Everybody needs to work

Currently, the poverty rate of the country stood at 26 per cent and it has set the target to reduce it to 16 per cent in 2015. And thus, everybody needs to work hard. There will be work providing that there are land and water. Only with work, one could earn income for living. Saving the part of income would help improve living standard, enabling children to go to school with no anxiety. Consequently, the GDP of the nation and human resources would develop.

President U Thein Sein

(From the address delivered at the opening ceremony of Ayeyawady Bridge (Nyaungdon) on 27-11-2011)

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham receives officials from CTGC, IGOEC

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham cordially shakes hands with an official of China Three Gorges Corporation (CTGC) and International Group of Entrepreneur Company (IGOEC) which are implementing Mongton Hydro Power Project, at the hall of Presidential Palace, here, this afternoon. Also present at the call together with the Vice-President were Union Minister U Khin Maung Soe, Deputy Ministers U Zin Yaw, U Aye Myint Maung and Dr Daw Khin San Yi and officials. At the meeting, they had a cordial discussion on feasibility study for wind power and hydro power generation projects, environmental conservation and local people’s participations in the project.—MNA

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham cordially shakes hands with an official of China Three Gorges Corporation (CTGC) and International Group of Entrepreneur Company (IGOEC).

MNA

New democracy nation and ongoing reforms

(Continued from 31-12-2012)

Fifth bridge opened

Nagapauk Bridge on DaikU-Sittoung Road with the length of 240 ft and the width of 24 ft and can withstand 60 tons of load was opened on 27 August as the fifth bridge in the time of the new government. Diplomatic relations established

Myanmar and Bosnia and Herzegovinian established diplomatic relations on 1 September. Bosnia and Herzegovinian is the 104th country with which Myanmar established diplomatic ties as the country is improving its relations with world nations.

Formation of Human Rights Commission

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission was formed on 5 September to promote and protect fundamental rights of citizens in accord with the constitution.

Revising, revoking and prescribing laws

The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session started on 29 September revised, revoked and prescribed laws.

Suspension of Myitsone Dam project

President U Thein Sein announced on 31 September the government would suspend Myitsone dam project on confluence of Ayeyawady River during its term in response to public concerns.

First peace talks

Union level Peace-Making Committee and “Wa” Special Region (2) Peace-Making Group entered into peace talks for the first time on 3 October.

Thai PM’s visit

Ms Yingluck Shinawatra, Prime Minister of Thailand, visited Myanmar on 5 October and discussed with President U Thein Sein on mutual cooperation.

Second Amnesty

Totally 6359 prisoners were pardoned on 11 October in the second amnesty granted under President Office’s Order No. 49/2011.

Opening of Shwegyin hydropower plant

On 22 October, the opening ceremony of Shwegyin hydropower project was held near Kyauknagar village about six miles north east of Shwegyin, Bago Region.

The plant generates 262 million kwh per year. (See page 8)

Kayin State Chief Minister attends openings of new school building, libraries in Hpa-an

Kayin State Chief Minister attends openings of new school building, libraries in Hpa-an

Nay Pyi Taw, 31 Dec—The opening of new school building for Magyiyyun Basic Education Middle School in Hpa-an Township in Kayin State took place at the school on 22 December. Kayin State Chief Minister U Zaw Min, State Social Affairs Minister U Chit Hlaing and the village administrator formally opened the school.

The chief minister made a speech and presented cash assistance for teachers. The newly-opened school building was constructed with the contribution of the State. Kayin State government, state/district/township WAOs and MCWSC donated one set of Sky Net, solar, one set of TV, publications and cash assistance for Linyaungchi Phyo library of the village.

He inspected thriving plantations and BEPS. On 23 December, the chief minister attended the opening of Pyinnya Bank library in Gyaing village. The State Hluttaw Speaker U Saw Aung Kyaw Min, the wellwisher and the village administrator cut the ribbon to launch the library and looked round it.

The chief minister delivered an address and the State government, wellwisher and State IPRD donated one set of Sky Net, solar, one set of TV, publications and furniture for library.—MNA
Thaunggyi village BEMS (Branch) organizes respect-paying ceremony

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Jan — The first respect-paying ceremony of Basic Education Middle School (Branch) was held in conjunction with prize-giving ceremony at the school in Thaunggyi village of Nyaunglebin Township of Bago Region on 9 December. Responsible persons spoke on the occasion, and old students paid respects to retired teachers.

Over 100-year-old tiered building in urgent need of maintenance

Magway, 1 Jan — Kinn village lies on the Ayeyawady bank, two-mile north of Magway. According to the records, the village was named Kinn village as sentries were deployed there in the time of King Sawlu. During Konbaung era, the Kinn village was made up of about 100 houses. Okpho is situated to the south of Kinn village. The village was called Okpho as the brick were made for construction of pagodas there. There is a more than 100-year-old monastery between Kinn and Okpho villages. It is called Pyathard monastery (tiered building). The compound of the monastery is about 5-acre in area where there are shad perennial trees. Of four rooms with 106 pillars of the monastery, two rooms were destroyed. Impressive Architectural skills of Late Konbaung era can be seen at the monastery. Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw U Visuta said the monastery was built by Pahtama Sayadaw U Visuddha in the time of King Thibaw. There is an ancient Bronze Buddha Image there and a stone Buddha Image is being kept in the ordination hall. The monastery was used to be a basic education primary school during the period from 1950 to 1985. The first-ever head master of the school was U Hla Gyi. Now the weather-beaten monastery and its architecture of ancient civilization are in urgent need of maintenance works.

Pakokku to organize first-ever extempore speaking contest on 6 January

Pakokku, 1 Jan — Jointly-organized by Pakokku U Ohn Pe Library committee and readers, the first-ever extempore talk contest in 50 years in Pakokku region will be held on 6 January 2013. Dr Hlaing Moe (medical superintendent of Chamyae Hospital), Poet Pakokku Maung Maung, U Kyi Win (Principal of Amae Eein free education) will defend the statement why education is more important than business. Writer Athwin Hsan, Daw Htay Yi (SAT) and U Thet Kyu will reassure the statement why business is more important than education. The contest will be held at the hall of Basic Education Middle School on Myoma street. Before the extempore speaking contest, entertainment programme will be presented with Myanmar traditional songs.

School-level scouting course concludes

Sittway, 1 Jan — A school-level scouting course concluded at Basic Education High School No (4) in Sittway on 29 December. The ceremony was attended by member of Rakhine State government, Rakhine State Education Officer U Han Sein, teachers, course instructors and trainees. Rakhine State Social Affairs Minister Dr Aung Kyaw Min spoke on the occasion. Then he presented awards to outstanding trainees and thanked course instructors from Rakhine State naval base and Red Cross Society for their contributions to the scouting course beginning 21 December. Scout methods including culture and customs, innovation, camping, hiking, first aid knowledge, child rights and risk response and rescue measures were given at the course.— Kyemon

Domino-effect car crash leaves three men, one woman wounded

Kamayut, 1 Jan — Four people were injured in a domino-effect car accident involving nine vehicles at about 7 am on 31 December. A passenger bus of No. 226 Bus Line driving from Danyinkon to Sule went out of control and caused a domino-effect crash to other eight vehicles near Sanpya Traffic Lights in Lammadaw Township. The incident left three men and one woman wounded. The injured were admitted to the hospital.

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 righteous legislative, administrative and judicial pillars

Yezagyo sees benefit of mix-cropping

Yezagyo, 1 Jan — Thanks to impressive reform processes and liberalization in the time of the new government, the livelihood of local people is getting better and better, thereby generating more income through double and mix cropping of marketable seasonal crops.

A farmer of a village in Yezagyo Township said farmers could grow crops as they want.

“I planted onion and chick pea under mix-cropping. This year’s opening price of onion had reached K 1100 per viss. After a harvest of onions, the farmland would turn to groundnut plantation. Locals are enjoying the benefit of mix-cropping”, he said.
A destroyed vehicle is towed from the site of a bomb attack in Baghdad's Karrada District, on 31 Dec, 2012.—Reuters

**Bombs kill 23 across Iraq as sectarian strife grows**

BAHDAD, 1 Jan—At least 23 people were killed and 87 wounded in attacks across Iraq on Monday, police said, underscoring sectarian and ethnic divisions that threaten to further destabilise the country a year after US troops left. Tensions between Shi’ite, Kurdish and Sunni factions in Iraq’s power-sharing jigsaw after a concrete wall was erected on the rise this year. Militants strike almost daily and have staged at least one big attack a month.

No group claimed responsibility for any of Monday’s attacks, which targeted government officials, police patrols and members of both the Sunni and Shi’ite communities. Seven people from the same Sunni family were killed by a bomb planted near their home in the town of Mussayyab, south of Baghdad.

In the Shi’ite majority City of Hilla, also in the south, a parked car bomb went off near the convoy of the governor of Babil Province, missing him but killing two other people, police said.

**Abe committed to improving ties with S Korea**

TOKYO, 1 Jan—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has expressed his commitment to improving relations between his country and South Korea.

