Austrian President pledges support for fully lifting of EU sanctions against Myanmar

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 March — Austrian President Dr. Heinz Fisher welcomed President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein at Presidential Palace in Vienna at 11 pm local time yesterday.

Next, President U Thein Sein held talks with the Austria President at the separate meeting.

Also present at the meeting between the two countries together with the President were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) General Soe Win, Union Ministers U Winna Maung Lwin and U Soe Thane and Myanmar Ambassador to Austria U Soe Nwe. The Austrian President was accompanied by Cabinet Director Dr. Rene Politzer and senior officials.

They held talks on Myanmar’s reform process in political, economic and social sectors, works carried out for creating a political configuration in which all political parties were allowed to partake, release of inmates who were serving prison terms due to various reasons to be able to take part in nation-building endeavours, peace making process with national races armed groups in pursuit of a lasting peace, challenges that the nation faces in democratic transition and measures to be taken to tackle challenges and fully lifting of sanctions against Myanmar for ensuring socio-economic development of the people.

After the meeting, President U Thein Sein sends message of felicitations to Ghanaian counterpart

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 March—U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Ghana, which falls on 6 March 2013.

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein shakes hands with Austrian President Dr. Heinz Fisher.—MNA

In his extended greetings at Myanmar-Austria Economic Forum, the President invited foreign investments to be able to fulfill the needs of capital, technology and human resources in Myanmar which is in need of political stability and economic development for strengthening democratic system. As foreign investment law and bylaws had emerged, investors were being invited, he added. He pointed out the two leaders made clarifications on their meeting and answered the queries raised by media at press conference where the Austrian President pledged Austria’s support for completely lifting of EU sanctions against Myanmar.

Next, the Austrian President hosted dinner to the President and party.

In the afternoon, the President held talks with Prime Minister Mr. Werner Faymann at the Office of the Prime Minister of Austria and Parliament Speaker Mrs Barbara Prammer at Austria Parliament.

The President said that bilateral relations were strained due to the difference between the political systems of the two countries but Myanmar and Austria had established diplomatic ties since 1953. The President called for strengthening intergovernmental government with Myanmar parliament, saying that she hoped for positive outcome while reviewing EU policy on Myanmar.

He started by announcing that the two leaders made clarifications on their meeting and answered the queries raised by media at press conference where they held talks on Myanmar’s reform process in political, economic connectivity, interparliamentary connectivity and people-to-people connectivity as Myanmar is exercising democratic practices.

The Austrian Parliament Speaker vowed to build friendly relations with Myanmar parliament, saying that she hoped for positive outcome while reviewing EU policy on Myanmar.

The President called for better bilateral relations between the two countries.

The President left Vienna by air in the evening and arrived in Brussels of Belgium at 8.15 pm local time.

Closing of Union Cup Games to be broadcast live

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 March—The closing ceremony of the Union Cup Games 2013, final match of men’s football event and prize presentation ceremony will be broadcast live on 7 March evening: TV Myanmar, Nay Pyi Taw Radio Myanmar and Sky Net Sport Channel will start programmes on the ceremony of the Union Cup Games live at 3.30 pm.

The final match of the women’s football tournament will be broadcast live at 7.30 pm.

MNA


**Winners of Union Cup Games men’s, women’s weightlifting contests**

In +75 kilos event, Cho Cho Win of Yangon Region, Kyi Pyar San of Kachin State and Su Su Lwin of Rakhine State stood first, second and third respectively. Sa Tha Htai Win of Ayeyawady Region stood first in men’s 85 kilos event, followed by Chun Thein Swe of Shan State and Aung Aung of Rakhine State. In men’s 94 kilos event, Saw Aung Naing won first prize, Win Hsan Aung of Kachin State second and Si Si of Yangon third. The winner of men’s 105 kilos event was Kyaw Tun Aung of Magway Region. Than Htai Soe was runner-up, Myat Than Aung of Kachin State was runner-up to Zaw Htet Aung of Yangon Region in +105 kilos event.

**Motorized boat capsizes, sink in the middle of Hline River**

Yangon, 5 March — A motorized boat capsized and sank near RP.8 of the upper-construction Bay-innaung Bridge No (2) in Hline river in Mayangon Township, here, at about 10.40 pm on 27 February. The “Than Htai Aung” motorized boat steered by Chit Naing, 27, of Twantay Township carrying 700 bags of fish feedstuff hit the stationary CP in the middle of the river and sank due to the crash.

**Upgrading of concrete road in Nay Pyi Taw Zabuthiri Township**

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 March — While Nay Pyi Taw Council is carrying out the tasks of ensuring Nay Pyi Taw Council Area to be equipped with the characteristic of a city and greening task, tarmacking of Zeyahtani road is being undertaken from the traffic lights at the junction of Razathingaha road and Zeyahtani road in Zabuthiri Township starting from 2 March morning.

**Union Cup Games Traditional Boxing (Mway) contest kicks off**

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 March — Matches of Traditional Boxing (Mway) were held at Training Centre (1), here, yesterday. Winners of men’s traditional boxing (Mway) contest were Moe Thi Aung (Yangon) in 45 kilos event, Myo Myint (Kayin) in 48 kilos event, Saw William (Kayin) and Min Thu (Magway) in 57 kilos event, Tin Aung Soe (Rakhine) and Kyaw Htoo Aung (Kayah) in 60 kilos event, Soe Lin Oo (Yangon) in 65 kilos event, Min Hsu San (Kayin) and Maung Tu (Magway) in 67 kilos event, and Tun Tun Min (Mon) and Yan Giy Aung (Yangon) in 71 kilos event. Winners of women’s traditional boxing (Mway) contest were Shwe Sin Kyemon (Yango) in 45 kilos event, and Min Hsu San (Kayin) in 48 kilos event, Saw William (Kayin) in 51 kilos event and Grace Ei Swe (Taninthayi) in 54 kilos event. In the afternoon, 10 matches of men’s traditional boxing (Mway) contest and three matches of women’s traditional boxing (Mway) contest were held.

**Globetrotter convoy passes through Meiktila**

Meiktila, 5 March — A convoy of 29 vehicles carrying 54 globetrotters, members of Germany-based The Sea Bridge For Motorhome passed through Meiktila at 9.30 Mandalay expressway, west of Toungoo, at about 9 pm on 28 February, claiming one life in the car crash.

**One man dies after having toad dinner**

Pyu, 5 March — A man died after having dinner with toad dish at a hut on Myayarpin Hill in Pyu Township of Bago Region on 20 February. U Tin Htwe, 54, and U Maung, 40, had their dinner with toad dish prepared with 50 toads and U Tin Htwe was pronounced dead on the hutt a few minutes after the dinner. U Maung had severe food poisoning and he is being given special care at Zeyahtani Station hospital.
Russia willing to consider making it easier for Libya to buy arms

UNITED NATIONS, 5 March — Russia is prepared to consider ways of making it easier for Libya’s government to buy arms, but voiced serious concern about lifting an embargo on the North African state already awash with weapons, Russia’s UN ambassador said on Monday.

Libya’s Prime Minister Ali Zeidan said last week he planned to ask the UN Security Council to lift the embargo, which was imposed at the start of an uprising in 2011 that led to the fall of dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

Russia’s UN Ambassador Vitaly Churkin, who is president of the Security Council this month, said there were concerns about the Libyan government’s lack of authority in the vast desert country and the spread of weapons its borders.

He said Libya had not yet made an official request for the arms embargo to be lifted, but the issue would likely be discussed by the 15-member council before a meeting on Libya later this month. “Some council members do have reservations about lifting the arms embargo,” Churkin told reporters, noting that Libya’s government was already able to purchase weapons with the approval of a Security Council sanctions committee.

“If of course it can be regarded as a somewhat cumbersome procedure even though it’s supposed to happen rather quickly,” Churkin said. “I think we will also be looking at ways maybe to facilitate the possible acquisition of arms by the Libyan government short of full fledged lifting of the arms embargo.”

The Libyan government has struggled to exert authority across the country. State security forces remain weak and militias, made up of former rebel fighters, hold the power on the ground.

At least five die in plane crash in Congolese town of Goma

GOMA, 5 March — At least five people were killed on Monday when a twin-propeller plane crashed at Goma airport in eastern Congo in this handout photo released by MONUSCO on 4 March, 2013.—REUTERS

An unidentified gunned killed at least 40 Syrian soldiers and government employees who were being taken to the Syrian border by Iraqi authorities on Monday after being flown into Iraq from a Syrian rebel attack last week, Iraqi officials said.

A convoy carrying the Syrians was ambushed in Iraq’s western Province of Anbar, where thousands of Iraqi Sunnis have been protesting daily for more than two months against the Shi’ite-led government and the perceived marginalization of their sect.

