crude barely changed just below $88.

“There is more upside potential for Brent because of the current backwardation in the overall economic outlook,” said Yusuke Seta, a commodities sales manager at Newedge Japan.—Reuters

US slaps duties on China wind towers, high-level talks begin

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec—The United States on Tuesday pressed forward with plans to slap steep punitive duties on wind turbine towers imported from China at prices deemed unfairly low, even as officials welcomed a high-level Chinese delegation for trade and economic talks.

The US Commerce Department set final anti-dumping duties ranging from 44.99 to 70.63 percent on utility-scale towers manufactured in China and additional countervailing duties of 23.86 to 34.81 percent to combat Chinese government subsidies.

The department also slapped final anti-dumping duties of 51.40 to 58.49 percent on wind towers from Vietnam.

A US trade panel has final approval over the duties and is expected to vote on the case in late January.

The action was the latest clash between the two countries over US imports of green technology from China.

It came as a Chinese delegation led by Vice Premier Wang Qishan was in Washington for the US-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade meeting, a high-level bilateral forum to address barriers to trade and investment.

Wang will attend a dinner on Tuesday evening hosted by US Trade Representative Ron Kirk and Acting Commerce Secretary Rebecca Blank and is expected to meet with US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner on Thursday morning.—Reuters

Toyota to target production of 9.9 million units in 2013

The Toyota logo is pictured on a Toyota car in Tokyo on 9 May, 2012.—Reuters

TOKYO, 19 Dec—Toyota Motor Corp (7203.T) will keep its global output target for 2013 nearly unchanged from this year at 9.9 million vehicles despite a production cut at home, the Nikkei reported.

The leading Japanese automaker aims to produce 5.6 million Toyota and Lexus brands outside Japan next year, up more than 6 percent from its 2012 target, the business daily said.

In Japan, it will manufacture 3.1 million vehicles, down 10 percent from this year’s target, the daily said.

The remainder of the company’s production will come from its subsidiaries Daihatsu Motor Co (7262.T) and Hino Motors Ltd (7205.T).

Toyota also cut its Japanese sales target to 1.36 million units for next year, down about 20 percent from its projection for this year, the Japanese daily reported.

The Japanese new-car market is expected to shrink in 2013 because subsides for environmentally friendly vehicles have expired, the paper added. The company’s global group sales will likely reach a record 9.7 million units for 2012, beating the 9.37 million units sold in 2007, the daily said, and make Toyota the world’s No 1 automaker. It was No 3 in 2011.—Reuters

Nissan to build new Infiniti model in Britain from 2015

TOKYO, 19 Dec—Japanese carmaker Nissan (7201.T) will invest around $250 million pounds to build a new version of its Infiniti luxury brand in Sunderland, northeast England, from 2015, creating 1,000 jobs.

Sunderland, which will be able to build 60,000 of the new “Etherea” model are Britain’s largest car plant and one of the most productive in Europe.

Infiniti brand cars are currently made exclusively in Japan, but Nissan said on Wednesday.

Britain’s largely foreign-owned car industry has been resilient compared with the rest of Europe where the car market has slumped to 20-year lows in the face of the euro zone crisis.

It has also been a relative bright spot in domestic manufacturing, attracting investment from abroad while other areas have seen a decline.

Nissan had said on Tuesday it expected the global premium car market to grow 8 percent next year as strong US demand offsets flat western European sales. —Reuters

States scramble to cover Medicaid costs, some face overruns

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec—Rising healthcare costs are pushing up the amounts states must spend on the Medicaid insurance programme for the poor, sending some scrambling to find funds, according to a report released on Tuesday by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The report found that spending on Medicaid and other public healthcare programmes is currently over budget in 10 states, compared to six states at the same point last year. In contrast, only five states have projected budget deficits, which has traditionally taken up most spending, is over budget.

Medicaid is operated by the 50 states with partial reimbursements from the federal government and it can take up to a third of a state’s budget. In fiscal 2012, it consumed 24 percent of total state spending.

When the 2007-09 recession struck, the newly jobless and homeless turned to the programme for healthcare, with annual enrollment growth peaking at 7.8 percent. The Legislature has slowed but not abated — the National Governors Association and National Association of State Budget Officers recently reported enrolment likely grew 3.2 percent in fiscal 2012, which ended in June for most states, from the year before.

In Texas alone the programme is underfunded by $4.3 billion for the 2012-2013 biennium, according to the NCSL. West Virginia, meanwhile, must find $180 million more for it in fiscal 2013. Iowa faces an estimated $61 million Medicaid shortfall it will address in its upcoming legislative session and Georgia has a deficit, as well.

The Conference, which represents members of statehouses from across the country, found that Maine’s Medicaid spending continues to increase despite declining caseloads. The shortfall caught Maine by surprise: the state had projected spending on the program to drop, but costs have shot up.

Nevada says a larger number of caseloads than expected accompanied by rising costs drove up its Medicaid expenditures, creating a shortfall. In nearby California, the Medicaid overspending includes its Children’s Health Insurance Programme.—Reuters

Dollar trades at lower 84 yen level in early Tokyo deals

TOKYO, 19 Dec—The US dollar traded in the lower 84 yen range early on Wednesday morning in Tokyo.

At 9 am, the dollar was quoted at 84.31-39 yen compared with 84.15-25 yen in New York and 83.95-96 yen in Tokyo at 5 pm on Tuesday.—Reuters

A logo of Infiniti, carmaker Nissan’s luxury division, is displayed on an Infiniti car during the opening of the Nissan global head office in Hong Kong on 22 May, 2012.—Reuters

The euro fetched 1.3282-3232 dollars and 111.54-62 yen against 1.3233-3333 dollars and 111.34-44 yen in New York and 1.3165-3166 dollars and 110.52-56 yen in Tokyo late Tuesday afternoon.—Reuters

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UN-AL envoy to Syria meets senior officials in Cairo

CAIRO, 19 Dec— UN-Arab League (AL) special envoy to Syria Lakhdar Brahimi held talks on Tuesday with AL Secretary-General Nabih al-Abri and Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr on the latest developments in Syria.
Brahimi started his talks at the AL headquarters in Cairo where he briefed Arabi on the results of his recent contacts with the parties of the Syrian crisis, his recent talks with Russian and American officials in Geneva, as well as his meetings with a number of European prime ministers.

Afterwards, the special envoy to Syria held a meeting with Amr where the two discussed the necessary efforts to enhance humanitarian aid for the Syrian people and to put an end to the ongoing bloodshed in Syria, according to a statement issued by Egypt’s Foreign Ministry after the meeting.

