Yangon-Pathein railway link nearing completion

As the government is seeking means to improve the country's transportation facilities for convenience of the people, it is expanding its motor road and railroad networks.

Yangon-Pathein railway link has been completed by 50 percent and is expected to be completed in coming year, according to engineers of the project.

"The railroad has the length of 40.34 miles. The project started since 2009-2010 fiscal year. The section I have been implementing (will be finished in May this year)," project engineer U Zaw Min Oo of Yangon (Hlinethaya)-Ayeyawady (Nyaungdon) road section explained, "Pathein-Eimme railroad section was finished in 2011, leaving Eimme-Sakkawt section to implement. The railroad section has the length of 54.75 miles. There are 127 railway stations along the railroad section. There are six railway stations, namely Singaung, Dauntgyi, Einme, Kyondaigyi, Mayan and Pantanaw (Sakkawt) railway stations. The section will be completed in open season of 2013-2014 fiscal year."

Upon completion, the railroad will guarantee better transportation to the people on the western bank of Ayeyawady River plus the direct link with Yangon, the commercial city. Ayeyawady Region will enjoy swift commodity flow.

"When the road comes into operation, we will enjoy better transportation," U Myint Soe of Kwinkalay village in Nyaungdon Township said.

Ministry of Finance and Revenue
Nay Pyi Taw
30 January, 2013

Myanmar clears debt owed to Japan

1. Myanmar has taken out development loans to be used in State-building from Japan under the agreement of the two governments since 1970. The government with the approval of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw has been negotiating with Japanese government to settle the due debt of 502.457 billion Yen.

2. Japan in support of democratization and national reconciliation efforts and social and economic reform process of Myanmar government will write off a debt of 303.576 billion Yen within one year period and set the remaining debt of 198.881 billion Yen as the new debt whose interest rate is 0.01 % per year, grace period of 10 years and repayment period of 30 years, totaling 40 years.

3. Under the bilateral agreement, Myanmar repay the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) taking out a total bridge loan of 198.881 billion Yen from Japanese banks—Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ Ltd (BTMU), Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBO) and Mizuho Corporate Bank (Mizuho) clearing the remaining debts.

4. The Japanese government, as debts have been settled, is taking steps to offer very-low-interest-rate development loans and assistance to Myanmar. The government will use prepared development loans and aids from Japan in people-centered development undertakings including education, health, social and administrative fields in coordination with Japanese government.

Ministry of Finance and Revenue
Nay Pyi Taw
30 January, 2013

Energy Ministry holds meeting on profit sharing contracts

A meeting on principles of profit sharing contracts between the Energy Ministry and foreign companies was held at the ministry here this morning.

Vice-President U Nyan Tun making a speech at the meeting on profit sharing contracts between the Energy Ministry and foreign companies.—MNA

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Ministry of Finance and Revenue
Nay Pyi Taw
30 January, 2013
**LOCAL NEWS**

**36th Anniversary Union Day**

*Myanmar Alinn*

**Rainy season loans paid back to MADB**

At Kyaukpyaw, 30 Jan—Myanmar Agricultural Bank of Kyaukpyaw Townships in Mandalay Region disbursed K3148.2 million as agricultural loans to 17962 farmers from 229 villages of the township in 2012 rainy season. As of the first week of January, the bank collects its loans from the farmers who paid back the bank dutifully. Up to 22 January, the farmers have paid back K1.572 million to the bank, accounting for over 92 per cent.

This year, the bank will disburse K100,000 per acre to each farmer so as to contribute much to cultivation of farmers.

*Myanmar Alinn*

**Illegal timber seized in Sagaing Region**

*Myanmar Alinn*

**Legal timber seized in Sagaing Region**

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*Myanmar Alinn*
US Senate approves John Kerry as next secretary of state

WASHINGTON, 30 Jan—US Senate on Tuesday approved Democratic Senator John Kerry as the next secretary of state, who is set to replace Hillary Clinton.

The Senate confirmed Kerry’s nomination in a 94-3 vote, hours after the chamber’s Foreign Relations Committee approved his nomination. Kerry has chaired the committee himself for the past four years.

“Senator Kerry will need no introduction to the world’s political and military leaders and will begin Day One fully conversant not only with the intricacies of US foreign policy, but able to act on a multitude of international stages,” said Democratic Senator Bob Menendez at the Senate, who serves as the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Bob Corker, the top Republican on the same committee, praised Kerry’s testimony on Thursday and called him “a realist” in dealing with world affairs. At the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee earlier the day, Kerry appreciated the praises from his colleagues. “I’m honoured beyond words,” he said. “What a privilege to work with you and now to work with you in a different way. I thank you very, very much.”

Kerry is expected to be sworn in this week, as Clinton will leave her job on Friday. A senator from the state of Massachusetts, Kerry was nominated by US President Barack Obama on 21 December as the next chief diplomat of the United States. Kerry offered support to Obama’s re-elections, and acted in preparation for his debate with Mitt Romney, the president’s Republican rival.—Xinhua

US Transportation Secretary LaHood to step down

WASHINGTON, 30 Jan—US Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood said on Tuesday that he planned to step down, marking the sixth department head to leave office as President Barack Obama begins his second term.

“I have let President Obama know that I will not serve a second term as Secretary of the US Department of Transportation,” Ray LaHood said in a statement, adding “I plan to stay on until my successor is confirmed to ensure a smooth transition for the important work we still have to do.”

In a statement, Obama thanked LaHood for what he’s done over the last four years, saying “As Secretary of Transportation, he has fought to create jobs and grow our economy by re-building our roads, bridges and transit systems. Under his leadership, we have made significant investments in our passenger rail system and laid the high-speed rail network of the future.”

During his tenure, LaHood has put safety front and centre with the Dis- tracted Driving Initiative and a rule to combat pilot fatigue that was decades in the making. He has also strengthened consumer protections with new regulations on buses, trucks and airlines.

Before becoming secretary in 2009, LaHood served 14 years in Congress representing an Illinois district. He’s the only Republican still in Obama’s Cabinet.—Xinhua

Fear, threats and bad food: life aboard a sanctions-hit Iranian ship

CHENNAI, 30 Jan—The eight Indian crew members on board the MV Amina had no inkling they were caught up in a fight to international waters to escape port arrest in Sri Lanka. Having disobeyed the captain’s orders to weigh anchor, their courage turned to fear.

“The captain taunted us that if you fall in the water I will give a report that says that you tried to commit suicide,” said 42-year-old Jesuraj, a foreman of the ship, speaking to Reuters after he and the others eventually made their way home.

“We had a lifeboat on standby and were ready to escape if required. We slept with our life jackets with the hope that if the ship did leave for Iran we would jump off and try to get the attention of some fishing boat.”

For a few miserable weeks, this was life on the sharp edge of a sanctions regime that has battered the Iranian economy and squeezed the shipping fleet it relies on for commerce, cutting off funds to its nuclear arms programmes. The Indians left the ship after authorities inter- vented, returned their cons- fiscated passports and took them ashore in Sri Lanka.

Subsequently, the Amina was fixed on by Sri Lanka’s navy when it tried to make another getaway. A few days later, the Iranian captain took advantage of rough seas to flee, heading the ship into Iran’s Bandar Abbas port last week.—Reuters

Violence engulfs key Syrian cities, activists say 50,000 killed in crisis

DAMASCUS, 30 Jan—Three explosive devices went off on Tuesday in Syria’s capital of Damascus, leaving injuries and property loss, as a broad-based opposition watchdog placed the overall death toll of Syria’s 22-month-old crisis at 50,000.

An explosive device exploded on Tuesday near Jisr al-Zahraa area in Damascus, leaving material damages only, the pro-government Sham FM website said, adding that another roadside bomb tore through the car of a Syrian parliamentarian, who was injured in the blast. The state-run SANA news agency, meanwhile, said a roadside bomb went off in the old part of Damascus late on Tuesday, injuring a storekeeper. Also in the old quarter of Damascus, a fire broke out near a_Swaiqa market late Tues- day, setting ablaze a number of shops and killing three people, a local online news website said, adding that the reason behind the fire has been unknown. Meanwhile, a military source was quoted by local media as confirm- ing that the town of Aqraba, located near the road to the southern airport of Dam- ascus, has become under control of the Syrian army after long-standing battles with the rebels. The state media also said the army eliminated many gunmen during clashes in hotbeds around Damascus.—Xinhua

Dutch parliament supports Croatia’s EU accession

THE HAGUE, 30 Jan—A majority of the Dutch parliament on Tuesday approved the accession of Croatia to the European Union (EU) later this year.