Abe met on Tuesday with his special envoy to South Korea, Fukushiro Nukaga. The former finance minister heads to Seoul later this week to deliver a letter from Abe to South Korean President-elect, Park Geun-hye.

The Prime Minister told Nukaga South Korea is one of Japan’s most important neighbours, and that the two countries share the values of upholding democracy and market economics.

**Abe says he hopes Japan and South Korea will make a fresh start through the launch of their new governments. The Prime Minister took power last month and Park becomes president in February.**

Abe asked Nukaga to convey his message to South Korea’s new leaders. Nukaga said he hopes to create a better environment between the two nations so they can repair relations.

**Hong Kong greets 2013 with fireworks, countdown celebrations**

HONG KONG, 1 Jan—A splendid fireworks show and countdown celebration was held in Hong Kong on the eve of 2013 new year.

The eight-minute show, the largest ever in the country’s history, was launched from both land and sea surrounding the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC).

Highlighting Hong Kong’s night vistas, the show was dubbed as the first of the world’s top 10 destinations for new year countdown celebrations.

An estimated 400,000 Hong Kong residents and tourists watched the show on both sides of the Victoria Harbor, despite it was the coldest new year ever in 29 years.

Starting from 11 pm on the new year eve, fireworks were launched from the rooftops of participating buildings in Wan Chai every 15 minutes, lighting up the sky with “shooting stars” in four different colors to symbolise good wishes in career, health, fortune and love.

In the final 10 seconds of 2012, fireworks in the shape of the numbers 10 to one shot from five buildings in Wan Chai. As the clock strikes midnight, fireworks were fired in three layers first from Victoria Harbor, then from the rooftop of HKCEC, and finally from five other buildings in Wan Chai.

The fireworks were accompanied by special fireworks and whistle-like sound effects. Search lights and lasers were also beamed from both sides of Victoria Harbor. “The combination of lights and fireworks was awesome. It’s good. I wish happiness and health in the forthcoming year,” said Robert, a tourist from Germany.

**Five dead in Shanghai construction accident**

SHANGHAI, 1 Jan—Five workers were killed and 18 others injured after a concrete platform under construction collapsed in Shanghai, a municipal government source said on Tuesday.

The accident occurred at around 9 pm Monday in a building in the Pudong New Area for examination and repair, which was part of the Jinqiao parking lot for Shanghai’s No 12 subway line, the source said. One was killed at the scene. The four others died in hospital.

The cause of the incident was under investigation.

**Asad’s forces battle to retake Damascus suburb**

BASHAR al-Assad, 1 Jan—This is the biggest attack on Daraya in two months. An armoured column is trying to advance but is being held (back) by the Free Syrian Army,” said Abu Kinan, an opposition activist in the area, referring to a rebel group.

Clashes were also reported near the airport in Aleppo, Syria’s largest city, which is in the north.

Insurgents have made that a target for the U.S. government with the hope of limiting government access in Syria, which is largely under rebel control. Rebels have taken much of the north and east of Syria over the past six months, but government forces still hold most of the densely populated south-west around the capital, the main north-south highway and the Mediterranean coast.

**Afghan transition a “sign of steady progress”**

WASHINGTON, 1 Jan—US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta on Monday said the security transition process announced earlier in the day by Afghan President Hamid Karzai is a “sign of steady progress,” as the United States prepares to exit combat roles in that country.

“It is another sign of steady progress that the Government of Afghanistan has announced the fourth tranche of the transition process,” Panetta said in a statement.

Earlier in the day, Karzai announced that Afghanistan has entered the second to last stage of the transition of security responsibility from NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to Afghan security forces. Afghanistan’s security transition is designed to take place in five tranches, or stages.

As part of the fourth tranche, 12 Afghan provinces enter the security transition process, ISAF officials said. Afghanistan now has 23 of its 34 provinces entirely in the transition process.

“This step demonstrates the success of our strategy,” said Panetta. US President Barack Obama has announced a withdrawal strategy that would see security responsibilities transferred to Afghans by the end of 2014.

**Fireworks light up the Victoria Harbor during the New Year celebrations in Hong Kong, south China, on 1 Jan, 2013.**

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**New Light of Myanmar**

**AFGHANISTAN**

**Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, told Nukaga South Korea is one of Japan’s most important neighbours, and that the two countries share the values of upholding democracy and market economics.**

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**Shinzo Abe**
Huawei partner offered embargoed HP gear to Iran

BEIJING, 1 Jan—A major Iranian partner of Huawei Technologies offered to sell at least 1.3 million euros worth of Hewlett-Packard computer equipment to Iran’s largest mobile-phone operator in late 2010, documents show.

China’s Huawei, the world’s second largest telecommunications equipment maker, says neither it nor its partner, a private company registered in Hong Kong, ultimately provided the HP products to the telecom, Mobtel Telecommunication Co of Iran, known as MCI. Nevertheless, the incident provides new evidence of how Chinese companies have been willing to help Iran evade trade sanctions.

The proposed deal also raises new questions about Shenzhen-based Huawei, which is being probed by the US House Intelligence Committee for failing to “provide evidence to support its claims that it complies with all international sanctions or US export laws.”

At least 13 pages of the proposal to MCI, which involved the partner expanding its subscriber billing system, were marked “Huawei confidential” and carried the company’s logo, according to documents seen by Reuters. In a statement to Reuters, Huawei called it a “bidding document” and said one of its “major local partners,” Skycom Tech Co Ltd, had submitted it to MCI. The statement went on to say, “Huawei’s business in Iran is in full compliance with all applicable laws and regulations including those of the UN, US and EU. This commitment has been carried out and followed strictly by our company. Further, we also require our partners to follow the same commitment and strictly abide by the relevant laws and regulations.”

In October, Reuters reported that another Iranian partner of Huawei last year tried to sell equipment to Iran, a theme that was played before the US export laws.

In a statement on October 4, 2012, Huawei said it had no intention of complying with the US export laws. The statement, released in English and Chinese on October 4, said that “Huawei has a strict export control system in place to ensure partners and resellers comply with all legal and regulatory requirements involving system security, global trade and customer privacy and the company’s relationship with Huawei is no different.”

Facebook Instagram use dived after photo fiasco

SAN FRANCISCO, 1 Jan—Facebook Inc’s Instagram lost almost a quarter of its daily users a week after it rolled out and then withdrew policy changes that incensed users who feared the photo-sharing service would use their pictures without compensation.

Instagram, which Facebook bought for $715 million this year, saw the number of daily active users who accessed the service via Facebook bottom out at 12.4 million as of Friday, versus a peak of 16.4 million last week, according to data compiled by online tracker AppData.

The popular app, which allows people to add filters and effects to photos and share them over the Internet or smartphones, experienced sharp slide in activity, according to data highlighted by AppData was bound to draw attention on the heels of the controversial revision to Instagram’s terms of service that, among other things, allowed an advertiser to pay Instagram “to display your username, likeness, photos (along with any associated metadata)” without compensation.

The subsequent public outcry prompted an apology from Instagram founder Kevin Systrom. Last week, a California Instagram user sued the company for breach of contract and other claims, in what may have been the first civil lawsuit to stem from the controversial change.

Instagram subsequently reverted to some of its original language.

The move renewed debate about how much control over personal data users must give up to live and participate in a world steeped in social media.

Analysts say Facebook, the world’s largest social network, was laying the groundwork 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.

Its shares closed down 13 cents or 0.5 percent at $25.91 on the Nasdaq, in line with the broader market.

Web China: TV show provides new way for public supervision

WUHAN, 1 Jan—A new TV programme in central China’s Hubei Province is forcing government officials to respond to public complaints under the glare of studio lighting and the unblinking eye of the camera.

During a 17 Dec broadcast, Yang Zefa, director of the food and drug administration of the provincial capital of Wuhan, apologized to the audience after a video clip depicting an illegal food production facility was played before them. Yang then demanded that more than 50 law enforcement officers were dispatched to inspect and close the facility that very evening.

The programme was created by the Wuhan municipal government in order to improve local officials’ work and create a new way for the public to supervise the government.

“We collect stories regarding the public’s top concerns, secretly film the stories and broadcast them live,” said programme staff Liu Zhihong. “The directors of relevant government departments are invited to come on the show to take questions and be assessed by representatives of the public, as well as our commentators. None of them know what will be played on the show before it airs,” Liu said.

The programme, like the microblog accounts that many officials have opened in recent months, allows the public to interact and participate in government affairs. “These officials show another side to the public when they’re on the show. They get embarrassed and委宣传部 when they encounter unexpected questions,” wrote a netizen using the screenname “Guo Wenjing.” “Televisions and the Internet have brought government officials and the general public closer by providing new ways to communicate,” said Shen Yang, a professor at Wuhan University’s School of information management.

New search engine for 11 March archives

The search engine will help users to locate photos, movies and other related documents.

The municipal governments of Fukushima, Miyagi, Iwate and Aomori provided the logging key words for online searches. A symposium will be held in Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture, on 11th January to discuss how to effectively use the digital archives, NIKK.
Senate approves ‘fiscal cliff’ deal, crisis eased

WASHINGTON, 1 Jan— The Senate moved the US economy back from the edge of a “fiscal cliff” on Tuesday, voting to avoid automatic tax hikes and spending cuts in a bipartisan deal that could still face stiff challenges in the House of Representatives.