The situation in Syria continued to deteriorate these days, as blasts and incessant military showdown across the country have plagued people’s daily life.

New security chief stresses social justice, security

BEIJING, 19 Dec— Meng Jianzhu, a senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC), has called on law enforcement and judicial authorities to actively respond to the public’s expectations of greater social justice and security.

Meng replaced Zhou Yongkang as secretary of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the CPC Central Committee in mid-November. In a speech delivered to the commission’s first plenary meeting on Monday, Meng urged more efforts in promoting social justice, social security and a fine work style of officials to meet the public’s expectations, according to a press release issued on Tuesday. Authorities must enhance supervision over, and the transparency of, their work, and they must boost their capabilities in social communications in the new media era, said Meng, also a state councillor and a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee.

Crime crackdown created more drug cartels: top Mexican official

MEXICO CITY, 19 Dec— The fracturing of Mexico’s criminal establishment in the government-led crackdown on drug traffickers created between 60 and 80 new cartels, the nation’s attorney general said on Tuesday, far more than were active six years ago.

Speaking on Mexican radio, Attorney General Jesus Murillo said former President Felipe Calderon’s efforts to stamp out drug trafficking and go after the kingpins had splintered the gangs, spawning many smaller criminal syndicates.

“I would calculate there are between 60 and 80 (new cartels), both medium-sized and small,” Murillo said.

The Sinaloa Cartel of Joaquin “Shorty” Guzman and the Zetas gang are arguably the two biggest organized crime groups in Mexico, though a number of lesser ones are strong in some areas and certain cities like Acapulco are home to many small gangs.

When Calderon, whose six-year term ended on 30 November, took office, about 10 cartels were operating in Mexico; four large, and six smaller ones, according to a consultancy Risk Evaluation.

Murillo estimated about 70,000 people died in drug-related violence under Calderon, with roughly 9,000 bodies unidentified.

“(Calderon) tried to confront the situation with emergency responses ... but this caused things to break down brutally and they got really out of control,” the attorney general said.

Calderon’s forces arrested or killed dozens of drug lords in his struggle against the gangs, but that military-led offensive led to more violence, kidnappings and a spiraling death toll.

Mexico’s new president, Enrique Pena Nieto, won election pledges to restore stability to the country, and on Monday he laid out his plans for reducing the violence.—Xinhua

Florida man plotted New York terror attack, prosecutors say

NEW YORK, 19 Dec— A Pakistani-born man plotted to detonate a bomb in New York City to avenge the deaths of people killed by drone attacks in Afghanistan but failed to raise enough money to carry out the scheme, a federal prosecutor said on Tuesday.

Raees Alam Qazi, 20, was arrested along with his brother, Sheheryar Alam Qazi, 30, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on 29 November. The brothers, both naturalized US citizens, are charged with providing support to terrorists and conspiring to use a weapon of mass destruction.

Both have pleaded not guilty.

On Tuesday, prosecutors offered the latest details about the alleged plot during a bail hearing in federal court.

Raees Alam Qazi traveled to New York from his home in Florida on 23 November with the hope of finding a job to make enough money to build an explosive, according to testimony from FBI Special Agent Kristine Holden.

The younger Qazi told investigators after his arrest that he rode home round New York on a bike looking for targets but never chose one and returned home four days later after running out of money, prosecutor Karen Gilbert said.

Qazi, who spent his time in New York sleeping in a restaurant, a mosque and on public transportation, was arrested two days after he traveled home on a Greyhound bus.

His brother, a taxi cab driver, was described by prosecutors and investigators as aware of the possible attack, but they said Raees Alam Qazi intended to carry it out. “The brother was supporting him, paying bills, providing a computer and a cellphone,” Gilbert said.

Sources of persistent sheen in Gulf of Mexico remain unknown: U.S. officials

HOUSTON, 19 Dec— The US Coast Guard said on Tuesday that underwater inspections at the site of BP’s 2010 rig explosion have failed to identify the sources of a persistent sheen on the surface of the Gulf of Mexico.

Meanwhile, it said that recent inspections confirmed BP’s Macondo well is secure and not leaking any oil, according to a report on the website of The Houston Chronicle.

The Coast Guard said that remote-operated vehicles investigating the sheen concluded operation on Saturday, and that no sources of leaking oil were identified.

However, investigators collected samples of a white, cloudy substance that appeared to be coming from several areas near the rig wreckage. The substance is not believed to be oil, said the report.

A prior sheen was reported on 16 Sept in waters near the site of the 2010 spill. It was later determined to have originated from a steel containment dome that was used in the early stages of the response in the 2010 spill to trap oil and methane hydrates from a leaking drill pipe in an attempt to funnel it to the surface.

A cap and plug were successfully put in place and a containment dome that was used from several areas near the containment dome have been observed, the Coast Guard said later.

Performers from St. Petersburg Ballet Theatre of Russia perform dance drama “Swan Lake” in Yinchuan City, capital of northwest China’s Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on 18 Dec, 2012. —Xinhua

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Mexico’s new president, Enrique Pena Nieto, won election pledges to restore stability to the country, and on Monday he laid out his plans for reducing the violence.—Reuters

President of European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso addresses the opening ceremony of European Children of Peace initiative and the EU Nobel Peace Prize Exhibition at EU headquarters in Brussels, capital of Belgium, on 18 Dec, 2012. The European Commission has formally accepted the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize money on behalf of the European Union and decided to top up the approximate 930,000 to 2 million Euro as a fund for “EU Children of Peace” initiative, which supports projects for children exposed to the ravages of war and conflicts worldwide.—Xinhua

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**New Light of Myanmar**

**LOCAL NEWS**

**New harvest ceremony held in Kyaukme of Shan State**

KYAUKME, 19 Dec—Shan new year and new harvest ceremony was held at Sakhattha, Ponpoe, Mongin, Nawngpein, Kywegen, Chaungcchauk, Nakhaw and other village tracts in Kyaukme Township of Shan State (North) on 14 December.

In commemoration of New Year to 2107 Shan Era, meals of new harvested paddy were offered to members of the Sangha and respects paid to older persons.

Next, Shan traditional festivals of Ozi, Toenaya, Keinnayi and Keinnaya dances were presented on a grand scale to the local people.

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**BGG golf tourney on 30 Dec**

YANGON, 19 Dec—BGG will hold the 6th cold season Bayinnaung family golf tourney at Punthaing Golf Course in Hlinethaya Township on 30 December morning.