Croatia finished accession negotiations in June and 9 December, 2011 signed the Treaty of Accession. A flotter that the Croatian leadership in favor of EU membership in a refere- dum. Before 1 July, all EU member states should have ratified the treaty, followed by accession of Croatia as the 28th EU member. The Dutch parliament agreed with Foreign Min- ister Frans Timmermans, who stated that the EU has learned from the mistakes that were made when Ro- mania and Bulgaria joined in 2007. After their accession, it became clear that the EU needs to avoid falling in the situation in Croatia. Only the anti-Europe Party of Freedom PVV and the Socialist Party SP are against the Croatian accession.—Xinhua

Plane crash kills 21 in Kazakhstan

KYZYL TU, 30 Jan—A passenger plane has crashed in Kazakhstan, killing all 21 people on board.

The plane was flying from the northern city of Kokshetau to Almaty in the southeast on Tuesday.

Emergencies Ministry vehicles and ambulances are parked near the site of the plane crash outside Almaty.—Reuters

The Bombardier CRJ 200 was operated by a Kazakh airline, SCA T. The Kazakh government says the plane was carrying 16 passengers and 5 crewmembers.

Local media report that the plane was making a second approach to an airport after the first attempt failed due to heavy fog. Government officials plan to retrieve the plane’s flight recorder to determine the cause of the crash.—Xinhua

At least 65 people were found shot dead with their hands bound in Syria’s Aleppo, on 29 Jan, 2013. Xinhua
YouTubers preparing to offer paid subscriptions this year: report

SAN FRANCISCO, 30 Jan—YouTubers, the video website owned by Google Inc, plans to offer paid subscriptions to some of the content on its site later this year, according to a media report.

YouTubers have reached out to several video producers, asking them to submit applications to create for-pay “channels,” according to a report in AdAge on Tuesday that cited anonymous sources. The first such channels could be available to consumers by the second quarter for between $1 a month and $5 a month, AdAge reported.

YouTubers, the world’s No 1 video website, has been moving to add professional-grade video programs to the vast archive of amateur, home-shot videos that made the site popular. The current crop of such channels is available to consumers for free and supported by advertising that appears alongside the videos.

YouTubers have hinted in the past that it was considering offering subscription-based paid content. YouTubers boss Salar Kamangar told Reuters in June that there was strong demand among certain YouTubers video producers, such as video game networks, to offer fee-based programs.

“They have such a big audience that they can start to segment their audiences into those that are willing to pay a higher amount for things like new gaming tricks,” Kamangar said at the time. He also said that cable channels with small audiences could potentially be offered to consumers through YouTubers on an “a la carte” basis. YouTubers was not immediately available for comment.

Russia takes deeper roots in Antarctica for scientific purposes

MOSCOW, 30 Jan—Russia entrenched itself deeper in Antarctica for continuing scientific researches there, according to the Press service of the Russian Federation’s Defence Ministry. According to the Ministry, a government Press service said on Tuesday.

Russian Prime Miniser Dmitry Medvedev has signed a plan of work of the Russian Antarctic expediti for 2013-2017 and beyond, according to the Press service.

The plan includes conducting annual expeditions in Antarctica for land and marine studies, observing global climate changes and supporting space explorations. “Overall, the plan focuses on expansion of Russia’s presence in Antarctica and implementation of some key projects,” it said. Russia maintains the permanent polar stations in Antarctica and plans to allocate another 60 billion (about 2 billion US dollars) to implement a wide range of new projects, state-run RIA news agency said.

The plan also envisaged further research of the subglacial Lake Vostok where Russia’s Vostok Station is deployed. Russia joined the Antarctic Treaty and its Environmental Protocol in 1959. The current Russian plan of Antarctic explorations expired in 2012.

Apple announces iPad with double storage capacity

NEW YORK, 30 Jan—Apple Inc said on Tuesday that it will sell a version of its iPad tablet computer with 128 gigabytes of storage, which is twice the capacity of its existing models.

Apple, which has sold more than 120 million iPads so far, said that the new iPad will go on sale 5 February, in black or white, for a suggested retail price of $799 for the iPad with just Wi-Fi model, and $929 for the version that also has a cellular wireless connection.

It will help fill the data gap created when QuikScat, which was designed to last two years but operated for 10, stopped collecting ocean wind data in late 2009. NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have studied next-generation replacements for QuikScat, but a successor will not be available soon. To meet this challenge cost-effectively, NASA proposed adapting leftover QuikScat hardware in combination with new hardware for use on the space station.

NASA to launch ocean wind monitor to space station

WASHINGTON, 30 Jan—The US space agency NASA announced on Tuesday that it will launch the ISS-RapidScat instrument to the International Space Station in 2014 to measure ocean-surface wind speed and direction.

The ISS-RapidScat instrument will help improve weather forecasts, including hurricane monitoring, and understanding of how ocean-atmosphere interactions influence Earth’s climate.

It will help fill the data gap created when QuikScat, which was designed to last two years but operated for 10, stopped collecting ocean wind data in late 2009. NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have studied next-generation replacements for QuikScat, but a successor will not be available soon. To meet this challenge cost-effectively, NASA proposed adapting leftover QuikScat hardware in combination with new hardware for use on the space station.

Iss-RapidScat will have measurement accuracy similar to QuikScat’s and will survey all regions of Earth accessible from the space station’s orbit. The instrument will be launched to the space station aboard a SpaceX Dragon cargo spacecraft.

It will be installed on the end of the station’s Columbus laboratory as an autonomous payload requiring no interaction by station crew members. It is expected to operate aboard the station for two years.

Apple updates software to iOS 6.1

BERLIN, 30 Jan—Apple issued updated software iOS 6.1 on Monday which could fix bugs and accelerate downloads speed. LTE support on iOS 6.1 covers more markets, therefore users in more areas of the world can enjoy faster website browsing, downloads, as well as FaceTime video calls. Based on iOS 6.1, US users can download favorite songs to their mobiles from iCloud, and buy movie tickets through the devices.

Users of the updated iOS 6.1 should leave at least 1GB of storage so as to install. iOS 6 has been launched in September, which is the world’s most advanced cell phone operating system with nearly 300 million users on the devices, according to CNN.

Research in Motion Chief Executive Officer Thorsten Heins is silhouetted during the BlackBerry World event in Orlando on 1 May, 2012.
Could an earlier lunchtime help you lose weight?

New York, 30 Jan—Dieters who ate early lunches tended to lose more weight than those who had their midday meal on the later side, in a new Spanish study. The finding doesn’t prove bumping up your lunch hour will help you shed those extra pounds. But it’s possible eating times play a role in how the body regulates its weight, researchers said.

“We should now seriously start to consider the timing of food—not just what we eat, but also when we eat,” said study co-author Frank Scheer, from Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Harvard Medical School in Boston.

The team’s research included 420 people attending nutrition clinics in southeast Spain. A long with going to regular group therapy sessions with nutrition and exercise counseling, dieters measured, weighed and recorded their food and reported on their daily physical activity. Study participants were on a Mediterranean diet, in which about 40 percent of each day’s calories are consumed at lunch. A bout half of people said they ate lunch before 3:00 pm and half after. Over 20 weeks of counseling, early and late lunchers ate a similar amount of food, based on their food journals, and burned a similar amount of calories through daily activities.

However, early eaters lost an average of 22 pounds — just over 11 percent of their starting weight—and late eaters dropped 17 pounds, or nine percent of their initial weight. What time dieters ate breakfast or dinner wasn’t linked to their ultimate weight loss, according to findings published on Tuesday in the International Journal of Obesity. One limitation of the study is that the researchers didn’t assign people randomly to eat early or late - so it’s possible there were other underlying differences between dieters with different meal times. Certain gene variants that have been linked to obesity were more common in late lunchers, for example.