In a rare New Year’s session at around 2 am EST (0700 GMT), senators voted 89-8 to raise some taxes on the wealthy who cut off automatic permanent low tax rates on the middle class that have been in place for a decade.

But the measure did little to rein in huge annual budget deficits that have helped push the US debt to $16.4 trillion.

The agreement came too late for Congress to meet its own deadline of New Year’s Eve for passing laws to halt $600 billion in tax hikes and spending cuts which strictly apply beginning 12:01 a.m. on Monday.

But with the New Year’s Day holiday, there was no real world impact and Congress still had time to draw up legislation, approve it and backdate it to avoid the harsh fiscal measures.

That week led to the backing of the House where many of the Republicans who control the chamber complain that President Barack Obama has shown little interest in cutting government spending and is too concerned with raising taxes.

All eyes are now on the House which is to hold a session on Tuesday starting at noon (1700 GMT).

Obama called for the House to act quickly and follow the Senate’s lead.

“While neither Democrats nor Republicans got everything they wanted, this agreement is the right thing to do for our country and the House should pass it without delay,” he said in a statement.

“There’s more work to do to reduce our deficits, and I’m willing to do it. But tonight’s agreement ensures that, going forward, we will continue to reduce the deficit through a combination of new spending cuts and new revenues from the wealthiest Americans,” Obama said.

Egypt to finalize talks on IMF loan in January

CAIRO, 1 Jan— Egyptian Prime Minister Hisham Qandil said Egypt would finalize talks on the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan in January, local TV reported on Sunday.

“We hope that there will not be any fundamental changes in our plan with the IMF which covers 4.8 billion US dollars,” said Qandil.

“Egypt will never be bankrupt,” said Qandil, stressing that it is only some Egyptian companies, not the country, that are exposed to bankruptcy. The Prime Minister added that economic problems are the top priorities of the Egyptian government, and it requires swift, procedures to get speedy solutions.

The budget deficit is the most serious economic problem due to the gap between income and expenditure, added Qandil, noting that political problems which caused investors to flee and are the main reason behind the economic problems.

Qandil, who made the remarks at a Press Conference, asserted that the purpose of the conference is to announce a national initiative for economic reform. “There are big challenges in all sectors, which is the nature of any transition period,” he said.

The government solution is to improve the services, provide more job opportunities, and encourage investment.

He added that the government has adopted some measures to solve the economic problems, including raising the prices of some commodities, but the increases would not affect the basic commodities like food and fuel. Qandil affirmed that the poor people would not be influenced by the price hike since subsidies would reach the poor.

Vinyl record sales in Japan double in 2012

TOKYO, 1 Jan— Sales of vinyl records have almost doubled this year in Japan. The Recording Industry Association of Japan says 418,000 vinyl records, worth more than 7 million dollars, were shipped between January and November.

The figure includes imported discs and is about double the total for the whole of last year.

Imports of vinyl records by rock and jazz musicians rock 242,000 copies, or roughly triple last year’s figure. This was mainly due to the demand for albums by the Beatles and other famous groups.

Most people in Japan buy vinyl records as a form of downloads and CDs. Sales have fallen to about half of the peak of 7 billion dollars marked in 1998.

Vinyl records only account for a small portion of total sales, but remain popular with some music fans. An industry expert says people may be buying vinyl records again because they prefer their warm sound.

Cuba patents new lung cancer vaccine

Havana, 1 Jan— Cuba’s Centre for Molecular Immunology (CIM) has patented a new lung cancer vaccine, CIM researcher Ana Maria Vazquez said on Monday.

Vazquez said in a news report, called Racotumomab, was proven in clinical trials this year to increase survival rates among cancer patients, and has shown good safety and tolerance levels.

The vaccine combats lung carcinoma by promoting the death of cancer cells and minimizing the presence of tumours, Vazquez explained.

Racotumomab is the second vaccine developed by CIM against lung cancer after CIMAvax EGF, which has proven effective in helping Cuban patients. Lung cancer is the second-most common type of cancer in Cuba with an estimated 5,000 patients in advanced stages of the disease.

Most Britons cut spending on this Christmas

LONDON, 1 Jan—Over half Britons spent less on Christmas this year than last year, British consumers’ association said on Sunday based on a survey.

Nearly 2,100 adults questioned said they have cut spending this Christmas, with 43 percent having a “significant cut”, the survey conducted between 19 and 21 December showed.

48 percent of these people didn’t buy as much food and 45 percent bought less high quality food than last year because of increasing food prices.

Nearly half of these people used discount cards, over drafts and other borrowing to help fund their purchases, with 22 percent saying they could only afford to pay for Christmas by using credit cards and overdrafts, according to the survey.

Euro shares dip as fiscal cliff deadline nears

LONDON, 1 Jan— World stocks were set to end the year up 15 percent but dipped on Monday as US politicians prepared for last-minute talks to avoid a fiscal cliff of spending cuts and tax hikes that could drag down the world economy.

In Washington, the two political parties are set to hold further talks to try and find a way to avoid the $600 billion “fiscal cliff” due to kick in from the start of January.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid said the Senate would resume sitting on Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. Washington time on Monday (1600 GMT), to continue discussions, but there was no expectation of significant differences between the two sides.

After a subdued day in Asia, where Japan’s Nikkei as well as a number of other indexes had already shut for the year, European stock markets opened fractionally lower.

The pan-European FTSEurofirst 300 .FTEU3, which has risen roughly 16 percent this year, was down 0.1 percent as London’s FTSE .FTSE and the Paris CAC 40. FCHI both started the day depressed and we’re going to recover from this the start of January.

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Pakistan frees four senior Afghan Taleban leaders

ISLAMABAD, 1 Jan—Pakistan on Monday released four senior Afghan Taleban leaders including their former Justice Minister Mullah Nurenuddin Turabi, a senior official said. Pakistan has freed 21 Afghan Taleban figures in less than two months at the request of the Afghan government.

Pakistan released 13 Taleban detainees last month during the visit of Afghan peace envoy, the late Taj Muhammad Rabbani, to push the peace process forward.

“Pakistan released four Taleban leaders on Monday,” a senior foreign ministry official said. He requested not to be identified.

Afghan embassy sources also confirmed the release of their prisoners by Pakistan. Apart from Mullah Turabi, Pakistan also freed former Taleban Minister of Communications Allah Mullah Nuroddin Turabi, a former Taleban Minister, Pakistan also freed their prisoners by Pakistan.

Taleban detainees last month from the Afghan government.

Xinhua

2012 most expensive year for motorists

NEW YORK, 1 Jan—The average gasoline price in 2012 was a record-high $3.60 a gallon, topping the previous high of $3.51 in 2011, travel group AAA said on Monday. The AAA blamed refinery outages, major hurricanes and unrest in the Middle East for the rise.

Drivers in states like Hawaii, Alaska, California and New York paid the highest prices. However, the price fell to $3.30 a gallon in December, the lowest monthly average for the year, AAA said.—Reuters

Premier extends New Year greetings to quake-hit residents

BEIJING, 1 Jan—Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has extended New Year greetings to people in a quake-hit area in Qinghai Province and urged the local government to finish the reconstruction programme “without regret.”

Wen made the remarks during his visit on New Year’s Eve to the Geyu township of Qinghai’s Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture where a 7.1-magnitude earthquake killed more than 2,000 people living on the mountainous plateau on 14, 2010. It was the third trip by Premier Wen to Yushu after the disaster. His previous two visits were soon after the quake in 2010.

“I could hardly believe my eyes when I came to Yushu again,” Premier Wen said. “A new and promising Yushu is rising up. The reconstruction programme will soon be complete and we must carry out the last-minute work well and finish it without regret.”

Most of the residents who lost their homes after the quake have moved into newly built residential buildings. Public facilities, including a square to commemorate Tibetan King Gesar, have been renovated, and education and healthcare services have been restored.

The more than 800-year-old Damkar Monastery was severely damaged in the earthquake. Premier Wen visited the monastery’s newly built scripture hall and clergy’s residence.

Wen told the clergy that he had been concerned about people in the quake-hit area, especially the Tibetans and clergy, and he was happy to see the monasteries completely renovated.

“Premier Wen extended New Year greetings to quake-hit residents. He said the government has created good conditions for many people living in Tibetan areas who are Buddhists.” Wen said.

“A monastery should be a clean and honest place where the clergy abide by the establishment’s regulations and build a positive social image,” Wen said.

Two quakes strike New Zealand’s North Island

WELLINGTON, 1 Jan—Two earthquakes hit the Taranaki region, in the western part of New Zealand’s North Island, in the early hours of New Year’s Day, causing little damage.

The first was magnitude 5.0, which hit at 3.11 am local time on Tuesday, at a depth of five km. New Zealand governmental geological agency GNS Science reported that it occurred 30 km north-west of Opunake.

The second struck half an hour later, with a 4.3-magnitude shake hitting at 3.42 am.