Those wishing to take part in the tourney are to enlist at Chairman U Khin Han, Tel: 09-614700, Vice-Chairman U Soe Min, Tel: 09-5021372, Secretary U Soe Maung Zin, Tel: 09-73224614 and Joint Secretary U Nay Lin, Tel: 09-7301466, with entrance fee, not later than 23 December.

The golf tournament will be held with the funfairs for the town on 30 December.

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**News on 3G phone cold sales of mobile phone market**

YANGON, 19 Dec—Due to news that low-cost 3G mobile phones will soon be sold, sales of K 200,000-GSM mobile phones are cold at some mobile phone sales centres.

Although the price of new mobile phones to be sold by Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications is still unknown, some mobile phone shops reduce the SIM cards worth K200,000 to K155,000.

“Our shop sells SIM cards worth K 155,000 in wholesales and K 160,000 in retailed sales,” said a person from the mobile phone shop near Hledan Bus-stop on Yangon-Insein Road.

Mobile telephones are being sold at discount as of 10 December.

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**Free English proficiency course concludes**

YANGON, 19 Dec—Under the leadership of Myanmar Theravada Buddhist Federation and Border and Hilly Region Sasana Nuggaha Association and under the supervision of Yangon Region Sasana Nuggaha Association, the free English proficiency course, conducted by Yangon West District Sasana Nuggaha Association, concluded at Kalewa Taewa monastery in Mayangon Township on 15 December morning, with a speech by Chairman of the association Agga Maha Srisrisudhamma Manijotadhara Wunna Kyawhtin Dr Khin Shwe.

Course instructor Daw Sandi Cho spoke words of thanks and explained the future tasks of the course.

Vice-Chairman of the federation and association U Kyaw Khin Myint, responsible persons and course instructors presented prizes to outstanding trainees.

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**Drought in Katha may reduce paddy production**

KATHA, 19 Dec—Harvesting of paddy commenced in villages of Katha Township in Sagaing Region as of early December.

A farmer from Katha Township said, “I don’t know where this year will be bad for farmers because we all faced climate change in the region. Some of farmlands were damaged due to lack of water so paddy plants became dry. In consequence, paddy production may decline.”

This year, the upper Sagaing Region suffered drought. In this case, paddy plantations of Katha, Indawgau, Kawlin townships and Mawlu region missed the change of water supply in time. Thus, these townships will not meet target of paddy production.

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**Loikaw Township has formed cooperative societies in 10 villages**

LOIKAW, 19 Dec—Kaymeed G. Agriculture and General Cooperative Society was constituted with seven executives and 75 members in Nankuk village of Chike Village-tract of Loikaw Township in Kayah State on 12 December.

Likewise, Nankuk Livestock Breeding and General Cooperative Ltd was formed with five executives and 50 members in Nankuk Village.

Thanks to strenuous efforts of Staff Officer U Soe Hlaing of Loikaw Township Cooperative Department, the cooperative societies were aimed at increasing income of the people, alleviating poverty and developing cooperative tasks.—Myanma Alinn

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**Motorbike without light hits man on roadside**

NYAUNGU, 19 Dec—On 7 December, a Kenbo (110) motorcycle was driven by Ko Bo Kyaw and Ko Khin Maung Ko of Ohnnechaung Village of Nyaungu Township without indicators hit Ko Kyaw Thu Aung, 33, of Letancheapaw Village who was standing roadside on Nyaungu-U-Myangan Road.

In the incident, Ko Kyaw Thu Aung was injured at his head. Ko Khin Maung Ko from the motorbike fell down on the stone of roadside and was injured at his head.

In a critical condition, Ko Khin Maung Ko died on the way to the hospital.

Ko Bo Kyaw was also injured at nose but it was not in critical condition.

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**Second Inter-Basic Education School Sports Competition**

From 22 to 31 December 2012

Nay Pyi Taw

Loikaw Township has formed cooperative societies in 10 villages

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**Ministry of Education (2012-2013) academic year**

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Our creative future

A newspaper ad of a private school reads, “We know what the parents want.” It portrays the country’s old-fashioned idea on how to raise a child. The typical Myanmar family rarely counts the opinion of children even in making the most important decisions for their life. Most children are taught to obey what the elders say. The creativity of the children is subject to the excessive guardianship since the tender age.

There are many Myanmar graduates who specialized in what their parents demanded and many professionals whose career choice was dictated by their parents. There are many success stories of this style of bringing up the kids, but there are many different stories as well. Some even let their parents decide their marriage and every other. The same commercial also carries another motto, “The desire of parents, the life of children.”

The call for human resource development has become louder as the country in transition begins to realize the need of skilled workforce. Its inefficient education system has wasted many generations for decades. Despite the government’s scrupulous attention, the education sector does not still show significant progress.

We need the education that stimulates the creativity of the students, rather than parrot-fashion learning method. The child-centered approach is the term that has been popular in schools nationwide over a decade. Still not all teachers know what does that really means. It is, for them, no more than a change of tables.

There are many factors that bring down the education standard of the country. Basically, we urgently need to change our attitude: the attitude of parents, teachers, students and others else to fix our broken education system. We need the new generation who are less guided and more creative to help our country step back from the edge of abyss of poverty.

Vietnamese delegation concludes visit

YANGON, 19 Dec — The visiting delegation led by Vice-President of Ethnic Council of the National Assembly of Viet Nam, together with Amyotha Hluttaw National Races Affair Committee Member U Saw Mya Aung and officials concerned from the Hluttaw Office, paid homage and made a donation to Thiri Mingalar Gaba Aye Pagoda in Mayangon Township, here, this morning.

They proceeded to Myanmar Gems Museum of Myanmar Gems Enterprise under the Ministry of Mines, situated on Gaba Aye Pagoda Road.

The delegation left here for home by air in the evening. — MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee receives Israeli, Turkish ambassadors separately

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec — Chairman of the Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo received Israeli Ambassador to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Mr Hagay Moshe Behar at Pyithu Hluttaw Committee Hall No 1, here, at 4 pm yesterday.

They cordially discussed matters related to friendly relations and cooperation between two parliaments of Myanmar and Israel.

 Likewise, Turkish Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Mural Yavuz Ates called on the Chairman of the Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee at 10 am today.

At the call, they had a cordially discussion on relations between parliaments of Myanmar and Turkey.

MNA
A(U Kyaw)

active participation. The governing body is to work as a catalyst to allow newspapers write informing the government for the change. It is aimed to promote of Myanma public service newspapers. Watchdogs are helping the newspapers smoothly transform into public service newspaper. We are not the organization that represents the people, but the people-oriented organization.