Dr Yunsheng Ma, a nutrition researcher from the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, said people who eat later may have extra food in their stomach when they go to sleep—which could mean more of it isn’t burned and ends up being stored as fat. “One of the other aspects to this is, what we know is glucose tolerance for example—how well you can deal with sugar in your food—your body is better able to cope with that in the morning than in the evening,” Scheer told Reuters Health.

More adults need vaccines, and not just for flu: Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

Atlanta, 30 Jan—The flu isn’t the only illness adults should be immunized against. US health officials said on Tuesday, as a new study found current adult vaccination rates in the country “unacceptably low.” The report by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) concluded that “substantial increase” in adult vaccinations is needed to prevent diseases including pneumonia, tetanus, diphtheria, hepatitis, meningitis and whooping cough.

“Far too few adults are getting vaccinated against these important diseases, and we need to do more,” said Dr Howard Koh, an assistant secretary for the US Department of Health and Human Services. In 2011, there were 37,000 cases of invasive pneumonia in the United States, and most of the 4,000 people who died from the illness were over the age of 50, Koh said. The CDC, a federal agency, recommends that older patients at risk for pneumonia receive vaccinations for the disease, he said.

Adults who don’t get vaccinated can put others, including children at risk, Koh said. In 2012, 9,300 adults were diagnosed with whooping cough out of a total of 42,000 cases. “When the source is identified, four out of five babies who got whooping cough caught it from someone in the home, a parent, sister, brother, grandparent or babysitter,” he said. “These are just examples of why adult vaccines are critical to the public health of our country.”

Ford set to offset losses in Europe with profits in North America

Chicago, 30 Jan—Ford Motor Co said on Tuesday that its profit in North America would be enough to offset its deepening losses in Europe in 2013.

With sales outlook deteriorating in Europe, Ford expects to lose two billion dollars there in 2013, worse than the 1.75-billion-dollar loss in 2012. However, the No 2 US automaker expects to earn more in North America in 2013. Ford reported a pretax operating profit of nearly 1.7 billion dollars, or 31 cents per share in the fourth quarter 2012, better than the average analysts’ estimate of 25 cents per share. This was also higher than the 1.1 billion dollars or 20 cents per share it earned a year earlier. Ford’s fourth-quarter revenue totaled 36.5 billion dollars. Ford earned nearly 1.9 billion dollars in North America in the quarter, almost one billion dollars better than the fourth quarter of 2011.— Reuters

Fashion-minded businesses  eyeing middle-aged women

Tokyo, 30 Jan—Apparel makers, department stores and other fashion-sensitive businesses are striving to attract women in their 40s and 50s as they remain active consumers regardless of economic conditions.

“When we were university students, we had part-time jobs and spent our money on brand-name dresses and bags,” says a 47-year-old planning manager at a company in Tokyo’s Ginza shopping and entertainment district. “Those in our generation have a feeling we’re always the main characters in society.”

A former returning to Japan from an overseas assignment, she got married and now has two children who are in the second and sixth grades in elementary school. Although busy with both parenting and working, she still pays attention to fashion trends and cosmetics.

Supplied photo shows women in their 40s trying beauty products during events in September 2012 in Tokyo’s Shibuya Ward held by Takarajimasha Inc. for readers of its GLOW fashion magazine targeting women in the age bracket.

J AL, Japan Post to start home delivery of Japnese fresh foods in Asia

Tokyo, 30 Jan—Japan Airlines Co and Japan Post Co said on Tuesday they will jointly start a door-to-door express delivery service for fresh food, including fruit and fishery products from Japan, to Singapore and Taiwan using special cool boxes.

The move comes as demand for Japanese food is growing in Asia in line with the rise in the number of visitors to the country, backed by economic expansion in the region. It will also facilitate Japan’s farming and fishery industries in supplying their products to individual homes, the two companies said.

They will operate the service from April to March next year on a trial basis, with two post offices in Hokkaido and Kanagawa prefectures carrying out shipments. The companies aim to expand the service to other parts of Asia including Hong Kong, Shanghai and South Korea, they said.

Cancer gene mutation linked to earlier menopause

According to the National Cancer Institute, a woman’s chance of getting breast cancer at some point in her life increases from 12 to 60 percent with a BRCA mutation and ovarian cancer from 1.4 percent to between 15 and 40 percent. What has been less well studied is whether those mutations also affect a woman’s egg stores and her chance of getting pregnant. For the new study, the researchers surveyed 382 California women who carried the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations. Of those, 105 women were diagnosed before age 40, and 277 women were diagnosed later than 40.

Of the women who carried the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations who were diagnosed before age 40, 78 percent had never been pregnant, and 49 percent had never experienced menopause. In the women who carried the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations who were diagnosed later than 40, 41 percent had never been pregnant, and 81 percent had never experienced menopause.

“Now they have an additional issue to deal with,” said Dr Mitchell Rosen, who worked on the new study at the University of California, San Francisco Medical Centre. An estimated one in 600 US women carries the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene mutations. Those mutations greatly increase the risk of breast and ovarian cancer.

Reuters
British Prime Minister to visit Algeria

**Xi stresses loyalty, stability of armed police**

**BEIJING, 30 Jan**—Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Tuesday stressed the stability of the armed police and its absolute loyalty to the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Xi, general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and also chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission (CMC), made the remarks during an inspection tour of the armed police in Beijing. He urged them to build a strong force with a fine work style.

“The armed police forces should be united, secure and stable,” Xi said.

The armed police should follow the absolute leadership of the CPC, and loyalty to the Party is always the foremost political requirement for them, he said. Xi reiterated that the armed police should be aware of its role in maintaining stability and improve its fighting capacity in order to achieve multiple tasks, including security duties as well as handling emergencies. He also told the country’s armed police forces to keep on high alert in maintaining the country’s stability, as the current situation is “complicated.”

“Forces should always maintain their readiness and capabilities for combat to ensure victory,” Xi said. “The forces’ fighting capability is the center for armed police construction.”

Also, such construction should be carried out in a scientific and comprehensive manner, he said.

During his inspection, Xi greeted armed police at grassroots level and encouraged them to make a greater contribution to local development. Vice chairman of the CMC Fan Changlong and Xu Qiliang also attended the inspection.

**China’s parliamentary session to avoid extravagance**

**BEIJING, 30 Jan**—The upcoming annual parliamentary session will travel to Algeria on Wednesday to meet with his Algerian counterpart, Abdelmalek Sellal.

Cameron is expected to ask about the progress of the government’s investigation into the siege, which took place at a gas plant jointly operated by British oil giant BP. Four Britons were among victims in the siege, which resulted in the deaths of many foreigners, including 10 Japanese.

The two leaders are expected to discuss ways to increase cooperation in antivirus efforts.

Cameron has said North Africa is becoming a “magnet for jihadists,” and that Britain will work with other countries to combat terrorism in the region.

**Fendi to fund restoration of Rome’s Trevi Fountain**

**Rome, 30 Jan**—Rome’s famous Trevi Fountain is being restored, courtesy of the Italian designer brand Fendi, a well-known fashion house.

City officials announced on Monday that Fendi will shoulder the cost of 2.18 million euros, or about 2.9 million dollars, for the 20-month long project. The fountain was originally completed in 1762 and is known for tourists throwing coins into the water to ensure a prompt return to the historical city.

The work will proceed in a way that will allow visitors to see the fountain and toss in coins. In return, the funding for Fendi will be able to put up a small sign near the fountain for 4 years. This marks another case where the cultural assets of the country, which is continuing austerity measures, are being restored by private sector firms. The restoration of Rome’s ancient Colosseum is proceeding with funds from another designer brand. Rome Mayor Gianni Alemanno expressed hope for more donations of the same kind, saying that they will not be able to save the cultural history of the country without similar initiatives.—NHK

**Argentina rebuffs Israeli anger over 1994 bombing probe**

**BUENOS AIRES, 30 Jan**—Argentina said on Tuesday that it “vehemently rejected” Israel’s demand for explanations on a joint commission set up by Argentina and Iran to probe the 1994 bombing of a Jewish centre in Buenos Aires.

“The attack suffered by our people on 18 July, 1994 did not involve any Israeli citizen. The victims were mostly Argentine citizens and include six Bolivians, two Poles and a Chilean,” the foreign ministry said in a statement.

