Work towards a new and more inclusive Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 6 March — President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein held talks with European Commission President Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso at the office of the European Commission in Brussels of Belgium on yesterday morning.

Also present at the meeting together with the President were Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) General Soe Win, Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, U Soe Thein and Dr Kan Zaw, the deputy ministers and Myanmar Ambassador to Belgium and European Union U Paw Lwin Sein.

They held cordial discussions on economic and political reform processes in Myanmar and ongoing tasks, peace making process as the President during this crucial transition period in my country. We embarked on a transition that has never been attempted before. From authoritarian rule to democracy, from a state-centered economy to the one based on a free market, and from a war involving more than a dozen different non-state armed groups, to a just and permanent peace.

When compared to past, my government has been able to open up the country in a transparent manner and carry out general political liberalization. In doing so, we were able to reduce the culture of fear that was present in our hearts and our minds and foster a more representative political process in an open society.

Recent political progress can be attributed to four crucial factors: building confidence challenges and tensions during this transition period; some of them may even seem insurmountable at first. I am confident that we will be able to face these challenges with synergy and cooperation of the government, Hlutaw, judiciary, armed forces, ethnic forces, political parties, civil society organizations, and most importantly the Myanmar people.

We are one of the poorest countries in the world. We lack the institutions that are necessary to manage our transition. We will face many challenges and there may well be set-backs. But you have my promise that we will continue this path until we succeed. My government will do everything in its powers to see Myanmar become the democratic, prosperous, and peaceful nation that I know all of our people deeply desire, and deserve.

Much attention is given to the politics of the transition. On the constitution on the past election, the by-elections or future elections, on political parties, politicians and parliament. But I ask you to place in the forefront the plight of the ordinary person in Myanmar, who are unskilled and uneducated, a villager with only a small plot of land or no land, often in debt and with little means to feed his family, separated for long periods of time from friends and loved ones who must travel to neighbouring countries in search of work for years at a time, living without electricity or running water, and without access to good public health care. For me the most important thing is how we will help these ordinary people, how will we lift or even begin to lift tens of millions of people in Myanmar out of poverty, and make it possible for them to enjoy a better life.

Over the nearly two years my government has been in office, we have worked hard to strengthen democracy. This means not only ending repression and creating the legal framework that can guarantee political freedom, enabling the development of civil society, and nurturing a new democratic culture. During this transition period, we have been able to lay a foundation for democratic institutions such as constitution, governance system with check and balance, national and local legislatures, judiciary, political parties and independent press. Proper implementation is required to give these democratic institutions life. It is important to change the mindset of the people so that people can take root. In solving problems arising from armed conflicts to industrial relations, the thing I am most proud of is to start a culture of solving these problems through dialogues and discussions.

We will continue tirelessly on the path to peace until we have a peace that is just and durable. Myanmar has experienced internal armed conflict since its independence in 1948. This must stop. We must find a political and negotiated solution. My government is absolutely committed to this goal. We have over the past 18 months signed ceasefire with 10 ethnic armed groups. We will now double our efforts to reach an agreement with the last remaining major non-state armed group, the Kachin Independence Organization. Current success and progress in the peace process stems from genuine will and desire of all Myanmar people for peace. To move from ceasefire to lasting peace, we must establish an inclusive framework for political dialogues with involvement from all relevant stakeholders and individuals. Moreover, it is important not just to reach peace in the agreements but to show results on the ground in the form of local development and re-building of livelihoods.

We must find ways of addressing long-standing ethnic minority grievances discuss and work towards a new and more inclusive Myanmar citizenship and a new and more inclusive Myanmar.

We have also work hard to make possible the broad-based and sustainable economic growth. We need to reduce poverty, create jobs and join in the profound economic development. We have seen across so much of Asia.

We are thankful for the relaxation of sanctions and the increase in development cooperation. But we should say already that we have no desire to become an aid-dependent country, with tremendous natural resources, and that our economy must learn to harness these resources in the interest of all its peoples, whilst also creating the level playing field that will allow entrepreneurship to thrive and businesses, especially small and medium businesses to grow. We need help now, during this transition, help with healthcare, education and livelihoods, targeted the poorest, help in training and retaining our people, and help in building the infrastructure we need urgently to turn our economy around. We need help now, but, we hope for in future is cooperation, trade and investment that will help all our economies.