The conflict in neighbouring Syria, where mainly Sunni Muslim rebels are fighting to overthrow a leader backed by Shi’ite Iran, is whipping up sectarian tensions in Iraq and the wider Middle East.

That has raised concerns of a return to the kind of sectarian strife that killed tens of thousands in Iraq in 2007.

“The incident took place in Akashat when the convoy carrying the Syrian soldiers and employees was on its way to the al-Waleed border crossing,” a senior Iraqi official told Reuters.

Six million facing hunger in southern Africa

GENEVA, 5 March — More than 6 million people across Angola, Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe are at risk of severe food shortages because of repeated cycles of drought and flooding, the global humanitarian body IFRC said on Monday.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said the crisis was passing largely unnoticed in the outside world and its appeals for financial support had won limited support.

Develop a nuclear weapon, has grown impatient with the protracted talks and has threatened pre-emptive war against Teheran if it deems diplomacy ultimately futile.

“There is a finite amount of time,” US Secretary of State John Kerry, in Riyadh, said of the talks between the group of six world powers and Teheran, Saudi Arabia’s main regional adversary.

Israel warned it cannot “stand idle” as Syria war spills over border

UNITED NATIONS, 5 March — Israel warned the UN Security Council on Monday that it could not be expected to “stand idle” as Syria’s civil war spills over its border, while Russia accused armed groups of undermining security between the states by fighting in a demilitarized zone.

Israel UN Ambassador Ron Prosor wrote to the council.

“Of course it can be regarded as a somewhat cumbersome procedure even though it’s supposed to happen rather quickly,” Churkin said. “I think we will also be looking at ways maybe to facilitate the possible acquisition of arms by the Libyan government short of full fledged lifting of the arms embargo.”

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“Israel cannot be expected to stand idle as the lives of its citizens are being put at risk by the Syrian government’s reckless actions.”

Prosor wrote. “Israel has shown maximum restraint thus far.”

Israel does not have a reputation for being idle. Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said that an attack on a Syrian arms complex on 30 January showed Israel was serious about preventing the flow of heavy arms into Lebanon, appearing to acknowledge that the Jewish state carried out the strike.

The United Nations says more than 70,000 people have been killed during a two-year revolt against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, which began as peaceful protests but turned violent when Assad’s forces cracked down on the demonstrations.

Airing frustration at the lack of progress in his agency’s investigation, Yukiya Amano told its 35-nation governing board on Monday that negotiations with Iran must “proceed with a sense of urgency” and be focused on achieving concrete results soon.

Because Iran is not providing the necessary cooperation with inspectors, the International Atomic Energy Agency “cannot conclude that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful activities”, said Amano, the IAEA’s director-general.

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K-12 student database jazzes tech startups, spooks parents

New York, 5 March—An education technology conference this week in Austin, Texas, will clang with bells and whistles as startups eagerly show off their latest wares.

But the most influential new product may be the least flashy: a $100 million database built to chart the academic paths of public school students from kindergarten through high school. In operation just three months, the database already holds files on millions of children identified by name, address and sometimes social security number. Learning disabilities are documented, test scores recorded, attendance noted. In some cases, the database tracks student hobbies, career goals, attitudes toward school—even homework completion.

Local education officials retain legal control over their students’ information. But federal law allows them to share files in their portion of the database with private companies selling educational products and services.

Entrepreneurs can’t wait. “This is going to be a huge win for us,” said Jeffrey Olen, a product manager at CompassLearning, which sells education software.

CompassLearning will join two dozen technology companies at this week’s SXSWedu conference in demonstrating how they might mine the database to create custom products—educational games for students, lesson plans for teachers, progress reports for principals.

The database is a joint project of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which provided most of the funding, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and school officials from several states. Amplify Education, a division of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corp, built the infrastructure over the past 18 months. When it was ready, the Gates Foundation turned the database over to a newly created nonprofit, iN2L, Inc., which will run it.

New York, 5 March—Supporters of an armed uprising to lay claim to a Malaysian state took their campaign to cyberspace on Monday, manipulating Google search listings to show a message backing the incursion. A Google search for the word “Sabah” the state at the centre of Malaysia’s biggest security crisis in years, came back with a search results page that quotes “Wikipedia” calling Malaysian control of the state “illegitimate.”

“The time has come to reclaim what is truly ours.” “Sabah is owned by the Filipinos, you illegally (sic) claiming it,” it said.

Philippine news portals have said a number of sites in the country were hit by pro-Malaysia hackers.

A tense stand-off between the intruders and security forces who had pinned down the group in the farming village of Tanduo erupted in a bloody firefight on Friday that left 12 gunmen and two police officers dead.

Another gun battle erupted on Saturday in Semporna, hours away from Tanduo by road, dramatically escalating tensions and raising the overall toll of reported dead to at least 18 militants and eight police officers.

Followers of the 74-year-old Muslim Islamic leader, Jamalul Kiram III, say the gunmen are ready to die to defend his claim to Sabah, which was once controlled by the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference.

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China’s first jumbo jet to debut in 2014

Beijing, 5 March—China’s first jumbo jet, the C919, is expected to make its maiden flight in 2014 as planned, its chief designer told Xinhua on Monday.

The design of C919’s airframe has been completed and the ground tests of the jet’s major equipment will start in 2013, said Wu Guanghui, the jumbo jet’s chief designer and vice general manager of the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC), the aircraft’s manufacturer.

The company had overcome a lot of difficulties, including insufficient experiences and technological reserves, weak industrial foundation and fierce competition, and had made new progresses in 2012, he said.

The COMAC will complete a series of technical review work and conduct over 40 wind tunnel tests in 2013, said Wu, who is in Beijing to attend the first session of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference.

LG’s LTE smartphone sales top 10 million

Seoul, 5 March—LG Electronics said on Monday that it has sold more than 10 million smartphones based on the high-speed long-term evolution (LTE) technology.

LG’s global LTE smartphone sales topped the 10 million mark last week as the company made an aggressive push into the fast-growing fourth-generation (4G) market, according to an e-mailed statement.

The result came as the LTE smartphone market is expected to grow rapidly. According to Strategic Analytics, global shipments of LTE smartphones are forecast to increase to 275 million units this year.

The company rolled out its LTE smartphones last year in around 10 countries such as the US, Germany, Japan and South Korea. LG planned to launch its Optimus G smartphone in about 50 nations by the end of this month. “Aggressive pushing forward with 4G LTE technology allows LG to satisfy the needs of consumers and is a huge factor in our growing success in global LTE smartphone sales,” said Park Jong-seok, president and chief executive of LG’s mobile communications division.
**BUSINESS & HEALTH**

**Philippine bourse slants on profit-taking**

MANILA, 5 March— Lack of positive leads prompted investors to sell their positions on Monday. The bellwether Philippine stock exchange index lost 0.07 percent, or 4.71 points, to 6,673.56, while the broader all-share index slipped by 0.03 percent, or 1.48 points, to 4,172.07.

Trading volume reached 3.87 billion shares worth 10.74 billion pesos (263.85 million US dollars) with 98 stocks declining, 62 advancing and 49 unchanged. Of the six counters, only the financials and the services sector bucked the trend. “The Philippine stock market has faced a strong challenge to rise above 6,720 as well as to sustain levels above 6,700,” analyst Justino Calayacay of Accord Capital Equities Corp. said in his daily stock market comment.

Investors, he said, are struggling to balance political concerns in Italy and fully the approach of a 1 March sequestration in the US on one hand and a slew of generally inspiring economic numbers both here and abroad. Calayacay said what is keeping investors hooked on the local equities is the fact that it still offers investors the “best balance between return and risk.”

The Philippine equities went as low as 6,564.77 on Monday, providing a window of opportunity for investors to start accumulating stocks.

Stock in the 30-company index closed mixed. Among those sold down were Ayala Corp., Ayala Land, Inc., and SM Prime Holdings, Inc.—Xinhua

**Alibaba eyes up to $8 billion jumbo loan**

HONG KONG, 5 March— Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group is back in the loan market with an eye on a jumbo financing of up to $8 billion to refinance existing debts, barely a year after borrowing $4 billion in loans, according to sources.

The borrower is said to have approached lenders seeking proposals for the loan, proceeds from which will refinance US$4bn in loans put in place last year as well as fund Alibaba’s obligations under a $7.1 billion share buyback deal it struck with Yahoo Inc (YHOO.O) last May.

The Chinese Internet company is refinancing its outstanding loans with a new borrowing to free itself from covenants that capped its borrowings to $4 billion.

The additional $4 billion is raising from the latest borrowing will finance its share buyback deal with Yahoo.