The second quake was centred 25 km north-west of Opunake at a depth of six km. Local residents were woken by the shakes, which lasted about 20 seconds.

There have been a number of smaller aftershocks throughout the morning in the area.—Xinhua

Iran test-fires missiles, torpedoes in naval drill

TIBERIAN, 1 Jan—Iranian Navy test-fired short-range and medium-range missiles as well as torpedoes “successfully” in ongoing naval drill on Monday.

On the fourth day of a six-day massive naval drill dubbed Velayat 91, or Guardianship 91, which started on Friday in Iran’s southern waters, Iranian Navy “successfully” test-fired the latest version of the home-made surface-to-air Ra’d (Thunder) missile, Press TV on Monday cited an official as saying.

The spokesman for the drill, Rear Admiral Amir Rastegari, said the earlier version of Ra’d missile had been modified by Iranian experts and installed on warships.

The new Ra’d missile could strike medium-range aerial targets, Rastegari said.

Iranian Naval forces test-fired short-range and medium-range missiles as well as torpedoes in ongoing naval drill on Monday.

Press TV reported.

Meanwhile, Iran’s naval units chased the enemy’s vessels while launching heavy missile attacks against the hostile forces, according to the report.

Vahidi reiterated that new features will be added to the missile in the near future so that it can also be launched from helicopters and submarines.

According to Iran’s Navy test-fired state-of-the-art torpedoes by hitting and destroying targets during the fourth day of its naval drill, Fancy This Progression in the opening act for the song Wake Me Up When December Ends.

In the towns like Woodlands and Tampines, people exchanged their best wishes as it came to the year 2013. Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said in his New Year message earlier on Monday that it is very important to keep the focus on the issue of population, which is “fundamentally about maintaining a strong Singaporean core.”

“We have to find effective ways to encourage Singaporeans to have more babies, and consider how many new immigrants to take in. We must keep our economy competitive and create good jobs for Singaporeans, and understand the mix and size of our labour force to support such an economy,” he said.

Xinhua

Iranian Coptics targeted in bomb attack in Misrata

Egyptian Coptic church in Misrata, local security official quoted as saying.

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Xinhua

Customers wait in line for gas at a Hess fuelling station in Brooklyn, New York, on 9 Nov, 2012.—Reuters
Yamethin Township facilitated with three GSM towers

Yamethin, 1 Jan—Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications has erected three GSM towers in Theingon Model Village, Ywadan Village and Yamethin for enabling the local people to have easy access to telecommunication facilities in Yamethin Township of Mandalay Region. As part of poverty alleviation, the government allowed sales of GSM mobile phones to the people through installment system. In Yamethin Township, a total of 4000 GSM mobile phones have been rented to the local people from 68 wards and villages of the township up to 20 December.

Myanma Alinn

Free medical treatment given in Shwepyitha Township

Shwepyitha, 1 Jan—The free medical team of Yangon Region Sasana Nuggaha Association provided medical treatments to monks, novices and people at Mahawsiikrayon Monastery in Ward 19 of Shwepyitha Township, Yangon Region, on 28 December morning.

A 22-member medical team included paediatrician Dr Yuzana Saw Myint, GP Dr Khin Than Nwe, eight surgeons and Secretary of the Region Association U Aung Thin gave free medical treatment to members of the Sangha and local people. Wardsmen, ward administrator U Aung Moe and NGOs provided necessary assistance to the medical team.

Myanma Alinn

Evidences of illegal lottery seized

Pyapon, 1 Jan—The authorities concerned searched the house of Thein Zaw on Yadana Street in Ward 7 of Pyapon on 15 December and seized 22 ledger books for illegal two-digit lottery, eight sheets of illegal lottery ledger, 378 sheets of illegal lottery vouchers and K 504,540.

Pyapon Police Station opened a file of lawsuit against him under the law. Acting on a tip-off, SIP Tin Lin Aung of Hinthada Crime Combating Squad, policemen and SIP medical treatments to monks, novices and people at Mahawsiikrayon Monastery in Ward 19 of Shwepyitha Township, Yangon Region, on 28 December morning.

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Myanma Alinn

Sanitation carried out in Lanmadaw Township

Yangon, 1 Jan—Under the supervisions of Yangon West District and Lanmadaw Township Development Affairs Committees, sanitation tasks were carried on 11th street in Ward 5 of Lanmadaw Township of Yangon Region on 29 December.

Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Yangon Region Minister for Development Affairs Mayor of Yangon U Hla Myint and YCDC members together with heads of department inspected the sanitation tasks for cleaning of the street and proper flow of drains.

About 100 workers of the committee together with local people participated in sanitation tasks with the use of garbage vans.

Myanma Alinn

Talks on Independence Day held in Dawei

Dawei, 1 Jan—An educative talk on Independence Day was given at Nursing Training School in Dawei of Taninthayi Region on 26 December.

Assistant Director Daw Ni Ni Cho, Head of Region Information and Public Relations Department, gave lectures on independence struggles and raising of reading habit.

After that, the assistant director of the department donated books and publications to an official.

The educative talk was also attended by trainees of the school and enthusiastic local people.

Myanma Alinn

YANGON, 1 Jan—As transport of rice and broken rice is lesser from Delta to Yangon due to declining prices of rice and broken rice in the market, the bus fares for rice bags fall to K 600 from K 650 and then to K 500, said highway bus owners in Pathein of Ayeyawady Region recently.

However, the charge of transport for rice still reaches K 700 per bag from Hinthada to Yangon by car and K 70 per bag from downtown Hinthada to Ayeyawady Jetty.

Sarpotaung, Pankyaos and other strains of rice cultivated in wetland of Hinthada Region are marketable due to its price at K 10000 per bag.

Myanma Alinn
New democracy nation...

(from page 1)

Cooperation with IMF

A delegation from IMF visited Myanmar from 19 October to 1 November. IMF stated in a press release released that it would make cooperation in adopting the policies for foreign currency exchange system.

Signature of preliminary peace agreement

On 3 November, Kavin State Peace-Making group signed five-point preliminary agreement with Kalohtoobaw group (former DKBA) in Hpa-an.

Conveyance of Sacred Buddha Tooth Relic

On 6 November, the sacred Buddha Tooth Relic from China was conveyed to Myanmar.

ASEAN Chairmanship in 2014

Obama recognizes the new Myanmar government

US President Obama recognized the new Myanmar government and Hlintaws’ democratization process, at 19th Summit held in Bali of Indonesia on 18 November. Opening of Ayeyawady Bridge (Nyaungdon)

Hill Clinton’s first-ever visit to Myanmar

US Secretary of State Hill Clinton paid a high-profile visit to Myanmar on 1 December. It is the first US Secretary of State’s visit to Myanmar in 50 years. She said that US wants to be partnership with Myanmar. Discussion with the Bangledeshi Prime Minister

Hillary Clinton’s first-ever visit to Myanmar

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Solar panels light up Payataung Village in Ottarathiri Tsp

NAY PYI TAW, 1 Jan—

As Payataung Village in Ottarathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area yesterday held a ceremony to launch distribution of electricity with the use of solar panels, Deputy Minister for Cooperatives U Than Tun, Nay Pyi Taw Council Member Dr Than Aung and Amyotha Hluttaw Representative U Khin Maung Htay formally opened it, and Union Minister at President Office Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman U Thein Nyunt launched the supply.

A total of 11 solar panels (250Watt/220(Watt) and 22 batteries (250 Ah/100 Ah 12 V) generate electricity for 282 houses, 76 lamp-posts, five monasteries, village administrator’s office and library.

The amount of electricity supply costs over K 39 million.

The received electricity from 6 pm to 10 pm and 4 am to 5.30 am, totally about five hours daily.—MNA

Why we celebrate Independence Day every year is to cherish and safeguard independence!

Myay Zar

New Light of Myanmar

Pursue holistic approach in democracy transition

Myanmar has become a social phenomena in the international community through its bold initiatives in the move to democracy. There is high expectation of change in all sectors of the economic and social spectrum. Mutual trust and understanding between the government and the people is instrumental factor for success of Myanmar’s democracy transition.

By nature, people aspire to the best. They have the right to express their desires or hopes. But the most important thing for the entire society is to shape the promising future through ongoing reform process. Towards this end, all the people are to exercise due diligence in fostering the free and transparent situation.

Meanwhile, we are to strive for flourishing of realistic positive attitude and negotiated political culture without taking an extreme view in facing possible challenges ahead.

In democracy transition, necessary institutions such as finance, education and health would be introduced and further down the line will be and large be put in place in the country. Myanmar would do everything in its power to try to achieve this end within a fair short of time frame.

As the country is facing the risk of lacking a skilled workforce, having a skilled and socially responsible labour is essential.

Introduction of democratic practices in the country which is still in initial stage of democracy is an intricate, complex and involved process. But none of the setbacks could dampen it from possible challenges ahead.

The received electricity through solar panels was conveyed to Myanmar.

