Do not hesitate to request budget for projects of “bare necessities”, says Speaker

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Jan—The parliament will not turn down the request of budget for projects of “bare necessities”, Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said at today’s Pyithu Hluttaw session.

In response to the proposal of U Aung Thaung of Taungtha Constituency on scarcity of irrigation, the parliament will not hesitate to request budget for projects of “bare necessities”, Pyithu Hluttaw session in progress.—MNA

Farms reclaimed in Nay Pyi Taw to go mechanized farming

Transformation to mechanized farming is a prerequisite for agricultural development. To convert conventional acre-plots to mechanized hectare-plots is one of the work programmes to implement for ensuring quick win.

The traditional farmland has such weak points as uneven size of farming plots, and no production roads which result in unnecessary production costs. In addition, it also contributes to low quality of crops.

As mechanized farming can reduce significantly the time, it enables double- and triple-cropping patterns, increasing the incomes of farmers which means increase in national income and high GDDP index.

We visited 3000-acre advanced mechanized farm in Dckkhinathu Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area recently and interviewed some personnel from Irrigation Department.

U Aung Thu Kywe Staff Officer (Civil) Irrigation

Q: How many persons previously owned the farmland on which mechanized farming is being implemented?
A: 177 owners in Area No.1. 426 in Area No.2, 239 in Area No.3 and 135 in Area No.5. But, some of them didn’t even an acre of farmland.

Q: There will be exact record of their ownership, right?
A: Yes, but only Land Records Department can say exactly. Our responsibility is just to undertake earthworks, construct intake and drainage facilities and production roads.

Q: How many workers are working here and machinery?
A: Roughly over 500. All of them are from this village and surrounding ones. There are 18 backhoes, and three bulldozers.

U Zaw Wan, Staff Officer (Civil) Irrigation

Q: Are the original owners are pleased with the project?
A: They want it with strong eagerness. Some of the parts were left vacant in the past because they thought nothing could be grown there. Now, you can see how thrive the sunflowers are! They are quite happy as production roads also serve as inter-village roads. Even the land price has gone up.

U Lin Lin Soe, Staff Officer (Civil) Irrigation

Q: Would you please name some programmes for convenience of farmers?
A: We have formed an organization called “Farmer’s Friend” to bridge between us and farmers.

Byline & Photo: Yamanya-Thwain Mon

By: We have formed an organization called “Farmer’s Friend” to bridge between us and farmers. Two persons for every channel of Ngaleik Dam, and 16 in total. Their main responsibility is to inform us the difficulties and inequality in irrigation water distribution to us. We will take care if we can and report to the upper level if we can’t. If we could focus on, there will be such organizations nationwide.

Q: When did the project start?

Q: And the scheduled date for completion?
A: The schedule date is around mid-March, 2013.

Q: How many acres of farmland have been reclaimed in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area?

As global countries are striving for food security, Myanmar is also implementing rural development and poverty alleviation scheme as a national objective. And the scheme is bound for success with concentrated and collaborative efforts of the government, businessmen and farmers.
Free medical treatment given in Hlinethaya

YANGON, 24 Jan — Talks on health education were held in conjunction with the ceremony to give free medical treatment to local people at People’s Hospital in Hlinethaya Township of Yangon Region on 19 January. A specialists team led by Deputy Medical Superintendent Dr Zin Mar Soe of Insein General Hospital performed free health care services in cooperation with a medical team led by the head of Yangon North District Traditional Medicine Department. They provided 690 patients with medical treatment. Patients who need to receive surgical treatment were transferred to Insein Hospital. — Kyemon

Overturned car hurt two passengers in Bago

BAGO, 24 Jan — A Hilux carrying passengers bound for Yangon plunged off the road and overturned at a place between mile post Nos (39/2) and (39/3) in the area of Inndakaw Police Station in Bago Township at about 1 pm on 22 January. The passenger car veered right off the road and turned over after crashing into the police islands. U Tin Win, 65, of Tamway Township suffered a head injury and U Ah Than an injury to his waist in the car accident. Inndakaw Police Station filed a lawsuit and investigation into the case is ongoing. — Kyemon

Woman dies after her motorbike hit by car

MANDALAY, 24 Jan — A motorcyclist was pronounced dead in the fatal collision between a Pajero and a motorbike on Pakokku-Mandalay motorway between East and West Auck-O villages in Yezagyo Township on 20 January. The victim is a 50-year-old woman called Daw Mu.

New SE-ME-WE-5 Internet link to be built in late Y 2013

YANGON, 24 Jan — Installation of Internet link, SE-ME-WE-5, will be carried out by the end of the year 2013. An agreement on installation of Internet link with China Unicon was reached in December 2012. Installation of inland fiber line from Muse to Chaungtha will be built first, aiming to contribute towards better Internet connection as the SE-ME-WE-3 is being old. It is estimated that installation of SE-ME-WE-5 will cost US$35 to 40 millions. — Kyemon

Salvage of sunken motorized boat in progress

YANGON, 24 Jan — Ngwezin Toe motorized boat loaded with goods bound for Myeik capsized and sunk in the Hline River at Bayintnaung pontoon bridge No (1) in Mayangon Township of Yangon Region at about 4.30 am on 16 January. Various kinds of commodities on the boat had already been salvaged on that day and works have been underway to salvage the sunken motorized boat since 21 January. — Kyemon

Saloon collides with stationary truck in Toungoo

NAO PYI TAW, 24 Jan — A Toyota saloon at breakneck speed crashed into the stationary twelve-wheel truck near mile post No (147/1) on Yangon-Mandalay Union Highway in Mingyi Nyo ward of Toungoo at about 2 pm on 22 January. The incident caused by reckless driving left four people on the saloon fatally injured and they were transported to 1000-bedded hospital in Nay Pyi Taw. — Kyemon

Photo shows car piling up in which three vehicles were involved occurred near Customs Department (Head Office) on Strand road in Kyauktada Township at about 10 am on 21 January. The car crash occurred when the driver of the Van driving from Kyauktada Township to Latha Township along the road stopped with a squeal of the brakes, leading the domino effect to the two small trucks behind his car. — Kyemon

Yangon-Taungup-Thandeh passenger bus accident claims 14 lives

SIITWAI, 24 Jan — A fatal car accident happened to an express passenger bus of Aung Thitsar Yangon-Taungup-Thandeh bus line near Salu village, 20 miles from Taungup, at about 2.30 am on 23 January. Fourteen passengers were pronounced dead in the tragic road accident. The express bus carrying 45 passengers plunged down into the valley at the downward turn of Naypu Hill after its brake failed, leaving 14 passengers including driver U Zaw Min Naing, 40, and a bus conductor dead and others wounded. Among passengers who were involved in the fatal accident, 33 with serious injuries are being hospitalized, at Taungup Hospital and the remaining injured given medical treatment at Thanwe Hospital. — Kyemon

Witnesses said that most of the survivors from the tragedy were fatally wounded and they were lucky to escape death although the bus plunged headlong into the deep valley.

Tatmadawmen, members of police force, the Taungup Township administrator and responsible persons of the bus line and social organization members rushed there and searched and picked up the survivors. — Kyemon

Book Fair on 26 January in Yangon

YANGON, 24 Jan — Tawwin family company will organize a books fair and prize-giving ceremony for reading and writing skill competition in cooperation with Myanmar Publishers and Distributors Association from 26 to 28 January on the ground floor of Tawwin Centre from 26th to 28th January.

Clinton forcefully defends handling of Benghazi attack

"With all due respect, the fact is that we had four dead Americans," Clinton said angrily as she testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, an appearance delayed more than a month because of her ill health.

"Was it because of a protest, or was it because of guys out for a walk one night who decided they'd go kill some Americans? What difference, at this point, does it make?" she said, making chopping motions with her hands for emphasis.

"It is our job to figure out what happened and do everything we can to prevent it from ever happening again."

During the morning Senate hearing and a later session in the US House of Representatives, Republicans accused Clinton's aides of being slow to respond to "painful incidents" and guilty of failing to make decisions at the White House until after Benghazi.

At turns emotional and fierce, Clinton chocked up at one point in six hours of congressional testimony as she spoke of comforting the Benghazi victims' families and grew angry when a Republican accused the Obama administration of misleading the country.

"I have said that I would resign if we had not been doing our jobs," the secretary of state said.

As has been said in a main opposition group at a time when the Human Kurds are fighting between themselves and the Syria's army, said in a main opposition group.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton testifies on the September attack on US diplomatic sites in Benghazi, Libya during a hearing held by the House Foreign Affairs committee on Capitol Hill in Washington on 23 Jan, 2013. Reuters

US, Africa say Mali action counter threat

Diabaly, 24 Jan—The United States and African leaders threw their full diplomatic weight behind a planned ground offensive against Islamist militants that killed US ambassadress, and said it will forcibly defend her.