MNA
More tourists flock to Taungthaman Lake, U Pein Bridge

Mandalay, 6 March — Taungthaman Lake, U Pein Bridge and Myanmar traditional garments are major tourist attractions in Mandalay where there has been an increase in tourist arrivals. Most of the visitors to the Taungthaman Lake are from the US, Britain, the Netherlands, France, Australia, Japan, Korea and Thailand.

Although necessary measures are being taken for the safety of globetrotters, a ban on begging on U Pein Bridge should be imposed because behaviours of vagrants could tarnish the image of the nation, a tour guide said. — Kyemon

Blood donation of Mandalay Region freight handling services

Mandalay, 6 March — The first collective blood donation of Mandalay Region freight handling services took place at Kywesekan bus terminal on 28 February.

It was attended by Mandalay Mayor U Aung Moung, Central Blood Bank in-charge Dr Daw Khin Mya Mon, Pyigyidagun Township Red Cross Society members, blood donors and guests. A total of 105 blood donors participated in the first blood donation ceremony, contributing 105 bags of blood for the blood bank. — Kyemon

Literary talks in Kengtung

Kengtung, 6 March — With the aim of promoting reading habit among the local people, Kengtung Township Writers Association organized a literary talks at the town hall on airport road in Kengtung on 26 February.

Local people thronged to listen to the talks of Writers Ledwinthar Saw Chit, Nay Win Myint and Khin Khin Htoo and donated cash for the literary talks. — Kyemon

Car crash hurts three persons in Thingangyun Township

Yangon, 6 March — A car crash between a Taxi and a light truck occurred on Thantthama Road at the top of Nilar street in Thut-waing-Thanthuma Road at about 6 am on 28 February morning.

The light truck driven by Saw Wai Zan Aung, 35, collided with the taxi driven by U Myo Nyunt Oo, 43, causing concrete blocks being placed in the middle of the road tilted to one side and damages to windscreens of the two cars. Three persons on the light truck had got minor injuries. Actions are being taken against the car accident. — Kyemon

Fire engulfs houses, cowsheds in Mahlaing Township

Mahlaing, 6 March — There was a house fire in Theebinkon village of Aiz-ma-pee village-tract of Mahlaing Township at about 11 am on 1 March. Three houses and three cowsheds were reduced to ashes in the fire.

The fire started from the kitchen of the house of Daw Seik, 65. Then the fire swept through the whole house and engulfed three houses and three cowsheds.

Fire crew of Mahlaing Fire Service Department put out the fire in cooperation with local people. — Kyemon

Young woman on a swing dies of sudden collapse of concrete post in Pyu

Pyu, 6 March — A young woman was killed in the sudden collapse of the concrete post at a compound of U Win Aung on 4th street in Say-yon ward of East Pyu village-tract in Pyu Township of Bago Region at about 4 pm on 28 February.

Ma Nu Nu Htwe, 20, died of the collapse of the concrete post that had fallen on her stomach while sitting on a swing dangling on a nylon rope which attached to a five feet tall concrete post and a tree. She was pronounced dead on the spot at the scene of the accident.

Pyu Police Station opened a case and investigation is ongoing. — Kyemon

Untimely rain refreshens Langkho of Shan State (South)

Langkho, 6 March — Langkho of Shan State (South) had seen an untimely rain at 1 pm on 4 March. As usual at the month of March, the region has high temperatures and local people are to take refuge in shady places in order to escape from the scorching heat. An old woman said that as the rain poured down, the untimely rainfall had refreshed the whole town, making the environment green. Rain was likely tomorrow, she added. — Kyemon

Union Cup Games go on

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 March — Union Cup Games are in progress at designated places here. Deputy Minister for Sports U Thaung Htaik enjoyed the final matches of Karatedo tournament being held at Training Centre (2) in Lewe on 4 March.

The deputy minister and officials presented prizes to winners of respective events. — Kyemon

Next, he was among the spectators for the final matches Traditional Boxing (Muy) tournament being held at Training Centre (1). The deputy minister and officials awarded winners who stood first, second and joint third in men’s 54, 57, 60, 63.5, 54 and 50 kilos events and in women’s 60 kilos event. — Kyemon
After Chavez, Obama says seeks “constructive relationship” with Venezuela

WASHINGTON, 6 March — US President Barack Obama on Tuesday said the United States is interested in starting a new relationship with Venezuela after the death of its socialist president, Hugo Chavez.

