From King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud
King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
His Excellency,

It gives us great pleasure on the Anniversary of your country’s Independence Day, to send to Your Excellency on behalf of the people and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and our name. Congratulations and Best Wishes for Health and Happiness and to the Friendly People of Myanmar most Progress and Prosperity.

Our Best Regards for Your Excellency.

From Mr Joachim Gauck
President of the Federal Republic of Germany

On the occasion of the 65th anniversary of Myanmar’s independence permit me to offer you and the people of Myanmar warmest congratulations on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

It is a matter of deep satisfaction that Bangladesh and Myanmar maintain excellent bilateral relations based on common history, culture and shared vision for development. I strongly believe that the existing bond of friendly relations between our two countries will further be strengthened in depth and dimension in the coming years.

I avail of this opportunity to convey my best wishes for your good health, long life and happiness as well as for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

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

From Md Zillur Rahman
President of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

On behalf of the people of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, extend to Your Excellency and through you to the friendly people of Myanmar, our warmest greetings and felicitations on the joyous occasion of the 65th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

On the occasion of the 65th anniversary of Myanmar’s independence permit me to offer you and the people of Myanmar warmest congratulations on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

It is a matter of deep satisfaction that Bangladesh and Myanmar maintain excellent bilateral relations based on common history, culture and shared vision for development. I strongly believe that the existing bond of friendly relations between our two countries will further be strengthened in depth and dimension in the coming years.

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

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker assists in fulfilling desires of local people in Maubin

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Jan—The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Union government have committed to fulfilling the needs of the people, giving priority to the tasks that should be carried out first, said Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann at the meeting with local people at Toe Shwe Wah Hall in Maubin today.

The Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw visited the area along with Chairmen of Hluttaw committees U Htay Ko and U Soe Naing, deputy ministers and officials of the Hluttaw Office to listen to voices of the people as part of efforts for assisting in overcoming obstacles and challenges of the people.

Speaking on the occasion, the Speaker also expressed the role of the representatives, urging the Hluttaw representatives to make field trips to be able to listen to voices of the local people and stressed the need of the representatives for cooperating in implementing the development of agricultural, livestock breeding and other economic sectors of the farmers in a bid to alleviate the poverty in the rural areas.

The meeting was also participated by Ayeyawady Region Chief Minister U Thein Htay and many local people.

In his concluding remarks, Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann underscored the importance of the rule of law for flourishing the democratic system in the country and urged the local people not to do any acts that would harm others and to practice law and disciplines as the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and the Union Government have committed to promoting the fundamental rights of citizens, democracy and human rights in the country.

Second Embraer arrives in Yangon

YANGON, 6 Jan—The second Embraer 190-AF XY-AGP leased by GE Capital Aviation Services (GECAS) to Myanmar Airways under the Ministry of Transport arrived at Yangon International Airport this evening, together with US pilots and co-pilots Mr Cornelius Joseph Stanton and Mr Miner III Harlow James.

U Than Tun, Managing Director of Myanmar Airways accepted the plane.—MNA

The following are messages of felicitations from foreign Heads of State/Government sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein, on the occasion of the 65th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of Myanmar.

YANGON, 6 Jan—The 65th Anniversary Independence Day was celebrated on 4 January at Mawyawady Park in Mawlamyine of Mon State. State Hluttaw Speaker U Kyin Pe, state ministers, national races representatives and social organizations attended the State flag hoisting ceremony.

State Chief Minister U Ohn Myint read out the message sent by the President on 65th Anniversary Independence Day.

The chief minister and party also attended state-level prize awarding ceremony and presented prizes to winners at essay, poem, computer-paintings contests, sport events and performing arts competitions.

The people from the state also participated in various sport events in commemoration of the 65th Anniversary Independence Day.—MNA

Second Embraer 190-AF XY-AGP for Myanmar Airways arrives at Yangon International Airport.—MNA

From Md Zillur Rahman
President of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh

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The following are messages of felicitations from foreign Heads of State/Government sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein, on the occasion of the 65th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of Myanmar.
Baby show marks 65th Anniversary Independence Day in Sittway

SITTWAY, 6 Jan — To mark the 65th Anniversary Independence Day, a Baby Show was held at the town hall in Sittway on 3 January. It was attended by Chairperson of Rakhine State Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee Daw Nyo Nyo Lwin and members, doctors and nurses of state/township health departments, officials concerned and mothers and their children.

Children under two including 10 twins took part in the baby show, and prize-giving ceremony was held on 4 January. During the show, Rakhine State Chief Minister U Hla Maung Tin and wife Daw Nu Nu Zan, state ministers and their wives and officials visited there.

Cotton growers generate more incomes in Tatikon Township

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Jan — Cotton growers in Tatikon Township of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area expect to see a high cotton yield about six million viss from their forthcoming harvest of Ngwechi-6 long staple cotton. Although growers fetched K 900 per viss of cotton last year, the purchase price of private-owned cotton purchasing centers for a viss of cotton at the beginning of harvest time is only K 850.

Overturned Hilux pick-up hurts nine passengers

BAGO, 6 Jan — A passenger Hilux pick-up of No (6) Kyaiit-Yangon bus line skidded and overturned near a bridge on Yangon-Mandalay Highway in Zaanagai (North) ward in Bago yesterday.

The Hilux pick-up driven by Babu from downtown Bago to Yangon skidded and by Babu from downtown Bago yesterday.

Cotton growers generate more incomes in Tatikon Township

MONGNAUNG, 6 Jan — Thanks to a coordinated approach to the price by Nay Pyi Taw Council in order to generate more incomes of cotton growers, mobile cotton purchasing centers of the Ministry of Industry and Textiles were being kept open to buy cottons at reasonable prices. As a result, the market price of cotton has reached K 1100 per viss, thereby generating more incomes of cotton growers.

Car crash kills driver in Taungdwingyi

TAUNGDWINGYI, 6 Jan — An accident happened to a Nissan truck driven by Thein Htai (30 years) in Shwe Kyar Inn ward of Taungdwingyi Township, Magway Region on 3 January. The road accident occurred while the truck went into a skid and crashed into the lamp-post after its break failed. The accident caused a loss of life of the driver.

Taungdwingyi Myoma Police Station filed a lawsuit against the case.

Shwedagon Pagoda sees more than 300,000 tourists in 2012

YANGON, 6 Jan — According to the figures that show the number of tourists who visited Shwedagon Pagoda in 2012, there has been an annual increase in arrival of tourists at Shwedagon Pagoda throughout four successive years since 2008.

The number of globetrotters thronging to Shwedagon Pagoda has reached 78,323 in 2008, 113,529 in 2009, 175,054 in 2010, 225,381 in 2011 and 345,333 in 2012.

U Win Kyawng of the board of trustees of Shwedagon Pagoda said that it is expected that the number of foreign visitors will be the same that of local pilgrims soon. Among tourists, arrival of British, French, and Russian visitors has dramatically increased with the number of 11,771, 15,386 and 6,801 respectively in 2012 compared to the last year when 3,201 British, 13,478 French and 3,735 Russian visitors visited there.

During the last year, more than 300,000 foreign visitors from 57 countries arrived there and the board received 1,415,139 US dollars and 83,136 FECs as cash donation.

New umbrella hoisted atop Kyantaingaung Sutaungpyae pagoda in Kyangin

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Jan — An umbrella-hoisting ceremony of Kyantaingaung Su-taungpyae pagoda was held at the pagoda in Zeepinkwin village of Kyangin Township of Ayeyawady Region on 2 January, attended by Region Chief Minister U Thein Aung.

The region chief minister and wellwishers hoisted Seinbudaw (diamond orb), Hnget-hoisted Seinbudaw (golden umbrella) atop the pagoda and enshrined Buddha relics in the pagoda.

Scouts formed nationwide to boost morale and morality of schoolchildren

NAY PYI TAW, 6 Jan — According to Chairman of the Supervisory Committee for the Scouts U Tin Nyo, the scouts were formed nationwide and training are being given to the members of the scouts with the aim of nurturing talent scouts and improving their morale and morality and physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

“Scout course covers activities that boy and girl scouts take part to be able to get knowledge and experience in helping others”, Dr Khin Maung Kywe who was very experienced in scouting in Canada said.

Mongnawng BEHS observes Independence Day

Mongnawng sub-township Basic Education High School on 4 January.

Schoolchildren in the sub-township participated in the outdoor games and the school head presented prizes to winners of respective sports events.

U Tin Nyo said that now the scouts were formed with the membership of 50 each grade seven school boys and girls for each region and state in the country. A total of 18,000 scouts far and wide of the nation would learn about practical skills and do a lot of activities during the course and it is planned to increase members of the Scouts.

Training for trainer courses had already been conducted for 90 teachers from regions and states and nine officials from three basic education departments totaling 99.