"I have said that I would resign if we had not been doing our jobs," the secretary of state said.

"It is our job to figure out what happened and do everything we can to prevent it from ever happening again." At turns emotional and fierce, Clinton choked up at one point in six hours of congressional testimony as she spoke of comforting the Benghazi victims' families and grew angry when a Republican accused the Obama administration of misleading the country.

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US drone kills six suspected al-Qaeda members in Yemen

San‘aa, 24 Jan—At least six suspected al-Qaeda members were killed in a US drone strike in northern Yemen on Wednesday, local sources said, in an escalating campaign in which at least 20 Islamist militants have died this week. The United States never comments on strikes by its pilotless aircraft, which it has used to track down militants in Yemen for years. The Yemeni government tolerates such strikes but usually does not comment on the US role in specific incidents.

Washington has scaled up action against al-Qaeda in Yemen, where the group exploited widespread anti-government unrest in 2011 to seize swaths of territory in the southern part of the country, before being driven out in a US-backe offensive in June last year. The sources said the drone strike targeted a vehicle travelling in rural areas near the capital San‘aa.

"The vehicle was totally destroyed and the corpses were burned beyond recognition," one source told Reuters. US drones have launched almost daily raids on suspected al-Qaeda militants in Yemen since Saturday.

Shoring up stability and security in Yemen is a priority for the United States and its Gulf Arab allies because of its location next to the world’s top oil exporter, Saudi Arabia, and its shipping lanes, and because it is home to one of the most active wings of al-Qaeda. Reuters

Caracas, 24 Jan—Venezuelan Vice President Nicolas Maduro said unidentified groups had entered the country with the aim of assassinating him and the head of the National Assembly as President Hugo Chavez recovers from cancer in Cuba. Maduro provided no proof of the claim, made at a rally on Wednesday to mark the end of a dictatorship in the OPEC nation 55 years ago, but he said action would be taken shorty.

"For several weeks we've been following groups that have infiltrated the country with the aim of making attempts on the life of (Assembly head) Diosdado Cabello and my own," Maduro told a crowd of red-shirted "Chavista" supporters.

"They will not manage it against either of us... Don’t be surprised by actions that are taken in coming hours and coming days. Criminals infiltrating our country can’t ask for mercy." Chavez named Maduro as his preferred successor before he went to Cuba in early December for surgery, his fourth operation in 18 months for an undisclosed form of cancer in his pelvis that was first diagnosed in mid-2011.

Chavez has not been seen nor heard from in public since then. Venezuela’s government says his condition is improving after he suffered multiple complications caused by the 11 December surgery.

Officials say he is in "good spirits" but no date has been set for his return home. Maduro said he and the Energy Minister Rafael Ramirez would travel to Havana on Wednesday to see Chavez.

Uncertainty over the 58-year-old president’s fragile health has raised the specter of political instability in the deeply polarized South American country of 29 million people.—Reuters

Venezuela’s Vice President Nicolas Maduro (L) and Venezuela’s National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello (R) greet supporters during a rally to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the collapse of the last Venezuelan dictatorship in Caracas on 23 Jan, 2013.—Reuters

A convoy of French military vehicles drive on a road outside Markala, Mali, on 22 Jan, 2013.—Reuters

Syrian opposition warns of Kurdish-Arab civil war in northern region

Damascus, 24 Jan—A Syrian opposition group at home has warned of a Kurdish-Arab civil war due to the raging battles between Syrian Kurds and armed rebels in northern Syria, at a time when the Human Rights Watch blamed the rebels of inflicting upon minorities’ properties.

The National Coordination Committees, the main opposition group inside Syria, said in a statement on Wednesday that the northeastern region of Syria has been witnessing ‘painful incidents’ and ‘dire consequences’ that could eventually lead to a Kurdish-Arab civil war due to the ongoing fights to control posts and areas in that slice of Syria.

The statement came against the backdrop of the simmering violence that has engulfed the border town of Ras al-Ein in Syria’s northeastern Province of Hasaka. The rebels, coming from neighboring Turkey, have been pushing to control that strategic Kurdish-dominated town, but fighters of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) have so far kept them from storming the town.

Scores of people have been killed due to the fights there, amid reports that the rebels are using great firepower in the area in order to push in. Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Syria, making up around 15 percent of the country’s 25 million people. Most of them are Sunni Muslims and live in a geocultural region in northeastern Syria. They have been complaining about discrimination and harassment by the Syrian government.

In its statement Wednesday, the National Coordination Committees stressed that “there are local and foreign parties that are pushing toward this collision (between the Kurds and Arabs) to achieve the goals, ambitions and agendas that do not serve the national interest of Syria.”

Xinhua

Women wear masks due to air pollution while sightseeing the Palace Museum in Beijing on 23 Jan, 2013.—Kyodo News
Samsung Galaxy S IV codenamed ‘Altius’ to go on sale in April

MUMBAI, 24 Jan — The countdown to the Mobile World Congress (MWC) is on with just a month left to go. And over the past few days, rumours surrounding Samsung’s next line of devices are beginning to churn out pretty fast. The latest one, as reported by Samsung’s prominent blog SamMobile indicates that the Galaxy S IV has now been codenamed ‘Altius’ and is expected to go on sale in April.

The blog mentions that Samsung is indeed planning to “ship the Altius starting from week 16, which simply means on 15 April”. It goes on to say that the Korean manufacturer is likely to announce the device at a special mobile unpacked event at MWC or maybe sometime in March in London or New York. Furthermore, the blog claims that earlier rumours suggesting that the smartphone will support wireless charging are in fact real. The company plans to sell a separate dock and a back cover with wireless charging capabilities for the device. The wireless charging kit is expected to be made available a couple of weeks later after the Galaxy S IV goes on sale.

This means that the successor to the Galaxy S line will have a removable back cover, just like company’s current flagship device the Galaxy S III.

An earlier report mentioned that Samsung plans on using an alternate technology based on resonant magnetic coupling that is different from the electromagnetic coupling found in the current wireless chargers.—PTI

Yahoo snaps up social news start-up Snip.it

SAN FRANCISCO, 24 Jan — Yahoo Inc said on Tuesday it has bought “social news” start-up Snip.it, the latest acquisition to be announced under Chief Executive Marissa Mayer.

Snip.it, a Pinterest-like service that allows news consumers to clip, organize and share articles, was founded in 2011 by Ramy Adeb, previously an investor at Khosla Ventures.

In a 2012 interview, Adeb, an Egyptian native, told Reuters he conceived his start-up idea during the recent Egyptian revolution, when he wanted to share articles about Middle East politics but found Twitter to be inadequate because most of his interactions with his Twitter followers were related only to tech in Silicon Valley.

Terms of the deal, which was first reported by tech blog AllThingsD, were not disclosed.

A former Google executive known for his interest in Silicon Valley start-ups, Mayer took the helm at Yahoo in July and has sought to revitalize the web property by snapping up fresh talent and young companies.

In a company blog post, Snip.it said it would shut down its current service but work on bringing “social news” to Yahoo, without providing details.—Reuters

Microsoft may invest up to $3 billion in Dell

NEW DELHI, 24 Jan — Microsoft Corp is in discussions to invest between $1 billion and $3 billion in mezzanine financing in a buyout of Dell Inc., CNBC cited unidentified sources as saying on Tuesday.

Private equity outfit Silver Lake Partners is trying to finalize a bidding group to take the world’s No 3 PC maker private, and has opened discussions with potential equity partners, sources familiar with the matter have said.

Dell also has formed a special committee to take a close look at any potential deal on the table, multiple sources with knowledge of the matter told Reuters. If successful, it would be one of the largest corporate buyouts since before the global financial crisis.

Microsoft, which accelerated its foray into computer hardware in 2012 with the launch of the Surface tablet, will provide the capital in the form of mezzanine financing according to CNBC, which is a hybrid of debt and equity.—PTI

RIM sets stage for clients to run BlackBerry 10 devices

A BlackBerry device is shown in front of products displayed in a glass cabinet at the Research in Motion offices in Waterloo on 14 Nov, 2012.—Reuters

TORONTO, 24 Jan — Research In Motion has released a new system to allow its biggest customers to use its new line of BlackBerry 10 smartphones on their own networks, paving the way for the 30 Jan launch of the make-or-break devices.

RIM said on Wednesday that the new device management system — BlackBerry Enterprise Service 10 (BES 10) — is now available to government agencies and corporate clients. The system lets clients support both corporate- and employee-owned devices and provides a single platform to manage BlackBerry, Android and Apple’s iOS-based devices.