Q: In reforming the newspapers, the quality of the news stories, rather than the outlook, is more important. There are many things to do to improve the quality of the newspapers. The significant development may not be seen without adequate financial and human resources. Xinhua of China is now financially independent. But we should not forget that it was largely funded by the Chinese government for years. Does the governing body have specific policies for the significant progress?

A (U Kyaw Zaw Naing): Human resources development is first priority. We attach more importance to the quality of the working journalists. Despite being the biggest media outlet in China, Xinhua cannot still claim themselves as public service media. The PSM must be people-centered. We are helping the newspapers move on smoothly. If there are adequate financial and human resources, it would not be such difficult to implement the policy.

Tso: HKA

National Objectives of 65th Anniversary Independence Day for 2013

1. All the national people to live together in the Union through thick and thin
2. All the national people to constantly safeguard non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty
3. All the national people to participate in the tasks for bringing about genuine, eternal peace putting an end to the armed conflicts
4. To make relentless efforts, in building a modern, developed and democratic nation, in order to better serve public interest, to ensure poverty reduction and bring about rightful legislative, administrative and judicial pillars
UN slams deadly attacks in Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, 19 Dec — A senior UN official in Iraq on Monday voiced his strong condemnation of a series of attacks that occurred in Iraq’s north on Saturday, killing at least 47 people and wounding over 110 others, UN spokesman Martin Nesirky told reporters here.

“Martin Kobler, the UN Secretary-General’s special representative for Iraq, strongly condemned the attacks in the disputed internal areas further aggravating the tensions there,” the spokesman said. “He called on all parties to engage in inclusive dialogue and to urgently work on defusing the situation to prevent an escalation. The United Nations stands ready to help if requested to do so.”

The attacks, which hit more than a dozen different Iraqi cities and towns, came on the eve of the first anniversary of the US military pullout from the Middle East country.

A QM’s senior leader arrested in Algeria

Algiers, 19 Dec — Algeria’s counterrorism forces on Monday arrested the Number Two leader of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Salah Gasmii, alias Mohamed Abu Salah, local media reported.

After being informed of the AQIM senior official’s whereabouts in Cherfa in Biskra Province, 130 km southeast of the capital Algiers, security forces arrested him near a restaurant at around 2 pm (1300 GMT) on Monday, TSA news website reported citing security sources. Abu Salah is being interrogated by security services, the sources said.

Hailing from Biskra Province, 420 km southeast of Algiers, Abu Salah is in charge of internal communication and coordination in the Kabylie region for AQIM, and is recognized as the Number Two leader in this al-Qaeda linked organization. Algerian counterrorism forces have dealt heavy blows to AQIM recently. In mid-November, three AQIM militants were killed, including Makhfi Rabah, senior official in charge of military and close to AQIM’s chief Abdelmalek Droukdel. In October, army forces killed Bekai Boulalem, alias Khaled El Mgr, who was in charge of coordination between AQIM and al-Qaeda.

AQIM emerged in early 2007 from the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), an Algerian armed Islamist movement. It currently operates in northwest Africa, including Algeria, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. A number of attacks were attributed to the group, including the triple suicide bomb attacks on 11 April, 2007, in Algiers, which claimed the lives of 20 people and injured 222 others, according to official figures.

Russia, Palestine eye deeper political dialogue

Moscow, 19 Dec — Russia and Palestine are interested in deepening political dialogue, Russian Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov met with Palestinian Ambassador to Moscow Faed Mustafa here on Monday, the ministry said in a statement.

Bogdanov and Mustafa agreed both sides have been interested in further enhancing political dialogue, while Moscow has been aimed at active support of Palestinian statehood, the ministry said.

The two diplomats also discussed the situation in the Middle East, focusing on the Palestinian-Israeli relations following the upgrading of Palestine’s status in the UN, according to the ministry.

Late last month, the United Nations General Assembly voted and granted an upgrade of Palestine’s status from observer “entity” to “non-member state,” which is an implicit and symbolic recognition of Palestine’s statehood at the UN. The 193 UN member states voted 138 to 9, with 41 abstentions, to support a draft resolution co-sponsored by about 70 countries, including China, Brazil, Jordan, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, South Africa. The resolution “reaffirms the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to independence in their State of Palestine on the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.”

Russia voted in favour of the resolution. — Xinhua

A lady experiences the “Rain Room” art installation by “Random International” in the Curve at the Barbican Centre in London, on 17 Dec, 2012. The “Rain Room” is a 100-square-metre field of falling water which visitors are invited to walk into, with sensors detecting and stops raining on the area where the visitors stand. — Xinhua

UN makes it easier for blacklisted Taleban to travel for peace talks

UNITED NATION, 19 Dec — The UN Security Council renewed its Taliban sanctions regime on Monday, but made it easier for blacklisted people to get an exemption to travel outside of Afghanistan for peace and reconciliation talks.

US-backed Afghan forces topped the Taliban government in late 2001 when it refused to hand over al-Qaeda militants, including Osama bin Laden, which the Islamist network’s hijacked airliner attacks on the United States on 11 September. There are 132 individuals and four entities on the UN Security Council’s sanctions list. Some diplomats hope the flexibility to grant travel exemptions will help induce moves toward peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan.

The resolution invites the government of Afghanistan, in close cooperation with the High Peace Council, to submit for the committee’s consideration the names of listed individuals for whom it confirms travel to such specified location or locations is necessary to participate in meetings in support of peace and reconciliation.”

The Security Council’s sanctions committee will require the passport or travel document number of the person travelling, the specific location to which they are expected to travel and the period of time — which cannot exceed nine months — during which they are expected to travel. Britain’s UN Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant said the travel ban exemptions “moreeffective and more flexible so it can serve the purposes of the peace and reconciliation process that is going to be so important over the next two years in Afghanistan.”

“It does that while sustaining proper oversight for the committee and it also sets the framework for close-counsel with the Afghan government and sanctions committee,” Lyall Grant said in a statement.

France said on Sunday that officials from the Afghan government, the Taleban movement and other factions would meet this week near Paris to discuss the country’s future. Foreign troops have started handing over security control to Afghan soldiers and police, a process due to be completed by the end of 2014.— Reuters
Sydney, 19 Dec.—An Australian Qantas flight en route from Sydney to Japan was diverted to Cairns on Monday night due to a drunk passenger, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) said on Tuesday.

The 34-year-old man, who allegedly tried to smoke a cigarette on the plane before punching and spitting at crew members, was forcibly removed from the flight.