As reported earlier, the buyback, agreed by Alibaba and Yahoo on 21 May 2012, will cost $7.1 billion and will be funded by $6.3 billion in cash and $800 million through a new issue of preferred stock by Alibaba to Yahoo.

Sources expect Alibaba to pay lower pricing than on its loans signed last year, which were well received.

The $4 billion in loans completed last year comprised a $1 billion four-year facility signed in July by eight banks and three other loans of $1 billion each signed in June.

The three other loans include two bilaterals of three and four years from China Development Bank (CDB) CHDB UL, and a $1 billion three-year facility from a group of 19 lenders. The three-year facility from 19 banks was part of a $3 billion dual-tranche debt which also comprised a $2 billion bridge that was taken out by CDB’s bilaterals.

The $1 billion three-year loan from the 19 banks paid a top-level upfront fee of 0.5 percent while the $2 billion 12-month bridge paid 175 basis points.

The $4 billion in loans last year funded the privatization of Hong Kong-listed Alibaba.com and financed the buyback of half of the 40 percent stake Yahoo held in Alibaba.—Reuters

**Mongolia called on to create own brands**

ULAN BAATAR, 5 March— Senior officials attending the opening of the Mongolian Economic Forum on Monday called on their country to create its own brands to enter into the international market.

Prime Minister Norov Altanhuyag said “Mongolian brand, Mongolia creates” has always been the Mongolian people’s dream.

Although Mongolia’s per capita possession of resources ranks among the world’s highest, most of its mineral products, meat, leather and cashmere are exported as raw materials with no added value, he said.

Mongolia should promote an upgrade and transformation of its economic structure, create its own brands and enter into the international market, the prime minister said.

Deputy Prime Minister Dendev Terbishdavga also urged Mongolian enterprises to join forces to create their own brands to sell abroad.

Mongolian cashmere made under minus 40 degrees could be able to produce highest grade cashmere, but Mongolian cashmere products were not well-known in the international market, he said.

The two-day economic forum was mainly aimed at providing suggestions for vigorously developing deep processing of Mongolian cashmere, leather, dary and other products, local media reported.—Xinhua

**Nine cheap and healthy foods to help women stay young**

1. Lemon
2. Apricot
3. Olive
4. Grapefruit
5. Cherry
6. Pomegranate
7. Carrot
8. Cucumber
9. Grape

Xinhua

**New Light of Myanmar**

**Sequestration not favoured method to cut budget deficit**

WASHINGTON, 5 March— A sound plan is needed to reduce the budget deficit over the next 10 years, but wholesale government spending cuts should not be the core of the programme, according to a new survey of economists.

The National Association for Business Economists’ poll of 196 members found more than 70 percent opposed the full implementation of $85 billion in federal budget cuts known as the “sequester” that were set to start taking hold last Friday. The International Monetary Fund last week warned that the spending cuts, if fully implemented, could shave at least 0.5 percentage point off gross domestic product this year.—Reuters

**Dollar trades at mid-93 yen level in early Tokyo deal**

TOKYO, 5 March— The US dollar traded in the mid-93 yen range on early Monday in Tokyo.

At 9 am, the dollar was quoted at 93.53-61 yen compared with 93.55-65 yen in New York and 92.58-59 yen in Tokyo at 5 pm on Friday.

The eurofiched 1.3015-3016 dollars and 121.76-78 yen against 1.3016-3026 and 121.82-92 yen in New York and 1.3075-3076 dollars and 121.05-09 yen in Tokyo late Friday afternoon.—Xinhua

**Fitness experts separate folklore from fact**

Giang Hoang, 38, of Los Angeles

Exercises on the beach in Santa Monica, California on 27 May, 2011. Reuters

New York, 5 March— Can crunches create six-pack abdominal muscles? Do weight-lifting women risk having their “best balance be-...
NATO expects decision on post-2014 Afghan force by mid-year

KABUL, 5 March—NATO expects a decision by the middle of this year on the size of a training force to be kept in Afghan-

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France says it will meet its deficit target in 2014

BRUSSELs, 5 March—France, the euro zone’s second-largest economy, will miss its budget deficit target this year but can reach the goal in 2014, the country’s Finance Minister Pierre Moscovici said on Monday.

Under pressure to show budgetary discipline to the rest of the euro zone and reassure financial markets, Moscovici pleaded for understanding from the European Commission, the EU executive that is policing countries’ debts and deficits.

“We need to be intelligent and find a balance between fiscal consolidation and growth,” France can bring its budget deficit to below 3 percent in 2014,” Moscovici told a news conference after a meeting with his euro zone counterparts in Brussels.

“We will not meet our deficit forecast for 2013 and I don’t want to deepen austerity at a time of recession and stagnation,” Moscovici said, referring to the euro zone’s economy, which the Commission expects to shrink 0.3 percent this year.

“Why not have any more adjustment plans for 2013,” he said of France. France is expected to show almost no growth this year—a 0.1 percent expansion—the Commission said in its latest forecast last month. Partly because of the lack of growth, the Commission has forecast that France’s deficit will be 3.7 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) this year, well short of the 3 percent target under European rules.—Reuters

Twelve pro-army militiamen killed in Yemen

ADEN, 5 March—A suicide bomber killed at least 12 members of a pro-government militia that helped the Yemeni army to drive al-Qaeda-linked Islamist militants out of southern strongholds in a US-backed campaign last year, a commander said on Monday.

Nizar Jaafar said 15 other people had been wounded in the attack on an area populated by the Popular Committees in the town of Lawdar in the southern province of Abyan.

Bakheet is the force of the blast shook the centre of Lawdar. No one claimed responsibility for the attack, but Islamist group Ansar al-Sharia had previously said it carried out similar bombings, often in reprisal for the tribal fighters’ role in driving the militants out of their strongholds.

Yemen has been grappling with multiple challenges since a popular uprising forced President Ali Abdullah Saleh out of office in 2011 and Abdul-Rabu Mansour Hadi took his place.

Apart from the Islamist militant insurgency, the US-allied country which is next door to the world’s top oil exporter, Saudi Arabia, is fighting a separatist movement seeking to revive the Socialist state that merged with North Yemen in 1990, as well as a potential challenge from Shi’ite Muslim rebels known as Houthis in the north.

Ansar al-Sharia has carried out a campaign of suicide attacks against the Yemeni army and its militia allies after they were forced to quit cities they captured in 2011, during the turmoil that accompanied the popular protests against Saleh.—Reuters

Locust reached Gaza Strip, not dangerous

GAZA, 5 March—The government of Islamic Hamas movement said on Monday that the swarms of locust which stormed the Gaza Strip earlier Monday evening were not big and not dangerous or harmful.

The swarms of locust were very little and only reached the fields in some parts of southern Gaza Strip, Saleh Bakheet, director general of plant protection department in the ministry of agriculture, said in a Press statement.

He said the swarms of locust came from Egypt and crossed into the southern area of the Gaza Strip, adding that little swarms had reached the farms and green fields of Abbasian village, east of the city of Khan Younis.

“The represents no kind of danger or harms to people and plants,” Bakheet said, adding that “the situation is under full control and protection of the ministry of agriculture.”

Farmers said that 10 locusts were founded in each dunum (1,000 square metres). Officials of the agriculture ministry said it would be dangerous if huge swarms of locust cover an area of 30 dunums (30,000 square metres).

Meanwhile, Israeli Radio reported that the swarms of locust covered various green fields and areas in southern Israel, mainly near the borders between Israel and Egypt.

The radio said that farmers in the area said swarms of locust were not that huge and do not represent any danger to their farms.

However, they expressed concerns that within the coming few days, swarms of locust would increase.—Xinhua

Turkey, Greece seek to boost economic ties amid tensions

İSTANBUL, 5 March—More than 250 businessmen from Turkey and Greece met here on Monday to explore the possibilities of broadening economic and trade relations between the two neighbours despite differences in some areas.

“Turkey and Greece aim to reach the 10 billion US dollar trade volume by the year of 2015,” Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who also attended the Turkish-Greek Business Forum, said during the event.

Tourism is one of the promising areas of cooperation between Turkey and Greece. Rifaat Hiscakiloglu, president of Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK), suggested at the forum that Turkey and Greece could develop tourism packages together to attract tourists from the Middle East and Asia.

Before the forum, the two governments headed by Erdogan and his Greek counterpart Antonis Samaras signed 25 agreements in a bid to boost cooperation on education, press, energy, tourism and sports.

However, some longstanding problems between the two neighbouring countries cast shadow on the future development of bilateral economic relations, one of the disputes being the gas exploration rights in the Eastern Mediterranean, and another, the Cyprus issue.