They are put out to tender for rural water supply tasks

NAY PYI TAW, 1 Jan—

“A total of 420 kinds of rural water supply tasks are put out to tender for implementation of rural development tasks,” said Chairman of Central Committee for Tender Scrutiny Deputy Minister for Border Affairs Maj-Gen Zaw Win, at the tender scrutiny meeting of Rural Region Development Department, at the Ministry here this morning.

Member of Tender Scrutiny Central Committee the director-general of Rural Development Department explained the future tasks.—MNA

YCDC accepts donation of two platform

YANGON, 1 Jan—

A ceremony to donate two Platform Trucks by Myanmar Pipes & Accessories Co Ltd to Yangon City Development Committee was held at City Hall here this morning. The managing director of the company donated the facilities to Yangon Region Minister for Development Affairs Chairman of YCDC Yangon Mayor U Hla Myint.

A platform truck manufactured by Japan is worth K 41 million.—MNA

Action speaks louder than words.
Some were even predicting the arrival of the final chapter of human civilization referring to Mayan calendar that ended on the day which was exactly the 21st of December 2012. But nothing even big or extraordinary occurred on that day let alone the destruction of the whole world by something like a large meteorite, mega volcanic explosions, the Sun’s evil twin brother “Nemesis”, a planetarium head-on collision or an all-out nuclear war.

The day was just like other ordinary days in which certain parts of the world saw ongoing civil wars, unexpected natural disasters, strikes, joys, sorrows, economic progress or economic decline. It was nothing more extraordinary than any other days of the year which had just said goodbye to us all.

They are just prophecies or beliefs of some quarters of the world. Who will even believe these when their final moment faced large-scale destructions in which many species were totally or almost wiped out and ecosystems vanished at certain times all along her history. The world saw mass extinctions of species in Ordovician–Silurian extinction event (450–440 million years ago); Late Devonian extinction (about 374 million years ago); Permian–Triassic extinction event (around 252.8 million years ago); Triassic–Jurassic extinction event (roughly 200 million years ago); and Cretaceous–Palaeogene extinction event (approximately 65.5 million years ago). But these events could not end the world.

Anyhow, mother Earth survived, and continues her existence till now despite the dreadful blows it suffered.

Here doomsday theory is another matter. It may be caused by high tsunamis or extraordinary earthquakes or mammoth volcanic eruptions or unimagined cyclones or the disappearance of Earth’s magnetic field which is protecting dreadful solar flares that hit the Earth on Mars or the return of the Nemesis or meteorite impact. In fact, we concern more about our future as we have already ushered into another very recently which according to the colander is 2013. And it is not our end, just another beginning. It may continue to usher in many more new years in the future.

Actually, these unforeseen external and internal forces may come or may not come. No one can ascertain. What is sure is that we have the past, the present, and the future. The past is over, but it really happened once. In fact, it’s like a dream. When we dream we feel as it is really happening. And when we wake up, we come to realize that it’s nothing, but a just a dream. Yes, it all happened yesterday. But it leaves behind emotions and repercussions that have much impact on us.

In point of fact, the present is where we are, and the future is where we are expecting or want to be. We know our past, but we don’t know where we are exactly in the present. No one knows how the world will end. They have their own night and day. We love them, and we admire them.

The past, the present, and the future. If we are doing our best at present, and just see the past as the lesson we should learn we can see a brighter future. And if we fail to do so, our future will be dim, and the past will be more painful.

Accordingly, we can say the past or yesterday is just dreams and the future or tomorrow is a vision. As the present is where we are, we actually are living between dreams and visions. As a result, we must make our vision brighter and dreams more beautiful. The only and best way is we all try with our finest performances so that we can have the most optimistic future and sweetest dreams ever as a Sanskrit saying which goes, “Yesterday is but a dream and tomorrow is only a vision. But today well-lived makes all the days that are before more enviable, and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day.”

Dy C&T Minister visits GSM/UMTS mobile stations in Bago Region (West)

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Jan—Deputy Minister for Communications and Information Technology U Thaung Tin inspected functions of Thayawady Post Office, GSM/UMTS mobile stations in Nawnin satellite ward in Pyay and Ywabe Taungbaw GSM/UMTS mobile station, Pyay Auto-Exchange and Region Manager Office in Bago Region (West) yesterday. MNA

Courses conducted at UMFCCI conclude

Yangon, 1 Jan—Organized by Human Resources Work Committee of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Certificate Course for Office Management No. 10, Certificate Course for Practical Approach to International Trade No. 8, Certificate Course for Systematic Distribution and Management No. 6, Basic Certificate Course for Sales and Marketing No. 4, Certificate Course for Business English No. 8, Certificate Course for Human Resource Management No. 4, Certificate Course for Financial Management No. 4 and Certificate Course for Japanese Language No. 7 concluded at the federation on 29 December. UMFCCI President U Win Aung spoke on the occasion. Chairman of Work Committee Dr Myo Thet explained the purposes of opening the courses. The outstanding trainees’ awards and completion certificates were presented to trainees. MNA

New primary school building handed over in Thegon

Thegon, 1 Jan—A ceremony to donate the new school building of Tatywa Basic Education Primary School was held at the school in Tatywa Village of Thegon Township, Pyay District, on 27 December. Sitagu Saydaw Dr Bhaddanta Ashin Nanissara gave Odakathaka on donations and handed over the documents related to the new school building to Deputy Director U Win Myint of Bago Region Education Director (Pyay)’s Office.

The new school building was donated by Sitagu Saydaw Dr Bhaddanta Ashin Nanissara.—Myanmar Alinn

KIA attacks food convoy with small arms

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Jan—As KIA has been attacking the routes linking Putao District where the population is dominated by Rawan people, local people are facing high commodity prices and food scarcity. The Tatmadaw and Kachin State government thus in cooperation are transporting foodstuff to the region.

At the fifth regular session of First Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, U Thein Zaw of Myitkyina Constituency and U Yaw D Dwe of Putao Constituency explained the purposes of opening the courses. The outstanding trainees’ awards and completion certificates were presented to trainees. MNA

KIA attacks crew to repair power grid

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Jan—KIA group attacked 66 KV power grid between Myitkyina and Wainmgaw Township on 24 December, causing electricity outage in Myitkyina. KIA also attacked maintenance crew with three vehicles bound to repair the power grid. The Tatmadaw in repairing damaged roads and bridges due to the mine attacks of KIA.

KIA members attacked the food convoy with small arms moving from Kayawwan Village of Sumprabum Township to Putao on 28 December afternoon and retreated following the counterattack on security forces. In the incident, a staff member from the convoy was wounded.

KIA has also committed 101 mine attacks in Kachin State and from 18 May, 2011 to 21 December 2012, the loss from mine blasts at railroads amounted to K 22020250.43. In addition, 22 units of State-owned machinery like loaders, graders, rollers, dozers, excavators and tampers at such construction sites on Myitkyina-Sumpabrum-Putao Road as Inkawma Station, Satka Station, Kawa Station, Nankhamka Village Station and Kagayan Station were destroyed by the bomb attacks of KIA, leaving K 663.350 million loss.

KIA attacks convoy of security forces in July 2011, damaging the vehicles and tools. The crew withdrew to Myitkyina and could not still repair the power grid. The power supply cannot be resumed.—MNA

New Light of Myanmar

Yestday, today and tomorrow

Tin Maung Than

Wednesday, 2 January, 2013

9
Clinton has blood clot in head, full recovery expected

WASHINGTON, 1 Jan—US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has a blood clot between her brain and skull behind the right ear, her doctors said on Monday. However, they predicted that she should make a full recovery.

The Sunday check on Clinton indicated that there is a blood clot “in the vein that is situated in the space between the brain and the skull behind the right ear,” her doctors said in a statement.

They noted that the chief US diplomat has not suffered any “stroke or neurological damage.”

Clinton is making “excellent progress” in her recovery, said the doctors, adding that “they are confident she will make a full recovery.” Clinton’s spokesman Philippe Reines said on Sunday night that she was hospitalized with blood clot, but has been treated with anti-coagulant.

Reines said Clinton is being treated at the New York–Presbyterian Hospital and she will be staying there for some 48 hours in order to allow her doctor to determine if any further action is needed.

Clinton has encountered a number of health problems recently. On 15 Dec, she fainted and hit her head, consequently sustaining a concussion.

Prior to that, she canceled her scheduled trip to North Africa and the Middle East due to a stomach virus. Clinton, 65, has said she will step down as secretary of state when President Barack Obama finishes his first term. Obama has tapped Democratic Senator John Kerry as her successor.

Chinese, Antigua and Barbuda leaders mark 30 years of ties

BEIJING, 1 Jan—Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao exchanged congratulatory messages on Tuesday with Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Baldwin Spencer to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

In his message, Wen said relations between China and Antigua and Barbuda have been increasingly consolidated in the past 30 years.

The two countries have witnessed enhanced political mutual trust, fruitful cooperation in economy and trade, infrastructure and culture, and sound coordination on international affairs, he said.

Facts proved that amity between China and Antigua and Barbuda conforms to the fundamental interests of both countries and peoples, Wen said.