Australia’s Qantas flight diverted to offload drunk passenger

The AFP said the flight captain made the decision to divert the flight to Cairns Airport because of the man’s violent behaviour. The man was arrested by AFP officers at the airport. AFP Assistant Commissioner Shane Connelly has urged traveling passengers to behave appropriately on an aircraft.

“Violent and disorderly behavior occurring both on-board aircraft and at airports will not be tolerated,” Connelly said in a statement. “Enough is enough. An aircraft captain and co-pilot can ill-afford to be distracted from their duties of safely flying an aircraft by having to deal with drunk, violent or disorderly passengers.” The AFP responded to more than 1,000 alcohol-related incidents at the 10 major airports during the 2011-12 financial year.

Australia pours in assistance as Fiji recovers from tropical cyclone Evan

Suva, 19 Dec.—The Australian government on Wednesday announced a 1.05 million-US dollar aid package to assist Fiji’s recovery from tropical cyclone Evan as it became one of the first countries to help Fiji.

The Australian High Commission in the Fijian capital of Suva was working with Fiji’s National Disaster Management Office on details of the assistance. A statement from the Australia High Commission said the assistance would include food, water, medical supplies, construction materials, and relief supplies, including water containers, blankets, tarpaulins, family hygiene kits and shelter kits.

The Australian government said at least 34 people were killed, and thousands were injured, displaced and in need of assistance. In addition, the total cost of the damage is estimated to be about 1.16 billion NZ dollars.

 Thousands of ducks in Indonesia’s Kediri die from H5N1 virus

Jakarta, 19 Dec.—A senior official overseeing animal husbandry in Indonesia’s East Java Province confirmed on Tuesday that the cause of the recent deaths of 11,000 ducks in the Kediri regency was avian influenza.

The confirmation came up after the regency administration received results of examinations on biologic samples of the ducks taken last month. “We knew the results after receiving results of examinations conducted by a laboratory in Malang, East Java. Results from the other examination conducted by a laboratory in Yogjakarta had not been released,” said Sri Suprayoga, head of Kediri regency animal husbandry supervisory body.

She added that the virus attacked the ducks that were sold in the regency was different from the other ones that attacked chickens and birds. She said that the type of virus attacked the ducks has gone through genetics changing.―Xinhua

Indonesian plane maker plans to mass produce N219 plane by 2017

Jakarta, 19 Dec.—A senior official of Indonesian aviation firm PT Dirgantara Indonesia (PTDI) told journalists on Tuesday that the company is planning to mass produce new mid-sized propeller plane N219 by 2017 as it is expected to receive orders from the plane.

“The project was envisaged in 2004 but due to financial crisis that hampered the firm, designing and material test was halted. But now, the production of the plane can be conducted as we have received orders from customers,” company spokesperson Sonny Saleh said in a press conference.

Two planes, one chopper gutted in massive fire at Hyderabad Airport in southern India

New Delhi, 19 Dec.—At least two aircraft and a chopper, used by the Chief Minister of the southern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, were gutted in a major fire which broke out at the state capital Hyderabad’s old airport late Monday night, a senior police official said on Tuesday.

There were at least two explosions as the massive fire engulfed parts of the airport at Begumpet. The two planes and the helicopter were damaged beyond repair. Some 10 fire tenders were pressed into service and it took them hours to bring the blaze under control. So far, there are no reports of any casualty,” the official said, on condition of anonymity.

However, police have ruled out any sabotage, he added. State Chief Minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy has ordered a probe into the incident.―Xinhua

Nine dead, over 3,000 displaced in flood, landslide in Sri Lanka

Colombo, 19 Dec.—Nine people have been killed and over 3,000 displaced following floods and landslides in Sri Lanka over the past two days, officials said on Tuesday.

A Disaster Management Centre (DMC) spokesman said eight people were killed in landslides and floods in the central Matutale district while one person was killed in flash floods in Kandy.

Polls open in tight South Korean presidential election

Seoul, 19 Dec.—Polls opened on Wednesday in South Korea’s closely contested presidential election, which pits the daughter of a military strongman against a former human rights lawyer once jailed for protesting his rule. Voting began at 6:00 am local time at 13,542 polling stations nationwide, with more than 40.4 million eligible voters poised to cast their ballots.

Polls will close at 6:00 pm and the result is expected by midnight.

Final opinion surveys released last week showed Park Geun-hye of the conservative ruling Saenuri Party held a slight lead over her liberal rival Moon Jae-in of the center-left main opposition Democratic United Party.

Still, in the gap in most polls was within the margin of error, and analysts say the contest is too close to call and its outcome will ultimately depend on voter turnout. As of 11 am, voter turnout was estimated at 26.4 percent, slightly higher than what was reported at the same time during the 2007 presidential poll, according to the National Election Commission.

Park, the 60-year-old daughter of South Korean dictator Park Chung-hee, is looking to become the first female leader of the country and extend the conservative rule for another five years. “I will humbly wait for people’s choice,” Park, who has vowed to restore national unity and overcome the polarized political landscape, said after voting in Seoul. Park, who acted as the de facto first lady to her father after her mother was assassinated, remains popular among older voters nostalgic for the rapid economic growth under the 18-year authoritarian rule.

An elderly woman is assisted in casting her ballot in the presidential election at a polling station in Nonsan, about 190 km (118 miles) south of Seoul, on 19 December, 2012.—REUTERS
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KOTA TABAH VOY NO (525)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TABAH VOY NO (525) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20.12.2012 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.P.W.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 256098/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (483)
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More new emigrants find success

Brunswick, 19 Dec—New Chinese emigrants are moving up the social ladder as more of them have a better education and sophisticated jobs, especially in the United States. According to the 2012 Blue Book of Overseas Chinese, released on Monday, about 1 million Chinese emigrated to the US during the past decade.

The number of new US residents of Chinese origin exceeded 4 million in 2010, a jump of 65.5 percent over a decade ago.

“New Chinese emigrants to the United States are more concentrated in the higher education and technology sectors,” said Huang Ping, a scholar of US studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Chinese-Americans are the fifth-largest demographic group in the US, after Caucasians, African-American, Mexican-Americans and Puerto Rican Americans.

The demographic percentage and influence of Chinese-Americans in the US will continue to rise in the coming years, Qin Jin, chief editor of the blue book, said at a conference held in Beijing. The percentage of Chinese-Americans holding a master’s or a bachelor’s degree is twice the figure of the US average, according to the book. More Chinese-Americans work in trade, finance, healthcare, education and social sciences, while 10 years ago their counterparts were usually found in manufacturing, sales and services jobs.