Myanmar saw the first-ever girl scouts in 1916. The various levels of boy scouts were formed in 1920 and activities of the scouts terminated in 1963. The first-ever Scout Association was formed in England in 1908. A total of 190 countries around the word have formed the scouts with the membership of 30 million scouts including 10 million girl scouts.
Venezuela lawmakers elect Chavez ally as Assembly chief

CARACAS, 6 Jan—Venezuelan lawmakers re-elected a staunch ally of Hugo Chavez to head the National Assembly on Saturday, putting him in line to be caretaker president if the socialist leader does not recover from cancer surgery.

By choosing the incumbent, Diosdado Cabello, the “Chavista”-dominated legislature cemented the combative ex-soldier’s position as the most powerful fig-ure in the government, after Chavez and Vice President Nicolas Maduro.

“As a patriot ... I swear to be supremely loyal in every-thing I do, to defend the fatherland, its institutions, and this beautiful revolution led by our Comandante Hugo Chavez,” Cabello said as he took the oath, his hand on the constitution.

He had earlier warned opposition politicians against attempting to use the National Assembly to “conspire” against the people, saying they would be “destroyed” if they tried.

Thousands of the president’s red-clad supporters gathered outside parliament hours before the vote, many chanting: “We are all Chavez! Our comandante will be well! He will return!” If Chavez had to step down, or died, Cabello would take over the running of the country as Assembly president and a new election would be organized within 30 days. Chavez’s heir ap-parent, Maduro, would be the ruling Socialist Party candidate.

Chavez, who was diagnosed with an undisclosed form of cancer in his pelvic area in mid-2011, has not been seen in public nor heard from in more than three weeks.

Officials say the 58-year-old is in delicate condition and has suffered multiple complications since the 11 December surgery, in-cluding unexpected bleeding and severe respiratory prob-lems.

Late on Friday, Maduro gave the clearest indication yet that the government was preparing to delay Chavez’s inauguration for a new six-year term, which is sched-uled for Thursday.

Brandishing a copy of the constitution after his win in the Assembly, Cabello slammed opposition leaders for writing a letter to foreign embassies in which they ac-cused the government of em-ploying a “twisted reading” of the charter.

“Get this into your heads: Hugo Chavez was elected president and he will continue to be president be-fore 10 January. No one should have any doubt ... this is the constitutional route,” he said as fellow Socialist Party lawmakers cheered.

Chinese media groups urged to enter world stage

BEIJING, 6 Jan—Chi-na’s media and publishing groups have been urged to compete globally by re-forming their operations and promoting their pro-ducts overseas.

At a meeting on Saturday, Jiang Jianguo, Deputy Director of the General Ad-ministration of Press and Publication said, “While securing their places in the domestic market, news me-dia and publishing groups should positively partici-pate in global competi-tion by setting up branches and publications overseas through share-buying and other methods.”

According to Jiang, the administration will help the country’s leading publish-ing groups enter the global market while supporting key publications from re-nowned writers and groups in a bid to expand the influ-ence of Chinese culture.

Syria’s Assad rejects dialogue with “puppet” opposition

BEIRUT, 6 Jan—Syrian President Bashar al-Assad announced what he described as a peace plan on Sunday, calling for a reconciliation conference with “those who have not betrayed Syria”, to be followed by the formation of a new government and an amnesty.

“The first stage of a po- litical solution would require that regional powers stop funding and arming the op-position, an end to terrorist operations and controlling the borders,” he said in a speech in central Damascus, his first public comments in months.

“We will not have dia-logue with a puppet made by the West,” he said.

Drone attack in Pakistan kills at least 10

DIRA ISMAEL KHAN, 6 Jan—A US drone strike killed at least 10 people sus-pected to be Taleban fighters in Pakistan’s northern tribal areas on Sunday, intelligence sources said, days after another drone strike killed a top militant leader in the area.

Between 10 and 12 peo-ple were killed in the attack on three compounds in Babar Pehari, South Waziristan, six intelligence sources said. More militants were believed to be in the compounds when they were hit, officials said, meaning the death toll may rise.

The compounds were believed to house fighters be-longing to the Punjabi Taleban, a group with close links to al-Qaeda, intelligence of-ficials said.

The Pakistan Taleban has established sanctuar-ies in the mountainous Ba- har area, 140 km (87 miles) northeast of Wana, the head-quarters of South Waziristan, they added.

South Waziristan is controlled by the Pakistan army, which operates under an uneasy truce with mili-tants from the local Wazir tribe.

Venezuelan Vice President Nicolas Maduro (L) listens to National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello speak during the assembly inauguration in Caracas on 5 Jan, 2013.—Reuters

Connecticut gun show goes on despite Newtown tragedy

STAMFORD, 6 Jan—An antique gun show went ahead as planned on Saturday 40 miles from the site of the 14 December mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School, even as other gun shows gave in to pressure to cancel after the tragedy.

The two-day East Coast Fine Arms show at a gun show in his city.

The compounds were ex-pected to be Taleban fighters, six intelligence sources said.

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South Waziristan is controlled by the Pakistan army, which operates under an uneasy truce with mili-tants from the local Wazir tribe.
Clearwire investor seeks to block sale to Sprint

WASHINGTON, 6 Jan—A large Clearwire Corp shareholder on Friday stepped up its campaign against the planned sale of the wireless service provider to its majority owner, Sprint Nextel Corp, saying it plans to ask the US telecoms regulator to block the deal.

Crest Financial’s general counsel also said on a call with reporters that it will ask the US Federal Communications Commission to block Sprint’s plan to sell 70 percent of itself to Softbank Corp of Japan for $20 billion.

Going to the FCC is a new line of attack on the Sprint deal by Crest, which has also filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of Clearwire investors. Dave Schumacher, Crest’s general counsel, said the fund said other minority investors told Crest they did not support the Sprint deal, but he did not provide details.

The investment fund, which owns around 8 percent of Clearwire, has said Sprint’s offer is worth about $2.27 share for the roughly 50 percent of Clearwire it does not currently own, “grossly undervalues Clearwire.” Sprint’s offer is worth $2.07 share, but Schumacher said Crest had not done its own valuation and was basing its criticism of the price on estimates by analysts.

In going to the FCC, Crest will argue that the Clearwire artifically undervalues the company’s spectrum holdings, Schumacher said. That in turn potentially devalues future revenue for the US government when it auctions off spectrum licenses.

“The merger is therefore a bad deal all around for Clearwire shareholders and also for the public at large,” said Schumacher.

Sprint spokesman Scott Sloat said the deal with Sprint is in the best interest of Clearwire shareholders and Sprint has said it has the support of three large Clearwire investors—Comcast Corp, Intel Corp and Bright House Networks LLC—which hold 13 percent of Clearwire stock.

Schumacher said the fund would try to prevent the three from voting because of their affiliation with Sprint.

“As Clearwire’s fight with its shareholders heats up, Sprint has its own shareholders to contend with,” a Kansas court on Friday declined Sprint’s request for an early dismissal of a lawsuit by a union pension fund that holds Sprint stock.

The lawsuit alleged that Sprint’s chief executive, Daniel Hesse, rushed merger talks with Softbank and did not get a fair price.

The ruling by Thomas Sutherland, the judge for the District Court of Johnson County, Kansas, will allow the pension fund to begin to demand documents and witnesses as it tries to prove Sprint did not act in its shareholders’ best interest.

“Sloat, the Sprint spokesman, said the ruling only addressed the technical adequacy of the pension fund’s pleading and did not address the merits of the case,” said Sprint continued to believe the case was without merit.—Reuters

People walk past a Sprint store in New York on 17 Dec, 2012.—Reuters

Sprint CEO says China to become as important as US

FRANKFURT, 6 Jan—German business software maker SAP sees potential for one million new customers in China, five times the number it currently has world-wide, German weekly paper Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung said.

“China will be as important for us as the United States,” SAP’s co-Chief Executive Jim Hagemann Snabe said.

On a call with reporters that hit the Kanto region coast. They say the fault has not provided details.

Clearwire was hit by the Kanto region

People walk past a Sprint store in New York on 17 Dec, 2012.—Reuters

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World’s largest radio telescope in Chile

Tokyo, 6 Jan—The world’s largest radio telescope is about to begin full-scale space observations this month.

The Alma radio telescope in Chile has a total of 43 antenna dishes, about twice the number than before. It is located in the Atacama Desert, 5,000 meters above sea level.

The multi-national project involving Japan, the United States and European nations began with 16 antennas in 2011.

With the new antennas, the telescope will be 2.5 times stronger than before, and will be able to capture the birth of planets.

The researchers predict that the enhanced telescope will be able to detect organic compounds such as amino acids in outer space.

The telescope will eventually have 66 antenna dishes. Officials from Japan’s National Astronomical Observatory say they expect to obtain new information within 4 to 5 years which could overturn past knowledge of the universe.

New fault found on seabed near Kanto region

Japan’s leading technology show that is now happening.