The BlackBerry smartphones, powered by an all-new operating system, are pivotal to the future of RIM, which has ceded market share to Apple Inc’s iPhone and devices powered by Google Inc’s market-leading Android operating system.

RIM is now betting that its re-engineered new line of touch-screen and key-based devices will help it win back consumers and market share.

The fate of the new smartphones could well be determined by the reception from RIM’s major clients, many of whom have, so far, only stuck by RIM because of the strong security features that BlackBerry devices offer.

The new mobile device management system builds on RIM’s core strength of security, but it offers a range of innovations that allow it to cater to the latest needs of IT departments, said Peter Devenyi, RIM’s senior head of enterprise software.

“We definitely anticipate that (enterprise) customers will be making the switch to BB10 rapidly,” said Devenyi, describing the feedback from government agencies and the business community as remarkably positive.—Reuters

Into deep space: second US firm takes aim at mining asteroids

CAPE CANAVERAL, 24 Jan — A team of entrepreneurs and engineers unveiled plans on Tuesday for a space mining company that would tap nearby asteroids for raw materials to fuel satellites and manufacture complex components in orbit.

Deep Space Industries, based in Santa Monica, California, said its inaugural mission is targeted for 2015, when it would send a small hitchhiker spacecraft called “Firefly” on a six-month expedition to survey an as-yet unidentified asteroid.

The 55-pound (25-kg) satellite, about the size of a laptop computer, would be launched as a secondary payload aboard a commercial rocket carrying a communications satellite or other robotic probe.

About 1,000 small asteroids relatively close to Earth are discovered every year. Most, if not all, are believed to contain water and gases, such as methane, which can be turned into fuel, as well as metals, such as nickel, which can be used in three-dimensional printers to manufacture components, David Gump, chief executive of Deep Space Industries, said.

Gump is a co-founder of three previous space and technology start-ups, including Astrobotic Technology, which is focused on exploration and development of lunar resources.

“There is really nothing in the business plan that Deep Space Industries is pursuing that cannot be done with technology research already accomplished in laboratories across the planet,” said John Mankins, a former NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory manager who works as the startup company’s chief technical officer.

“The technology may not have been used in space for the exact purposes that we propose, but the fundamental technologies are really at hand,” Mankins said.

The company officials, who unveiled their plans at a press conference at the Museum of Flying in Santa Monica, California, that was also webcast, did not comment on their financial backing, except to say they were looking for investors.

Deep Space Industries is the second company to unveil plans to mine asteroids, rocky bodies of various sizes that orbit the sun. So far about 9,500 asteroids have been found in orbits that come near Earth. Small fragments of asteroids regularly pass through the planet’s atmosphere, lighting up the night sky as they incinerate and occasionally surviving to become meteors.

Last year, Planetary Resources, a Bellevue, Washington-based company backed by high-profile investors including Google executives Larry Page and Eric Schmidt and advisers like filmmaker James Cameron, announced a programme that would begin with small, low-cost telescopes to scout for potentially lucrative asteroids. Firefly, as well as a follow-on line of planned asteroid sample-return satellites called Dragonfly, would be based on miniature research spacecraft known as CubeSats that are built from commercially available, off-the-shelf electronic components.—Reuters

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**Kidney tissue created from iPS cells**

**Tokyo, 24 Jan — Researchers in Japan say they have for the first time efficiently converted human iPS cells into ones that can grow into kidney tissue. The success was reported by a group led by Associate Professor Kenji Osafune of Kyoto University’s Center for iPS Cell Research and Application. Osafune’s team is focusing on the in vitro regeneration of kidney and other organs from embryonic mouse kidney cells. Osafune says the success is a first major step leading to regenerative medicine. He says research on kidney regeneration has made little progress so far because the organ has a complicated structure.**

**WashingtoN, 24 Jan — Johnson & Johnson may sell or spin off its slow-growing $2 billion-a-year diagnostics business, the company said on Tuesday when it reported quarterly earnings. The diversified healthcare company said it may sell the Ortho Clinical Diagnostics business — whose products include equipment for laboratory diagnostics and blood transfusion screening — or its animal health products unit, and Abbott Laboratories has split off its drugs unit. Debbie Wang, an analyst with Morningstar, said the J&J diagnostics unit “is a slower grower, and if you’re not one of the leaders, it’s very difficult to compete in that area.” Les Funtleyder, a fund manager at Poliwogg, said the company is wise to consider exiting this low-tech diagnostic business. J&J should target the more high-tech, high-profit molecular diagnostics business, which entails sophisticated genetic analysis used by physicians to tailor individual treatments, he said. This is becoming more of a mainstay in medical treatment, especially in cancer, where numerous gene mutations make patients vulnerable to disease. “If you look five years down the road, we are going to see molecular diagnostics and gene sequencing converge,” Funtleyder said in an interview at the J&J analyst meeting in New York. He added that gene sequencing — a process that looks for certain genes, and gene mutations especially, provides potential for certain diseases — will become the main determinant of how physicians treat patients. Funtleyder said he thinks J&J should consider acquiring companies like Illumina Inc or Life Technologies Corp, both engaged in genetic analysis. But Andy Busser, a fund manager for Symphony Capital in New York, thinks moving into molecular diagnostics may not be likely.**

**Yen bounces after BOJ disappoints:**

**Aussie slips**

**New York, 24 Jan — IBM’s shines with fourth quarter, 2013 outlook**

While some analysts said IBM’s earnings may be a sign of an improved tech spending environment, others said the strong results were specific to IBM’s business model. “IBM is better positioned in a tough environment than most tech companies are,” said Cindy Shaw, managing director at Discern. IBM made a bold strategic move a decade ago when it bought PriceWaterhouse’s consulting business and then decided to exit the PC business, betting its future was in services. The strategy appears to have paid off. “What IBM does better than anyone, with the exception of Accenture, is solving problems and I am not talking about taking out some costs, but really driving revenue,” Shaw said.

IBM is more specific to IBM than the industry in general. “The results show that the IBM Advantage and business model — vertical integration of hardware and software — is difficult to replicate,” he said. “IBM has been doing this the longest and competitors are very accustomed to it. They have a much stronger offering and brand name.” As a result quarterly net income rose 10 percent to $6.1 billion, or $5.39 a share from $4.71 a year earlier. Revenue dropped 1 percent to $29.3 billion due to the sale of its retail business in the third quarter. Analysts had expected the Armonk, New York-based company to report net income of $5.95 billion, or $5.25 a share, on revenue of $29.05 billion, according to Thomson Reuters IBES.

**Dish to close 300 Blockbuster stores, 3,000 jobs may be lost**

**New York, 24 Jan — Dish Network Corp plans to close 300 Blockbuster stores in the United States in the coming weeks and could lay off as many as 3,000 employees, a move that comes days after the DVD rental firm’s UK unit went into administration.**

Dish is trying to shed unprofitable Blockbuster outlets as online retailers like Amazon, Com Inc and sites like Apple Inc’s iTunes eat away at Blockbuster’s business. The company did not disclose the locations of the store closings, and Abbott Laboratories has split off its drugs unit. Debbie Wang, an analyst with Morningstar, said the J&J diagnostics unit “is a slower grower, and if you’re not one of the leaders, it’s very difficult to compete in that area.” Les Funtleyder, a fund manager at Poliwogg, said the company is wise to consider exiting this low-tech diagnostic business. J&J should target the more high-tech, high-profit molecular diagnostics business, which entails sophisticated genetic analysis used by physicians to tailor individual treatments, he said. This is becoming more of a mainstay in medical treatment, especially in cancer, where numerous gene mutations make patients vulnerable to disease. “If you look five years down the road, we are going to see molecular diagnostics and gene sequencing converge,” Funtleyder said in an interview at the J&J analyst meeting in New York. He added that gene sequencing — a process that looks for certain genes, and gene mutations especially, provides potential for certain diseases — will become the main determinant of how physicians treat patients. Funtleyder said he thinks J&J should consider acquiring companies like Illumina Inc or Life Technologies Corp, both engaged in genetic analysis. But Andy Busser, a fund manager for Symphony Capital in New York, thinks moving into molecular diagnostics may not be likely.**

**A worker is pictured behind a logo at the IBM stand on the CeBIT computer fair in Hanover on 26 February, 2011.**

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IBM is more specific to IBM than the industry in general. “The results show that the IBM Advantage and business model — vertical integration of hardware and software — is difficult to replicate,” he said. “IBM has been doing this the longest and competitors are very accustomed to it. They have a much stronger offering and brand name.” As a result quarterly net income rose 10 percent to $6.1 billion, or $5.39 a share from $4.71 a year earlier. Revenue dropped 1 percent to $29.3 billion due to the sale of its retail business in the third quarter. Analysts had expected the Armonk, New York-based company to report net income of $5.95 billion, or $5.25 a share, on revenue of $29.05 billion, according to Thomson Reuters IBES.
Colombian police seize 3.8 tons of cocaine

BOGOTA, 24 Jan—Colombian police on Tuesday seized more than 3.8 tons of cocaine in the northern city of Cartagena, authorities said. The drugs were found in multiple pharmaceutical containers under the cover of fake documents, said National Police chief Jose Roberto Leon.