Chinese-Americans have tended to live in metropolises such as New York, San Francisco and Chicago. Their communities have expanded to suburban areas, where they find nicer living conditions, better schools and safer neighbourhoods.

Experts warn that the trend of increasing emigration of talented Chinese people to other countries may leave China with a brain drain.

But favourable policies and numerous projects have been introduced to attract returnees, who bring back management knowledge, innovative ideas and strong cultural ties to China, said Qi.

Yang Zhenheng, a Standing Committee member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, makes remarks on the opening ceremony of the 9th national congress of Taiwanese compatriots in Beijing, capital of China, on 17 Dec, 2012.—Xinhua

Florida man sentenced to 10 years in “hackerazzi” case

Los Angeles, 19 Dec—A Florida man who pleaded guilty to hacking into the email accounts of celebrities to gain access to nude photos and private information was sentenced to 10 years in prison by a federal judge in Los Angeles on Monday.

Former office clerk Christopher Chaney, 36, said before the trial that he hacked into the accounts of film star Scarlett Johansson and other celebrities because he was addicted to spying on their personal lives.

Prosecutors said Chaney illegally gained access to email accounts of more than 50 people in the entertainment industry, including Johansson, actress Mila Kunis, and singers Christina Aguilera and Renee Olstead from November 2010 to October 2011.

Chaney, who was initially charged with 28 counts related to hacking, struck a plea deal with prosecutors in March to nine felony counts, including wiretapping and unauthorized access to protected computers.

“I don’t know what else to say except I’m sorry,” Chaney said during his sentencing. “This will never happen again.”

Chaney was ordered to pay $66,179 in restitution to victims. Prosecutors recommended a 71-month prison for Chaney, who faced a maximum sentence of 60 years.—Reuters

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER
TENDER NO. 5(T)AMD-FR (2012-2013)

1. Open Tender is invited by Agricultural Mechanization Department, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, for the supply of the following stores which will be purchased in Myanmar Kyats.

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<th>Lot No.</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>75 HP (4-WD) Tractor (SONAUKA, INDIA)</td>
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<td>Tender documents are available at the Factory &amp; Research Section of Agricultural Mechanization Department Building No(50), Nay Pyi Taw, during the office hours.</td>
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For further details please call 067-431243
Agricultural Mechanization Department

UN mission increases patrols in DRC’s Goma

UNITED NATIONS, 19 Dec—A UN spokesperson said on Monday that in response to reports of movements by rebels around Goma, the Democratic Republic of Congo, UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO)has stepped up its patrols of the area.

“The situation on the ground in North Kivu and South Kivu remains tense and fragile, with reports of movements of M23 rebels around Goma, in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC),” said Martin Nesirky, spokesperson to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. “Over the weekend MONUSCO stepped up its ground patrols and air reconnaissance flights in response to these reports.”

Last month, the armed rebel group violently seized Goma, the capital city of North Kivu Province, with widespread attacks on its civilians. More than 475,000 people in DRC have so far been displaced internally because of their movements.

Xinhua
California minor arrested in Bieber, Kutcher “swatting” hoaxes

LOS ANGELES, 19 Dec—A minor was arrested on suspicion of placing hoax calls claiming gunshots were fired at the home of Justin Bieber and that people had been shot at actor Ashton Kutcher’s house, police in Los Angeles said on Tuesday.

Police said the unnamed minor is suspected to be behind the hoaxes that resulted in dozens of emergency responders being dispatched to the homes of Kutcher and Bieber in October. Neither the actor nor the singer were at home during the pranks.

The false emergency calls are known as “swatting” because SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) officers are often sent to such purported crime scenes.

The Los Angeles Police Department would not release the name or gender of the minor, but said the suspect was arrested on 10 December and lived in the Southern California region. The Los Angeles County District Attorney’s office is reviewing whether to file charges.

In the Kutcher incident, dozens of emergency personnel were sent to the Hollywood home of the “Two and a Half Men” star after a call claiming that people were in his home with guns and explosives, and that seven children were in a SWATting prank, but police said the Cyrus case has not been linked to the Kutcher and Bieber incidents.

Bin Laden movie “Zero Dark Thirty” arrives, mired in controversy

NEW YORK, 19 Dec—Oscar-winning director Kathryn Bigelow could have made a testosterone-fuelled shoot-'em-up Hollywood version of the capture and killing of Osama bin Laden. Instead, she and screenwriter Mark Boal turned “Zero Dark Thirty” into a more complex look at the decade-long hunt for the al-Qaeda leader, including a frank presentation of US torture and previously undisclosed details of the mission to hunt down the man behind the 11 September attacks.

When the film opens in limited US release on Wednesday, Bigelow and Boal want audiences to disregard a year of controversies, including claims, which they have denied, that the film makers were leaked classified information.

“It’s about a look inside the intelligence community. The strength and power and courage and dedication and tenacity and vulnerability of these women and men,” Bigelow, 61, told Reuters in a joint interview with Boal.

Bigelow won an Academy Award in 2010 for “The Hurt Locker,” about US army bomb disposal experts in Iraq. She says her latest movie puts the audience at the centre of the quest to find bin Laden, and gives a perspectve of the US intelligence community and how its methods changed in the years following the 11 September attacks.

Naomi Watts pulls off “The Impossible” to critical acclaim

Cast members Ewan McGregor (L), Naomi Watts (C) and Tom Holland pose at the gala presentation for the film “The Impossible” at the 37th Toronto International Film Festival in this 9 Sept, 2012, file photo.—Reuters

LOS ANGELES, 19 Dec—Days after the devastating 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, actress Naomi Watts took part in a fundraising telethon spearheaded by George Clooney to help the region’s hundreds of thousands of people in 14 nations whose lives were shattered.

Little did Watts know that eight years later she would be starring in “The Impossible,” out in the US movie theatres on Friday, about a real family’s approach to star in the film, directed by Spanish filmmaker Juan Antonio Bayona, she hesitated.

“I thought, how do you make a movie about a tsunami without it becoming so spectacular disaster movie?” Watts, 44, told Reuters. “That would be so wrong.”

However once Watts read the script, she was moved by the story based on the real-life Spanish family of Maria Belon, her husband Enrique Alvarez—played by Ewan McGregor in the movie—and their three sons.

Belon’s family were spending their Christmas holiday in Thailand when the tsunami hit. The film follows their struggle to survive, injured and separated, in the aftermath and their perseverance in finding each other amidst the chaos.