NHK

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The researchers say the fault could have been formed as recently as 1923 when the Great Kanto Earthquake killed tens of thousands of people.

Professor Emeritus Nakata said the discovery will help in the study of massive earthquakes in the region.

NHK
Portugal does not need debt restructuring: IMF's Lagarde

LISBON, 6 Jan—Any restructuring of Portugal’s debt is out of the question and the country’s bailout programme is progressing well, the head of the International Monetary Fund said on Saturday.

IMF chief Christine Lagarde told Portuguese weekly Expresso that she was also confident Portugal would not follow Greece into a spiral of economic recession.

“The European Union and IMF gave Portugal a 78-billion-euro ($102-billion) bailout in 2011 and the lenders have praised most of their terms. They relaxed Portugal’s tough budget goals last year as the country’s deepest recession since the 1970s eroded tax revenues. “It is out of the question,” Lagarde told the weekly, when asked if Portugal may be forced to restructure its debt.

“The Portuguese authorities are determined to do what is necessary to complete the programme in order to regain access to (bond) markets,” she said.

She added that she expected the IMF to approve the country’s next loan tranche, after the sixth review that was carried out in the autumn.

“The Portuguese authorities and the Portuguese have been extremely courageous and firm in applying difficult and painful reforms,” she said.

Some economists have said Portugal may be forced to extend the loan deal beyond this year, when it is scheduled to return to financing itself in bond markets in the third quarter.

Lagarde said the Portuguese should not expect any changes to the loan agreement. “But we have to adapt the program, review after review, bearing in mind all the implications,” she said. Asked if she was convinced Portugal would not go into Greece’s path, she said: “Yes, I am.”

French won’t buy troubled Petroplus refinery: Hollande

VAL-DE-REUIL, 6 Jan—France will not take over insolvent Swiss refiner Petroplus’ oil refinery in Normandy, but could help the plant financially once a suitable buyer is found, President Francois Hollande said on Saturday.

About 500 jobs at the 161,000 barrels-a-day Petit-Couronne refinery are at risk, the latest industrial headache for the Socialist leader who has vowed to stem rising unemployment by the end of the year.

“It’s difficult to find a serious buyer. We must do everything to find one,” Hollande told reporters after meeting union leaders in Val-de-Reuil, a town about 110 kilometres (70 miles) north-west of Paris.

“The state will do its duty, but it cannot take the plant over, and the workers know that,” he said.

He added the state could at some point provide financing. Petroplus poses a major test for Hollande’s government after it faced criticism over the tactics it used in a two-month battle over the future of ArcelorMittal’s (ISPA.AS) Florange steel plant, which unnerved investors in the euro zone’s second largest economy and confused France’s unions.

His administration is struggling to stop a haemorrhage of industrial jobs which has helped push unemployment to 15-year highs, while curbing public spending and raising taxes to help slash a stagnant economy.

A French court set a deadline of February 5 for interested parties to submit bids for the Petit-Couronne refinery. Shell RSD.A.L, which had a six-month oil processing deal with the troubled plant running to mid-December, has not extended its contract, making the refinery less attractive for buyers due to expensive restart costs.

So far only NetOil, a company led by Middle Eastern businessman Roger Tamraz, has submitted an offer while 7 others have filed letters of intent to buy France’s oldest refinery.

Net Oil’s offer includes an oil supply deal with BP (B.P.L) and an agreement with Hyundai (003580.KS) to upgrade the plant.

Union spokesman Yvon Scornet told reporters after the meeting that Hollande had promised to do everything possible to push the project forward, but had given no guarantees.

Japanese firms putting more focus on farm business

TOKYO, 6 Jan—Japanese companies are starting to enter the new agriculture business of growing plants indoors with advanced technology.

Major chemical company Showa Denko has developed a technology to accelerate growth in plants using red LED lighting.

The company plans to open a new lettuce factory in Kawashiki Village, Fukushima Prefecture, in April.

Showa Denko says lettuce can be harvested around 20 times a year at the factory, about 5 times more than ordinary greenhouse cultivation.

Mitsubishi Chemical has also developed a vegetable cultivation system using blue LED technology. The firm has begun selling the system to Russia and other countries with low temperatures and limited sunshine hours.

Nishinbo Holdings has started indoor hydroponic cultivation of strawberries as part of its strategy to diversify business. The company is selling both strawberries and its cultivation system. Chiba University Professor Eiji Goto says the new technologies developed by the companies may lead to unprecedented farming methods.—NHK

Bluefin tuna sells for record $1.76 million at Tokyo auction

TOKYO, 6 Jan—A bluefin tuna was sold for an all-time high of 155.4 million yen (about $1.76 million), or 700,000 yen per kilogram, on Saturday.

Kiyoshi Kimura, president of sushi restaurant chain operator Kiyomura Co, shows a 222-kilogram bluefin tuna at the Metropolitan Central Wholesale Market in Tokyo’s Tsukiji District on 5 Jan, 2013.—Kyodo News

China to improve rural students’ nutrition

BEIJING, 6 Jan—China plans to build enough school canteens to provide safe and nutritional meals for all primary and junior high school students in impoverished rural regions by 2015.

According to a circular, jointly released Saturday by the ministries of education and finance, local governments should submit their dining hall building plans to the two ministries for approval and the granting of funds before construction starts.

Chinese students in poor regions often rely on government-funded or charitable lunch for sufficient nutrition.

Last year, the “Free Lunch for Children” project, initiated by some 500 journalists and domestic media, received millions of donations. It allocates three yuan per person each day to provide free lunch for impoverished school children.

The circular said that some local governments are not fully aware of the importance of the issue. It said substantial canteen construction plans as well as insufficient financial support have hindered the drive to improve students’ nutrition.

The circular urged local administrations to focus on areas such as seating capacity and quake-resistance levels.

Also on Saturday, the General Administration of Press and Publication urged local publishing groups to purchase enough government-funded dictionaries for primary and junior high school students in rural areas.

The move comes after widespread media reports that counterfeit dictionaries had seriously misled students during their studies—especially those in impoverished areas where an official copy was hard to obtain.

According to the administration, more than 30 printing firms across the country will supply 100 million dictionaries for primary and junior high school students in rural regions this year.—Xinhua

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Sudan's South Sudan agree once again to set up buffer zone

BOGOTA, 6 Jan—At least 11 people were killed and 33 others injured early Saturday in a bus accident on a highway in central Colombia. The bus, owned by the company that operates the highway between several cities in Colombia, was carrying passengers when it crashed. The accident occurred near Manizales city, the capital of Caldas province, where the bus was headed.

Liberia, 6 Jan—Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili on Saturday pledged continued contribution to the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. Ivanishvili made the pledge at a meeting with visiting US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta. The visit is aimed at strengthening ties with the United States.

Russia, Sweden to conduct joint submarine rescue drills

MOSCOW, 6 Jan—Russian and Swedish navies will conduct a joint submarine rescue exercise this year, a Russian military spokesman said on Saturday. The exercise will be held under preliminary agreements reached between Baltic Sea chief Vice Admiral Viktor Kravchuk and Swedish Defence Minister Carl Bildt, according to the spokesman.

China city Pollution cuts off water supply in N China city

SHANZHUANG, 6 Jan—Contamination in a northern Chinese river has led to the water supply in Handan, a city with more than 1 million people in Hebei province, being cut off since Saturday afternoon.

A state by the Chinese government said the cut-off was caused by an accident in the neighboring Shanxi province where industrial pollutants poured into the upper reaches of the Zhanghe River.

A statement from the Shanxi provincial government said a flexible tube rupture at a chemical plant in Changzhi city had caused the pollution, which is expected to reach the Zhanghe River in 10 days.

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**New Light of Myanmar**

**WORLD**

**Chinese drivers question new traffic rule**

U LAN BAATAR, 6 Jan—The Mongolian government said it has decided to set up a system to regulate Internet commenting.

The Information Technology, Postal, Telecommunication Authority has been instructed to introduce relevant software and technical solutions, according to a government Press release about Saturday’s cabinet meeting.

In addition, the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority is tasked with developing requirements for news websites and the issuance of domain names.

The new measures, according to the Press release, will also be applied.

**Russian PM calls for full implementation of Sochi constructions**

MOSCOW, 6 Jan—Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Saturday called for full implementation of sports constructions for the Sochi games.

Of course, this issue cannot be discussed: the 2013 schedule should be implemented in full," Medvedev said during a meeting about Sochi Olympics test events.

In 2012, 44 sports facilities were put into operation. However, the construction of several facilities still lagged behind the schedule, he said.

Ten of the Olympic and Russian’s prestige depended on the construction of Sochi facilities, Medvedev said, adding much preparation work should be done ahead of the games.

"That is why the commissioning of sportive facilities and the infrastructure, as well as the test events is our strategic priority," Inter-Fax news agency quoted Medvedev as saying.