The drugs were believed to belong to the drug ring of Los Urabenos, as the symbol with three axes was found on packages. The drugs were assumed to be delivered to Los Zetas, a drug cartel in Veracruz, Mexico. The drugs were worth more than 100 million US dollars on the black market, officials estimated.

The police now offer a reward of about 56,818 dollars for the capture of a man with the accident response, also believed to be a key figure for the group.

Austrian gas plant

VIENNA, 24 Jan—Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann will take part in the EU-CELAC (European Union — Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Summit in Chile on the weekend, where he hopes to build upon economic ties with the region.

Joining Faymann will be Austrian State Secretary for the Foreign Ministry Reinhold Lopatka, where they will take part in the main conference as well as conduct bilateral talks, primarily centred on the development of economic relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as environmental issues.

Faymann said Wednesday that Austrian exports to Latin America, which made up 25 percent of total investments in the region, would be a responsibility for Austrian and European companies, both in terms of environmental protection and social balance.

He added that environmental technologies and green energy would also be topics of discussion, and said Austria had many internationally-renowned industries leading in those fields. Lopatka will be present in Latin America ahead of the summit, where, together with Vice-President of the European Commission Antonio Tajani, he will visit Peru, where he will seek to establish contacts. He told the Austria Press Agency that Austria exports to Peru had risen 100 percent in recent years, and said he expected a similar figure for Chile. He also hopes to use the summit as an opportunity to conduct bilateral talks with representatives from Uruguay, Cuba, and Haiti.

UN humanitarian chief calls for more aid to Syrians

UNITED NATIONS, 24 Jan—The UN under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, Valerie Amos, said on Wednesday that ordinary people are paying a terrible price for the failure of the international community to agree on steps to resolve the political crisis in Syria.

Speaking to reporters in Davos, Switzerland, Amos, who is also the UN emergency relief coordinator, said that despite the insecurity and limited access, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who gather in Kuwait City for the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, which will be hosted by the Emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, are engaged inMoves to the destination of aid due to the worsening security situation in the Middle Eastern country.

Brazil’s embassy in Mali to stay open

RIO DE JANEIRO, 24 Jan—Brazil’s embassy in Mali, where the government forces and militants are engaged in clashes, will stay open, Foreign Ministry spokesman Tovar da Silva Nunes said on Wednesday.

The state-run news agency Agencia Brasil quoted Nunes as saying that there have been no orders from the government to close the embassy, though several countries, including Japan, have temporarily closed their embassies in Mali due to the worsening security situation in the Western African country.

Mali has been split into two since April, 2012, after the Al-Qaeda-linked rebels seized the north. France swept to the aid of the ill-equipped Malian army on 11 January, as the rebels continued south towards the capital Bamako. The international campaign against the Mali rebels mounted after 37 hostages including European, American and Japanese nationals were killed last week in rescue operations in an Algerian gas plant. Al-Qaeda-linked terrorists who claimed responsibility for the hostage taking in Algeria, which neighbours Mali, said they carried out the kidnaping in retaliation for the French offensive in Mali.

They also said they wanted to avenge a group of Western workers to northern Mali to hold them for ransom. US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that France could not permit northern Mali to become a safe haven (for rebels). US military planes have helped to ferry French soldiers and equipment to Mali. A coalition force from the West African nations is also moving into the troubled country.

UN humanitarians are engaged in operations to provide aid to Syrians in the snow-blanketed village of Shirakawa in Gifu Prefecture on 19 Jan, 2013. The area has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

White House: Allen’s NATO nomination to go ahead

WASHINGTON, 24 Jan—The White House on Wednesday said it would go ahead with the NATO nomination of John Allen, currently US Commander in Afghanistan, the announcement came after the Defence Department cleared Allen of misconduct. White House spokesman Jay Carney said during the regular press briefing that the Pentagon’s “investigation of that matter is now complete and we welcome its finding. And therefore, we intend for the nomination to proceed,” urging the Senate to consider it “in a timely manner.”

Allen was suspected of having inappropriate correspondence with Tampa socialite Jill Kelley, who was involved in the scandal that prompted the resignation of former CIA Director David Petraeus.
Self-reliant supply of electricity launched in PyinOoLwin Township

PyinOoLwin, 24 Jan—

Supply of electricity is one of the functions to develop social economic life of the rural people.

On 12 January, a self-reliant supply of electricity was launched in Ywathaya and Kayinsu villages in Hsinlwin Village-tract of PyinOoLwin Township.

Chairman of the power supply committee U Ko Ko explained the tasks of the committee.

Townselder U Bo Kay spoke words of thanks. Next, Commander of the local station Brig-Gen Aung Lin Dway pressed the button to launch supply of electricity.

The power supply facility was provided to 410 houses of the village, spending K 70.9 million.

Plan to choose players for U-16 team

Mandaly, 24 Jan—

Myanmar Football Federation manages participation of age-wise football teams of the country in the international football tournaments. It is planned to constitute the U-16 football team.

For the team, tentatively selected players will be selected from the youth players from Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions and Shan State at first.

A sports trials for the U-16 team were held at Mandalay Football Academy on 19 and 20 January.

New school buildings put into service

Nay Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—

Due to allotting fund by Ministry of Education in the 2012-2013 fiscal year, a ceremony to open two school buildings were held at No. 16 Basic Education High School in Kyitaung Village-tract of Zeyathiri Township on 18 January.

Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Paing Soe, Nay Pyi Taw Education Officer U Myint Zaw and Zeyathiri Township Administrator U Myat Thein Tun formally opened the school buildings.

Next, the Nay Pyi Taw Council member spoke on the occasion.

The Ministry of Education funded K 90 for two school buildings.

India plans to build Agricultural Research Department in Myanmar

Yangon, 24 Jan—

With the aim of developing agricultural tasks in Myanmar, the Agricultural Research Department is under construction in the Yezin Universities campus with the assistance of India.

India is projected to send experts to the department for conducting trainings on academic and research works to the trainees. The department will be facilitated with lab apparatuses, equipment and research materials.

On completion, the department will admit B.Ag graduates from Yezin University of Agriculture for pursuing further studies and conducting research works. At present, about 200 students are learning at the University of Agriculture.

India is providing assistance of agricultural equipment worth US$ 10 million for development of Myanmar’s agricultural sector.

These machinery are 300 40-HP tractors, 150 110-HP paddy threshers, 228 13.5-HP power-tillers and other farming equipment.

Since 1988, India is putting its investment in cultivation of long-staple cotton through good agricultural pattern and benefits from cultivation.

Cultivation of long staple cotton demonstrated

Nay Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—

A demonstration on cultivation of late-monsoon long-staple cotton was held on 1.5 acres of model plot in Thabyein Village of Zeyathiri Township on 15 January.

Officials of Industrial Crops Development Department explained the tasks of the committee.

Townselder U Bo Kay spoke words of thanks. Next, Commander of the local station Brig-Gen Aung Lin Dway pressed the button to launch supply of electricity.

The power supply facility was provided to 410 houses of the village, spending K 70.9 million.

Myanma Alinn

Myanma Alinn

International Recognized Pencak Silat Referee and Coach Refresher Course commences

Nay Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—

Myanmar is making strenuous efforts to achieve victory in the coming XXVII SEA Games to be hosted in Myanmar.

In so doing, referee and coaching courses have been conducted in respective sports events one after another.

On 18 January, the International Recognized Pencak Silat Referee and Coach Refresher Course, jointly organized by Sports and Physical Education Department of the Ministry of Sports and Myanmar Martial Arts Federation, was opened at Sports Training Centre in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

In this course, the international technical delegate from the International Pencak Silat Federation is providing training on advancement of technical and laws. Now, the training course is a pace for enhancement of Pencak Silat sport in Myanmar in the future and securing the glitter future in the nation,” said Union Minister for Sport U Tin Oo at the opening ceremony.

At present, five staff officers and technical officers of the Sports and Physical Education Department, five GC referees, 14 from Myanmar Martial Arts Federation, three from Ministry of Commerce, nine from Ministry of Defence and one from Ministry of Home Affairs are attending the training course.