Earlier in the day, Argentina’s Ambassador Carlos Garcia to Israel was summoned to the foreign ministry for a clarification talk on the Memorandum of Understanding signed on Sunday between Argentina and Iran. Argentina’s Foreign Ministry said it considered the “summons to demand explanations about sovereign decisions made by the Republic of Argentina to be an inappropriate act that we vehemently reject and that goes against the traditional ties of friendship existing between both countries.”

On Sunday, Argentine President Cristina Fernandez announced the “historic” agreement with Iran and said the five-member commission will be composed of “internationally renowned legal experts,” none of whom is from either of the two countries to ensure objectivity. On 18 July, 1994, a bomb leveled a seven-story building housing the Israeli-Argentine Mutual Aid Association (AMIA), killing 85 people and injuring more than 700 others.—NHK

**Roman architect Nicola Salvi’s masterpiece, the Trevi Fountain, built between 1732 and 1762.**

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**British Prime Minister David Cameron**

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One soldier injured in clashes with armed group in central Tunisia

TUNIS, 30 Jan—Overnight clashes between a group of three armed men and anti-terrorist units left one soldier injured in Tunisia’s central town of Kasserine, near the border with Algeria, Mosaic FM reported on Tuesday.

The officer, who was injured in the leg following a heavy gunfire exchange between the security units and the assailants, was sent to a military hospital in the Tunisian capital of Tunis, according to the report. The armed men who were carrying machine guns managed to escape into the nearby mountain of Saloum, where anti-terrorist units are combing with the help of helicopters.

A number of automatic weapons were seized, the report said. Similar incidents involving groups of armed assailants were reported last month in the same area, near the Chaambi mountain. One member of the national guard was killed in clashes between his unit and the terrorists, the official TAP Press agency said.

Zambia’s mining firm stuck with 60,000 tons of copper concentrates

LUSAKA, 29 Jan—A mining firm in Zambia is stuck with 60,000 tons of copper concentrates because all the country’s smelters are heavily congested with the mineral, the Times of Zambia reported on Tuesday.

Kansanshi Mine Plc, owned by Canada’s First Quantum Minerals Ltd situated in northwestern Zambia’s Solwezi district, says it has failed to turn the copper concentrates into cathodes because all the smelters were cramped up and the company is appealing for a duty waiver so that it could export the concentrates.

For the company, which does not own a smelter of its own but transports the copper concentrates to other mining firms that have smelters, it has appealed for a waiver on the concentrates which currently stands at 10 percent so that the pile-up of the concentrates could be reduced. “We are sitting on as much as 60,000 tons of copper concentrates. The smelters on the Copperbelt province are choker blocker and we cannot export this concentrate because it will attract a 10 percent duty and that makes it more expensive,” MAtt Pascal, the company’s director of operations, was quoted as saying by the paper.

He said the government will gain more money if the company is allowed to take the concentrates to neighboring countries for processing.—Xinhua

NY Senate motion condemns wartime Japan’s “comfort women” system

NEW YORK, 30 Jan—The New York Senate on Tuesday passed a resolution honouring a “comfort women” monument erected in the state, saying it is a reminder that the coercion of Asian women into sexual servitude by the wartime Japanese military was a “crime against humanity,” a staff member of a lawmaker said.

The resolution says approximately 200,000 young women were forced into military prostitution during the Japanese colonial and wartime occupation of parts of Asia and some Pacific Islands.

It nevertheless toned down the condemnation of Japan expressed in an earlier draft. The draft resolution sought an apology from the Japanese government and encouraged it to “accept historical responsibility and educate future generations about these crimes.”

The resolution honors a monument established in 2012 in New York that it says “symbolizes suffering endured by comfort women and serves as a reminder of the crime against humanity committed through the comfort women system.”

In October, a South Korean civic group put up an ad in New York’s Times Square urging the Japanese government to apologize for victimized women.

In response, conservative Japanese lawmakers including Shinzo Abe, who became Prime Minister in late December, published an ad in a local newspaper in the neighboring state of New Jersey saying that no historical documents have been found that show women “were forced against their will” into prostitution by the Imperial Japanese Army.—Kyodo News

Russia to launch more satellites

MOSCOW, 30 Jan—Russia plans to expand its orbital satellite group from 75 satellites at present to 113 in 2020, head of the Federal Space Agency, Roscosmos, said on Tuesday.

“We expect by 2015 the orbital group will consist of 95 and by 2020 of 113 satellites,” Vladimir Popovkin told students of Bauman Technical University in Moscow. Popovkin said the space agency would spend one third of its budget developing new spacecraft and engines, including a nuclear-powered booster. “We plan to construct its prototype in 2013 so we could start its testing,” Popovkin envisaged that the new Russian module of the International Space Station could become a separate orbital station. “We build this module the way it could function autonomously as a small orbital station for scientific purposes,” he said. The official also mentioned Russia might cut the number of carrier rocket launches from Baikonur space center in Kazakhstan after 2016, given AStan’s complaints about environmental damage launches have inflicted.—Xinhua
Political tolerance

More than two years ago, Myanmar, in general context, was quite a stranger to democracy while the word ‘politics’ was a taboo. But the society — even some, if not many, politicians could still swallow some basic democratic practices even about two years after the first-ever general election in decades.

Many have accepted that democracy is the principle of majority rule with respect for the rights of individuals or groups in the minority. Since the first-ever parliamentary session, the lower house speaker warned against ‘the tyranny of the majority’. The first two years of Myanmar democracy have tested ‘political tolerance’ of Myanmar politicians and society. We need to reassess how much we could safeguard freedom of expression and divergent opinions.

We could not force any society into unity. It could only be established voluntarily. To ensure unity, we must guarantee that every individual of the society has the fundamental and equal rights to hold divergent opinions but follows the majority rule.

Neither gun nor suppression will resolve any problems. We need to find solutions through political dialogues as we now have a legitimate parliament. It is not the time to see each other as enemy, define black and white, and play blame game. Every stakeholder of Myanmar’s political circle needs to tolerate each other as enemy, define black and white, legitimate parliament. It is not the time to see but follows the majority rule.

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Second SEAGF Council Meeting approves 33 sports in Myanmar SEA Games

NAI PI TAW, 30 Jan— President of South East Asian Games Federation Council and Myanmar National Olympic Committee and Union Minister for Sports U Tin Hsan addressed second SEAGF Council Meeting at Thangha Hotel here yesterday morning.

The Union Minister said, “Sports are the most effective diplomatic means to tighten cross-cultural ties and unity among nations.” He stressed the need of “fair play and sportsmanship”. He said he is confident that XXVII SEA Games would be another milestone to our common search for peace and tranquility through friendly co-operations.”

Ministers of the previous SEAGF Council Meeting held in Nay Pyi Taw on 14 July, 2012, were approved and issues arising from the minutes discussed at the meeting. Myanmar Olympic Committee made presentation on sports, disciplines, events and venues in XXVII SEA Games to be hosted by Myanmar in December, 2013, and sought approval for them. Singapore National Olympic Council elaborated preparation for XXVII SEA Games to be hosted by Myanmar in 2015. SEAGF Council Executive Committee, Sports and Rules Committee and Medical Committee submitted reports of each committee. Delegates then participated in discussion. The XXVII SEA Games will be hosted by Myanmar in three major cities and onetown with 33 sports events on 11-22 December, 2013.

Taking nationwide census needs international assistance:

UNION I & P Minister

NAI PI TAW, 30 Jan— “Forming Central Census Commission and its related committees, the Ministry of Immigration and Population is strong for successful collecting of nationwide census in 2014 through the adopted four steps. To meet standard in taking census, the ministry is working in collaboration with UNFPA. The ministry is still in need of international assistance though it is hiring experts and using cutting-edge technology,” said Chairman of Central Census Commission Union Minister for Immigration and Population U Khin Yi at the meeting with Ambassadors to Myanmar from foreign missions and charge d’affaires, at Sedona Hotel in Yangon on 30 January.