Greece welcomes New Year with wishes for exit from debt crisis

ATHENS, 1 Jan—Greece welcomed the New Year with wishes for a swift exit from the severe debt crisis which has brought hardship to Greek people over the past three years.

Amped painful austerity and recession political leaders and citizens on the streets of Athens and across the country exchanged wishes for an imminent return to growth in the coming months and a better future for suffering Greek peoples.

Despite gloomy forecasts by experts that 2013 will be also difficult for Greece, Athenians and foreign visitors sent their messages for brighter days to come from the pedestrian road under the illuminated Acropolis hill. As the City’s Philharmonic Band and local music groups performed traditional songs, spectators embraced each other wishing the entire world all the best during the New Year.

Celebrations in Athens ran on a limited budget due to the crisis for a third year in a row. However, Greeks faced 2013 with plenty of decisiveness to continue the struggle to tackle problems and rebuild the ailing economy despite wide-spread pessimism.

“I am absolutely certain that we can reverse the current situation... that this adventure will end,” Greek President Karolos Papoulias stressed in his message for New Year’s Eve.

New York City breaks tourism record for third straight year

NEW YORK, 1 Jan—Some 52 million visitors travelled to New York City in 2012 in a third straight record-breaking year for tourism, the mayor’s office and the city’s tourism organization said on Monday.

More than a million additional tourists visited to New York in 2012 than in 2011, a 2.1 percent increase, Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s office and NYC & Company, New York’s tourism and marketing organization, said in a news release.

New York received 41 million visitors from elsewhere in the United States, and 11 million travelled from a foreign country. The tourists spent $36.9 billion directly and generated an estimated economic impact of $55.3 billion.

The city set a goal of welcoming 55 million visitors by 2015, Bloomberg said on Monday in a news release. The old goal of attracting 50 million visitors by 2012 was surpassed a year early, according to Chris Heywood of NYC & Co, the city’s tourism and marketing organization.

New York has seen a record number of tourists each year since 2002 with the exception of 2009. Heywood said.

The record-breaking figures were announced on a day when more than one million revelers were expected to ring in the New Year by packing Times Square to watch the famous ball drop, according to cable television news channel NY1.

The growing number of visitors to New York also reflected the current boom in tourism across the globe. A record 1 billion travellers visited a foreign country in 2012, according to the World Travel & Tourism Council.

Zambia’s wildlife management chief fired over hunting safaris

LUSSAKA, 1 Jan—The head of a government institution that manages Zambia’s wildlife has been fired after irregularities were identified in the awarding of safari hunting licenses to some companies, the Post of Zambia reported on Monday.

Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) Director-General Edwin Matokwani has been fired together with four other senior officials for irregularities in the awarding of the 10-year safari hunting licenses while the licenses have since been revoked.

Minister of Tourism and Art Sylvia Masebo said there were several irregularities in the awarding of the safari hunting concession in 19 hunting blocs in various game management areas, which would not be tolerated.

“Contrary to the tender rules, there was a leakage of information during evaluation process to prospective bidders long before the process was completed. This in itself rendered the whole evaluation process not credible in the eyes of stakeholders and the general public, “she was quoted as saying by the paper. According to her, some companies which submitted bids in the tender process and were subsequently approved should have been considered as associate firms with cross shareholding and had directors related to one another, contrary to tender rules.

Out of the 19 advertised licenses, 13 were awarded to Zambians with foreign origins while only one was given to an indigenous Zambian, she added.

The irregularities in the awarding of the safari hunting licenses causes some stakeholders to petition Zambian President Michael Sata so that he could intervene and reverse the move.

Following the petition, the wildlife body re-advertised the tender for the granting of 19 safari hunting licenses in various game management areas.
Beijing air quality improves for 14th consecutive year

BEIJING, 1 Jan—Beijing’s air quality has improved for 14 straight years, with major pollutants down in the city, a municipal government spokesman said on Monday.

The annual average concentration of major pollutants PM10 (particulate matter under 10 micrometres in diameter) and nitrogen dioxide dropped by 4 percent year on year in 2012, said Fang Li, spokesman for the municipal environmental protection bureau.

“The biggest challenge for air quality control in Beijing is the increase of pollutants,” said Fang. “We can only improve air quality by making sure that pollution outpaces are closed down in the city’s growing population, as well as an increasing number of cars and construction projects, as problems for improving air quality.

Replacing coal with natural gas has reduced the consumption of coal by 700,000 tonnes last year, Fang said, adding that 122 heavily polluting companies were closed as well.—Xinhua

Over hundred infect norovirus in Japanese Yokohama

TOKYO, 1 Jan—More than a hundred people have infected norovirus at a hospital in Japan’s Yokohama, municipal officials said on Monday.

A total of 112 people, including 82 patients and 30 staff, at the Yokohama Denencho Hospital have been infected, with symptoms of vomiting and diarrhoea, caused by the infectious virus by Monday morning, local media reported on Sunday.

Kyodo News, Japan’s national news agency, said local government has urged local governments to pay attention to the epidemic.

Meanwhile, Maebashi city in Gunma Prefecture also reported a senior female, who was detected positive to the virus test, died at a nursing home, according to Kyodo. —Xinhua

Indonesian capital imposes car free night for new year’s eve celebrations

JAKARTA, 1 Jan—Capital city of Indonesia, Jakarta, applied car free night due to new year’s eve celebrations, local media reported on Monday.

The celebration is named Jakarta Night Festival (JNF). Governor of Jakarta, Joko Widodo, will lead the countdown of new year of 2013.

According to Kompas.com, due to the celebration, main streets in Jakarta will be closed for vehicles from 8:00 pm on Monday to 2:00 am on Tuesday.

Around 5 parking areas were set for people who want to enjoy JNF.

The local government built 16 stages for JNF, which are prepared for many top artists and art performers.

Fireworks display is also planned to be part of the entertainment.—Xinhua

S Korea’s welfare spending to top 30 pct of budget in 2013

SEOUL, 1 Jan—South Korea planned to spend the highest portion of budget on public welfare next year amid the president-elect Park Geun-hye’s pledge to increase social spending.

The special budget committee under the South Korea’s National Assembly tentatively agreed on Sunday for the 2013 budget of 342.7 trillion won (321.94 billion US dollars), up 0.2 trillion from the preliminary budget plan proposed in September by the government.

The committee’s lawmakers from both ruling and opposition parties agreed to increase 4.3 trillion won next year on public welfare spending instead of reducing 4.1 trillion won in social overhead capital (SOC) expenditure. Among the total, 97.1 trillion won will be allotted to social welfare expenditure and additional 5.5 trillion won will be spent on public welfare projects.

The figure breached the 100 trillion won mark for the first time in the country’s history and the expected 3 trillion won increase will raise the proportion of the public welfare budget to the total to top the 30 percent mark for the first time.

The record level of budget for public welfare came after Park’s campaign pledge to increase social spending.—Xinhua

Seven dead in central China road accident

WUHAN, 1 Jan—Seven people, including two children, were killed and five others injured after a head-on collision between a minibus and an SUV Sunday afternoon in central China’s Hubei Province.

The minibus collided with the SUV at around 3:00 pm on a section of National Highway 106 in Tingshan County of Xianning City. The icy road due to days of snow and sleet contributed to the collision, a local government spokesman said on Monday morning.

Seven died at the scene. The five injured were rushed to a local hospital for treatment, the spokesman said. The cause of the accident is under investigation. —Xinhua
Central African Republic rebels threaten to enter capital

BANGUI, 1 Jan—Rebels in Central African Republic could enter the capital Bangui as early as “tonight, or tomorrow morning” if President Francois Bozize refuses their conditions for peace talks, a rebel spokesman said on Sunday. The three-week-old Seleka rebellion has advanced to within 75 km (45 miles) of Bangui, posing the most serious threat yet to Bozize’s nearly 10 years in charge of the turbulent and resource-rich former French colony. AfricanUnionChairman Thomas Yayi Boni is due to meet Bozize on Sunday to lay the groundwork for peace talks in Gabon with Seleka, an alliance of three armed groups that accuses Bozize of failing to honour a 2007 deal under which members who laid down their guns were meant to be paid.

Dubai ruler urges citizens to honour low-class workers

DUBAI, 1 Jan—Dubai’s rulingEmirSheikh Mohamed bin Rashid al-Maktoum on Sunday urged citizens to give gifts to blue-collar workers in the sheikhdom to celebrate the seventh anniversary of his ruling on 4 Jan, 2013.

23 people hospitalized for gas poisoning in Istanbul

ANKARA, 1 Jan—At least 23 people were hospi-
talized for gas poisoning in a hotel in the Turkish larg-
est city of Istanbul early Monday, local newspaper Today’s Zaman reported on its website. About 21 of the poisoned are foreign tour-
ists and two are employees in Modern Sultan Hotel in Fatih District of Istanbul, according to the report. Ambulances were de-
ployed to the hotel, said the report, adding that some of the poisoned people were unconscious.

Four tourists were in critical condition, added the report, firefighter and gas experts were sent to the hotel to avoid further accident due to gas leak.—Xinhua

Israel eases ban on building material for Gaza

Gaza, 1 Jan—Israel eased its blockade of Gaza on Sunday, allowing a shipment of gravel for private construction into the Palestinian territory for the first time since Hamas seized control in 2007.