“I think the increasing trade volume between Turkey and Greece can erase political tensions and conflicts,” Turkey and Greece could cooperate with each other to solve the gas exploration disputes,” said Alexander Karapippers from Greek company Ergani, who believed that trade with Turkey and Greece helps Turkey to solve domestic financial crisis.—Xinhua

South African official says BRICS summit preparations at advanced stage

Johannesburg, 5 March—The South African government announced on Monday that preparations for the upcoming 5th BRICS Summit are at advanced stage.

“At this point, preparations are at advanced stage for the 5th BRICS Summit. From the substance and logistical perspective, we are satisfied with the state of readiness,” said Ebrahim Fahroh, South Africa’s Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation.

The official stressed that the South African government is confident that “the summit will be a great success.”

The 5th BRICS Summit will be held in the south-eastern port city of Durban from 26 to 27 March under the theme “BRICS and Africa: Partners for Development, Integration and Industrialization.”

It will be the first time for South Africa to host the BRICS summit since it officially became a membershhip of the group on 24 Dec, 2010, following formal invitation by the BRIC nations to join the group.—Xinhua

Learjet makes emergency landing at St Louis airport

St LOUIS, 5 March—An Learjet 45 with reported landing gear problems made an emergency landing at Lambert-St Louis International Airport in St Louis, Missouri on 4 March, 2013.—Reuters

An image captured from a video footage from KSDK shows a Learjet 45 airplane with reported landing gear problems landing with rescue vehicles and first responders upon making an emergency landing at Lambert-St Louis International Airport in St Louis, Missouri on 4 March, 2013.—Reuters

The 5th BRICS Summit—25 agreements signed
Toward a country of sustainable development

The Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is enhancing relations with the international community to access knowledge, experience and resources to accelerate its development progress. It recognizes its responsibility to its citizens and to its partners to achieve the most it can from this cooperation. The government and its development partners agree to take concrete actions to make their cooperation more effective and workable.

In a measure of achieving national priority, the government is extensively engaged in developing a culture of democratic practices that recognizes human rights and empowers citizens through participatory processes, strengthening the rule of law and improving access to justice and information, creating an enabling environment for civil society to contribute to policy formulation, budgetary processes and delivery of services at the grassroots level.

Furthermore, it is pursuing market based, inclusive growth, equitable and sustainable development and accelerating peace-building, political reforms and development initiatives to promote reconciliation and national harmony in recent conflict and ceasefire areas while integrating capacity enhancing objectives into all development plans and developing appropriate strategies to unleash and develop capacity.

As a developing country, we have to make the most of our natural resources in pursuit of economic growth. But, sustainable economy is a question of seeking a balance between exploitation and conservation of environment.

Since development and environment are complementary and not antagonistic, public education is instrumental to reinforce the durability of social and economic infrastructures and facilities, and only then, we may be able to leverage from the solid base to advance towards a country of sustainable development.

SWRR Ministry, Asian Disaster Risk Management Centre sign deal

NAY PYI TAW, 5 March—The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Asian Disaster Risk Management Centre signed a MoU here this morning.

Union Minister Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khan addressed the signing ceremony at Amara Hotel, calling for strengthened cooperation between the two organizations. Director-General of Relief and Resettlement Department U Soe Aung and Executive Director Dr Krasae Chanowongse of the centre signed the deal.

The executive director spoke words of thanks. The ministry will call on Myanmar staff to work harder.

Coord meeting on cooperation in development of Shweili-Kyaikpyu corridor project held

NAY PYI TAW, 5 March—The Second Joint Expert Group Meeting on China-Myanmar Highway Project from Ruili to Kyaukpyu between the Ministry of Construction and a panel of experts from the Construction Ministry of Yunnan Province of the People’s Republic of China was held at the meeting hall of the ministry, here, this morning.

Union Minister for Construction U Kyaw Lin delivered an address at the meeting.

Next, Deputy Director-General Mr. Guan Changyu of the Ministry of Construction of the PRC on cooperation in development of Shweili-Kyaikpyu corridor project at the meeting that runs through 7 March. —MNA

Seminar on International Arbitration held

NAY PYI TAW, 5 March—Under the capacity building programme of parliaments, a seminar on International Arbitration took place at the Hluttaw Office, here. This afternoon, Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw U Mya Nyein gave an opening speech and officials from the Supervisory Committee for Hluttaw Capacity Building explained the purpose of it. Experts Mr. Christopher Lau, Mr Robert San Pe and U Min Naing Oo led the discussions. The three-day seminar was attended by representatives from Pyithu Hluttaw and Amyotha Hluttaw and officials from Hluttaw Capacity Building Supervisory Committee and members and officials from the Hluttaw Office. —MNA

Platforms of Yadana Gas Field Project under repair

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 March—Measures are being taken for the platforms—production platform, living quarter platform and flare platform of Yadana Gas Field Project which is fulfilling energy and electricity demands of the State—to withstand wave impact of the sea and to upgrade the natural gas production rig without having no effect on natural gas production.

While the maintenance works were in progress, Union Minister for Energy U Than Htaik, Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe, Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Sein Tin Win and officials visited production platform of Yadana gas field project in the Gulf of Mottama, offshore Mottama Gulf by helicopter this morning.

After hearing reports on subsidence project presented by the GM and responsible persons of Total E&P Myanmar, the Union minister and the Chief Minister coordinated the requirements and gave instructions on continued production and supply of natural gas during the period of matriculation examinations, stressing to produce 15 million cubic feet of natural gas per day in March. —MNA

Next, the Union minister and party inspected upgrading of production platform and called on Myanmar staff to work harder. —MNA
Mawlu gets better GSM telephone services

Mawlu Region has 43 villages from 10 village-tracts which are home to about 5000 local people. The tower gives communication services to six-mile radius of Mawlu. At present, GSM handset shops are selling communication equipment to the local people at fair prices in competitiveness.  

Mawlu, 5 March—GSM phone lines came into operation as of 22 February in Mawlu of Indaw Township in Sagaing Region.  

MM Co built a 42-m GSM tower at the Post Office and Communication Station in Mawlu and Fortune Co installed modem communication devices at the tower.  

Mandala, 5 March—A fire drill was practised at Myoma Market in Hopin of Monyin District on 24 February. It was attended by departmental officials, Head of Township Fire Services Department U Hein Min Htaik and members, members of Auxiliary Fire Brigade, workers of Township Development Affairs Committee and members of the market committee. The head of the Township FSD explained fire hazard and root causes of outbreak of fire. Later, members of Fire Brigade participated in the fire drill with the fire engine and fire extinguishers.  

Mandyal, 5 March—A fire drill was practised at Myoma Market in Hopin of Monyin District on 24 February. It was attended by departmental officials, Head of Township Fire Services Department U Hein Min Htaik and members, members of Auxiliary Fire Brigade, workers of Township Development Affairs Committee and members of the market committee. The head of the Township FSD explained fire hazard and root causes of outbreak of fire. Later, members of Fire Brigade participated in the fire drill with the fire engine and fire extinguishers.  

Diamond orb hoisted atop Shwesaryan Pagoda in Patheingyi

On 25 February, a ceremony to hoist diamond orb and pennant-shaped vane atop the pagoda was held in conjunction with the merit sharing ceremony on the platform of the pagoda. The ceremony was attended by State OvaDaChariya Myataung Monastery Sayadaw U Win Myint, executive of the association, 09-428120954, 052-50160, U Than Shwe, 09-3585205, U Thet Naing, 09-3040209 and U Soe Myint, 09-428173499. —NMA

State School of Fine Arts turns out artists

Yangon, 5 March—The certificate presentation ceremony of State School of Fine Arts (Yangon) of the Fine Arts Department of Ministry of Culture was held at the National Theatre on Myoma Kyaung Street in Dagon Township of Yangon Region on 3 March morning. Deputy Minister for Culture Daw Sanda Khin presented completion certificates to the students. The deputy minister and party then viewed painting and sculpture works of the students.—NMA

Cash and kind donated to quake victims

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 March—Wellwishers donate cash and kind for victims of earthquake-hit Mandalay and Sagaing regions through Department of Relief and Resettlement and the Yangon Region Department of Relief and Resettlement under the Ministry of Social Welfare;

U Win Myint, Head of Religious Affairs Department, 09-49040139, U Thein Aung, of the association, 09-428120954, 052-50160, U Than Shwe, 09-3585205, U Thet Naing, 09-3040209 and U Soe Myint, 09-428173499. —NMA
Kenyatta takes early lead as Kenya counts votes

Kenya’s Deputy Prime Minister and presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta (C) casts his ballot inside a polling station in Kenya’s town of Gatundu, on 4 March, 2013.