According to the prime minister, the International Olympic Committee gave positive assessment of the sports facilities which have been put into service. The sports venues should go through more serious tests in 2013, he added.

Under the motto of "Hot. Cool. Yours," the Sochi Games which features 98 medal events will open on 7 February, 2014 and run until 23 February.

**Iran plans to double natural gas production from southern fields**

TEHRAN, 6 Jan—Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Saturday said that the country plans to double natural gas production from the South Pars field, Press TV reported.

Iran plans to double natural gas extraction from the South Pars gas field in the next six months, Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying during a ceremony to inaugurate Iran’s biggest natural gas storage facility.

According to the report, Iran is currently producing 300 million cubic metres of natural gas per day from South Pars field. The South Pars/North Dome field is a natural gas condensate field located in the Persian Gulf. It is the world’s largest gas field, shared between Iran and Qatar. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), the field holds an estimated 1,800 trillion cubic feet (51 trillion cubic meters) of in-situ natural gas and some 50 billion barrels (7.9 billion cubic metres) of natural gas condensates.

In December, Iranian Oil Minister Rostam Qasemi said that his ministry would soon strike gas deals with different countries.

The flotilla’s naval infantry will get two small-sized missile ships by summer and three amphibious assault ships by spring, said the spokesman who is from the south military district.

**Russia’s Caspian Flotilla to get new assault ships**

MOSCOW, 6 Jan—The Russian Caspian Flotilla will get new missile ships and assault ships this year, a military spokesman said on Saturday.

The Caspian Flotilla will also get two service ships later this year, the spokesman said in a statement.

Currently, Russia’s navy is composed of the Pacific Fleet, Northern Fleet, Baltic Fleet, Black Sea Fleet and Caspian Flotilla. Stationed in the Caspian Sea, the Caspian Flotilla is the oldest Russian military flotilla.

The navy will receive more than 50 new warships by 2016, including 18 surface warships, 30 special-purpose and counter-subversion vessels, and six multi-purpose strategic submarines, according to a statement made earlier this week by the Defence Ministry.

Eight militants killed in military operation in NW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 6 Jan—At least eight militants were killed and three hideouts destroyed in an operation launched by the Pakistani army in the country’s northwest tribal area of Orakzai Agency on Sunday, local media reported.

According to the report, the operation was conducted in the Mamozi area of the northern part of Orakzai, or called Upper Orakzai, on Sunday with the backup of air force.

Jet fighters pounded the militant hideouts in the afore-said area, leaving three of them destroyed and eight militants killed.

On Saturday, at least 20 militants were killed, 14 others injured and five militant hideouts destroyed during an army operation launched in Khyber Agency which lies next to Orakzai Agency.

**Visitors view the exhibition “Werner Berg: from Expressionism to Pop Art” in Beijing, capital of China, on 5 Jan, 2013. The exhibition, which was opened at the National Art Museum of China (NAMOC) on Saturday, displays more than 70 oil paintings and 16 woodcuts created by Austrian painter Werner Berg (1904-1984).—Xinhua**

**A man views fish-like lanterns during Hwacheon Sancheoneo Ice Festival in Hwacheon, Gangwon-do Province of South Korea, on 5 Jan, 2013. The annual Hwacheon Sancheoneo Ice Festival held from 5 to 27 January attracts over one million people every year.—Xinhua**

**Eight militants killed in military operation in NW Pakistan**

**Russian PM calls for full implementation of Sochi constructions**

**Iran plans to double natural gas production from southern fields**

**Russia’s Caspian Flotilla to get new assault ships**

**Chinese drivers question new traffic rule**

**Mongolian government to regulate Internet comments**
Vultures are only birds

Recently, six vultures took a rest at the Great Pagoda Shwedagon in Yangon, the commercial hub and the most populous city of Myanmar. People had contrasting views on their visit. Some took it as a bad omen, while others view it as a good sign.

In fact, these big birds would be in their seasonal journey when they just trying to escape the harsh northern winter. Many bird species do wintering, migrating in groups, some in very large groups, to warmer regions of the south. So these vultures made a short stay at our awe-inspiring pagoda while in kittle on their way towards wintering grounds in temperate regions.

Many Myanmar people see vultures as ungraceful and inauspicious, and some even regard them evil or ominous just for dining on dead or decaying animals.

In reality they like hyenas are scavengers Mother Nature has created as public workers that clean all dead animals by feeding on carrion. If Mother Nature has not created scavengers, forests and natural grasslands everywhere around the world will be contaminated with a large number of decaying carcasses as predators mostly hunt and feed only on living prey.

Vultures or condors as they are called can fly high in the sky for long hours in search of food. They can endure and survive the harsh environs and weather conditions, as many of the species live in semi-desert regions. Even the Japanese-made car Nissan Condor is named after the species live in semi-desert regions. Even the environment and weather conditions, as many of the species live in semi-desert regions. Even the

Mother Nature has created as public workers that clean all dead animals by feeding on carrion. If Mother Nature has not created scavengers, forests and natural grasslands everywhere around the world will be contaminated with a large number of decaying carcasses as predators mostly hunt and feed only on living prey.

Visits of globetrotters increase at Mingun this year

Mandalay, 6 Jan—About 200-300 tourists visit Mingun Region from Mayanchan jetty on Strand Road in West Thiri Marlar Ward of Aungmyethazan Township in Mandalay Region daily; and the number of tourists in December 2012 was higher than that of the previous year, said U Thet Tun, Chairman of Globetrotters Water Transport Association.

“The globetrotters including various kinds of races across the world leave Mayanchan jetty for Mingun Region. Our motorboat association is constituted with 28 motorboats. These motorboats leave Mayanchan jetty at 9 am and Mingun at 1 pm. The fare of the boat is K 500 per passenger. The chartered boat collects K 25000 for five. This year, the passengers for Mandalay-Bhamo and Mandalay-Bagan routes are on the increase. The motorboats are facilitated with life jackets and rescue equipment for the passengers,” said U Thet Tun.

KIA blasts trucks, abducts local women, sabotages rails, bridge

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—KIA blasted trucks, abducted local women, sabotaged railroad and bridges and planted mines in urban area in Kachin State on 2 and 3 January.

A KIA group stopped three trucks carrying cement and iron rod/sheet at the Mile 90 on Myitkyina-Sumprabum Road and blasted the three trucks and 16 tons of cement and eight tons of iron rod/sheet worth K 9.8 million. The drivers of the trucks were released later.

A KIA group comprising about ten members abduced Ma La Ngan Khauang Naw, 32, Ma La Nay Daung Nywe, 34, and Ma La Ton Yein Hnyaw, 28, of Nant Wah Village, Waimaw Township, around 12.15 pm on 3 January.

Around 7.30 pm on that day, KIA fired heavy artillery pieces to troops who are providing security to rail transportation at Mile Post No. 620-8/9 between Kardu and Mawan villages in Mohinyn Township. There was no damage to the rails in the attack. However, the Express Up-train No. 40 on-route from Mandalay to Myitkyina had to stop at Mawan Station and it could proceed to Mohinyn around 9.30 pm.

Similarly, a KIA group blew up an iron-reinforced Bailey bridge which is 280 feet long. The bridge with life jackets and rescue equipment for the passengers,” said U Thet Tun.

New Light of Myanmar
**Plans to provide US$ 5 million to Naga Self-Administered Zone, Chin State**

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—Union Minister for Border Affairs Li-Gen Thein Hnyi received Indian Ambassador Dr Villur Sundararajan Seshadri at the Ministry of Border Affairs, here, on 2 January afternoon. They discussed road and bridge construction tasks, education and health tasks to be jointly undertaken by the ministry and India in Naga Self-Administered Zone and Chin State, and construction of schools in Rakhine State.

India is projected to provide five million US dollars yearly in Naga Self-Administered Zone and Chin State. In 2012-2013 fiscal year, a plan is underway to build 10 basic education primary schools, eight rural health centres, three bridges of 100 feet long in Naga Self-Administered Zone and 11 schools, nine rural health centres and five bridges of above 200 feet long bridge in Chin State.

MNA

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**Elephant camp in Katha attracts globetrotters**

Katha, 6 Jan—A total of 21 globetrotters who arrived in Katha by Pandaw cruiseliner from Australia and Britain visited Natpaung Elephant Camp in Phatsuk forest reserve, 11 miles west of Katha on 1 January morning. They were welcomed by Assistant Manager U Thura Tun of Indaw Region Timber Extraction Region and staff.

Next, 15 elephants performed entertainments to the tourists. The guests then observed nature of the elephants by taking documentary video. The elephant camp collects 10 FECs per tourist for observing elephants, 20 FECs for riding elephant, 20 FECs for video camera and 10 FECs for camera.