A Palestinian official with knowledge of an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire that ended eight days of fighting last month between Israel and Gazamilitants said the move had been expected as part of the deal.

“This is the first time gravel has been allowed into Gaza for the Palestinian private sector since the blockade,” said Raed Fattouh, the Palestinian official overseeing the shipment of 20 truckloads of the material.

Israel tightened the blockade after Hamas, an Islamist group that refuses to recognize the Jewish state, took power five years ago. But under international pressure, Israel began to ease the restrictions in 2010 and has allowed international aid agencies to import construction material.

The gravel was transferred a day after Egypt allowed building material into Gaza through its Rafah crossing, departing from a six-year ban. It was part of a shipment donated by the Gulf Arab state of Qatar, which has pledged $400 million to finance reconstruction.

Gaza economists say nearly 70 percent of the enclave’s commercial needs—including building material and fuel—were being met through shipments via Israel and a network of smuggling tunnels running under the Egyptian border.

One Palestinian official said Israeli counterparts had promised “other building items” would be allowed into Gaza in the coming days.

“Ir is has promised to ease the blockade more if the truce continues to hold,” said the official, who asked not to be identified.—Reuters
London, 1 Jan—The Silver Linings Playbook star thinks she is a pushover and wants to learn how to be more assertive without upsetting other people.

She told Marie Claire South Africa’s January 2013 issue: “My New Year’s Resolution is to stand up for myself. It’s hard for me. Nobody wants to be disliked. You always want to be polite and be nice. I tried to find a balance in saying what I mean and still being nice. I can’t do it. I have this ‘okay’ attitude and everything. I end up allowing myself to get walked over and resenting it.”

Jennifer, 22—who is dating British actor Nicholas Hoult—also revealed she prefers staying at home rather than having wild nights out.

She said: “I don’t like going out that much. I’m kind of an old lady. After it’s 11pm, I’m like ‘Don’t these kids ever get tired?’ When I’m out, I think about my couch.”

While the stunning star has been blasted for her curvy figure, Jennifer has no plans to lose weight. She added: “I’d rather look chubby on screen and like person in real life.”—PTI

Elvis Presley, The Beatles top list of most-forged autographs

Los Angeles, 1 Jan—Elvis Presley and The Beatles top the list of most-forged celebrity signatures in 2012, with less than half of their autographs for sale certified as genuine, memorabilia authenticators PSA/DNA said on Thursday. The King and The Fab Four British rockers, who topped the list two years ago when it was last released, joined notable figures such as former US President John F Kennedy and late pop star Michael Jackson on the list of most-forged celebrity signatures.

Late American astronaut Neil Armstrong landed at No 3 on the list, after fake Armstrong signatures rose significantly after his death in July. One reason forgeries of Armstrong’s autograph soared was that he rarely signed for fans during his life. Joe Orlando, president of Newport Beach-based PSA/DNA, told Reuters.

“Armstrong is someone who is very conscious of the value of his own autograph,” Orlando said. “Even before he passed away he was very tough to get...It really heightens the level of his market.” Secretaries and assistants responding to huge volumes of fan mail are one reason for fake signatures floating through the marketplace, said Margaret Barrett, director of entertainment and music memorabilia at Heritage Auctions in Los Angeles.

“Back in the day, the kids would write to the movie studios,” Barrett said.

“There was absolutely no financial gain 50 years ago and secretaries and assistants just wanted to make them happy. A lot of times people stumble upon an old box of signed photographs in grandma’s attic and don’t know they’re forged.”

Barrett, whose specialty is late Hollywood actress Marilyn Monroe’s autographs, said that official documents such as contracts and checks are reliable sources to verify whether or not a signature is forged.

“A good rule of thumb is to compare it a signed contract,” she said. “Sometimes (celebrities) would have secretaries or other sign photos and letters but they couldn’t have a contract signed by a proxy.”

Reuters
**New Light of Myanmar**

**SPORTS**

**Brisbane, 1 Jan—**

Caroline Wozniacki’s preparations for the Australian Open were in tatters on Monday after she was bundled out of the Brisbane International by Kazakhstan’s world No 103 Ksenia Pervak.

Wozniacki’s defeat completed a disastrous 12 months in which the Dane relinquished the No 1 ranking and failed to threaten at any of the major championships.

The world No 10 started strongly but wilted as Pervak, a 21-year-old qualifier on the comeback trail from a serious pelvic injury, committed 16 muscular injuries in the third set.

“You know, I’m still 10 in the world,” she said. “Just the most important thing is that you’re healthy. I had some struggles with my health. Obviously that makes a difference.

“But as long as I’m healthy and I can fight and be competitive, that is the most important thing.

“You play the sport you love to do, and obviously it’s more fun when you’re winning. Right now in these situations it’s not so much fun. There is always the next week—I guess that’s the good part about tennis.”

Wozniacki, sporting a ring on her wedding finger, downplayed speculation she was engaged to the golfer Rory McIlroy, who was among the spectators on Monday.

“It was a Christmas present and it fit on this finger,” she said. “I put it on, and all of a sudden I hear that I’m engaged. I’m not. It’s already twice we’ve had to shut down engagement rumours.

“Don’t worry, we will let you know if that time happens. We’re just taking one day at a time.”.—Reuters

**AC Milan’s Brazilian players Pato (R) and Robinho celebrate after winning the Italian Serie A title at the end of their match against AS Roma at the Olympic stadium in Rome on 7 May, 2011.**

AC Milan’s Brazilian players Pato (R) and Robinho celebrate after winning the Italian Serie A title at the end of their match against AS Roma at the Olympic stadium in Rome on 7 May, 2011. **Reuters**

**Milan hoping to keep Robinho or Pato**

**Milan, 1 Jan—**

AC Milan are still hoping to keep at least one of their two unsettled Brazilian strikers, Alexandre Pato and Robinho, club president Silvio Berlusconi said in a radio interview on Monday.

Pato is involved in negotiations for a move to world club champions Corinthians and Robinho has also been the subject of speculation over a return home with his former club Santos among the contenders.

“I hope that only one of them leaves,” Berlusconi told Radio Lombardia. “I’m especially sorry about Pato because until he started this incredible sequence of injuries, he was Milan’s number one player for the future, a true champion.

“Pato, signed as a 17-year-old and now 23, has suffered an extraordinary 16 muscular injuries in the last two years, costing him, among other things, a place in Brazil’s squad at the 2010 World Cup.

Brazilian media have reported that he has agreed terms to join Corinthians in a deal that is expected to be finalised on Thursday.

Robinho, 28, has played for Real Madrid, Manchester City and Milan since leaving Santos in 2005, although there is a general feeling in Brazil he has never quite lived up to his early potential.

Berlusconi added that it could be two or three seasons before Milan are in the fight for honours again after they sold several top players including Sweden striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic to cut costs.

“We must devote ourselves to a work of rebuilding and I believe will not be less than three years before we get to the point where we have a team champions and turn ourselves into contenders again,” he said.

Milan, reportedly among the clubs signing to sign Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba, are seventh in Serie A and have reached the last 16 of the Champions League.

**Deportivo look to Domingos for La Liga survival**

**Madrid, 1 Jan—**

Survival in La Liga is the priority for new Deportivo La Coruna coach Domingos Paciencia, who was appointed to replace the sacked Jose Luis Oltra on Monday.

“His important for Depor to stay in the Primera division and for this we need the commitment of everyone,” Domingos told a news conference after agreeing to take charge of La Liga’s bottom club until the end of the season.

“It is a tough job but I like those, and it is for that reason I am here.”

The former Portuguese international, who turns 44 on Wednesday, led Braga to second in the Portuguese league in 2010, and his side beat Liverpool on their way to the final of the Europa League the following season, where they lost to Porto.

He moved to Sporting last year, but despite leading them to the Portuguese Cup final, he was sacked in February as they struggled to keep pace in the title race.

“We tried to sign him when he was a player with Porto but Tenenbeat us to his signature,” Deportivo president Cesar Augusto Lendoiro said.

“We are convinced we will be able to save ourselves.”

Promoted Depor were knocked out of the King’s Cup at the first hurdle last month, and after managing only two wins in 17 league matches on their return to the top flight, they sacked Oltra on Sunday.

The Galician club is struggling withcrippling debts and Lendoiro has said they will be forced into administration unless a deal with the Spanish tax authorities can be hammered out before the end of the year.

*Reuters*

**Tunisia win first Nations Cup warm-up game**

**Sharjah, 1 Jan—**

Tunisia began their preparations for next month’s African Nations Cup with a 2-1 win over Iraq in a warm-up international in Sharjah on Sunday. Issam Jemaa and Fahredinne Ben Youssfescored second-half goals before Iraq converted a late penalty through Younes Mahmoud to reduce the deficit.

Jemaa’s goal came just 14 minutes after the break after the Irish defeated the Lebanese during the week and 60,000.