Bersani ultimatum may bring new Italy election closer

Rome, 5 March—Italy could be inching closer towards another election within months after centre-left leader Pier Luigi Bersani issued an ultimatum to anti-establishment comic Beppe Grillo to support a new government or return to the polls.

Last week’s election, in which Grillo’s 5-Star Movement won a huge pro-test vote, left no group with a working majority in parliament, making an alliance with a rival the only way out. On RAI state television late on Sunday, Bersani underlined his opposition to two of the options floated - another technocrat gov- ernment like the outgoing one led by Mario Monti or a coalition with Silvio Berlusconi’s centre-right.

That would leave only one possibility to avoid elections—Grillo’s bucking for the centre-left, which won the lower house in the election but does not have enough support in the Se- nate.

“No (Grillo) must say what he wants, otherwise we all go home, including him,” Bersani said.

Grillo, who repeatedly said his populist move- ment, which he refuses to call a party, would not give a vote of confidence to any government of established parties, although it could support individual laws.

“We have already said it several times: we won’t give a vote of confidence to a government of political parties,” the movement’s newly named Senate leader, Vito Crimi, told its novice lawmakers on Monday during a meeting in Rome streamed on Grillo’s blog.

He said the party could consider supporting a tech- nocratic government as the one headed by outgoing prime minister Monti.

The uncertainty in Italy, during a long limbo before talks to form a gov- ernment begin after 15 March, has unsettled in- ternational markets. The spread between Italian 10- year benchmark bonds and German bunds—a measure of investor confidence—widened on Monday to an almost three-month high.

From shirt store to multi-billionaire: Inditex founder

Madrid, 5 March—Armancio Ortega, the founder of the textile group Inditex, is now the third richest man in the world, according to the magazine Forbes which published its rich list on Monday.

Ortega has moved up two places over the last year from being the fifth richest man in the world and has a fortune estimated at 57 billion US dollars, up 19.5 billion dollars since the start of March 2012.

Chavez’s breathing problems worsen, has severe new infection

Caracas, 5 March—President Hugo Chavez’s breathing problems have worsened and he is suffer- ing from a new, severe respiratory infection after undergoing cancer surgery in Cuba, Venezuela’s gov- ernment said in a sombre update on Monday.

Reading the latest of- ficial assessment of Chavez’s health, Information Min- ister Ernesto Villegas said the 58-year-old socialist leader’s condition was very delicate.

“Today there is a wors- ening of his respiratory function. Related to his de- pressive immune system, there is now a new, severe infection,” Villegas said.

“The president has been receiving high-impact chemotherapy, along with other complementary treat- ments … his general condi- tion continues to be very delicate.”

Chavez made a sur- prise-pretow return to Venezuela from Cuba two weeks ago. The govern- ment said he is in a tightly guarded suite at a Caracas military hospital. He has not been seen in public nor heard from since his mid-11

German car sales decline 10 pct in February

Berlin, 5 March—Germany, Europe’s biggest car market, saw a sharp year-on-year fall in sales of 10.5 percent in February, the Federal Motor Trans- port Authority (KBA) said on Monday, as the auto industry is still under the shadows of the eurozone debt crisis. About 66 per- cent of the 200,683 newly registered cars were for commercial use, the KBA said in a statement.

However, the February figure marked a 4.5 percent increase compared with January. According to Ger- many’s VDKI association of car importers, new car registrations in the first two months of this year totalled 392,000.

German car sales fell 2.9 percent in 2012 with a total of 3.08 million mod- els, still outperforming oth- er European markets like Italy.

German automakers’ resilient performance dur- ing the debt crisis has been attributed to strong demand in North America and Asia.
Wen suggests new gov’t expanding domestic demand

BEIJING, 5 March—Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Tuesday advised his succeeding government to “unswervingly” take expanding domestic demand as the government’s long-term strategy for economic development, given the “fundamental” role of consumption and the “key” role of investment in driving economic growth.

In his last delivery of government work report as China’s premier, Wen said he made his suggestions based on an understanding of the work of the past ten years, especially of the past five years. “The difficulty in and key to expanding domestic demand lie in consumption, and that is also where the potential lies,” Wen told nearly 3,000 national legislators at the annual session of the 12th National People’s Congress (NPC).

Wen said China has become China’s primary driving force for economic growth, contributing to about 51.8 percent of China’s gross domestic product growth last year, while fixed-asset investment helped drive another 50.4 percent of the GDP growth, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Vietnamese, Portuguese communist parties boost ties

HANOI, 5 March—The Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) wants to further boost friendship and cooperation with the Portuguese communist party and people, said Le Hong Anh, Poliburo Member and permanent member of the CPV Central Committee’s Secretariat on Monday.

Anh made the statement in capital Hanoi during his reception of General Secretary of the Portuguese Communist Party Jeronimo de Sousa, who led his party’s high-ranking delegation to visited Vietnam from 1-4 March. Anh said the visit manifested new development of the friendship and cooperation between the two parties and countries.

The Portuguese party leader expressed his delight to re-visit Vietnam and wished the country’s new-ness the country’s renewal in socio-economic development, especially valuable experience of the CPV in building and developing the socialist country of Vietnam.

He also informed the host of information about the country and party of Portugal, confirming that he would try to contribute to promoting the close relations and cooperation between the two parties in the coming years.

During his stay in Vietnam, Jeronimo de Sousa held talks with CPV’s External Affairs Commission Hoang Binh Quan, worked with the CPV’s Central Theory Council, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, and toured some economic sites in Hanoi. —Xinhua

Mongolian president meets Danish parliament speaker on cooperation

ULAN BATOR, 5 March—Mongolian President Tsakhiia Elbegdorj met visiting Danish senior officials here on Monday on the two countries’ cooperation in energy, agriculture and culture.

“Mongolia is interested in promoting cooperation with Denmark in such fields as culture, education, science and so on,” Elbegdorj told the Danish parliamentary delegation led by Parliament Speaker Mogens Lykketoft.

He also expressed his willingness to introduce Mongolia’s environmentally friendly technologies to the Central Asian country.

The delegation, which started its official visit on Saturday, was also scheduled to hold talks with Mongolian Foreign Minister L.Bold and Mining Minister D.Gankhuuyag. —Xinhua

People are stranded in the Songhuaqiang River, northeast China’s Jilin Province, on 4 March, 2013. Nine people were evacuated to safety by a helicopter after three ferries carrying nine passengers were stranded for more than 28 hours in the Songhuaqiang River on Monday.—Xinhua

Four killed, 18 injured in firing in Pakistan’s Karachi

ISLAMABAD, 5 March—At least four people were killed and 18 others injured when some unknown gunmen sprayed bullets in various areas of Pakistan’s southern port city of Karachi on Monday evening, local media reported.

Urdu TV channel ARY said that two people were killed and several others injured when some unknown gunmen opened fire at a police mobile, injuring several people, according to one police official. The protesters also set four banks on fire in the area.

Later in Ancholi area of the city, two people were killed and several others injured in firing by unknown gunmen.

The Rangers’ spokesperson said that four ranger personnel were injured in separate incidents of firing across the city. —Xinhua

New Zealand port decision opens access for large cargo ships

WELLINGTON, 5 March—Lei The New Zealand government on Tuesday opened the way for larger foreign cargo vessels into the country, bringing estimated efficiency gains of more than 300 million NZ dollars (248,088 million US dollars), by approving expansion of one of its major port channels.

Conservation Minister Nick Smith said in a statement that he had granted consents for the dredging of the entrance and shipping lanes at the Port of Tauranga, on the east of the North Island, to accommodate “S” class vessels.

Port of Tauranga chief executive Mark Cairns said the dredging project will be carried out in several stages, with the first starting at the end of this year and taking six months to a year to complete.

“Larger ships, both contain- erized and bulk, have rela- tively higher fuel efficiency and are therefore more car- bon efficient, with lower oper- ating costs per unit,” Cairns said in a statement.

“This will enhance the competitiveness of New Zea- land exporters and provide lower freight costs for im- porters.” The New Zealand Shippers’ Council estimated the value to New Zealand of bigger ships operating on the Southeast Asia trade routes could be up to 338 million NZ dollars a year, increasing up to 391 million NZ dollars a year by 2020.—Xinhua

Malaysian security forces launch attack against Sulu gunmen

KUALA LUMPUR, 5 March—Malaysian security forces on Tuesday launched an all-out assault on Tuesday against the Sulu gunmen, who held up a village in Malaysia’s Sabah state, aiming at ending the three-week standoff.

The operation was started at 7 am, Prime Minister Najib Razak announced in a statement, in order to “de- fend the dignity and sover- eignty of the country.”