Myanma Alinn

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**Traditional boat race honours Independence Day in Ye**

Ye, 6 Jan—In honour of the 65th Anniversary Independence Day, the Myanmar traditional boat race was opened at Myanaktha Moat in Ye of Mon State on 2 January. It was opened by Acting Township Administrator U Soe Lin Thein, Amyotha Hluttaw Representative U Min Thein Han and Chairman of the boat race committe U Zaw Min Oo. Altogether 17 teams participated in the race. The prize awarding ceremony was held on the Independence Day.

Myanma Alinn

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**Drive Safely**

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**Tube-well supplies water to local people**

Seikpyu, 6 Jan—A ceremony to launch a two-inch diameter tube-well was held in Maungwuchuang Village of Shatnayang Village of Seikpyu Township in Magway Region on 1 January. The tube-well was sunk with the assistance of UNICEF under the supervision of Township Development Affairs Committee for 2012-2013 fiscal year.

The 250 feet deep tube-well, the water pump station and 3400-gallon-capacity water tank were built for supplying water to 216 local people. All tasks of water supply to the local people cost K 4 million.—Myanma Alinn

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**Cultivation of organic paddy on increase in Labutta**

Yangon, 6 Jan—Cultivation of paddy with the use of organic matter is increasing day by day. In Labutta Township, the cultivation of organic paddy reaches 1000 acres of farmland in 2012.

Pawhsanhmwe paddy strain produces 40 baskets per acre through organic matter use pattern. In the market, organic rice is sold at K 3000 per pyi. Due to lack of chemicals and other fertilizers, the organic rice is suitable for consumption. Organic rice is sold at supermarkets and shopping malls in Yangon.

Myanmar plans to export 1.5 million tons of rice in 2012-2013 fiscal year. Myanmar will be trying hard to export about 3 million tons of rice to the world market in 2017. At present, Myanmar stands 8th position among the top rice exporting countries across the world. Now, Myanmar exports 100,000 tons of rice monthly. From April to October 2012, Myanmar fetched 260.315 million US dollars through export of rice. So, Myanmar will extend cultivation of paddy in coming years.

Myanma Alinn

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**Overspeed motorbike hits roadside post**

Letpadan, 6 Jan—An over speed motorcycle hit the post of roadside on Yangon-Pyay Highway in Letpadan of Thayawady District in Bago Region at 3 pm on 27 December. The JLM 110 brand black colour motorcycle driven by Soe Gyi (a) Soe Win Than, 33 of Phalangon Village of Kyauktwin Village-tract of Thayawady Township, from Yangon to Pyay, with Myint Oo, 32 of the same village on the pillion seat was out of control and hit the post in front of High Yield Educative Farm between mile post 87/4 and 87/5 on the highway.

In the incident, Myint Oo on the pillion seat was rushed to the hospital, but he died on the way due to critical condition of his injury. The respective police station opened a file of lawsuit against Soe Gyi under the laws.—Myanma Alinn

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**Ward administrator elected in Kyimyindine Township**

Yangon, 6 Jan—The election of ward administrator was held in Wayoneik Ward of Kyimyindine Township on 15 August under the prescribed rules and regulations.

Of 22 wards in Kyimyindine Township, 250 feet deep tube-well was held in Maungwuchuang Village of Shatnayang Village of Seikpyu Township in Magway Region on 1 January. The tube-well was sunk with the assistance of UNICEF under the supervision of Township Development Affairs Committee for 2012-2013 fiscal year.

The 250 feet deep tube-well, the water pump station and 3400-gallon-capacity water tank were built for supplying water to 216 local people. All tasks of water supply to the local people cost K 4 million.—Myanma Alinn

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**Rector Dr Hla Tint confers certificate of BA Myanmar on graduate Ma Thuce Khung at the convocation hall of Yangon University for 113th convocation of Yangon University of Distance Education on 2 January.—Maung Tin Hlaing (H&T)**

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**Drive Safely**
WASHINGTON, 6 Jan—A 7.5-magnitude earthquake struck the coast of the US state of Alaska early Saturday, triggering a tsunami warning that was later lifted.

The temblor, whose magnitude was initially placed at 7.7, occurred at 0858 GMT, with its epicentre located 106 km west of Craig, Alaska, at a depth of 9.9 km, according to the US Geological Survey (USGS).

The major earthquake prompted tsunami observers to issue a warning for coastal areas near the epicentre, which was eventually expanded to cover the shores from Cape Fairweather, Alaska, to the northern tip of Vancouver Island, Canada. But the feared “significant widespread inundation of land” did not come, and the Alaska Tsunami Warning Centre canceled the warning, saying just small sea-level changes were detected in some areas.

“A tsunami was generated during this event but no longer poses a threat,” said the centre.

There were immediate reports of casualties or damage. But some voluntary evacuations were reported in some of the affected coastal communities.

Last October, a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck off Canada’s Queen Charlotte Islands, not far from the epicenter of the latest one. A tsunami warning was issued, but the resulting tsunami was below dangerous levels.

Iranian lawmaker says Turkey implements West’s policies on Syria

TEHRAN, 6 Jan—An Iranian lawmaker said that Turkey has turned into a performer of the West’s policies on Syria, Press TV reported on Saturday.

Hossein Sobhani-Niai, a member of the Iranian Majlis (parliament) Presiding Board, said on Friday that the Turkish government is implementing macro policies drawn up by the Western countries on the ongoing crisis in Syria.

US personnel and equipment began arriving at the southern Turkey’s Incirlik Air Base on Friday to support NATO’s Patriot battery deployment, US Embassy in Ankara said. The deployment of six Patriot batteries, including two each from Germany and the Netherlands, is in response to Turkey’s request to NATO against possible missile threat from Syria. All six batteries will be under NATO’s command and scheduled to be operational by the end of January.

The 21-month protests against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has turned increasingly bloody, with heavy fighting often erupting along Syria’s border with Turkey.

Egypt’s cabinet reshuffle on Sunday to include ten new ministers

CAIRO, 6 Jan—Ten new ministers are expected to swear into office in a cabinet reshuffle in Egypt on Sunday, official news agency MENA reported.

The new ministers, according to MENA, include Mohamed Ibrahim as minister of electricity, Mohamed Ali Bishr as minister of local development, Wael Al-Maaddawi as minister of civil aviation and Khadel Mohamed Fahmi as minister of environment, Egypt’s President Mohamed Morsi said in a speech late December 2012 that he had discussed with Prime Minister Hesham Qandil an imminent cabinet reshuffle to improve the government’s performance and make it able to cope with the ongoing political, social and economic challenges.

Five people died, five passengers. Five people died,” police told AFP.

Five people died in a plane crash in southeastern France

PARIS, 6 Jan—Five people died on Saturday when their private plane crashed a few moments after taking off from the Grenoble airport in southeastern France, local police said. “There were five passengers. Five people died,” police told AFP.

The plane crashed a few moments after taking off from the airport, in the village of Saint-Pierre-de-Bresseux. It was heading to Morocco and was due to make a stop in Spain, police sources said. The plane was registered in Morocco.

Nearly 130 Afghan prisoners released from Bagram prison

KANDAHAR, 6 Jan—Nearly 130 Afghan prisoners, who were formerly held by the NATO and US forces in charges of being involved in anti-government activities, were released from Bagram prison, an official said on Saturday.

“Up to 129 prisoners, who have been detained and held in Bagram prison over the last couple of years but there were no evidence to prove their involvement in the insurgency, were released and would join their families today,” General Mohammad Yar Barakzai, an Afghan defence ministry official in charge of the prisons, told a ceremony here.

The NATO-led coalition forces handed over the control of the Bagram detention centre to the Afghan government in March last year. Afghan President Hamid Karzai has ordered the concerned authorities to review the cases of more than 3,000 prisoners held in the detention center after the Afghan government took control of the prison.
Cambodian police arrest over 70 Chinese nationals for telephone fraud

PHNOM PENH, 6 Jan—The Cambodian police on Saturday arrested more than 70 Chinese nationals who were involved in telephone fraud in China following a complaint filed by the Chinese police, according to the latest police report.

A number of telephones and computers used by the suspects for threatening and extorting money from many people in China were also confiscated.

“The raids were made simultaneously in several locations in Phnom Penh City and its immediate suburbs after the Chinese police identified those suspects to the Cambodian authorities, Li Gen Chhay Sinath, head of the Interior Ministry’s internal security department, said on Saturday.

It was the fifth time that the Cambodian police in cooperation with their Chinese counterpart conduct massive crackdown on Chinese nationals accused of operating a Phnom Penh-based international extortion ring.

Telephone fraud has become a major social security problem in China. Suspects often use overseas servers to make phone calls from overseas, making it more difficult for the Chinese police to trace them.

Tropical storm Sonamu leaves 1 dead, 500 displaced in Philippines

MANILA, 6 Jan—Tropical storm Sonamu (local name “Auring”) left one person dead and about a hundred families still in evacuation centres in western and southern Philippines, the country’s National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said on Saturday. The casualty was identified as Pedro Francisco, a 35-year-old man at Iraan village, Rizal town of western Philippine province of Palawan, the agency said.