Myanma Alinn

Maintenance of bridges, building supervised in Bago

Nay Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—

Bago Region Chief Minister U Nyi Win visited new wooden bridge across Maywa Creek on Zigon-Swepahla Road in Zigon Township in Thayawady District on 16 January.

He also met with local people in Kazingyi Village.

Myanma Alinn

Buddha Puja for ancient Mya Hninzi Pagoda

Nay Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—

The first Buddha Puja for ancient Mya Hninzi Pagoda will be held in Zalaung (North) Village in Ottarathiri Township from 19 to 23 February.

Myanma Alinn
Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker meets committee chairs, commission members

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann met committee chairs and commission members at Zabuthiri Hall of the Hluttaw complex here this afternoon.

Also present at the meeting were deputy speaker U Nanda Kyaw Swa and officials of the Hluttaw Office.

The Speaker delivered an opening speech and the committees and the commission elaborated on progress of works.

The meeting was brought to an end by the concluding remarks of the Speaker.—MNA

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker receives reps of ZTE Corp

Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Maung Maung Soe, Hluttaw Rights Committee Member U Aung Hsan and officials of the Hluttaw Office.

Myanmar-Czech trade cooperation discussed

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Regional development undertakings gaining momentum

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Government’s Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee, Union Level Departments meet

Government’s Guarantees, Pledges and Undertakings Vetting Committee, Union Level Departments meet.
59th Myanmar medical conference held

Naty Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—The 59th Myanmar Medical Conference kicked off at Strand Hotel in Mawlamyine yesterday morning, attended by Union Health Minister Dr Pe Thein Khin, Mon State Chief Minister U Oo Myint and Chairperson of Myanmar Medical Association (central) Dr Kyaw Myint Naing.

The Union Minister speaking on the occasion called for collaborative efforts of the other ministries, social organizations and people for fruitful public health care service delivery. He also stressed the need for a special focus on reduction of mother and child mortality rate and prevention against avoidable diseases.

The Union Minister, the state chief minister and guests looked round pharmaceuticals and medical equipment booths. The Union minister also visited Mawlamyine Nursing and Midwifery training School and construction site of extended ward at Waw Township Hospital in Bago Region. — MNA

Laotian delegation visits Bagan, Nay Pyi Taw

President of Lao PDR National Assembly Madam Pany Yathotou observes Lacquerware.— MNA

Arts College and U Ba Nyin Lacquerware Manufacturing — MNA

Amyotha Hlutaw Deputy Speaker U Mya Nyin and wife Daw Myint Myint Thein hosted a dinner to the Laotian delegation at Aureum Palace Hotel.

The delegation visited Bagan Archaeological Museum and Thiri Zeya Bhumi Bagan Palace this morning. The delegation then came here and visited Nay Pyi Taw Myanma Gems Museum and 500-acre educative farm in Pobbatthiri Township.

They also visited Uppatasanti Pagoda and made cash donation for the pagoda.— MNA

Union Attorney-General meets UNDP Resident

Representative, International law experts

Naty Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—The visiting Laotian delegation led by President of Lao PDR National Assembly Madam Pany Yathotou visited Bagan Ancient Cultural Region yesterday.

The delegation visited Shwezigon, Bu, Ananda and Thatbyinnyu and Lawkananda pagodas as well as Lacquerware Arts College and U Ba Nyin Lacquerware Manufacturing. — MNA

The delegation visited Aureum Palace Hotel.

The delegation visited Bagan Archaeological Museum and Thiri Zeya Bhumi Bagan Palace this morning. The delegation then came here and visited Nay Pyi Taw Myanma Gems Museum and 500-acre educative farm in Pobbatthiri Township.

They also visited Uppatasanti Pagoda and made cash donation for the pagoda. — MNA

KIA attacks military column, police outpost

Naty Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—50 KIA troops attacked a military column on security duty along Myitkyina-Bhamo motor road near Kantaungyan village for about half an hour yesterday afternoon, according to the Ministry of Defence.

Two KIA members threw in a grenade into Mashikhahtang bridge police outpost in Phakant this afternoon, killing one police. — MNA

The map shows attacks of KIA at military column, police outpost.

Drugs seized in Sittway

Naty Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—Before the departure of Malikha Boat from Sittway to Buthidaung at 7:30 am today, U Indaraca (a) U Tun Aye Kyaw, 38, son of Maung That Shey and U Tha Lone, 37, son of U Tha Sei aboard the boat were seized along with one homemade revolver, 26 assorted ammo, one 91 MM grenade, one 9 MM magazine, one CDMA-450 mobile phone and one package of WY stimulus tablets containing 49600 pieces.

The seized things are being kept in Sittway local police station. Actions are being taken against the drug smugglers. — MNA

Laiza-bound civilian car turned back

Naty Pyi Taw, 24 Jan—Authorities turned back a civilian vehicle bound for KIA stronghold Laiza at Dopthomeyan of Kachin State this afternoon to avoid “unnecessary losses”. Five activists including Ko Nay Kyaw Zin of Myanmar Social Development Network were destined to the battling area.

Security forces reasoned with them to turn back on account of insecurity and threats of mines planted by KIA groups. — MNA
Thousands of Venezuelans march in support of Chavez

Caracas, 24 Jan—Thousands of supporters of Venezuela’s ailing President Hugo Chavez flooded the streets of the capital Caracas on Wednesday in support of their leader, who has been hospitalized in Cuba for over a month.

Chavez’s followers set out from three different locations to converge in the downtown area’s 23 Jan district, in honour of Democracy Day. The cheering supporters wore the signature red color of Venezuela’s ruling United Socialist Party and carried banners that read “We are all Chavez.”

Wednesday’s rally is the second of its kind this year. Chavez was reelected for over a month. In early January, he announced plans to resign and have his government, with thousands of supporters streaming into the streets and leaders of friendly governments traveling to Caracas to express their solidarity. His government has decided to postpone the swearing in till his condition improves, and the decision was upheld by the Supreme Court of Justice.

Venezuela’s opposition forces, however, claim the move is unconstitutional and have been campaigning to have the president of the National Assembly name an interim leader.

US House passes debt ceiling extension bill

Washington, 24 Jan—The US House of Representatives on Wednesday passed a bill to extend the debt limit through the middle of May, buying a bit more time for the overcharged budget debate.

The bill, which cleared the House by a 285-144 vote, would suspend the 16.4-trillion-dollar debt ceiling until 19 May, allowing the federal government to issue debt and pay bills before that date.

The measure, initiated by the House Republicans, will temporarily defuse the default crisis, and at the same time set a timeline for the next phase of budget wrangling.

The move freezes all federal spending, including social programs, and bars America from defaulting on its obligations.

Israeli election star Lapid turns down possible centre-left union

Jerusalem, 24 Jan—Israeli rising political newcomer Yair Lapid, whose party Yesh Atid has become the second largest in Israeli politics since Tuesday’s elections, said on Wednesday that he would not form an obstructive bloc with the centre-left.

Lapid gave a short statement outside his Tel Aviv residence on Wednesday, in light of rumours and speculations which started to surface amid the election’s results. “We’re not going to build an obstructive bloc with Hanin Zoabi,” Lapid said, referring to the controversial Arab Knesset member from the Balad Party.

Lapid responded to a speech made by Labour Party leader Shelly Yachimovich, who called upon Lapid to form an obstructive bloc with the centre-left parties as the only way to remove Benjamin Netanyahu from the prime minister’s position. “The results of the elections are clear and we must follow through on them,” he added, referring to the shift to the centre that was shown in the results.

He also acknowledged the victory of Netanya, who addressed the topics of costs of living and inequity in the Israeli society on Tuesday night in his speech after the elections, hinting at a future partnership with him. “I’m grateful to the thousands of activists and volunteers who helped us get to where we are, and we will make sure to fight for the things that are on the agenda for the middle class, like decreasing the high costs of living and fighting for an equal share of the burden in the Israeli society, which I’m glad PM Netanyahu took notice of,” Lapid summed up.

Eight Algerian soldiers injured in gas field siege

Algeria, 24 Jan—Eight Algerian soldiers were injured during a siege on a gas field facility in In Amenas of southeast Algeria to rescue 790 workers detained by an armed group, the defence ministry said in statement on Wednesday.

The statement carried by the official APS news agency said “eight soldiers were slightly injured according to a final figure (of the hostage rescue operation),” adding that “the majority of them have resumed service.”

Last week, the Algerian Special Forces stormed three days in a row a gas field facility to rescue the abducted workers, including 134 foreigners of 26 nationalities, detained by an armed group of 32 militants. The operation, which ended on Tuesday, resulted in 37 hostages and 29 militants killed and arrested three militants, while five people are still missing, according to Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal.