Tunisia’s national soccer team players line up for a team photo before their African Cup of Nations qualification match for the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations against Sierra Leone at Monastir Olympic Stadium on 13 Oct, 2012.—Reuters

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Repaved road commissioned into service in Nyaunglebin

Nyaunglebin, 1 Jan—As a gesture of hailing the 65th Anniversay Independence Day, repaved Maha Bagwa Road, 1100 feet long and 10 feet wide, was put into service in Ward 2 of Nyaunglebin on 28 January.

The road was built at a cost of K 19,027,304 by the Township Development Affairs Committee in 2012-2013 fiscal year. Township level authorities cut the ribbon to open the repaved road.—NLM

Kenyans usher in 2013 with hope for peaceful elections

Nairobi, 1 Jan—Chants, enthusiastic songs, and joy reverberated across Kenya as the East African nation bid a turbulent 2012 good-bye and ushered in the New Year with full of hope. While some Kenyans congregated at places of worship for vigils to pray for the outcome of the New Year, others converged at entertainment spots to dance 2012 away.

The rest welcomed 2013 from the comfort of their homes, where they followed live broadcasts of various New Year events on television. And as the clock ticked towards midnight, chants of welcoming the New Year echoed across the East African nation as Kenyans shouted in joy. It was evident that Kenyans were glad to see 2012 go down in history as one of the toughest for the country. During the year, Kenyans saw incidents of terror attacks perpetrated by suspected Somali militant group Al-Shabaab sympathizers increase, claiming lives of tens of people and injuring scores others in various towns, among them the capital Nairobi and Mombasa. The East African nation also witnessed its prominent sons and daughters continue to succumb to cancer as the killer disease haunted the country.

“Happy New Year,” shouted Nairobi resident Phanice Abuya to her friends and family as the clock hit midnight, signifying the start of 2013. The group, which had gathered at her home in Komarock on the east of Nairobi for a night vigil, responded in chants and dance, welcoming in 2013.

After about 5 minutes of revelry that involved lighting fireworks, toasting glasses full of wine as they congratulated each other for completing the year, the group went to the next phase of celebrations, which was sharing their New Year wishes. “My prayer is that we have peaceful elections and elect credible leaders who will steer this country to greater heights,” said George Abuya. The East African nation will hold a crucial general election in about 60 days that will see incumbent President Mwai Kibaki retire and the country adopt a devolved system of government.

The polls, to be held under a new constitution, will be the first for Kenya since the bungled 2007 elections that saw Kenyans mourn, kill and displace each other due to disputed presidential results. “This is my year of hope. I pray to get married and start a new life,” said Caroline Kemunto, 30, as the group cheered her.

The rest of the members talked about their hopes and wishes before the group continued with celebrations into wee hours of 2013. Daniel Kibuchi, who attended a church service in Nairobi’s central business district, said they sang and danced the night away as they prayed for peace and security ahead of polls. “The service started at about 9.30 p.m. local time (1830 GMT),” Xinhua.

Sharapova looks back on banner year

Brisbane, 1 Jan—Maria Sharapova said 2012 had been the most memorable year of her career. Sharapova was the first Russian female athlete to carry the flag for my country, so it was very emotional. It was such an incredible experience.” Sharapova, competing in this week’s Brisbane International tournament, said there was more depth in women’s tennis than at any stage of her 12-year career. “It’s much more physical than it has been,” she said.

“Maybe five years ago you go into a tournament that’s had good results, beaten top players, hasn’t been consistent enough but is a really tough, tough player. “The inconsistency obviously shows that their ranking is not high enough, therefore you’re facing them in the first few rounds. “It is a much stronger sport. And also with technology and racquets and improvements of all the things we have. There are so many things in tennis that in other sports you

Djokovic in injury scare at Hopman Cup

Perth, 1 Jan—Austral-ian Open champion Novak Djokovic suffered an injury scare at the Hopman Cup on Monday when the world No.1 hurt his leg as he was pushed towards him while he signed autographs. Djokovic had wrapped up a 6-3, 6-4 victory against Italian Andreas Seppi when the incident happened. The Serb left his racquets and bag on the court and limped straight up the players tunnel to receive a medical assessment in the locker room.

Djokovic was unable to complete a television interview he had agreed to after his victory over Seppi. Djokovic only arrived in Perth from Abu Dhabi late on Sunday and said he was troubled by jet lag. He felt this morning that I was dream-walking,” he said. “I broke the ice af- ter the first set and started to feel better.” Djokovic and Ana Ivanovic held an unassailable 2-0 in the tie against the Italian pairing of Seppi and Francesca Schi- avone.—Reuters

Sharapova of Russia tosses a ball during her match against Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark in an exhibition tour in Sao Paulo on 7 Dec. 2012.

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Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a return to Andreas Seppi of Italy during their men’s singles match at the Hopman Cup tennis tournament in Perth on 31 Dec, 2012. Reuters

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Myanmar Medical Research Conference on 7-11 January

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Jan—With a view to enhancing medical research works and receiving good research results for users by presenting the findings by researchers from various departments under the Ministry of Health, the 41st Myanmar Medical Research Conference will be held at the Department of Medical Research (Lower Myanmar) on Ziwaka street in Dagon Township from 7 to 11 January 2013.

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Jan—At the conference, 88 medical research papers will be read out and 26 posters will be displayed at the poster show.

Moreover, 12 educational talks will be conducted at the conference. NGOs at home and abroad, pharmaceutical companies, lab equipment, chemical supplier companies, private labs at home and abroad, hospitals and booths of clinics will display their products.—MNA

Significant temperatures on (1-1-2013)

Haka -1°C
Loilem 3°C
Putao 5°C

Watermelon sees up-ward prices

Daw Hla from the Village of Sin-te-gyi nurtures watermelon plants.

Watermelon growers in central Myanmar have seen up-ward prices for the fruits as it is in high demand these days.

“A watermelon broker at the China-Myanmar border market phoned me recently to take good care of our plants so that we can harvest marketable fruits and the price for the fruits is expected to be up when we harvested in March,” said Daw Hla, 51, as she is working on her two-acre of watermelon farmland in the village of Sin-te-gyi, located about 10 miles east of Nay Pyi Taw.

A price for one-kg fruit which is considered to be marketable at the border market has reached over 1000 kyats at the border market recently thought there was no-buyers for the fruits for the export market last month.

Watermelon has been popular among the farmers since the income from the fruits reached its peak in 2009. To compete with rich non-inhabitant farmers from border areas, farmers in areas around Nay Pyi Taw have scheduled their planting season to be able to harvest the fruits in December before the New Year and in March in attempts to avoid the mass harvest of watermelons.

“Watermelon farming is a kind of lottery. We, small farmers, are not sure to win or loss from the harvest as we have to compete with fruits grown in Myanmar by rich non-inhabitants agro businessmen from Myanmar-China borders,” Daw Hla added.

The price for the watermelon at the Myanmar-China border market was downward last month as fruits from both Myanmar traditional farmers and all non-inhabitant agro-business men from the border areas had been exported to the market while watermelons from Vietnamese farmers were flowing into the market at the same time.

To grow watermelon, traditional farmers borrow money from private lenders with the interest rate of 10 percent while they get loans with the interest rate of 10 per cent from the government with the interest rate of 2 per cent to grow rice.

University of Agriculture welcomes freshers

Nay Pyi Taw, 1 Jan—At a coordination meeting for holding sixth regular session of First Hluttaw took place at Hluttaw Building here this morning.

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Mya Nyein, Union ministers and officials of the Hluttaw Office attended the meeting.

Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann makes speech at coordination meeting for holding sixth regular session of First Hluttaw.—MNA

The Speaker in his opening speech called for collaboration and coordination in performing duties. He also underscored the flourishing of working practices.

He also predicted long haul parliamentary session, earmarking the approval of National Plan, Union Budget, taxation laws, SEZ law, national investment law and other important pieces of legislation.

He called on every stakeholder and citizen to participate in legislation.

Secretary of working committee for holding Hluttaw meetings Director-General of Hluttaw Office U Kyaw Soe reported on works of the central committee and working committees.

Union Ministers Lt-Gen Ko Ko, U Aung Kyi, U Thein Tun, U Nyan Tun Aung, U Zeyar Aung, Dr Pe Thet Khan, U Kyaw Lwin, U Hay Aung and U Khin Maung Soe, and Nay Pyi Taw Council Chair-man U Thein Nyunt reported on their respective parts in organizing Hluttaw session. Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann attended to the need.

The concluding remarks by the Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker brought the meeting to an end.—MNA

University of Agriculture welcomes freshers

Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing presents stationery and cash assistances to a fresher.—MNA

The Union minister and the rector of the university provided stationery and cash assistant to 64 first and second year students.

The Union minister proceeded to Agricultural Research Farm in Tatkon Township where he viewed thriving maize, groundnut and sunflower plantations. —MNA

The Union minister and the rector of University of Agriculture welcomes freshers at the University. —MNA

Watermelon grower Daw Hla who is from the village of Sin-te-gyi after talking to the media about how he is preparing for next year’s harvest.

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Speaker earmarks upcoming parliamentary session for “important laws”

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