Francisco died after he was hit by an uprooted coconut tree, it added.

Meanwhile, about a hundred families or some 500 people were evacuated in a basketball court in Quezon town, southern Philippine province of Bukidnon on Friday afternoon as flash flood occurred in the area due to continuous rains brought by the storm, NDRRMC said. According to the agency, power interruptions were also being experienced in Puerto Princesa City, Abohar, Brookes Point and Quezon, all in Western Philippine island of Palawan.

The weather forecasting agency of the Philippines said that the tropical storm had left the Philippine Area of Responsibility.

S Korean president-elect’s way of democratizing economy

SEOUL, 6 Jan—South Korean president-elect Park Geun-hye has seemingly conflicting images. Park is the daughter of the country’s longest-serving dictator Park Chung-hee, but she is set to become the first female president in the country’s history. Park garnered over half of all votes in the presidential election for the first time since democratic elections were introduced in 1987, but Park’s conservative ruling Saenuri party has been by and large identified with business conglomerates, or chaebol, and the establishment, representing the small number of population.

During her election campaigns, Park sought to recast her pro-business, conservative image by putting forth an agenda of “economic democracy.” The buzzword was yelled throughout the presidential race by both conservative Park and Moon Jae-in, the liberal candidate of the main opposition Democratic United Party.

During the 2007 presidential election, then-conservative candidate Lee Myung-bak won a landslide victory over liberal candidate Chung Dong-young. At that time, voters in Seoul favored pro-business Lee who promised higher economic growth rather than Chung walled up from the competition between the two on economic democracy.

Park’s success is expected to see change. In the past and since democratic elections, the country’s top five chaebols, including Samsung, Hyundai Motor, SK, LG and Lotte, surged to 57 percent of GDP in 2012 from 36 percent in 2007.

According to the Fair Trade Commission, total assets of the chaebols, or conglomerates, or chaebol, have been frozen up due to low temperature.

Four killed as train attacked by militants in SW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 6 Jan—At least four people were killed and about a dozen injured when a train was attacked by unknown militants in Pakistan’s southwest Balochistan Province on Saturday night, reported local media. The attack took place at about 8:00 pm local time when some unknown gunmen opened fire at a passenger train near Mach, a small town lying some 50 kilometres southeast of Quetta, capital of Balochistan Province, according to the reports. The passenger train named Jaffar Express was heading towards Quetta from Rawalpindi, a city in east Pakistan’s Punjab Province, when it got attacked, said local media.

Assistant Commissioner of Mach confirmed the attack and said that the engine of the train was also damaged in the attack. Four members of Frontier Corps, a paramilitary force in the country, were killed in the attack, according to the local media.

The attackers fled the scene after the security forces fought back, said a local Urdu TV channel ARY. No group has claimed the responsibility for the attack.

One soldier killed, four wounded in ambush in restive S Thailand

BANGKOK, 6 Jan—One soldier was shot dead while four others were wounded in a roadside ambush by presumed insurgents in restive southern province of Pattani, Thai News Agency reported on Saturday.

The incident occurred late on Friday night when a group of 7 soldiers were leaving from their base on an army truck to change shifts with other soldiers in the provincial seat.

An unknown number of assailants opened fire at them, and Private Saravut Sirnakorn, 22, was shot dead at the scene. Four others were injured and rushed to Pattani Hospital.

The police blamed suspected separatists for the crime.

More than 5,000 people have been killed and more than 9,000 hurt in over 11,000 incidents, about 3.5 incidents a day, in Thailand’s three southern border provinces—Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat—and four districts of Songkhla since violence erupted in January 2004, according to Deep South Watch, which monitors the regional violence.
Egyptians debate over draft law limiting protests

CAIRO, 6 Jan—The draft law limiting protests in Egypt, which is currently being studied after recently being announced by Justice Minister Ahmed Meekki, stirred up an overwhelming debate in the Egyptian political arena.

Contradictory reports emerged during the day on whether the Shura Council, the country’s legislative authority, had received a proposed law to regulate demonstrations, sit-ins and marches.

Meekki’s statement made it clear that the intended law was not a ghost of reality, if it was not yet submitted to the Shura Council for discussion.

Leaked reports said the content includes the time of protests from 7 am to 7 pm, regulating that protests can neither cause traffic jam nor include damage or sabotage and they cannot be held outside the presidential palace.

The proposed law also stipulates that strikes must be staged at least 14 days after prior notice and cannot affect work and production, which is seen as “ridiculous” by opposers of the law, as strike worldwide means halting production as a means of pressure.

Most political parties and movements in Egypt, including some Islamist ones, strongly rejected the draft law, arguing it limits freedom of expression and serves only the current administration.

The main opposition bloc dubbed “the National Salvation Front” denounced the law as “notorious,” saying it represents a copy of the repressive laws adopted at the time of former President Hosni Mubarak.

The Front, with its various political parties and revolutionary forces, will stand against this law and will take all necessary political and legal measures to hold protests against such a freedom-limiting law, Hussein Abdel-Ghani, the Front’s spokesperson, told Xinhua.

For his part, political activist and Front member Karima al-Ahmarawi said the law “is an unforgivable crime against human rights. Whoever proposed this law is more evil than the devil as it prepares for a terrorist, repressive, fascist, police state.”

Al-Hifnawi added that Egyptians broke the barrier of fear and held anti-government protests despite the emergency law during the time of Mubarak and they would not give up their right of expression under any circumstances. Xinhua

Nixon to be remembered in centennial salute at California birthplace

LOS ANGELES, 6 Jan—A planned yearlong centennial celebration of Richard Nixon’s birth is due to kick off on Sunday at his presidential library in Southern California, with stricty honors and the laying of a wreath by the eldest daughter of the late 37th US President.

In, the Cold War-era Republican stalwart who opened US relations with communist China and became the only American president to resign from office, leaving the White House in disgrace over the Watergate scandal, would have turned 100 this week.

He died in 1994 at age 81.

The Richard Nixon Foundation plans to observe his complicated legacy with various events throughout the year, starting with the event on Sunday at the official Nixon library run by the foundation and the National Archives in Yorba Linda, California — his birthplace.

Among those set to attend are his eldest daughter, Tricia Nixon Cox, who will lay a White House wreath by President Barack Obama, and his sons.

Bruce Herschensohn, who was a speech-writer for the president, will deliver the keynote address, followed by a flyover by a squadron of US fighter jets, musical presentations by a US Marine band and a 21-gun salute.

Although Nixon had campaigned on a promise to achieve “peace with honor” in Vietnam, he initially escalated the conflict by approving a secret bombing campaign against communist North Vietnamese positions in Cambodia. A peace deal was eventually reached in 1973 leading to an end of US military involvement before South Vietnam ultimately fell to the communist North. —Reuters

South Carolina woman ranked as oldest American dies at age 114

New York, 6 Jan—A 114-year-old South Carolinian woman who was born when William McKinley was president of the United States and had ranked as the oldest known living American for just over two weeks, has died, her daughter said on Saturday.

Mamie Rearden died on Wednesday at a hospital in Augusta, Georgia, about 20 miles south of her South Carolina home, her young- est daughter, Sara Rearden, told Reuters.

She had recently broken her hip and was having difficulty breathing earlier in the week, her daughter said, adding, “I was looking right at her when she took her last breath.”

Even at Rearden’s advanced age, she was younger than that of the oldest known living person in the world, identified as a 115-year-old Japanese man, Jiroemon Kimura, according to the Gerontology Research Group.

The group’s figures show Rearden became the oldest living person in the United States just 16 days before her death.

She was born on 7 Sept, 1898, in Edgefield, South Carolina, where she was raised and lived all her life, her daughter said. She was a school teacher early in life, but after getting married and starting a family she left the job to become a homemaker, and went on to have 11 children in all.

She obtained her first driver’s license at age 65, and at about the same time became a case worker for an anti-poverty program, according to her daugh- ter. Her husband, Oacy Rearden, died in 1979 at the age of 88.

Policemen examine ice condition at Xidayang Fishing Wharf in Qingdao, east China’s Shandong Province, on 5 Jan, 2013. The ice conditions in the Bohai Sea and the Yellow Sea this January may be more serious than that in the past years, forecasted by North China Sea Marine Forecasting Center of State Oceanic Administration. —Xinhua

Rescuers work at a fire accident scene in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong on Saturday afternoon. There is no immediate report of casualties. —Reuters

Rescuers work at a fire accident scene in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong on Saturday afternoon. There is no immediate report of casualties. —Xinhua

XIAN, 6 Jan—Nine- teen Chinese tourists who went aboard a ferry after emer- ging the Republic of Korea (ROK) at the end of last year have been identified, local authorities said on Sunday.

The tourists, all males, are from two coun- tries in northwest China’s Shaanxi Province and its capital city of Xian, re- spectively, sources with the provincial government said.