US imposes fresh sanctions on key criminal groups

Washington, 24 Jan—The Obama administration on Wednesday imposed fresh sanctions on three key transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) operating in Asia and Europe.

The Department of Treasury targeted this time four members of the Camorra, one of Europe’s largest criminal organizations; the Inagawa-kai, the third largest clan within the Japanese Yakuza criminal network; and an individual providing support to a key member of the Brothers’ Circle, a large multi-ethnic Eurasian criminal network.

The move freezes all of their assets under US jurisdiction and bars American citizens from doing business with them.

Indian committee submits report on stronger rape laws

New Delhi, 24 Jan—An Indian judges’ committee on Wednesday submitted a report on how to amend criminal code to deliver harsher punishment of rapists, after the horrifying gang rape took place over the last month in the Indian capital.

The committee headed by former chief justice JS Verma, set up to suggest ways to make rape laws stronger in the country, submitted its report and hoped it would be taken up seriously in the coming parliament session.

“This is just the beginning of the change,” said Justice Verma, adding that the first step is to stop sexual harassment against women. The 16 December gang rape shook India after a 23-year-old woman was brutally killed by six thugs on a moving bus in south Delhi.

Many have called for death punishment for the rapists as Indian law does not give capital punishment to rapists and a majority of rape cases remain unsolved in courts.

5.2-magnitude quake hits Hokkaido, Japan

Hokkaido, 24 Jan—An earthquake measuring 5.2 on the Richter scale jolted Hokkaido of Japan at 21:34:32 GMT on Wednesday, the US Geological Survey said.

The epicenter, with latitude and longitude coordinates 43.13 degrees north latitude and 145.709 degrees east longitude, is clear and we must follow through on them,” he added, referring to the shift to the centre that was shown in the results.

He also acknowledged the victory of Netanya, who addressed the topics of costs of living and inequity in the Israeli society on Tuesday night in his speech after the elections, hinting at a future partnership with him. “I’m grateful to the thousands of activists and volunteers who helped us get to where we are, and we will make sure to fight for the things that are on the agenda for the middle class, like decreasing the high costs of living and fighting for an equal share of the burden in the Israeli society, which I’m glad PM Netanyahu took notice of,” Lapid summed up.

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The epicenter, with a depth of 59.50 km, was initially determined to be at 43.1448 degrees north latitude and 145.7090 degrees east longitude.
Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (2nd from L) and economic and fiscal policy minister Akira Amari (3rd from R) attend a meeting of Cabinet ministers on Wednesday. Amari submitted the report, in which the government revised upward its basic assessment of the Japanese economy for January for the first time in eight months. Kyodo News

Two more Japanese hostages confirmed dead in Afghanistan

KABUL, 24 Jan—Security forces discovered two more Japanese nationals were killed in the hostage crisis in Afghanistan, raising the Japanese death toll in the crisis to nine and leaving one still missing.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga released the confirmation at a press conference, saying the government will take every measure to find the whereabouts of the Japanese who remains unaccounted for.

The two victims, along with other seven that confirmed dead on Monday, were employees of Japan Gasoline Company (JGC), which has a total of 17 Japanese nationals working at the gas plant seized by Islamic militants in the North African country.

The JGC confirmed earlier that seven out of the 17 people are in safe condition.

An aircraft of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces left for Algiers, the capital of Algeria, to bring the dead and the seven survivors back home. Xinhua

Sri Lanka new China recording center to open

COLOMBO, 24 Jan—Sri Lanka’s new chief justice ceremoniously commenced his duties on Wednesday amidst continued disapproval by the international community and the island’s lawyers.

Chief Justice Mohan Peiris, who was sworn in before President Mahinda Rajapaksa on 15 January, arrived at the Supreme Court complex on Wednesday morning to attend the ceremonial event that usually includes an address by the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL).

However, in keeping with a unanimousmade decision in December, the 11,000strong membership of the BASL decided that they would not attend the event.

The BASL since November launched a string of protests against the impeachment of former Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake and have steadfastly maintained that her removal was illegal and undermined the independence of judiciary.

“This is another step towards tyranny. People who should have fought the impeachment did not do so and this is the tragic result,” BASL member and lawyer Srinath Perera told reporters after the ceremony.

Media had turned out in droves for the event but only the state media were allowed inside.

Meanwhile the United States on Wednesday expressed concern over threats and attacks against lawyers and members of civil society organizations in the aftermath of the controversial impeachment.

The US Embassy here said it is disturbed by the series of threats and attacks against legal defenders, civil society organizations and activists who have spoken out on recent events. Sri Lanka has faced a barrage of criticism from the Britain, Commonwealth and other international organizations for its removal of Bandaranayake earlier this month. Xinhua

CPC official calls for positive role in religious development

BEIJING, 24 Jan—A high-ranking official of the Communist Party of China (CPC) has encouraged the religious circle and followers to play a positive role in China’s modernization drive.

Calling them a “positive force” in promoting economic and social development, Yu Zhengsheng, a Standing Committee member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, said efforts are needed to make religion conducive to national development and the improvement of religious adherents’ material and spiritual lives.

Yu made the remarks during his visits to major national religious groups in Beijing from Monday to Wednesday.

“Among our people, it remains secondary whether they choose to believe or not to believe in religion, or which religion they chose to believe in. The common goal of realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is primary,” he said.

He also urged the religious groups to pay attention to organization building and personnel training, and to discover more positive elements in religious doctrines. Xinhua

Drugs addicts hold bank staff hostage in Cambodia for drug

PHnom Penh, 24 Jan—Two drug addicts armed with a pistol have been holding two local bank staff hostage since Tuesday evening in the bank, demanding “drug, not money”, police confirmed on Wednesday morning.

The incident happened at Acleda Bank’s branch in Phnom Penh commune in Stung Trang district of Kampong Cham Province, about 124 kilometers east of Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia.

“The perpetrators are drug addicts, they are taking the two bank staff hostage in the bank’s building to demand drug.” Touch Mey, deputy police chief of Arak Thnort commune, told Xinhua over the telephone.

He said that at the start on Tuesday evening, three bank employees were taken hostage, but one managed to escape on Wednesday morning and reported to police. “The police surrounded and broke into the building, but could neither arrest the suspects nor rescue the hostages because they had led the two male hostages into a cashier room, which is equipped with double safety locks,” he said. “We dare not to break the locks to enter the room because we are concerned that the suspects will kill the hostages.”

The suspects kidnapped them for drug, not for money because the bank on Wednesday afternoon arranged about 57 million riel (14,250 US dollars) to give to the kidnappers in order to exchange for the release of the hostages, but they did not take the money, but demanded for drug instead.—Xinhua

Philippine president signs law promoting welfare of domestic workers

MANILA, 24 Jan—Philippine President Benigno Aquino III has signed a law that promotes the welfare of household workers, a senior official said on Wednesday.

Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Abigail Valte said that Aquino inked Republic Act No 10361 or “An Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers” on 18 January this year.

“The law will take effect 15 days after its publication in the print version of the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation,” she said in a text message reply.

The law provides the setting of a minimum wage and other benefits for some two million domestic workers in the country. Xinhua

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The suspects kidnapped them for drug, not for money because the bank on Wednesday afternoon arranged about 57 million riel (14,250 US dollars) to give to the kidnappers in order to exchange for the release of the hostages, but they did not take the money, but demanded for drug instead.—Xinhua

Philippine president signs law promoting welfare of domestic workers

MANILA, 24 Jan—Philippine President Benigno Aquino III has signed a law that promotes the welfare of household workers, a senior official said on Wednesday. Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Abigail Valte said that Aquino inked Republic Act No 10361 or “An Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers” on 18 January this year. The law will take effect 15 days after its publication in the print version of the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation,” she said in a text message reply. The law provides the setting of a minimum wage and other benefits for some two million domestic workers in the country. Xinhua

Drug addicts hold bank staff hostage in Cambodia for drug

PHnom Penh, 24 Jan—Two drug addicts armed with a pistol have been holding two local bank staff hostage since Tuesday evening in the bank, demanding “drug, not money”, police confirmed on Wednesday morning. The incident happened at Acleda Bank’s branch in Phnom Penh commune in Stung Trang district of Kampong Cham Province, about 124 kilometers east of Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia.

“The perpetrators are drug addicts, they are taking the two bank staff hostage in the bank’s building to demand drug.” Touch Mey, deputy police chief of Arak Thnort commune, told Xinhua over the telephone.