UNDP resident representative Mr. Ashok Nigam, UNFPA resident representative Mr. Mahamed Abdel-Ahad and officials concerned answered the queries raised by those present.
“Blood” movie brings Japan-Myanmar friendship to mind

The special show of “Blood” movie was presented in order to perpetuate Myanmar-Japan bilateral ties at Thabin Hall of the Hlutaw Complex, here this evening.

Pyithu Hlutaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, Amyotha Hlutaw Speaker U Khin Aung Myint and party enjoy movie “Blood” at Thabin Hall.

Myanmar invites investment for deep seaports

YANGON, 30 Jan—The Myanmar Power Summit organized by Ministry of Electric Power and Center for Management Technology (CMT) of Singapore was held at Sedona Hotel, here, this morning, with an address by CMT Managing Director G. Seelan.

Union Minister for Electric Power U Khin Maung Soe said that only when international assistance and foreign investments flow into the electric sector, a core for economic growth, will it develop.

The summit introduces officials concerned of the ministry to electrical experts home and abroad. Those present could decide to make investments in the sector after knowing current situations of the Myanmar electric sector through the presentations by engineers of the ministry.

Besides, it spreads knowledge and ideas on sustainable development of the sector shared by World Bank, IFC, KEPCO and other organizations.

The Union Minister accepted USD 3000 donated by CMT for constructions of two projectors to be used in the ministry and relief and rehabilitation tasks being undertaken in Rakhine State.

The resource persons answered the queries raised by media.

Country Manager (Myanmar) of World Bank Mr. Kanthan Shankar presented reports on possibilities of emerging projects for infrastructures for sustainable development of Myanmar electric sector and encouragement of World Bank. The summit will last till 31 January.

US institution discusses cooperation and education reform

Nav Pyi Taw, 30 Jan—Deputy Minister for Education Dr B A Shwe held talks with a delegation led by Senior Program Officer Ms Linda S Bishai of USIP (United States Institute of Peace) at his office, here, yesterday.

They had a cordial discussion on education reform, cooperation with international organizations and putting peace building process in human society in school curriculum.

Myanmar Power Summit launched

Union Minister NPED for National Planning and Economic Development Dr K N K Saw at the latter’s office here this morning.

The Union Minister briefed the ongoing political, economic and administrative reforms and replied to queries of Thai guests on business opportunities under Myanmar’s new investment law of Myanmar, potential of special economic zones and measures for agricultural development.

KIA kills two civilians, injures three others

Nav Pyi Taw, 30 Jan—A military column and KIA group exchanged fire near Mayang Village in Moguang Township, Kachin State, at about 7:20 pm yesterday.

The clash started as KIA troops opened fire on the military column discharging security duties.

The heavy weapon attack killed two civilians and three others were injured.

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

Nav Pyi Taw, 30 Jan—The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of H.E. Mr Abdelilah El Housni as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Morocco to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr Abdelilah El Housni was born in Rabat on 5 September 1958. He got Bachelor Degree from the University of Maine, United States of America in 1991. He had served as Master Degree of Public Administration from the Administrative National School, Rabat in 1981 and served as Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with two children.

Mr Abdelilah El Housni joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Morocco in 1981. He had served as Counsellor in 1991, Minister Plenipotentiary in 1997 and Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco to Japan in 1998. He also worked as Chief of Regulations and Planning Division in 2004 and Human Resources Director in 2009. He is married with two children.

Mr Abdelilah El Housni will serve as an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Morocco to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok, Thailand.
**Man arrested for allegedly abandoning bodies of Japan financier, woman**

**Tokyo, 30 Jan**—Police on Tuesday arrested a man on suspicion of abandoning the bodies of a Swiss-based Japanese financier and a woman believed to be the financier’s wife, which were found buried in Saitama Prefecture.

Takahashi Kuwahara, 41, unemployed and of no fixed abode, was held earlier Tuesday on an island in Okinawa, southern Japan, in connection with the disappearance of Makoto Shimomi, the 51-year-old financier, and his wife since early December while on a trip home from Switzerland.

The police have also obtained arrest warrants for seven other people, including a 43-year-old company executive acquainted with Shimomi.

The bodies found Monday in a vacant lot showed signs of strangulation. The police have identified one body as that of Makoto Shimomi and are confirming through DNA analysis whether the other is that of his 48-year-old wife Mie.

The couple disappeared after leaving their condo in Tokyo’s Ginza commercial district on 7 December, the police said.

A vehicle in which they are believed to have traveled was found near the bodies found buried in Kuki, Saitama Prefecture, north of Tokyo.

Kyodo News

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**Tokyo husbands shout their love for wives in public**

**Tokyo, 30 Jan**—Love was in the air in a Tokyo park as Japanese husbands gathered to scream out their feelings for their wives, promising gratitude and extra tight hugs.

With modesty and reticence traditionally valued over outspokenness, expressing deeper feelings like love has long been hard for Japanese men to express.

“I’m sorry that I’ve gained weight over the last seven years,” a suit-clad man yelled. “But that’s because the meals you cook are so delicious.”

The event, now in its fifth year, was thought up by Kyotokuya Yamana with the support of a local flower shop to urge Japanese men to show their affection in more explicit ways.

“The economy is getting better in Japan and I see a lot of Japanese married couples getting more active in deepening their relationships,” Yamana said.

Wives in the audience laughed and clapped, especially when one man got down on his knees to offer his wife a bouquet.

“He’s very fabulous and manly today,” said Yuko Todo, 33, after her husband Takeshi’s performance. “It just reminded me how macho he used to be—I’d forgotten that in the eight years we’ve been married. My heart pounded.”

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**New Mexico woman held for locking girl in a cage: police**

**Santa Fe, 30 Jan**—Police in New Mexico found an 8-year-old girl locked in a cage in a darkened mobile home, authorities said on Tuesday, adding that they charged the girl’s adoptive mother, who had gone to the movies, with child abuse.

Cindy Patriarchias, 33, and her boyfriend were arrested after police found the caged girl on Friday evening, Las Cruces Police Department spokesman Dan Trujillo said.

He said police, acting on a tip from the woman’s estranged husband, found the girl in the corner of a bedroom locked inside the cage, about four feet high, slightly more than two feet wide and about five feet long.

The homemade wooden structure had two latches and a baby crib mattress on the floor. Trujillo said he said Patriarchias had been charged with one count of negligent child abuse while her boyfriend was charged with one count of negligently permitting child abuse. Patriarchias was released on bond on Tuesday but her boyfriend is still being held, authorities said.

The girl was seen by medical personnel but showed no visible signs of physical abuse. — Reuters

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**Visitors view the “Divinity Destroyed, Berlin 1933, 1938, 1945” outdoor exhibition in Berlin, Germany, on 29 Jan, 2013. The exhibition features portraits of prominent figures in the field of science, artistic and cultural sphere, who were prosecuted by and suffered from the Nazi regime’s cruelty dated back to 1933 until 1945. Berlin Municipality kicks off a series of exhibitions, to remind of the 80th anniversary of Adolf Hitler’s usurpation of German power on 30 Jan, 1933.**

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**Fast Retailing to open world’s largest Uniqlo store in Shanghai**

Shanghai, 30 Jan—Japan’s casual-wear retailer Fast Retailing Co plans to open the world’s largest Uniqlo fashion store in Shanghai, sources familiar with the plan said on Tuesday.

The store, which will handle multiple fashion brands owned by Fast Retailing, will likely open for business before the end of the year.

Fast Retailing currently operates nine so-called “global flagship stores” in the world, including one in Shanghai. In contrast to the existing flagship stores, which handle only Uniqlo brand products, Fast Retailing hopes to widen its customer base by selling various fashion brands in the new Shanghai store.

The new Shanghai store, to be housed inside a commercial building in the busy Huashan 1 District, is expected to be substantially larger than the Uniqlo Ginza store, currently the company’s largest outlet with 5,000 square metres of shopping space. First Retailing currently operates 182 Uniqlo stores in China, one of the company’s key markets in the world. The company has said it plans to open 100 Uniqlo shops in China a year.

Kyodo News

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**Nudists lose bid to block San Francisco ban on baring all**

**New York, 30 Jan**—Nudists in famously tolerant San Francisco lost a bid Tuesday to block a city ban on nakedness in public places, when a federal judge threw out a legal challenge that argued public nudity was akin to political expression.