The tourists departed northeast China’s port city of Dalian on 28 December and arrived in Inchon in the ROK on 29 December, ac- cording to reports released by the ROK’s Yonhap news agency on Thursday.

The tourists went miss- ing the second day after staying at a hotel in Inchon for the night, the reports said. The Shaanxi Tourism Bureau said in a Saturday statement that the tourists had not registered with lo- cal tourism authorities in Shaanxi. The Shaanxi provincial public security de- partment has dispatched a team to look into the case.—Xinhua

Investments in Jordan rise by 58 pct by 2012

AMMAN, 6 Jan—Invest- ments registered in Jordan rose by about 56 percent in 2012 compared to 2011, the Jordan Investment Board said on Saturday.

Investments in 2012 reached about 1.614 bil- lion dinars (about 2.3 bil- lion US dollars) compared to 1.023 billion dinars (1.44 billion dollars) in 2011, the board said in a statement of which a copy was obtained by Xinhua. Of the total in- vestments in 2012, about 49 percent were local invest- ments and the rest foreign investments, according to the statement.

Awami Shdaifat, acting executive director of the board, said the majority, or about 1.27 billion dinars (1.79 billion dollars) of the investments, was in the in- dustry sector, increasing by 96 percent compared to 2011. About 99 million di- nars (140 million dollars) worth of investments were in the industrial sector in 2012, followed by the ag- ricultural sector with 24.6 million dinars (34.5 million dollars) and 64.6 million dinars (91 million dollars) in the hotel and hospitality sector.—Xinhua

NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Identities of 19 Chinese missing in ROK confirmed

XIAN, 6 Jan—Nine- teen Chinese tourists who went aboard a ferry after emer- ging the Republic of Korea (ROK) at the end of last year have been identified, local authorities said on Sunday.

The tourists, all males, are from two coun- tries in northwest China’s Shaanxi Province and its capital city of Xian, re- spectively, sources with the provincial government said.

The tourists departed northeast China’s port city of Dalian on 28 December and arrived in Inchon in the ROK on 29 December, ac- cording to reports released by the ROK’s Yonhap news agency on Thursday.

The tourists went miss- ing the second day after staying at a hotel in Inchon for the night, the reports said. The Shaanxi Tourism Bureau said in a Saturday statement that the tourists had not registered with lo- cal tourism authorities in Shaanxi. The Shaanxi provincial public security de- partment has dispatched a team to look into the case.—Xinhua

Investments in Jordan rise by 58 pct by 2012

AMMAN, 6 Jan—Invest- ments registered in Jordan rose by about 56 percent in 2012 compared to 2011, the Jordan Investment Board said on Saturday.

Investments in 2012 reached about 1.614 bil- lion dinars (about 2.3 bil- ion US dollars) compared to 1.023 billion dinars (1.44 billion dollars) in 2011, the board said in a statement of which a copy was obtained by Xinhua. Of the total in- vestments in 2012, about 49 percent were local invest- ments and the rest foreign investments, according to the statement.

Awami Shdaifat, acting executive director of the board, said the majority, or about 1.27 billion dinars (1.79 billion dollars) of the investments, was in the in- dustry sector, increasing by 96 percent compared to 2011. About 99 million di- nars (140 million dollars) worth of investments were in the industrial sector in 2012, followed by the ag- ricultural sector with 24.6 million dinars (34.5 million dollars) and 64.6 million dinars (91 million dollars) in the hotel and hospitality sector.—Xinhua

Egpytian calls for peaceful transition in Syria

RIYADH, 6 Jan—Saudi Arabia and Egypt affirmed on Saturday the importance of peaceful transition of power in Syria, Saudi Arabia’s government and foreign ministry said.

After a meeting in the Saudi capital of Riyadh, the Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal and his Egyptian counterpart Mohammed Kamel Amr called for the peaceful tran- siption of power to spare the Syrian people of tragedies and sufferings.

The foreign ministers said in a Press conference that the situation in Syria was the top topic of their talks. “We also discussed in this framework the results of the on-going efforts and international initiatives and the need to push them to achieve the aspirations of the Syrian people towards establishing a new regime and maintaining the security and stability and the unity, sovereignty and in- dependence of the Syrian territory,” the Saudi foreign minister said.

Amr said the meeting also discussed enhancing bilateral ties between the two countries, especially commercial relations.

Xinhua

Policemen examine ice condition at Xidayang Fishing Wharf in Qingdao, east China’s Shandong Province, on 5 Jan, 2013. The ice conditions in the Bohai Sea and the Yellow Sea this January may be more serious than that in the past years, forecasted by North China Sea Marine Forecasting Center of State Oceanic Administration. —Xinhua

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**SPORTS**

**Li Na lifts seventh career title at Shenzhen Open**

**Shenzhen, 6 Jan — Former French Open winner Li Na bagged the seventh career title when she overcame Czech Klara Zakopalova 6-3, 6-7, 7-5 to win the inaugural Shenzhen Open on Saturday. The two 30-year-old battled it out in the three-set thriller where Li managed to nail the victory on her first match point.**

“Today was an especially big test,” said the top seed. “We’ve played a few times, and it’s never once been an easy match. The way she plays just isn’t my favorite — she hits a particularly flat ball — so for every point I win, I really have to able to control the tempo.”

Li will then compete in next week’s Sydney event as a warm-up to the Australian Open where she will try to restore her glory as a former Grand Slam winner. Li became not just the first Chinese but the first Asian to win a Grand Slam title in 2011 in the French Open. In the doubles final, No 1 seeds from Chinese Taiping, Chan Hao-Ching and Chan Yung-Jan, defeated unseeded Irina Buryachok of Ukraine and Valeria Solovieva from Russia 6-0, 7-5.—Xinhua

**Fernando Verdasco (L) and Anabel Medina Garrigues of Spain hold up the Hopman Cup and their diamond encrusted silver balls after defeating Novak Djokovic and Ana Ivanovic of Serbia in the final of the Hopman Cup tennis tournament in Perth on 6 Jan, 2013.**

**Spain overcome Djokovic and Ivanovic for Hopman Cup shock**

**Perth, 6 Jan — Spain secured a surprise victory in the Hopman Cup with a comeback triumph against Serbia in the final of the mixed teams event in Perth on Saturday.**

Fernando Verdasco and Anabel Medina Garrigues beat the more fancied pairing of Novak Djokovic and Ana Ivanovic 6-4, 7-5 in the deciding mixed doubles to secure a 2-1 win. World No 1 Djokovic had already defeated Verdasco 6-3 7-5 in the opening singles before Medina Garrigues survived a tense clash against Ivanovic, 6-4, 6-7, 6-2.

“Thanks to Fernando because without him, the doubles would have been impossible,” Medina Garrigues said. Verdasco led Djokovic 3-0 in the second set of their singles rubber before being overhauled. “It’s difficult to play against a player like him,” Djokovic said. “He’s very aggressive and serves over 200kmh.”

Djokovic is chasing his third successive Australian Open at Melbourne Park from 14 January. He suffered a shock loss to Australia’s Bernard Tomic during the round robin stage of the Hopman Cup but recovered with back-to-back singles wins against Andreas Seppi and Verdasco. —Reuters

**Dida ‘best Brazilian goalkeeper of 21st century’**

**Sao Paolo, 6 Jan — Former AC Milan and Brazil goalkeeper Dida has been ranked the best Brazilian goalkeeper of the 21st century by the International Federation of History & Statistics (IFFHS).**

Dida is in seventh position on the list, ahead of compatriots Julio Cesar and Rogerio Ceni. Italian Gianluigi Buffon heads the ranking. QPR’s Julio Cesar is in eighth place and is the only other Brazilian in the top ten. Sao Paulo’s Rogerio Ceni is in 13th.

Goalkeeper Marcos, who was first choice for the Selecao in 2002 when they won their fifth World Cup, lies in 34th. He hung up his gloves this year after representing Paulista club Palmeiras for the entirety of his career. Three more Brazilians made this century’s top 50; Tottenham’s Gomes, Corinthians’ Casio — who made four outstanding saves as his side will compete in this year’s Copa Libertadores. Dida made 91 appearances for the Brazilian national side before retiring in 2006, following Brazil’s elimination from the World Cup quarter-final. The top 10 are as follows:

- Gianluigi Buffon
- Iker Casillas
- Petr Cech
- Edwin Van der Sar
- Oliver Kahn
- Victor Valdes
- Iker Casillas
- Jens Lehmann
- Roberto Abbon
- Danzieri

**Former AC Milan and Brazil goalkeeper Dida**

**Nagatomo extends contract with Inter**

**Milan, 6 Jan— Japanese players Yuto Nagatomo has officially extended his contract with Inter until June 2016.**

“FC Internazionale is pleased to announce that Yuto Nagatomo has signed a contract extension with the club,” read a statement.

“All the paperwork relating to the Japanese defender’s new deal, which runs until June 2016, has been completed.”