Inspector General of police Ismail Omar told a Press conference before noon that the operation was conducted by the police and army.

The operation is still on going and the security forces have met some resistance, but there are no reports of any casualties on the security forces so far, he said.

The casualties of the intruders are also unknown, he added. Local media reported fighter jets were used in the aerial attack, followed by the artillery firing and a ground assault by the security forces to the Tanduo village, where more than 180 members of the Royal Army of the Sulu Sultanate, including some heavily armed, have held up for three weeks.

Najib stressed that his government had tried to settle the situation without bloodshed. “The police had meetings and negotiations in the hope that the intruders will agree to leave peacefully, without suffering from any serious legal actions,” he said in the statement.

On Friday, a gun battle broke out between the security forces and the group, killing two special forces commandos and 12 gunmen.

A day later, six police and six gunmen were killed during a shootout in the Semporna area.

One of the most reward- ing things that can happen when watching a document- ary is to learn something really new, something to gob-smackingly alien to your experience that you’ve never even heard of it before.

French director Eric Valli made of Nepal documenta- tories such as Honey Hunt and the Oscar-nominated Caravan.”—Xinhua
Vietnam receives 1.21 mln foreign tourists in first 2 months

HANOI, 5 March—Foreign visitors to Vietnam in the first two months of 2013 posted some 1.21 million people, down 8.4 percent over the same period last year, Vietnam’s General Statistics Office reported on Monday.

Of the total figure, some 743,900 foreign visitors came to Vietnam for travel, down 7 percent on-year. Visitors coming for business purpose posted 204,900 person-times, down 8.4 percent, while tourists coming for visiting relatives posted 143.4 percent to 200,600 person-times.

During the period, the country saw a growth in the number of foreign visitors from Russia with 38 percent, New Zealand (up 24.8 percent), Indonesia (21.9 percent), Thailand (18.8 percent) and South Korea (10.4 percent).

Children play near the relief tents at Guandian Village of Liantie Township in Eryuan County of Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, southwest China’s Yunnan Province, on 4 March, 2013. A 5.5-magnitude earthquake hit Eryuan County on 3 March. Thirty people have been confirmed injured, while some 21,000 people have been evacuated.—Xinhua

Mozambican delegation in Brazil for toxic waste treatment

MAPUTO, 5 March—A Mozambican delegation consisting of members from the ministries of agriculture and environment is in Brazil for experience in treating agro-plastic bags used in the agriculture sector, the government said on Monday.

Mozambicans want to know how to store and incinerate the bags in order to preserve environment in the southern African country.

The delegation in Brazil is in line with a statement released by the Agriculture Ministry, the mission from Sunday to Friday was scheduled to visit with Parana, where members of the delegation were set to see a storing center of plastic bags.

The delegation is headed by the national director of the Project on the Elimination of Toxic Waste, Khalid Cassam, and the national director of agricultural services, Mohamed Rafik Vala.—Xinhua

VIETNAM RECEIVES 1.21 MLN FOREIGN TOURISTS IN FIRST 2 MONTHS

UNITED NATIONS, 5 March—The 57th annual meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women opened on Monday at UN Headquarters in New York with its focus set on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls.

“Ending violence against women is a matter of life and death,” Deputy UN Secretary-General Jan Eliasson told the opening session. “The problem pervades all countries, even in the most stable and developed regions.”

“Violence against women pervades war zones as well as stable communities, capitals as well as the countryside, public space as well as the private sphere,” Eliasson said. “Since it is an unacceptable feature of daily life, we have to respond everywhere and on every level.”

The executive director of UN Women, UN Under-secretary-General Michelle Bachelet, said, “The world can no longer afford the costs of violence against women and girls, the social and economic costs and the costs in deep human pain and suffering.”

“Over the past few years, women, men and young people took to the streets with signs that ask ‘Where is the justice?’, she said.

“They declared solidarity with a Pakistani girl shot for defending the right to education,” said Bachelet. “They pledged justice for a young woman in India and another in South Africa who were brutally raped and later died. They demanded an end to the endless cases of rape and violence that threaten the lives of countless women and girls in every country but never make the headlines.”

“Most importantly, we are here to deliver results for the women and girls around the world.”

“Ending violence against women and girls is at the core of the gender equality,” UN Women's Executive Director Michelle Bachelet said on Monday.

Four soldiers wounded in mine blast in SE Turkey

ANKARA, 5 March—Four soldiers of the Turkish security forces were wounded in a land mine blast in southeastern Turkey on Monday, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported.

The mine exploded while a military convoy was passing a road near Tavan Tepe area in Lice town of Diyarbakir Province at 08:00 pm local time (1700 GMT), leaving four Turkish soldiers injured, Diyarbakir Governor Mustafa Toprak was quoted as saying.

The injured were taken to Hani State Hospital for medical treatment, Toprak said, adding that an investigation into the blast is underway.—Xinhua

Drive Safely
Stephen Chow’s blockbuster continues box office conquest

BEIJING, 5 March—“Journey to the West: Conquering the Demons,” a period adventure comedy created by writer-director Stephen Chow, had raked in more than 11.1 billion yuan (176.7 million US dollars) as of Sunday, the film’s production company announced.

The film took in 80 million yuan when it debuted on 10 February, the biggest opening ever for a domestic film. It pulled in a combined 1.08 billion yuan throughout February, the Huayi Bros. Media Group said.

Chow’s 3-D action comedy, based on the classic Chinese novel “Journey to the West,” follows the adventures of a young demon hunter.

China’s current box office record is held by “Lost in Thailand,” a low-budget comedy that has earned more than 1.26 billion yuan since it debuted last December. However, many believe Chow’s movie will break that record before it leaves theaters.—Xinhua

Oprah Winfrey to deliver commencement address at Harvard

BOSTON, 5 March—Talk show host, entrepreneur and philanthropist Oprah Winfrey will deliver this year’s graduation address at Harvard University, the Ivy League school said on Monday.

“Oprah’s journey from her grandmother’s Mississippi farm to becoming one of the world’s most admired women is one of the greatest American success stories,” Harvard President Drew Faust said in announcing her selection.

Winfrey will join a long list of politicians, policy makers, captains of industry and authors — including George JK Rowling—who have offered their wisdom and advice to Harvard’s graduating classes. She will speak at the school’s 362nd graduation exercises on 30 May.

Long a fixture on Time Magazine’s 100 most influential people list, the 59-year-old Winfrey has been popular on the college commencement circuit, speaking at Stanford University, Duke University and Spelman College in recent years.—Reuters

Whitney Houston’s FBI files show fan letters, possible extortion

LOS ANGELES, 5 March—The FBI on Monday released decades-old files on late pop singer Whitney Houston, detailing letters from obsessed fans and an alleged extortion attempt investigated by the bureau. The 128 pages from Houston’s files posted online on the FBI’s website showed one fan’s attention-seeking letters but did not divulge any new insights into the troubled singer’s personal life.

Houston, known both for her soaring ballads and well chronicled history of drug abuse, was found dead last year in a Beverly Hills hotel bathtub. She was 48. Authorities called her death an accidental drowning due to cocaine use and heart disease. The FBI cases were opened at the height of the singer’s career between 1988 and 1999. Names and several details were redacted from the files. Among the Grammy-winning singer’s FBI files, released through a Freedom of Information Act request, were love letters sent by a Vermont man, who wrote that he “might hurt someone with some crazy idea.”

The file shows the FBI interviewed the man but the bureau concluded no law was broken because the man said he would have only hurt Houston’s reputation by proclaiming his love publicly.

An alleged $250,000 extortion attempt was brought to the FBI’s attention shortly after Houston’s marriage to R&B singer Bobby Brown in 1992 and threatened to make public private information unless the “I Will Always Love You” singer paid.—Reuters

James Bond bosses want Adele to sing next theme tune

LONDON, 5 March—Producers of James Bond franchise reportedly want singer Adele to repeat her Skyfall success with a new smash hit tune. The bosses want the 24-year-old to sing the theme song for the next 007 movie as well after she won an Oscar for Skyfall theme, reported Sun Online. “Producers are thrilled by how well the song has been received and hope Adele’s presence on the next film will replicate that success. They want her to become as synonymous with Bond as Dame Shirley,” a source said.

Welsh legend Shirley 76, had Bond hits with Goldfinger (1964), Diamonds Are Forever (1972) and Moonraker (1979). But none won awards or sold as many as Skyfall’s three million copies worldwide.

Meanwhile Adele’s aunt has told how relatives wept with joy as they watched the star at last week’s Academy Awards in Los Angeles. Arina Adkins, elder sister of the star’s mother Penny, said, “We streamed it live online through the night. When Adele burst into tears, we all did the same. We’re all quite strong but we’re also very emotional. Adele’s one of us. We feel what she feels.”