“I felt a huge amount of pressure because of the responsibility to Maria’s story,” said Watts. “And on her back, she carries the stories of everybody else because hers is connected to the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. I felt a sense of responsibility.”

The British-born, Australian actress delivered, despite her fears. So far, her performance has earned Watts best actress nominations from the Golden Globes, the Screen Actors Guild and the Broadcast Film Critics Association.—Reuters

Gabby Douglas, Adele among brightest young stars—Forbes magazine

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Hirscher finishes year with slalom win

Madonna di Campiglio, 19 Dec—Austria’s Marcel Hirscher finished 2012 in style with his second victory of the winter in a floodlit slalom in Madonna di Campiglio, his last race of the year.

The reigning overall World Cup champion won both runs and destroyed the field in the night’s second leg to win in a combined time of one minute 42.50 seconds. The race was marred by the death of a 70-year-old steward, who suffered a heart attack during the first would.

Hirscher, who finished on the podium in all seven technical races held this winter, left second-placed German Felix Neureuther 1.67 seconds adrift.

His consistency and his second win of the season, after success in the giant slalom of the season, meant he added his name to the Madonna roll of honour with the greatest slalom specialists in the sport’s history, from Ingemar Stenmark to Alberto Tomba, by having also won World Cup races in the Italian resort.

“It’s a great honour to be on this list,” he said.

The race also saw the return to the World Cup of slalom world champion Jean-Baptiste Grange, who was all the more surprised by his feat as he finished the race lying on the snow after injuring a disc on the way down.

Hirscher’s victory meant he added his name to the Madonna roll of honour with the greatest slalom specialists in the sport’s history, from Ingemar Stenmark to Alberto Tomba, by having also won World Cup races in the Italian resort.

“Now I’m looking forward to Christmas... I can devote some time to my girlfriend,” he added.

While the speed specialists will resume racing with a downhill in Bormio on 29 December, Hirscher will not race before New Year’s Day at a race in Munich.

“The World Cup remains my goal. I won it last year almost to everybody’s surprise and I’m determined to confirm this season,” said Hirscher.

Japan’s Naoki Yuasa achieved his first career podium after climbing from 26th to third with a blistering second run.

“If it’s not I’ll never forget,” said the Japanese, who was all the more surprised by his feat as he finished the race lying on the snow after injuring a disc on the way down.

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The race also saw the return to the World Cup of slalom world champion Jean-Baptiste Grange, who had been sidelined since a knee operation in March.

The Frenchman skied two solid runs and finished 21st.

Chilton to race for Marussia F1 team

London, 19 Dec—Max Chilton will be Britain’s fourth man on the Formula One grid next season after back-markers Marussia said on Tuesday they would make his race debut with them in Australia in March.

Chilton, the reserve driver this year, will partner German Timo Glock at the Russian-licensed former Virgin Racing team who have yet to score a point in the three seasons since they entered the sport.

“It’s hard to put into words how I’m feeling today, with the announcement that I will be racing in the Marussia F1 Team in 2013,” said Chilton in a statement.

“I am very fortunate to have spent the last six races with the Marussia F1 Team as reserve driver, which means that instead of a standing start I am already up to speed and at ease with the people, the culture, the systems and of course, the 2012 package.”

Chilton will find himself lining up against compatriots Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) and Jenson Button (McLaren), the 2008 and 2009 champions respectively, as well as Force India’s Paul Di Resta.

The latest in a long list of British Formula One drivers took part in his first grand prix practice session in Abu Dhabi last month and replaces Frenchman Charles Pic, who has moved to Caterham.

While Chilton’s talents behind the wheel have been praised by the team, his ability to bring much-needed funding with him was also critical to landing the drive.

Graham Chilton, chairman of global reinsurance broker Aon Benfield and vice-chairman of Aon Group, has invested heavily in his son’s rise through the junior series. Chilton senior’s Capucins Motorsport purchased Carlin Motorsport in 2009, competing in the GP2 support series as Marussia Carlin Motorsport with Max Chilton as one of their drivers this year.

The Briton achieved two pole positions and two race wins in GP2 last season.

Neymar wins leading scorer in 2012

Sao Paulo, 19 Dec—Brazilian superstar Neymar won the prestigious Golden Boot for the second time in his short career with 43 goals in 2012.

Across the last twelve months, Neymar has scored 20 goals in the Sao Paulo state championship, eight in the Copa Libertadores, 14 in the Brazilian league and one in the Supercup.

Having already won the award for best striker in the Brazilian championship, the 20-year-old international picked up a second award in weeks. It is also the second time Neymar has won the prize of the country’s most lethal attacking chief, who was also the top goal scorer in the country’s most lethal attacking chief, who was also the top goal scorer in the 2010 World Cup.

The 37-year-old pitcher broke into the majors with the Baltimore Orioles in 1999 and was traded to the Rangers midway through the 2011 season.

Texas Rangers relief pitcher Koji Uehara of Japan; Reuters

Japanese’s Uehara eager to repay Red Sox by staying healthy

US Open and Olympic triumphs by enticing the country’s youth to pick up a tennis racket during 2013.

Sport England figures said that the total number of people playing tennis for 30 minutes each week had dropped 10 percent since 2008 despite the millions at the disposal of the LTA through Wimbledon profits and government funding.

While acknowledging the LTA’s successes over the past year, Sport England said it had to prove it was doing enough to continue growing the numbers swinging a racket.
Liverpool’s Suso fined for Twitter comment

LONDON, 19 Dec—Liverpool forward Suso has been fined 10,000 pounds ($16,200) for a comment he posted on Twitter, the FA said on Tuesday.

Suso was responding to his team mate Jose En-
rique posting a photograph of himself getting his teeth whitened. “What the f*** is he doing? This guy is gay...he does everything except play football,” tweeted Suso, who accepted the charge that he had brought the game into disrepute.

The 19-year-old Span-
iard, who has made 13 first-team appearances for Liverpool this season, was also warned as to his future conduct by the FA.

Corinthians could sign Pato

MILAN, 19 Dec—World champions Corinthians could sign Milan and Bra-
zil striker Alexandre Pato, according to Brazilian sports daily Lance.

The 23-year-old has fallen down the pecking order at the Italian club after a recurring knee problem and is reportedly consider-
ing a move to the Paulista giants, who won the Copa Libertadores and the World Club Cup in 2012.

Pato burst onto the world football scene in 2007 with Brazilian club Interna-
tional.

After initial success in Italy his injury problems have made him an increasingly peripheral figure in the Milan squad and the time may be right to seek pastures new.