The left-wing-back joined from Cesena and made his debut for the Nerazzurri in a 5-3 victory over Roma on 6 Feb, 2011. He has scored six goals in 86 official appearances for the club.—Xinhua

**Japanese players Yuto Nagatomo**

**NFL: Vikings QB Ponder to miss playoff game with elbow injury**

**New York, 6 Jan — Minnesota Vikings starting quarterback Christian Ponder will miss Saturday’s playoff game against the Green Bay Packers with an elbow injury, the National Football League (NFL) team said.**

Ponder, who hurt his elbow during last week’s regular season finale, will be replaced by Joe Webb, who is 1-1 as a starter in his NFL career and has not thrown a pass all season. Minnesota plays Green Bay in the opening wildcard weekend of the NFL playoffs at 8:00 pm ET (0100 GMT).—Reuters

**NBA: Timberwolves top scorer Love has broken hand**

**Toronto, 6 Jan — Minnesota Timberwolves leading scorer Kevin Love has fractured his right hand, the National Basketball Association (NBA) team said on Saturday.**

The injury to Love, who missed the first three weeks of the 2012-13 season with a broken right hand, is a severe blow to the Timberwolves (15-14), who are battling to stay in playoff contention in the NBA’s Western Conference. —Reuters

Love, 24, suffered the latest injury in the third quarter of Thursday’s game at Denver. An update to Love’s status will be provided after he is examined by a hand specialist later this week, the team said in a statement. The two-time All-Star forward, who was on the gold-medal winning US team at last summer’s London Olympics, leads the Timberwolves with an average of 18.3 points and 14 rebounds per game. —Reuters

**Minnesota Timberwolves forward Kevin Love (42) wipes sweat from his face during the first half of the Timberwolves’ NBA basketball game against the Los Angeles Clippers at the Target Centre in Minneapolis, on 5 March, 2012.** —Reuters
Tomato at Sarlingyi Market

SARLINGYI, 6 Jan—Now, local people from Sarlingyi Township can buy onion, pepper and tomato at market.

Berdych completes Kooyong line up

MELBOURNE, 6 Jan—World number six Tomas Berdych has been confirmed as the final player in the eight-man invitational Kooyong Classic. Tournament director Colin Stubs had held the final spot in the field open until as late as possible, hoping to secure a top-10 player for the tournament that serves as warm up for the Australian Open.

Stubs had said earlier he had contacted representatives of the world’s top four players, Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Andy Murray and Rafa Nadal, about filling the spot. Djokovic instead chose to play Hopman Cup in Perth, the 31-year-old Federer has not played any competitive warmup matches this year.

Ski jumping: Takanashi earns 3rd World Cup win of season

Japanese teenager Sara Takanashi, a distance matched once all day, and finished with 242.1 points. In five individual events this season, Takanashi has won three times, with one second and one third. “I got full marks, two jumps in good form in a row,” she said. “I just managed to get into my Yenmark position (for landing). It’s a good thing I did as that has been an issue.”

D’Antoni says Lakers need better starts, tighter defence

LOS ANGELES, 6 Jan—Faster starts and a much improved defense are sorely needed by the Los Angeles Lakers if the 16-time NBA champions are to resume a bitterly disappointing campaign, according to their head coach Mike D’Antoni.

Lakers fans had lofty expectations for 2012-13 before Kobe Bryant and Pau Gasol were joined by fellow All-Stars Dwight Howard and Steve Nash during the off-season but the once mighty franchise has failed to gel, slipping to a 15-17 record.

An ageing line-up has not been helped by a spate of injuries and three different head coaches, though the return of veteran point guard Nash from a leg fracture for the last six games certainly gave the team a much needed lift. “We just have to get better starts,” D’Antoni told reporters after Lakers team practice at their El Segundo training facility on Saturday. “Whatever we’re doing isn’t working right now. “And defensively, we need to work harder. We lose our energy on defence sometimes because of the offensive spurters.”

The Lakers lost a tense battle with their city rival Clippers 107-102 on Friday after clawing back from a 19-point deficit early in the fourth quarter at the Staples Centre.

When Bryant finished with a game-high 38 points, “We came back and we had a shot at the end to win. “We’re always shooting under pressure, down eight or 10, and the ball has to go in. Then you’re down 15 or 17, and it’s ‘Oh man’. We’re struggling with that a little bit. “So there are spots where we’re really good and there are spots where we seem to dissolve a little bit as a team. We have to find guys that can make shots and we have to get back to that.”

The Lakers have very little time to get back as they host the Denver Nuggets on Sunday and their three-time defensive player of the year Howard has billed himself a “game-day decision”. Centre Howard put up 21 points and 15 rebounds for the Lakers against the Clippers on Friday but hurt his shoulder in a tangle with Caron Butler and woke up on Saturday in some pain.

Howard skipped team practice on Saturday and received treatment from the Lakers’ training staff but D’Antoni was not too worried, saying the centre’s chances of playing on Sunday were “good.”

Bench player Jordan Hill, who sprained his right ankle against the Clippers, was listed as “probable” for Sunday’s game against the Nuggets. The Lakers, who have lost three of their last four games, have gone 10-12 since D’Antoni took over from interim coach Bernie Bickerstaff.
Kayin State celebrates Independence Day

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—Myanmar Police Force led the state-flag hoisting ceremony on Kayin State Independence Day on 4 January at Pyidaungsu Thiri Sports Ground in Hpa-an in Kayin State.

The chief minister read the message sent by the President. He added that the military has dispatched mobile medical teams to stable regions to provide health care to local national races and the work has achieved considerable success. Those mobile medical teams are also taking care of locals in some parts of Kayin State. He made known the military’s wish to make a contribution toward health and transportation sectors of Kayin State for its development. He described the Tatmadaw as the armed forces of the Union made up of national people of the Union from four corners of the nation, stressing that every national race must have Union spirit.

The KNU Chairman said guns shots could hardly be heard since the ceasefire negotiation was initiated. He pledged to strengthen the peace process without a single thought of return. KNU has formed seven committees after its conference and it has been planned to reconstitute peace-making committee.

The KNU General Secretary and the Secretary-2 expressed KNU’s wish to re-discuss the principles to be observed by the two sides in detail so as to strengthen the peace process, adding that it would do a lot for building mutual trust, emphasizing the instrumental role of transportation for progress of Kayin State. They requested cooperation of military mobile medical teams with KNU’s medical teams in improving education and health for the locals. They cited the conflict in Kachin State as a barrier to peace process, adding that doubts still remain among national races due to the civil war which has been dragging on for over the half of a century. And Kachin incident could be a question to the country’s democratization process, they said.

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services vowed to cooperate in potential matters with seven committees that will be formed by KNU, adding that he believed KNU’s pursuit of peace for development of Kayin State as every one who loves the country wants to see national development. He called for moving towards the positive side keeping honesty and promise.

Common goal of all national brethren could be reached one day as national races and stressed the need for learning of Myanmar language, English and culture of national races and stressed the need for learning of Myanmar language, English and computer in schools.

Health and education tasks in Kachin State for regional development were jeopardized. He guaranteed that Tatmadaw was keen to see peace and stability and prosperity of the country. He said that he believed peace accord could be reached in Kachin State.

Next, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing hosted breakfast for KNU Chairman General Mutu Sae Phoe and party for documentary photo.—MNA

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, KNU Chairman hold talks

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing held talks with KNU Chairman General Mutu Sae Phoe at Bayintaung Yeiktha here this morning.

Present on the occasion were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) General Soe Win, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Hla Htay Win, Vice-Chairman of Peace-making Working Group Union Minister U Aung Min, and senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), KNU General Secretary Phado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, Secretary-2 Phado Saw Mahn Mahn, central committee members Phado Roger Khin, Phado Nayin Maung and Phado Saw Hla Tun from the KNU side.

The Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services said approximately 75 per cent of peace process has been completed between the government and KNU and coordination would be the final stage of the process. He expressed the military’s commitment to do its fair share for peace and stability of Kayin State, vowing to strengthen the prevailing peace for development of the nation. He added that the military has dispatched mobile medical teams to stable regions to provide health care to local national races and the work has achieved considerable success. Those mobile medical teams are taking care of locals in some parts of Kayin State. He made known the military’s wish to make a contribution toward health and transportation sectors of Kayin State for its development. He described the Tatmadaw as the armed forces of the Union made up of national people of the Union from four corners of the nation, stressing that every national race must have Union spirit.

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Summary of observations at (9:30)hr M.S.T today

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 Jan—During the past (24) hours weather has been partly cloudy in Upper Sagaing, Yangon and Tanintharyi Regions, Rakhine and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States. Night temperatures were (3°C) below January average temperatures in Chin State. (3°C) above January average temperatures in Mon State and about January average temperatures in the remaining Regions and States. The significant night temperatures were (-1°C) in Haka and (2°C) in Loilem.