Supermodel Heidi Klum new judge on NBC’s “America’s Got Talent”

NEW YORK, 5 March—Supermodel and television host Heidi Klum said on Monday that she will be a new judge on the popular summer TV talent show “American’s Got Talent.”

Klum will be the fourth judge on the talent show created by British entertainment mogul Simon Cowell. She joins comedians Howie Mandel, radio “shock jock” Howard Stern and former Spice Girl Mel B on the show hosted by Nick Cannon.

“Excited to join @HowardStern @howiemandel @OfficialMelB & @NickCannon on @nbcaagt as new judge! Will be so fun,” Klum tweeted. Broadcaster NBC said Klum, 39, adds a discerning taste to the jury panel. “As we look to develop an act that will get the world’s attention, we and the contestants will benefit from Heidi’s international sensibility and understanding of what works in today’s global entertainment industry,” NBC president of alternative programming, Paul Telegdy, said in a statement.

NBC said last month that Mel B would replace Sharon Osbourne, who quit the show after her son Jack was dropped from another reality show by the network. German-born Klum was due to join the other judges for the nationwide auditions set to start on Saturday in New Orleans. The show is open to singers, dancers, magicians and other performers with a top prize of $1 million.

NBC is betting that Klum and Mel B will boost falling audiences for the summer show, which experienced record low numbers during the finale in September with less than 11 million viewers.

Klum is also the host on Bravo’s fashion-design competition “Project Runway” as well as model competition “Germany’s Next Top Model” in her native country. Bravo is a division of NBCUniversal, which is owned by Comcast Corp.
**New Light of Myanmar**

**SPORTS**

Cuba, Japan clinch second-round berths in WBC

**New York, 5 March** — Cuba powered its way to the second round of the World Baseball Classic on Monday with a 12-0 rout of China that was stopped in the seventh inning because of the mercy rule at Yafiuoki Dome in Fukuoka, Japan. Jose Abreu crowned the Cuban triumph with a grand slam home run as Cuba improved to 2-0 in Pool A competition to join Japan into the next round, to be played at the Tokyo Dome.

Japan, winner of the first two editions of baseball’s elite international competition in 2006 and 2009, also advanced thanks to a victory over inexperienced China in Fukuoka, posting a 5-2 victory over them on Sunday. The reigning champions benefitted from a sterling performance from starting pitcher Kenta Maeda, who limited China to one hit and struck out six over five scoreless innings. Four teams will compete in Tokyo for the right to advance to the final round at San Francisco’s AT&T Park, where the semi-finals and final of the 16-team tournament will be played.

In Pool B play in Taipei, South Korea stayed in the hunt for a second-round berth by shutting out Australia 6-0 on Monday after taking charge early with three runs in the top of the first inning.

IOC begins on-site evaluation on Tokyo’s bid for the 2020 Olympics

**Tokyo, 5 March** — The International Olympic Committee’s (IOC) Evaluation Commission on Monday kicked off its four-day visit in Japan’s capital of Tokyo to assess the city’s concept for the Games and sports venues, laid out by the city is a “lifelong dream” of him. Tokyo Governor Naoki Inose also expressed the enthusiasm of the city to host the event and called Tokyo is a “surprising city.”

Ko-kyo first hosted the Olympic Games in 1964 and the city failed in bidding for the 2016 Olympic Games, which will be hosted by Brazil to Rio de Janeiro.

McIlroy regrets decision to withdraw from Honda Classic

**New York, 5 March** — Rory McIlroy has admitted he was wrong to withdraw from the Honda Classic last week, saying he now regretted his decision to stop playing.

The world number one was heavily criticized after he quit the tournament midway through Friday’s second round with what was initially a mysterious explanation. The Northern Irishman was playing badly and appeared certain to miss the cut when he shook hands with his playing partners after just eight holes. Before leaving the course, McIlroy told reporters he was in a “bad place mentally.” Shortly after he issued a statement blaming his early exit on a severe toothache while apologizing for quitting, but now admits he should have kept playing.

“It was a reactive decision,” he told Sports Illustrated after quitting after he hit his approach shot into the water on the par-five 18th, his ninth hole of the day.

“What I should have done is take my drop, chip it on, try to make a five and play my hardest on the back nine, even if I shot 85.” “What I did was not good for the tournament, not good for the kids and the fans who were out there watching me — it was not the right thing to do.”

McIlroy has been struggling all year after switching clubs but reaffirmed his belief that his equipment was not to blame.

Carolina netminder Ward to miss six to eight weeks

**New York, 5 March** — Carolina Hurricanes goaltender Cam Ward is expected to miss six to eight weeks with a sprained knee ligament, the NHL team said on Monday, dealing the Southeast Division leaders a serious blow.

Ward was injured midway through the second period of Carolina’s 3-2 win over Florida on Sunday, and the injury could sideline him through the end of the regular season, which ends on 27 April for Carolina.

The 29-year-old Ward is 9-6-1 with a 2.84 goals-against average and .908 save percentage this season, and is expected to be replaced as primary netminder by Dan Ellis.

Ellis, who replaced Ward on Sunday, has appeared in seven games and is 3-2-1 with a 2.53 GAA and .923 save percentage.

Kobe leads Lakers to beat Hawks 99-98

**Los Angeles, 5 March** — Kobe shot 13-for-27, 2-for-5 three-pointers and 6-for-8 free throws, finishing with 34 points, six rebounds, four assists, which lift the Los Angeles Lakers to hold off the Atlanta Hawks 99-98 at Staples Centre on Sunday night.

With this victory, the Lakers got back to 500 with 30-30, ranked ninth behind the Utah Jazz and the Houston Rockets.

Kobe scored 11 points at the first quarter, as well as the fourth, and the Lakers’ last six points, giving the team a great opening and happy ending. The Hawks’ Josh Smith and Al Horford played aggressively too, who blew the Lakers’ 16-point lead in the second half, almost turning around the game.

Nash had 15 points, 10 assists, Howard contributed 11 points with 15 rebounds, Metta World Peace hit 13 points while Antawn Jamison added 10 points off the bench for the Lakers.

The Hawks’ Horford finished with 24 points and five rebounds; Josh Smith donated 19 points, seven rebounds and seven assists.

Xinhua

Reuter
Mandalay, 5 March — A fire drill was practised in front of Sein Myintno tea shop at the corner of 68th and 30th streets in Patkon Pyawbwe Ward of Chammyathazi Township in Mandalay on 26 February.

Head of Mandalay District Fire Services Department U Hla Min explained danger of fire and fire preventive measures. The talk was attended by local people and service personnel.

Later, members of Fire Brigade and workers of tea shop led by Head of Mandalay District Fire Services Department U Hla Min practiced fire drill. — Myanma Alinn

Blake to run at opening Doha Diamond League meeting

London, 5 March — Jamaica’s 100 metres world champion Yohan Blake is the first high-profile athlete to sign up for the opening Diamond League event in Doha, organizers said on Monday. The meeting on 10 May in Qatar is the first of the 14 Diamond League fixtures.

“This will be my first time in Qatar and I am looking forward to going to Doha, for my first Diamond League appearance on the

Asian continent,” Blake said in a IAAF statement. “I have heard about the fast track in Doha and I hope to break the meeting record (9.85 seconds, Usain Bolt, 2006). I always want to surprise the audience, everywhere I go.”

“I am the second fastest man in the world at the moment. My ambition is to become the best. I have to continue working very hard for that. Anything is possible.” — Reuters

Yankees GM breaks leg in parachute jump for charity

New York, 5 March — New York Yankees General Manager Brian Cashman broke his right fibula and dislocated his ankle upon landing from a parachute jump for charity in Florida, the team said on Monday.

Cashman, 45, the main executive who decides which multimillion-dollar contracts to offer on Major League Baseball’s highest paid team, was attempting to raise awareness for the Wounded Warrior Project, which aids US military veterans when they return from war. He was injured on the second of two tandem jumps with a parachutist from the US Army Golden Knights at the Homestead Air Reserve Base outside of Miami, the team said in a statement.

Surgery was scheduled for later on Monday at Broward Health Medical Centre, the statement said. “I’m in great spirits and it was an awesome experience,” Cashman said in the statement. “The Golden Knights are first class. While I certainly didn’t intend to raise awareness in exactly this fashion, I’m extremely happy that the Wounded Warrior Project is getting the well-deserved additional attention.” — Reuters

Flacco signs six-year contract with Ravens

New York, 5 March — Quarterback Joe Flacco signed a six-year contract to remain with the Baltimore Ravens, the team said on Monday in a deal that reportedly makes the Super Bowl MVP the highest paid player in National Football League (NFL) history.

Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed but various media reports said it was worth $120.6 million, moving him past New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees, and his six-year, $120 million deal, as the league’s top earner.

The laid back Flacco downplayed the importance of the record contract that kept him from shopping his talents around. “It was pretty uneventful, to tell you the truth,” Flacco, 28, told reporters at a news conference. “It’s not really a big deal. “Our goal is to win the Super Bowl. That’s always been one of my goals. It’s never necessarily been a goal of mine to get paid like this, it’s just what comes with the job.”

The strong-armed Flacco, the only NFL quarterback to win at least one playoff game in each of his first five seasons, threw for 11 touchdowns and no interceptions in Baltimore’s postseason run to the Super Bowl title. In last month’s championship game, Flacco completed 22 of 33 passes for 287 yards and three touchdowns against the strong defense of the San Francisco 49ers in a 34-31 victory. Before the season, Flacco was derided in some circles for declaring himself one of the league’s elite quarterbacks since his statistics were not particularly impressive on a team that played conservatively and relied on its staunch defense. — Reuters

Mexico’s players celebrate during the awarding ceremony of CONCACAF Under-20 Championship Grand Final soccer match against US, held at Cuauhtemoc Stadium in Puebla, Mexico on 3 March, 2013. (Xinhua)

New York Yankees’ General Manager Brian Cashman watches batting practice during workouts at the team’s spring training complex in Tampa, Florida on 27 Feb, 2012. — Reuters

Myanmar TV

(7-3-2013, Wednesday)

7:00 am
1. Purata By Venerable Mingan Sayadaw
2. To Be Healthy Exercise
3. Morning News
4. International News
5. Road to 27th SEA Games (Archery)
6. Cultural Dances
7. Documentary
8:00 am
9. Musical Programme (Radio Myanmar Modern Music Troup)
10. Classical Song
11. Musical Programme
12. Dance of National Races
10:00 pm
13. Myanmar Movie
14. ASEAN Programmes
15. Sing & Enjoy
16. Evening News
17. Weather Report
18. News
19. TV Drama Series
20. News
21. People Talks
22. International News
23. Weather Report
24. Documentary
25. Alinka Wut Yi Music Troupe
26. TV Drama Series
27. News
28. Myanmar Movie

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(6-3-13 10:30 am - 7-3-13 09:30 am) MST
1. News
2. Photo Exhibition on the Occasion of the 66th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Russia and Myanmar
3. Tents of the Two Lands
4. News
5. Record Album News
6. “Easily Cooked & Tasty Dishes” Spiced Crab News
7. Melama Ceti with various statues reflecting life of Buddha
8. Education, Living and Health Care Exhibition News
9. Glue Shuffling News
10. Conversation with President of Austrian Federal Economic Chamber Dr. Christoph Leitl
11. News
12. Your Home in PyinOoLwin
13. News
14. Myanmar Movies
15. “Deadhead Yet Cherished”

Sprinter Yohan Blake of Jamaica addresses a news conference during the upcoming Memorial Van Damme, IAAF Diamond League athletics meeting, in Brussels on 12 Sept, 2011. — Reuters

Baltimore Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco celebrates after his team defeated the San Francisco 49ers in the NFL Super Bowl XLVII football game in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 3 Feb, 2013. (Reuters)
Trust is a must to attract foreign investment: MP

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 March—Six lawmakers discussed the pros and cons of signing Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards 1958 (New York Convention) at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session today.

The convention’s principal aim is that foreign and non-arbitral awards will not be discriminated against and it obliges parties to ensure such awards are not to serve the interests of their jurisdiction in the same way as domestic awards. An ancillary aim of the convention is to require courts of parties to give full effect to arbitration agreements by requiring courts to deny the parties access to court in contravention of their agreement to refer to the matter to an arbitral tribunal, according to United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).

“The convention is to require courts of other countries to give full effect to arbitration agreements by requiring courts to deny the parties access to court in contravention of their agreement to refer to the matter to an arbitral tribunal, according to United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL).”

“...To make the economy a success, it all depends on trust. No matter what legislation is enacted and no matter what agreement is signed, no potential investor would make investment unless they have confidence in (political) landscape of the country,” says Daw Aung San Suu Kyi of Kawhmu Constituency.

She called for preparing what is necessary, reiterating internal strength and competence as sine qua non to serve the interests of the citizens to the fullest.

She also stressed the need of local judicial system to meet the international norms, recommending that legal experts should improve their professional knowledge of arbitration.

Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Set Aung warned against the over-reliance on donor countries and associations, calling for a focus on software development rather than hardware development.

Other MPs also spoke in favour of signing the convention with all agreeing it as a prerequisite to attract foreign investment. So, the Union Assembly agreed to sign the convention.

So far, 148 out of UN member countries have signed the convention, according to UNCITRAL.

UMFCCI members visit Hluttaw

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 March—A 16-member group of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry observed the 17th day sixth regular session of first Pyidaungsu Hluttaw today. They then looked around Hluttaw buildings and left there.—MNA

Weather forecast on squalls warning

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 March—During the pre-monsoon period from March to Mid May, isolated rain or thundershowers are likely in the afternoon or evening accompanied with 35-40 mph surface wind, hails and lightning, due to the rising day temperature in the whole country. Public is advised to take necessary awareness with the Weather News and Warning, announced Meteorology and Hydrology Department.—MNA

MPs seen at 17th day sixth regular session of first Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.—MNA

Myanmar timber to be exported to EU soon

Teak exporters said that it is expected to export Myanmar teak to EU coming June as there will be a coordination meeting between Myanmar Timber Enterprise and an EU delegation before reaching an agreement on export of Myanmar teak to EU market.

The general secretary of Myanmar Forest Products and Timber Merchants Association said that it is necessary to take necessary measures to be able to meet the demands of EU market.

“Timber certification process is needed before export of forest products and timber exports in Myanmar”, U Zaw Win of the association said. The Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry announced that export of wood logs will not be allowed by 2014.

Now timber from Myanmar is being exported to India, China, Thailand and Bangladesh under the temporary permits issued by the ministry. Wood logs and finished wood products from Myanmar are being exported to foreign countries.

Myanmar Alinn: 4-3-2013

Trs: YM

Wushu event reaches final in Union Cup Games

The final matches of Wushu event in the Union Cup Games continue at Wushu Sports Training Hall of Sports Training Centre No. 2 in Lwee on 3 March morning.

At first, women’s Shanshou events were held. Hla Hla Win (Mandalay) secured the first prize in the 48-kilo class, Naw Mar Tun (Shan) second and Wai Yan Lin (Bago) third. Chung Kyaw Aung (Mandalay) and Myat Myat Min (Ayeyawady) joint third.

Wushu event reaches final in Union Cup Games

Myo Ko (Yangon) and Naing Naing Lin (Bago) vigorously fighting in 65-kilo class men’s Shanshou event.

Hsu Hlaing Oo (Mandalay) stood first, Hsu Myat Hlaing (Ayeyawady) second and May Win Lin (Mon) third in the 52-kilo class. Khaing Khin Oo (Ayeyawady) won the first prize, Mu Mu Htwe (Taninthayi) second and Swe Wint (Mandalay) third in the 60-kilo class.

Men’s events followed in the afternoon. Wai Yan Lin (Bago) won the first prize, Kyaw Zin Win (Shan) second and Aung Chan Tha (Bago) third and Chan Myaw Hlaing (Taninthayi) joint third in the 48-kilo class.

In the 56-kilo class, Yasu Maung (Mandalay) bagged the first prize, Zaw Moe Aung (Bago) second and Chat Ko Ko (Chin) and Wai Lin Aung (Mandalay) joint third.

The first prize went to Kyaw Lin Tun (Ayeyawady), second to Kyaw Naing Tun (Mandalay) and joint third to Than Zaw (Mon) and Thein Lin (Bago) in the 60-kilo class.

Myo Ko (Yangon) secured the first prize, Naing Naing Lin (Bago) second and Sai Myo Thant (Taninthayi) and Akkar (Mon) joint third in the 65-kilo class.

Myanmar Alinn: 4-3-2013

Trs: TTA

Objectives of the 68th Anniversary Armed Forces Day 2013

1. To uphold the national policy namely non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and perpetuation of sovereignty
2. To play the leading role in the national politics by the Tatmadaw joining hands with all national races with Union Spirit and the true patriotism in line with the Constitution
3. To crush all destructive elements at home and abroad through the strength of State, People and Tatmadaw
4. To build up a strong, competent, modern, patriotic Tatmadaw to safeguard the security and sovereignty of the nation