San Francisco city leaders last month approved the ban on baring it all in streets, public plazas and the transit system to curb public nudity, which some residents and business owners complained had gotten out of control.

The efforts to clamp down have caused a flap in the city, where men in particular are known to parade naked through the streets of the predominantly gay Castro District. Some residents say nudists, and specifically a group known as the Naked Guys, have gone too far with their constant presence at a square in the Castro District.

But nudists claim they have a right to nakedness in public and say politicians in San Francisco, which has often celebrated the bizarre and unconventional, should leave them alone.

Four nudist activists sued in November, even before the measure barring public nudity was passed by a slim majority of the Board of Supervisors, saying it would violate their constitutional right to free expression.

However, US District Judge Edward Chen concluded that “nudity in and of itself is not inherently expressive,” and denied the nudists’ request for an injunction blocking the measure, which is due to go into effect on Friday.

Violators face fines of up to $100 for a first offense and $200 for a second. A third violation can bring a year in jail and a $500 penalty. — Reuters

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**Annual Up Helly Aa fire festival is celebrated in the Shetland Islands, Scotland, on 29 Jan, 2013. Up Helly Aa is an event that celebrates Shetland’s Viking heritage and culminates with the dramatic burning of a replica Viking galley.**

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**Visitors view the “Divinity Destroyed, Berlin 1933, 1938, 1945” outdoor exhibition in Berlin, Germany, on 29 Jan, 2013. The exhibition features portraits of prominent figures in the field of science, artistic and cultural sphere, who were prosecuted by and suffered from the Nazi regime’s cruelty dated back to 1933 until 1945. Berlin Municipality kicks off a series of exhibitions, to remind of the 80th anniversary of Adolf Hitler’s usurpation of German power on 30 Jan, 1933.**

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**New Light of Myanmar**

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**Kyodo News**

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**Reuters**
Australian PM fixes federal election date on 14 September

Canberra, 30 Jan—Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard made a surprise announcement on Wednesday that the federal election will be held on 14 September.

Gillard made clear of the election date during an address to the National Press Club in Canberra. The prime minister had been talking about the government’s economic and education plans before announcing the election date.

Sky News commented that it’s unprecedented to announce the election date so early, leaving major parties with eight months to prepare for the poll. Gillard, leader of the Australian Labour Party (ALP), said she wanted to avoid the “carry on” that usually arises from constant speculation of the likely date of the poll during an election year.

“I can act so Australia’s parliament and government serves their full three-year term, so it is clear and certain when the election will be held,” Gillard said.

Japan parties signal cooperation to choose next BOJ chief

Tokyo, 30 Jan—The ruling and biggest opposition parties agreed Wednesday to eliminate a rule that has prevented the government from picking people for such jobs as Bank of Japan governor if their name has been reported by news media in advance.

The move signals further cooperation in parliament between Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s Liberal Democratic Party and the opposition camp in choosing the next central bank chief, who will play a key role in boosting the country’s struggling economy and fighting deflation after the incumbent steps down in April.

The agreement to end the rule set in 2007 came as a meeting between the Diet affairs chiefs of the LDP and the Democratic Party of Japan, which lost power in December’s general election.

Kyodo News

ASDF to deploy F-35 jets in Amomori Prefecture

Tokyo, 30 Jan—Japan’s Defence Ministry has decided to deploy F-35 stealth fighter jets at Misawa Air Base in Aomori Prefecture, northern Japan, as early as fiscal 2017.

The Air Self-Defence Force has ordered 42 of the jets, which are being jointly developed by 9 countries including the United States.

Delivery of the jets to Japan is scheduled to begin by March 2017. The Defence Ministry intends to deploy the first fleet of jets to Misawa within a year. The Defence Ministry has earmarked more than 88,000 dollars from the fiscal 2013 budget to start designing a new training facility at Misawa.

The jets will cost about 165 million dollars each, up to more than 50 million dollars per jet from when the deal was signed last June. This is because the aircraft will be partially assembled in Japan.

The purchase has raised questions as to whether fighter jets made with Japanese parts would violate Japan’s ban on exports weapons, if they are used overseas.

Defence Minister Itsu- no Onda says he will study the matter.

NHK

Over 1,000 Malaysian workers strike at Chiyoda’s construction site

Kuala Lumpur, 30 Jan—Major plant engineering company Chiyoda Corp said on Tuesday that workers entered into a strike Monday at a construction site undertaken by its local subsidiary in Sarawak, Malaysia.

More than 1,000 people took part in the industrial action demanding wage increase and improvement of working conditions, the Star daily said on Tuesday, adding that police were dispatched to the scene.

Chiyoda said some workers blocked the road around the site on early Monday morning, forcing 327 Chiyoda employees and associates including 143 Japanese to stay at their living quarters.

As of 6 pm on Tuesday, some strikers remained blocking the road linking the living quarters and the nearest city, it said.

Kyodo News

Mega solar plant construction begins in Oita

Oita, 30 Jan—Full-scale construction has begun on what will be one of Japan’s largest solar power plants.

The project, undertaken by Marubeni, extends over one million square metres at a coastal industrial area in Oita Prefecture, southern Japan. About 340,000 solar panels are to be installed. They are expected to produce 81,850 kilowatts, enough to supply 30,000 households. The plant will go into operation in April of next year and is projected to have a lifespan of 20 years.

Manabu, official Yojiro Fujimoto, who attended a ceremony to mark the construction start on Tuesday, said the facility makes effective use of idle land and will also contribute to the region’s power supply.

He said he hopes to undertake renewable energy projects in other regions, too. Another solar power plant in the area—built by major engineering firm JGC—is set to start operating in May.

Mitsui Engineering and Shipbuilding and M&T Power Co also have a joint project in the area.

The growing emphasis on solar power generation in southern Japan is focusing attention on whether it and other forms of renewable energy will spread across the country.—NHK

Park’s nominee for Prime Minister withdraws nomination

Seoul, 30 Jan—President-elect Park Geun Hye’s nominee for prime minister withdrew under pressure Tuesday following allegations of a series of past ethical lapses, according to Yonhap News Agency.

Kim Yong Joong, 74, who served as Constitutional Court chief and currently heads Park’s transition committee, offered to withdraw after a meeting with the president-elect earlier in the week.

A New Light of Myanmar
KBZ BANK LTD. is pleased to inform all that we have successfully opened Pyay Branch (2) as 95th branch to date-effective 31.1.2013. All honoured persons are kindly requested to come and enjoy our cordial banking services at our newest branch.

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Fax: (053) 24543, 24847, 24699, 26233
www.kbzbank.com
**Claims Day Notice**

**MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (491)**

Concerns a cargo carried on MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (491) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.1.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expense 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**
**Myanmar Port Authority**

**Agent For:** M/S Advance Container Shipping Agency Department

**Phone No:** 256908/378316376797

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**Justin Bieber strips down voice, heartache on ‘Believe Acoustic’**

Justin Bieber’s new album ‘20/20’ is due out in March

Los Angeles, 30 Jan—Singer-turned-actor Justin Timberlake has set a March date for his comeback album —his first in more than six years. RCA Records said on Tuesday “The 20/20 Experience,” the former N’Sync boy band member’s follow-up to 2006’s “FutureSex/LoVeSounds” and only his third album ever, would be released on 19 March.

In recent years, Timberlake, 31, has focused more on films and business ventures ranging from restaurants to a clothing line, and reviving social network working site Myspace, of which he is part owner. He remarked in a recent video that creating music involved “physical torture” for him. “Suit & Tie,” the first single off his forthcoming album, fell short of sales expectations for its first week. The song, featuring rapper Jay-Z, sold 314,000 downloads last week. Industry experts had expected about 300,000 downloads.

Top transgender designer Tom Ford collaborated with Timberlake, designing suits worn in the “Suit & Tie” video as well as styling the production and the release’s artwork. Timberlake will perform his first concert in five years during a private Super Bowl weekend event in New Orleans on 2 February at an invitation-only concert.

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**Actor Ashley Judd and race car driver Dario Franchitti split**

Los Angeles, 30 Jan—American actress Ashley Judd and her Scottish race car driver husband Dario Franchitti are ending their marriage after 11 years. The movie star, 44, and the Indianapolis 500 race car driver, 39, married in 2001 and have no children.