He said that at the start on Tuesday evening, three bank employees were taken hostage, but one managed to escape on Wednesday morning and reported to police. “The police surrounded and broke into the building, but could neither arrest the suspects nor rescue the hostages because they had led the two male hostages into a cashier room, which is equipped with double safety locks,” he said. “We dare not to break the locks to enter the room because we are concerned that the suspects will kill the hostages.”

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CLAMS DAY NOTICE
MV FRISIA LAHN VOY NO (021)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV FRISIA LAHN VOY NO (021) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.1.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of MIP where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS ORIENT OVERSEAS CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

CLAMS DAY NOTICE
MV EVER ABLE VOY NO (332)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV EVER ABLE VOY NO (332) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.1.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS EVER GREEN SHIPPING
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

CLAMS DAY NOTICE
MV PAC ARIES VOY NO (011)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV PAC ARIES VOY NO (011) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.1.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS INTERASIA LINES
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

THE ART OF THE ACROBATS

Search for missing plane in Antarctica

WELLINGTON, 24 Jan—A search is under way in Antarctica for three Canadians on board, New Zealand rescue authorities said on Thursday.
An emergency locator beacon from a Twin Otter plane flying from the South Pole to the Italian base in Terra Nova was activated late on Wednesday in the northern end of the Queen Alexandra Range.
A search by a US National Guard helicopter failed to spot the plane, and a second flight over the area was planned, the NZ Rescue Coordination Centre said. Weather conditions in the area were said to be poor, with low cloud and strengthening winds.—Xinhua

Train derail in Arkansas, US

HOUSTON, 24 Jan—Almost 30 train cars derailed in Arkansas, a southern state in US, on Wednesday, but no injuries were reported, authorities said.
The accident happened near Willford, in the north-east of the state Wednesday morning, closing the main rail line between Springfield and Memphis until late Wednesday, local media reported.
Three of the cars carried hazardous chemicals, but did not leak after the derailment, according to the reports.
The cause of the accident is still being investigated.—Xinhua

Somali militants threaten to kill Kenyan hostages

NAIROBI, 24 Jan—Somali Al-Shabaab militants who kidnapped two Kenyan civil servants a year ago have threatened to kill them unless Kenya releases all prisoners held on terrorism charges.
In a statement posted on the militants’ Twitter account Wednesday night, the al-Qaeda-allied group vowed to release the prisoners and Kenyan government is advised to pay close attention to the pleas of the POWs (prisoners of war).
“The release of the prisoners is unconditional and must be made public,” the group posted on Twitter. “Kenyan government has three weeks to release the prisoners claiming retaliation for a botched French operation to free them. Kenya has heightened security around the country, with security agencies at an unprecedented state of alert after recent reports Al-Shabaab planned attacks against the East African nation and foreign interests in the country.
The militant group has also come under pressure from African Union peacekeepers, who have pushed them out of the Somali capital Mogadishu and from Ethiopia.
Al-Shabaab is known in the area under its rule and is believed to have links to al-Qaeda. The group has also blocked some international aid workers from accessing parts of Somalia suffering from drought and famine.
Reuters

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New Light of Myanmar

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MV FUK KANG SHAN VOY NO (107)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV FUK KANG SHAN VOY NO (107) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.1.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
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SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS COSCO SHIPPING CO. LTD.
Phone No: 256916/256919/256921

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U Thun Maung, Advocate
For Mitsubishi Electric Corporation

The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Registered

Dated 26 January, 2013

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The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Ministry of Energy

Invitation for Bids to Conduct Petroleum Operations in Myanmar Onshore Areas (2013)

Dated: 17th January, 2013

1. The Ministry of Energy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar hereby announces Invitation of Sealed Bids for Petroleum Operations to be conducted in Myanmar Onshore Areas on production sharing basis.

2. The following Onshore blocks are available for bidding in this bidding round:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Type of Contract</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>PSC B2</td>
<td>(Zebbyutang-) Nandaw</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>PSC C1</td>
<td>(Indaw-Yenan)</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>PSC H</td>
<td>(Taungoo) Pyinmana</td>
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<td>(4)</td>
<td>PSC J</td>
<td>(Mawlamyine)</td>
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<td>(6)</td>
<td>PSC M</td>
<td>(Kyaikkyi)</td>
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<td>(8)</td>
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<td>EP 3</td>
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<td>(10)</td>
<td>EP 4</td>
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<td>(12)</td>
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<td>IOR 6</td>
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<td>(16)</td>
<td>IOR 7</td>
<td>(Shwepyitha)</td>
<td>IPR</td>
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<tr>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>MOGE 3</td>
<td>(Padaukpin-Natma)</td>
<td>PSC</td>
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<tr>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>MOGE 4</td>
<td>(Myintha)</td>
<td>PSC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. All interested parties are cordially invited to submit “the Letter of Expression of Interest”, together with Company’s Article of Association (AOA), Memorandum of Association (MOA), Certificate of Incorporation, latest Annual Report and latest Financial Statement (or) Financial Report and Detail Track Record, which are to be endorsed for authenticity by the respective Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar at the place of Company’s registration (or) establishment or nearest, in sealed envelopes superscripted “Confidential” “Myanmar Onshore Blocks Second Bidding Round-2013”, to the following address not later than two (2) Months after the date of announcing of this invitation (17th January 2013):

Director General
Energy Planning Department
Ministry of Energy
Building No.6, Nay Pyi Taw
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Note: For further inquiry (and/or) information, please contact the following:-

Director General
Energy Planning Department
Ministry of Energy
Building No.6, Nay Pyi Taw
The Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Managing Director
Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise
Ministry of Energy, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Tel: 95-67 411 055/ 411 056
Fax: 95-67 411 125
Email: moegdplan@energy.gov.mm

Director General
Energy Planning Department
Ministry of Energy, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Tel: 95-67 411 099/ 411 057
Fax: 95-67 411 113
Email: myanmar@mptmail.net.mm

4. The petroleum operation shall be conducted on production sharing basis and/or improved petroleum recovery basis and the party(s), who desire to enter into the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) and/or Improved Petroleum Recovery Contract (IPR) with the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) shall have technical competency, financial capability, experience, expertise and technical know how to conduct petroleum exploration and development works and must have good track record.

5. The potential bidders will be pre-qualified and selected. Then the potential bidders who passed pre-qualification will be presented with General Overview of each Block consisting of representative data and information free of charge by Geological/Geophysical Team of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise.

6. The potential bidders will be explained and provided with Standard Terms and Conditions by Energy Planning Department in order to submit proposal(s).

7. The potential bidders will be allowed to submit up to three (3) proposals for three (3) onshore blocks together with proposed Terms and Conditions. The proposals submitted shall be on a block by block basis.

8. The potential bidders’ proposed Terms and Conditions will be assessed and the best offered Terms and Conditions will be selected for awarding.

9. The potential bidders must cooperate with a minimum of (1) one Myanmar national owned company registered at Energy Planning Department, Ministry of Energy, of their own choosing.

10. Energy Planning Department will provide the list of Myanmar national owned companies registered at Energy Planning Department to interested foreign companies.

11. For further information (and/or) release of information, please contact the following:-

Goldie Hawn tries not to interfere in Kate Hudson’s life

NEW DELHI, 24 Jan—Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn try not to interfere in Kate Hudson’s relationship with Matt Bellamy. Kurt has been in a relationship with Kate’s mother Goldie for 30 years and although the trio are extremely close, Kurt says they don’t offer advice unless Kate asks for it.—PTI

Violinist Vanessa-Mae rehearses for a new role—Olympic skier

Violinist Vanessa-Mae is seen performing on stage during a concert in Prague in this 25 Sept, 2008 file photograph. Vanessa-Mae has put music on hold for a year and is rehearsing for a new role—skiing at the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, in February 2014, she said in an interview on 19 Jan, 2013.—REUTERS

London, 24 Jan—Violinist Vanessa-Mae has put music on hold for a year and is rehearsing for a new role—skiing for Thailand at the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, in February 2014.

“Vanessa-Mae, 34, is in training with the aim of competing in at least five internationally recognized events to qualify for the giant slalom and possibly the slalom at the Sochi Olympics.

“People are surprised when they see me skiing—a classical violinist, Oriental, who has lived in the city all her life,” Vanessa-Mae told Reuters in a telephone interview.

“But it has been my dream to be a skier since I was 14. This is something I am determined to do.”

The violinist is a British citizen but she also holds a Thai passport. She was born in Singapore to a Chinese mother and a Thai father but she was brought up in England when her mother remarried a Briton.

Vanessa-Mae, whose full name is Vanessa-Mae Vanakorn Nicholson, would be only the second Thai to compete at a Winter Olympics if she qualified.