Milan’s initial asking price is around 15 million euros (about 19.8 mil-

Russian race-walker Morozov gets life ban for doping

MOSCOW, 19 Dec—Former world youth race-
walking champion Sergey Morozov has been given a life ban for breaking an-
ti-doping regulations, the Russian athletics federation  (VFLA) said on Tuesday.

Morozov, 24, who won the 2005 world youth title in the 10,000 meters race walk, has shown an “abnor-
mal hemoglobin profile in his biological passport”, the VFLA said on its website (rusathletics.com).

It was his second dop-
ing offence.

The Russian was con-
sidered a medal contender for the 2008 Beijing Olympics after setting a 20-km world record time of one hour, 16:43 minutes at the national championships earlier that year.

But his time was never ratified by the world’s gov-
erning body IAAF because of a lack of doping control at the event.

Morozov, who also won the 2007 European junior title, could not com-
pete in Beijing because he was handed a two-year ban after testing positive for EPO in 2008.

He returned to com-
petition in 2010 and competed for Russia at the 2011 world championships, finishing 12th in the 20-km.

It was the latest in a se-
ries of doping offences by Russian athletes in less than two weeks.

On Friday, the VFLA

banned European junior race-walking champion Tatjana Mineyeva for two years after she failed a drugs test, while the IAAF placed Olympic 2004 ham-
mer champion Olga Kuzen-
kova under investigation af-
ter she also tested positive.

Last week, 2012 Olym-
pic discus silver medalist Darya Pschchalnikova and Russian hammer champion Kirill Ilonnikov, who fin-
ished 16th at the London Games, were temporarily suspended by the IAAF for failing drugs tests.

The International Olymp-
ic Committee (IOC) on 5 Dec stripped shot put-
ter Svetlana Krizelyova of her bronze medal from the 2004 Athens Games. Krizelyova, 43 and long retired from the sport, tested positive for anabolic steroids after her samples from eight years ago were re-tested.—Reuters

No Pain, No Gain
Coordination meeting on Relief and Rehabilitation in Rakhine State held

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—A coordination meeting on Relief and Rehabilitation in Rakhine State took place at the assembly hall of Ministry of Border Affairs here yesterday. It was attended by Union Minister for Border Affairs Lt-Gen Thein Sein and deputy ministers, departmental heads, UN coordinator UNDP, representation and multi-purpose development tasks held.

The Union Minister delivered an opening speech on the occasion. After that, UNDP resident representative Mr Ashok Nigam said that they are organizations that are providing humanitarian aids to the society that are in need of helps. Coordination for aids programme would be made only when they knew the needs. He continued to say that he would like to give advice on laying down the future long-term plans pertaining to education, health and water and sanitation and the livelihoods. At the same time, it needed to make arrangements for aids, rehabilitation, the end of conflicts and the regular running of livelihoods businesses. Those present presented the reports on the ongoing humanitarian aids programme, follow-up programme, views on the emergence of a harmonious society and solving of difficulties and challenges they face.

In his concluding speech, the Union minister said that all needed to understand the real situation of the Rakhine incident. It was found that feelings and discontentments between two societies remained existed. But it needed to change the wrong thoughts and assumptions of both societies. Providing humanitarian aids as well as ensuring the basic infrastructures for sustainable development was a must. A plan was under way to form four townships—Kyauktaw, Maungdaw, Minbya and Mrauk-U district. The Union government would scrutinize the citizenship in line with Myanmar Citizenship Law (1982). International organizations should review the criteria for humanitarian aids programme, based on the real situation. He also urged UN agencies, IGOs, INGOs and social organizations to join hands with the Union government in such future tasks as relief and rehabilitation, the rule of law and sustainable development. —MNA

Coordination meeting on Ayeyawady River conservation and multi-purpose development tasks held

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—“Embankments of Ayeyawady River are to be built for effective utilizations of Ayeyawady River water,” said Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung at coordination meeting on Ayeyawady River conservation and multi-purpose development tasks held at the Ministry here this morning.

Director-General U Tun Lwin Oo of Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems presented the report on Ayeyawady River conservation and multi-purpose development tasks and Mr Keon Thomas of SBE Consulting Engineers group of Belgium, on Ayeyawady River: Towards an Integrated Management System.

Afterwards, the deputy ministers, Region ministers, departmental official and scholars gave suggestions. —MNA

The failure of electronic control system of Yadana natural gas drill at 5 am on 17-12-2012 led to the suspension of natural gas supply for domestic use.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise is fixing the issues that stopped operation of power stations in Yangon Region and Shwedagon and Myan-aung power stations and cut the electricity generation by about 310 Megawatts.

Thanks to MOGE’s efforts, the natural gas of 60 million cubic ft could be supplied at 10 am on the same day; 90 million cubic ft at 11 am; 110 million cubic ft at 1 pm; 124 million cubic ft at 4 am on 18-12-2012 and 148 million cubic ft at 5 am on 19-12-2012. As the offshore natural gas supply could not resume at full capacity, the electricity generation of Shwedagon and Myanaung power stations is reduced by 28 Megawatts and power stations in Yangon by 30 Megawatts, totaling 58 Megawatts.

The electricity supply to some regions and states would be reduced periodically in time of the decline in the natural gas supply.

The Ministry of Electric Power is trying to fill the gap with the increased supply from hydropower stations and is planning to cope with the reduction in electricity supply and voltage. The repair would be completed by 19-12-2012 evening.

Ministry of Electric Power

Three-month extension period for Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec — Issuance of temporary passports for Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand is being carried out at five centres in Thailand. As the process is due to expire on 14 December this year Thailand has proposed to stop the process of issuing documents to Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand and to carry out the process at the new centres on the side of Myanmar.

Out of nearly 2.5 million Myanmar migrant workers in Thailand, it is estimated that only about 1.5 million had been registered and the remaining one million are unregistered and undocumented. The closure of current five centres could result in loss of jobs, travelling expenses and unwanted difficulties for workers.

President U Thein Sein held coordination on Myanmar migrant workers with Prime Minister of Thailand Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra in Dawei of Taninthayi Region, calling for extension of deadline without stopping the ongoing process. The Thai PM approved to extend the deadline for another three months and, if necessary, deadline will more be extended.

For ensuing the process of issuing temporary passports to workers as quick as possible during the extension period, tasks of opening more centres and appointing more staff and other necessary measures will be made with added momentum.

Ministry of Power

Public Notice

The New Light of Myanmar Thursday, 20 December, 2012