“We have mutually decided to end our marriage. We’ll always be family and continue to cherish our relationship based on the special love, integrity and respect we have always enjoyed,” a representative for the couple told People magazine in a statement on Tuesday.

No reason was given for the split. Judd, the daughter of country music star Naomi Judd, starred in movies like “Double Jeopardy” and “High Crimes.”

In recent years she has turned her attention in recent years to humanitarian work with AIDS sufferers and young people. Judd has been mentioned as a possible Democratic candidate for the US Senate in 2014, although she has made no formal announcement.

Media reports have said Judd, who represented Tennessee at the 2012 Democratic National Convention, might run for one of Kentucky’s seats in the Senate.

Franchitti is a three-time Indianapolis 500 champion, who has also competed in NASCAR and the American Le Mans series. He and Judd married in Scotland in December 2001 after a two-year engagement.

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**Kennedy Center plans expansion, with floating stage on Potomac**

Washington, 30 Jan —The John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is planning a $100 million addition, including an outdoor floating stage on the Potomac River, in its first major expansion since it opened in 1971. Three connected pavilions to house classrooms, rehearsal rooms, lecture space and other facilities were also included in initial plans for the US capital’s premier performance space, which were laid out on Tuesday.

The expansion, designed by architect Steven Holl, will take place south of the Center and includes an outdoor video wall. One pavilion will float on the Potomac as an outdoor stage, and public gardens will link the Center with the water. “Steve’s wonderful concept will create a strong visual presence that bolsters the Center’s prominence as the national cultural center, while maintaining its unique presence among Washington’s iconic landmarks,” Kennedy Center Chairman David Rubenstein said in a statement.

The expansion will be paid for from private funds. Rubenstein, a founder of the Carlyle Group private equity firm, is contributing $50 million towards the roughly $100 million cost. The Center is seeking to raise another $25 million for programming. Exteriors for the project will include use of Carrara marble, the same Italian marble which clad the site now.

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**Entertainer J. Justin Timberlake walks the third fairway during the celebrity challenge of the Pebble Beach National Pro-Am in Pebble Beach, California on 11 Feb, 2009.— Reuters**

Timberlake posted on Twitter about the forthcoming game, saying among other things: “This is gonna be a GREAT Super Bowl!” and “Oh wait... I don’t have tickets. Dammit! Anybody know anybody? LOL!”

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**Handout image of architect Steven Holl’s rendition of the proposed Kennedy Center Expansion Project in Washington. The John F Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is planning a $100 million addition, including an outdoor floating stage on the Potomac River, in its first major expansion since it opened in 1971. Three connected pavilions to house classrooms, rehearsal rooms, lecture space and other facilities were also included in initial plans for the US capital’s premier performance space, which were laid out on Tuesday.— Reuters**

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**New Light of Myanmar**

Thursday, 31 January, 2013
Lazio beat Juventus to reach Coppa Italia final

ROME, 30 Jan — Thanks to an injury-time winner from Sergio Floccari, Lazio advanced to the Coppa Italia final at the expense of Juventus on Tuesday. Floccari headed in the goal from a corner deep into injury-time to give his side a 2-1 win on the night, and a 3-2 aggregate triumph. The goal came mere moments after Juventus midfielder Arturo Vidal looked to have sent the tie into extra-time after stepping inside his marker to rifle the net from close range.

Lazio midfielder Alvaro Gonzalez broke the deadlock in the 53rd minute with a fine diving header. Lazio head coach Vladimir Petkovic praised Lazio and goalkeeper Federico Marchetti for their dramatic win over Juventus. “We are satisfied with the result and that was a crazy game at the end, but we had the right determination to take home the result,” he said.

Things could have been different if Marchetti had not saved from blank-point range when Juventus striker Sebastian Giovinco was clear on goal at the 95th minute. “Marchetti is having a fantastic season, not just in the individual saves, but the way he does his work and is a reference point in the locker room,” Juventus head coach Antonio Conte felt his side did enough against Lazio and rued that last-gasp miss. “We did more over the 180 minutes than Lazio, but whoever wins is always right, so we accept the result. That late miss from Marchesio weighed very heavily on us, as it would’ve been the goal to qualify us,” he said. Lazio will meet either fierce rivals Roma or Inter Milan at the Stadio Olimpico in the final. Roma must wait until 17 April to try and consolidate their 2-1 first-leg lead.

New Orleans, 30 Jan — He is the “Cool Joe” that made the Baltimore Ravens go, and in Sunday’s Super Bowl championship Joe Flacco could take a giant step toward assuming the team’s leadership role from retiring linebacker Ray Lewis.

The strong-armed quarterback, quiet but brimming with confidence, lifted his game in the postseason, throwing eight touchdowns without an interception and earning consideration as one of the game’s top quarterbacks. The only National Football League quarterback to notch more touch- downs without an interception in a postseason were former San Francisco 49ers Hall of Famers Steve Young (nine TDs in 1994) and Joe Montana (13 TDs in 1989). “He’s been doing what he’s been doing all year long for us,” Fullback Vonta Leach told Reuters at Tuesday’s Media Day at the Superdome. “A lot of people are making a big deal now just because it’s the playoffs, but Joe has been leading for our team all year long. He’s just been Flacco.” None other than Lewis himself recently anointed Flacco as the team’s next “General”, but the linebacker said he hoped the Ravens quarterback would work on becoming a more vocal leader.— Reuters

Deco out of Fluminense’ Copa Libertadores match

RIO DE JANEIRO, 30 Jan — Fluminense coach Abel Braga says injured midfielder Deco is unlikely to be ready for the club’s 2013 Copa Libertadores debut against Caracas on 13 Febuary. The former Porto, Barcelona and Chelsea star completed 20 minutes of light running on Tuesday in his first training appearance since injuring his right thigh two weeks ago.

“The Copa Libertadores is something different. You need to have meticulous planning and preparation and we can’t go making rash decisions,” Braga said. Fluminense, which won last year’s Brazilian Serie A championship, is among the favourites for this year’s Copa Libertadores title.

The Rio de Janeiro outfit is yet to win South America’s most prestigious club competition. It’s best result was in 2008 when it lost the final to Ecuador’s Liga de Quito in a dramatic penalty shootout at Rio’s Maracana Stadium.Fluminense and Caracas have been drawn in Group Eight of the tournament along with Chile’s Huachipato and the winner of the Gremio-Liga de Quito qualifier, which will be decided in Porto Alegre on Wednesday.

Cuban baseball defector returns home under new law

HAVANA, 30 Jan — A decade after he defected to the United States to play Major League Baseball, Cuban pitcher Jose Contreras has returned to his homeland in the first test of the island’s liberalized travel laws.

He was welcomed on Tuesday at Havana’s Hot Corner, a mecca for baseball fans, by about 200 people who crowded around to get photos and autographs from the lanky right-hander.

Contreras, 41, signed baseball cards, dollar bills, Cuban money and a woman’s dress as he mixed happily with his fellow countrymen in an emotional return home. “After 10 years, I’ve had the opportunity to come back to Cuba, to my land, my country, and it’s like a dream come true to be here with my family, with my fans,” Contreras told Reuters in an occasionally tearful interview.

Before 14 January, when new travel regulations went into effect, high-profile defectors such as Contreras were effectively barred from returning to Cuba, but now they can return if they have been away for at least eight years. Mutch to the chargin of Cuban officials, many Cuban athletes have left the country over the years to cash in on their sporting prowess. Contreras was in Mexico playing for the Cuban national team when he defected in 2002 and signed a four-year, $32 million contract with the New York Yankees. He went on to pitch for the Chicago White Sox, Colorado Rockies and Philadelphia Phillies. Contreras was the first big-name athlete known to have tested the new law, returning to Cuba from the United States a few days ago, driven not only by a desire to see his homeland, but also to be with his 77-year-old mother Modesta Camejo, who is ill.— Reuters

Tottenham in late Damiao bid

LONDON, 30 Jan — Tottenham Hotspur is reportedly willing to pay up to 20 million pounds to sign Brazil international striker Leandro Damiao. The London outfit is also prepared to include their Brazilian goal keeper Gomes in negotiations with Damiao’s Brazilian club Internacional, Lancet reported on Tuesday.