Academic Prawat Nagvajara represented Thailand in cross-country skiing at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics and the 2006 Turin Winter Olympics.

“I want to compete for Thailand because there is a part of me which I have never celebrated—being Thai,” said Vanessa-Mae.

“My father, like most Thais, has never skied but he’s really excited about me doing this as it is the Thai Olympic Committee.”

Vanessa-Mae started skiing at the age of 4 but music has always been her priority. She made her international professional debut aged 10 and made her mark on the world stage when she broke from tradition and became known for her sexy, glamorous style and for mixing classical music with pop.

Her first techno pop-style album, “The Violin Player,” was released in 1995 and reached No 11 in the UK albums chart and she has not stopped touring since, although she has not released a new album since 2004.—Reuters
S Williams down, Federer survives at Australian Open

MELBOURNE, 24 Jan.—Veterans Serena Williams and Roger Federer got tested in Wednesday’s Australian Open quarterfinals. Federer passed and Serena flailed. Tournament-favourite Serena Williams was eliminated by 19-year-old fellow American Sloane Stephens, which is the biggest upset of the tournament as the 29th seed rallied to overcome Williams 3-6, 7-5, 6-4 to reach her career first Grand Slam semifinals. Williams appeared to hurt her lower back while attempting to pull up short of the net during the eighth game of the second set, which forced the 15-time Grand Slam champion to call for a trainer after the ninth game.

Stephens won the second set when Williams, serving slower than usual, was broken. Williams also had her service broken in the final game of the match. The match was billed as a showdown pitting the future of American tennis against the most accomplished player of the present generation. Stephens will play defending champion Victoria Azarenka in the semifinals. The defending champion overcame some early jitters to beat Victoria Azarenka of Belarus.

Cincinnati Reds have been added in 2003 and set its site alongside the Ohio river, sits atop the league table with a 10-3 record and the great fans of Cincinnati, MLB Commissioner Bud Selig said in a statement. “The Midsummer Classic will be a remarkable opportunity to celebrate Cincinnati’s rich baseball tradition, which parallels the history of the national pastime itself.”

The game promises an economic boost for the Cincinnati economy as last year’s All-Star Game in Kansas City had a $60 million economic impact.

Cincinnati 2015 MLB All-Star Game

TORONTO, 24 Jan.—The Cincinnati Reds have been awarded Major League Baseball’s (MLB) 2015 All-Star Game, which will mark the first time in 27 years the city will enjoy the economic boost the event provides. It will mark the fifth time Cincinnati has hosted the annual game, which pits American League and National League All-Stars against each other to determine which team gets home field advantage for that season’s World Series. “I am very pleased to award the 2015 All-Star Game to the Reds and the great fans of Cincinnati,” MLB Commissioner Bud Selig said in a statement. “The Midsummer Classic will be a remarkable opportunity to celebrate Cincinnati’s rich baseball tradition, which parallels the history of the national pastime itself.”

The game promises an economic boost for the Cincinnati economy as last year’s All-Star Game in Kansas City had a $60 million economic impact.

The 2013 All-Star Game will be played at the home of the New York Mets and the 2014 Midsummer Classic will be in Minneapolis, home of the Minnesota Twins.—Reuters

Buffon extends Juventus contract

ROME, 24 Jan.—Italian international goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon extended his contract with Juventus by two years through to 2015, the Italian giants confirmed on Wednesday. “Buffon has extended his deal with the club for two further years through to June 2015. Juve will always be home for him,” said the club chairman Andrea Agnelli in a news conference. “The 34-year-old Buffon joined Jue from Parma in 2001 and has spent 12 seasons in the Turin-based side. Even when Juventus were relegated to Serie B in 2004, Buffon chose to prove his loyalty by sticking with the team and pacing Juve back to Serie A.

Juventus are topping the league table with a 5-point advantage after 21 rounds of this season.
Transportation services discussed in Myawady

Myawady, 24 Jan—Myawady town's traffic line Control Committee held the coordination meeting on transportation at the hall of District General Administration Department on 16 January. Deputy Commissioner of District GAD U Than Htoo made a speech. Commander of District Police Force Police Lt-Col Aung Myint discussed traffic rules.

Croatia end French hopes of world title hat-trick

ZAGREB, (Spain), 24 Jan—France's hopes of becoming the first nation to claim a hat-trick of successive world handball titles were dashed with a 30-23 quarter-final defeat to familiar rivals Croatia on Wednesday. Hosts Spain also advanced to the last four with a 28-24 defeat of Germany, where they were joined by Denmark, 28-26 winners over Hungary, and who joined by Denmark, 28-26 winners over Hungary, and

Bolt eyes three golds at world championships

London, 24 Jan—Triple London Olympic champion Usain Bolt is injury free and eying three gold medals at this year's world championships in Moscow in August. As part of his preparations, the Jamaican 100 and 200 meters world record holder will run the longer sprint at the Bislett Games Diamond League meeting in Oslo on 13 June.

“The aim for 2013 is the IAAF World Championships in Moscow in August. My goal is to win three gold medals and repeat my Olympic Games success,” Bolt said in a news release on Wednesday. “My preparations have been good this fall. I am injury free, working hard and everything is going according to plan. I hope to come to Bislett prepared and ready to run a great race.”

Bolt won gold in the 200 meters and 4x100 relay at the 2011 worlds in Daegu but was disqualified from the 100 final for a false start. His training partner and compatriot Yohan Blake went on to take the title. Bolt gained a measure of revenge when he beat Blake to retain his Olympic 100 and 200 meters titles at the London Olympics. He also helped the Jamaicans to a world record of 36.84 in the 4x100 relay. The

Bolt strikes a pose while inaugurating a Puma store in Barcelona on 23 Nov, 2012.—Reuters

“Bittersweet” feeling for cast aside 49ers quarterback Smith

San Francisco 49ers quarterback Alex Smith throws the ball during the fourth quarter of their NFL football game against the Arizona Cardinals in San Francisco, California on 30 Dec, 2012.—Reuters

Miami, 24 Jan—San Francisco quarterback Alex Smith lost his starting spot to Colin Kaepernick after getting injured in week nine and while the former top draft pick is happy to be going to the Super Bowl he admits to having mixed feelings about being a back-up. Smith won plaudits last season after throwing for 3,144 yards and 17 touchdowns and leading the 49ers to the NFC Championship game before they lost to eventual Super Bowl winners the New York Giants.

After an equally strong start to the current season, where he had thrown for 1,737 yards in nine starts with 13 touchdowns passes, Smith suffered a concussion in play-off in play-off and Smith says he has certainly taken his chance in play-off when the starter goes out. In stepped Kaepernick, who led the 49ers through the remaining seven regular-season games, throwing for 1,814 yards and 10 touchdowns, and to a 3 February Super Bowl showdown with the Baltimore Ravens in New Orleans. “I would be lying if I said it wasn’t a little bittersweet,” Smith told the San Jose Mercury News on Wednesday.

“Yes, I want to be out there. It’s what you work for coming into the season. That was the mindset, the goal for me.”

San Francisco 49ers quarterback Alex Smith throws the ball during the fourth quarter of their NFL football game against the Arizona Cardinals in San Francisco, California on 30 Dec, 2012.—Reuters

South Florida Athlete in Africa

Bolivia eyes three golds at world championships

Jamaica's double Olympic champion sprinter Usain Bolt strikes a pose while inaugurating a Puma store in Barcelona on 23 Nov, 2012.—Reuters

Myawady — Rd of 14 meetings starts in Doha on 10 May.

Diamond League series of 14 meetings starts in Doha on 10 May.

Reuters

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Bolt strikes a pose while inaugurating a Puma store in Barcelona on 23 Nov, 2012.—Reuters

Jamaica’s double Olympic champion sprinter Usain Bolt is injury free and eying three gold medals at this year’s world championships in Moscow in August. As part of his preparations, the Jamaican 100 and 200 meters world record holder will run the longer sprint at the Bislett Games Diamond League meeting in Oslo on 13 June.

“The aim for 2013 is the IAAF World Championships in Moscow in August. My goal is to win three gold medals and repeat my Olympic Games success,” Bolt said in a news release on Wednesday. “My preparations have been good this fall. I am injury free, working hard and everything is going according to plan. I hope to come to Bislett prepared and ready to run a great race.”

Bolt won gold in the 200 meters and 4x100 relay at the 2011 worlds in Daegu but was disqualified from the 100 final for a false start. His training partner and compatriot Yohan Blake went on to take the title. Bolt gained a measure of revenge when he beat Blake to retain his Olympic 100 and 200 meters titles at the London Olympics. He also helped the Jamaicans to a world record of 36.84 in the 4x100 relay. The
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Censorship division dissolved

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