Damiao has long been on the radar of Tottenham and the Premier League club is understood to have had at least two offers rejected in the past two years.

The 23-year-old has won 14 international caps for Brazil and was the team’s leading scorer at last year’s London Olympics with six goals.

The England transfer window closes on Thursday and Tottenham will reportedly turn its attention to Sevilla striker Ayrton Negredo should it fail in its pursuit of the Brazilian.

Ravens QB Flacco grows into leadership role

Baltimore Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco answers questions from journalists during Media Day for the NFL’s Super Bowl XLVII in New Orleans, Louisiana on 29 Jan, 2013.— Reuters

David Silva (L) of Manchester City breaks through the defence of Armond Traore (C) and Etebo Gana of Queens Park Rangers during the Barclays Premier League match at Loftus Road on 29 Jan, 2013. The match ended with a 0-0 draw.— Reuters

Cuban pitcher Jose Contreras (R) meets fans in Havana on 29 Jan, 2013.— Reuters
KARZAI seeks direct dialogue with Taliban

KABUL, 30 Jan — Afghani President Hamid Karzai has called on the Taliban insurgent group to respond to his government’s call for direct dialogue.

In a speech in the capital Kabul on Tuesday, Karzai stressed that reconciliation with the Taliban through peace negotiations is important for bringing peace to Afghanistan.

Karzai said some foreign powers are plotting peace talks with the Taliban, but all negotiations with the Taliban should take place under his government.

He said he wants to call on the Taliban and the country’s politicians not to let the foreigners cheat them.

The Taliban has called on the United States to hold talks for achieving peace in Afghanistan.

They have set up a liaison office in Qatar and want to negotiate with the US.

The group has rejected dialogue with the Karzai administration, calling it a puppet government of the United States.— NHK

Karzai seeks direct dialogue with Taliban

WASHINGTON, 30 Jan— The White House on Tuesday called for a lasting solution to the unfolding unrest in Egypt.

“We call on all Egyptian leaders across the political spectrum to make clear that violence and looting is not acceptable and to actively work to prevent further violence,” White House spokesman Jay Carney told reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Nevada state.

“The Egyptians need to engage in a peaceful process in order to reach a lasting solution to the current unrest,” he said.

Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi imposed a curfew and a state of emergency on Sunday in response to the bloody clashes in the coastal cities of Port Said, Suez and Ismailia. However, thousands of protesters took to the streets on Monday evening till late hours in defiance of the curfew and army deployment.

Days of clashes between the protesters and the security forces have left over 50 people dead and about 2,000 others injured, renewing concern about Egypt’s ongoing transition process.

“This democratic process must adhere to the rights of all Egyptians, and we look to the government of Egypt to ensure that the people’s right to due process is protected,” Carney said.

US to build drone base in Africa to combat terrorists: report

WASHINGTON, 30 Jan— The US military is planning to set up a drone base in northwestern Africa in order to combat the local affiliate of al-Qaeda and other Islamist extremist groups which pose a growing menace to the region, local media said on Tuesday.

This is an indication that Africa has become a priority for the US counterterrorism efforts, the New York Times reported in a front-page news report.

The drone base is most likely to be established in Niger which sits east to Mali, where French troops are assisting government forces in fighting al-Qaeda-backed extremist groups controlling the north, the report said. But the US Africa Command is also discussing options for locating the base in other countries of the region, such as Burkina Faso, it added.

Pentagon officials were quoted as saying that they envision flying only unarmed surveillance drones from the base, though they did not rule out conducting missile strikes at some point if the threat worsens.

Currently, the US military has a limited presence in Africa, with only one permanent base in Djibouti. A new drone base in northwestern Africa would join a constellation of small airstrips in recent years on the continent, including one in Ethiopia, for surveillance missions flown by drones or turboprop planes.

If the drone base is set up, the US military will provide immediate surveillance assistance to the French troops fighting in Mali, the report said.

More mainland cities to issue travel permits to Taiwanese residents

BEIJING, 30 Jan— The Chinese mainland has decided to authorize another two cities to issue travel permits to Taiwan residents, a mainland spokesman said on Wednesday.

The cities of Yanqings in Jiangsu Province and Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province will be able to issue travel permits to Taiwanese starting from 5 February, Yang Yi, spokesman for the State Council’s Taiwan Affairs Office, said at a press conference.— Xinhua

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas (C) attends a Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) executive committee meeting in the West Bank city of Ramallah on 29 Jan, 2013.—Xinhua
NAY PYI TAW, 30 Jan—Students whose affiliation with Mandalay University of Medicines was terminated will not be re-admitted to the university, Deputy Health Minister Dr Win Myint confirmed the university’s decision in his answer to the question raised by U Thein Tun Oo of Amarapura Constituency at today’s Pyithu Hluttaw regular session.

He said the dismissal conformed to the existing rules and regulations approved by sixth medicines seminar in 2013. The number of dismissed students rose as 2400 students were admitted in 2012 with the maximum gap of marks of 30 and there were problems in teaching medicines, he explained.

There are now only 1200 students who were admitted, the deputy minister said. According to the rules and regulations, a student who failed MBBS (B) exam thrice and who did not complete the one-year term as house surgeon will face dismissal.

MP U Thein Tun Oo said, “We know the rules. But I raised the question because I felt sympathy towards students and parents.” He sees some students had faced unfair dismissal by the stringent rules.

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Jan—As regards the proposal of Dr Myat Nyana Soe from Yangon Region Constituency No (4) urging the Union government to build information and public relations departments in respective townships to public information centers so that people can inquire the functions of government agencies, Deputy Minister for Information U Paik Htwe replied that current workforce of township IPRDs could not take the responsibility of public information centers and there was no such legislation giving power to IPRDs to collect information and data from other departments.

He suggested forming public information committee by administrative organs in townships and assigning staff officers of IPRD as member or secretary of the proposed committee. Currently, the deputy minister said, the township IPRDs can only publicize the gazettes and orders and instructions of the government and are not in a position to assume the responsibility of publicizing information for public.

U Khin Maung Yi of Ayeyawady Region Constituency No (6) said there is sufficient equipment and technology at region/ state level and the State is organizing capacity building programmes with international assistance. Thus, the proposal can be realized at region/state level. But still it is difficult to collect information at township level. If and when inter-department network is built along with full computerization, such public information centers can be introduced. He said he prefer to documentation of proposal saying it is a nice one but difficult to be implemented at present.

The proposal was put to vote and rejected as “No” vote outnumbered “Yes” ones.

As regards the question of U Nu of Yangon Region Constituency No (10) about whether there is any plan to give the whole amount of pension to the retired civil servants, Dr Lin Aung, Deputy Finance and Revenue Minister, said when one is allowed to have pension, gratuity is also granted as reward for his service. Monthly pension is then given for his living costs and is of internationally practised pension scheme.

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Jan—An MoU on cooperation in development between Myanmar and Australia governments was signed at Thingaha Hotel, here, yesterday with the attendance of Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Dr Daw Khin San Yi, Ambassadors from UK and Australia and embassy staff, officials and media.

Australia agrees cooperation in Myanmar development

Director-General Daw Than Than Lin of Foreign Economic Relations Department of Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and Director-General Mr Peter Baxter of Australian Agency for International Development of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia exchanged the notes of MoU on socio-economic development in order to uplift mutual economic and social networks, to alleviate the poverty rate and to sustain development undertakings.

Under the MoU the Australian government will assist Myanmar in poverty alleviation and sustainable development programs.

NAY PYI TAW, 30 Jan—One gas-fired generator for Myanmar was shipped on 26 January by EGAT of Thailand and is expected to arrive at Asia World jetty on 22 February.

Energy Ministry of Thailand agreed on 29 October to supply two 120-Megawatt natural gas-fired generators. Another generator is expected to arrive at Yangon port on 14 March.

The generators will be installed by Thai STFE Company in cooperation with Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise in Ywama power plant yard.

List of noteworthy amounts of rainfall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pinlaung</td>
<td>2.52 inches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kyaikhmi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chaungzon</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0.55 inch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kengtung</td>
<td>0.51 inch</td>
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Noteworthy amounts of rainfall (30-1-2013)