“At this challenging time of President Hugo Chavez’s passing, the United States reaffirms its support for the Venezuelan people and its interest in developing a constructive relationship with the Venezuelan government,” Obama said in a statement.

“As Venezuela begins a new chapter in its history, the United States remains committed to policies that promote democratic principles, the rule of law, and respect for human rights,” he said. 

Mexico wants US ties to focus on economy, education, not drugs

MEXICO CITY, 6 March — Mexico must give greater priority to economic cooperation and education in relations with the United States rather than allowing the fight against organized crime to take centre stage, a senior Mexican official said on Monday.

Mexico has spent the past six years locked in a bloody fight with powerful drug cartels whose killings, kidnappings and extortion have marred the country’s image, particularly in the United States, where it ships nearly 80 percent of its exports.

President Enrique Pena Nieto is keen to rewrite the script, focusing his efforts on the economy, which has grown at a faster pace than the United States’ in the last three years.

Pena Nieto’s conservative predecessor, Felipe Calderon, staked his name on crushing the gangs, but by the time he left office at the end of November nearly 70,000 people had died in the violence, and his efforts were widely condemned as a failure.

Sergio Alcocer, Mexico’s deputy foreign minister responsible for the United States and Canada, said the focus on tackling the cartels and border security meant many of the benefits of Mexico’s ties with the United States had been ignored.

“The US population needs to see Mexico is an important part of daily life,” he said in an interview with Reuters.

Fuel, water shortages continue to affect many communities in Syria

UNITED NATIONS, 6 March — The UN humanitarian arm said that many communities in Syria continued to be affected by the shortages of fuel and water, while the UN health agency reported cases of water-borne and sanitation-related diseases, including over 80 suspected cases of Hepatitis A and more than 100,000 cases of a skin disease, Leishmaniasis, a skin disease,” del Buey said. Despite the security constraints, and organizations continuing to increase deliveries of much-needed assistance, he said, adding that the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) “began a major increase of mobile health services to support 50 medical teams in 12 governorates.”

Deadly snowstorm slams road, air travel in Midwest

CHICAGO, 6 March — A deadly late-winter storm dumped heavy snow on the Midwestern United States on Tuesday, contributing to numerous automobile accidents and flight cancelations as it headed toward the Northeast and the mid-Atlantic states.

The storm was expected to move eastward over the Ohio Valley and then the central Appalachians and mid-Atlantic states on Wednesday, hitting Washington with its biggest snowfall in possibly two years, the National Weather Service said.

“It will be a wet, heavy, gloppy snow consistent with wallpaper paste,” service spokesman Chris Vaccaro said.

The Washington area was due to get six to eight inches of snow overnight and several more inches on Wednesday, according to the Storm Prediction Centre in Norman, Oklahoma.

In Chicago, where the National Weather Service issued a winter storm warning through midnight, residents girded for between 4 to 8 inches of snow.

During the evening rush hour, wind-whipped sleet fell at a heavy rate throughout the Chicago area, according to the Illinois State Patrol, reducing visibility to less than half a mile and causing delays on roads.

Monique Bond, a spokeswoman with the state patrol, said bad weather may have been a contributing factor in a deadly crash at Interstate Highway 70 in Marshall, Illinois, near the Indiana border.

A female driver headed east on I-70 crossed the median and crashed into a westbound tanker truck. The driver of the car and her young child died in the accident. Most of the other weather-related incidents the state patrol responded to on Tuesday were spinouts involving single vehicles, Bond said.

More than six inches of snow fell at O’Hare International Airport, causing 900 flight cancellations, according to the Chicago Department of Aviation.

Southwest Airlines, which cancelled nearly 250 flights out of Chicago’s Midway Airport, resumed flight operations at 6 pm on Tuesday, the city aviation department said. But delays of an hour or more were common.

US Secretary of Defence Chuck Hagel speaks during a news conference on the effects of the ‘sequester’ on military operations, at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, on 1 March, 2013. — Reuters

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India’s atomic research centre developing world’s largest magnet

NEW DELHI, 6 March—India’s state-owned Bhabha Atomic Research Centre is developing what it claims to be the world’s largest magnet, weighing 50,000 tons, local media reported on Tuesday.

The magnet, slated to be several times bigger than the one at the Compact Muon Solenoid detector at CERN in Geneva will play a major role in the India-based Neutron Observatory coming up 4,300 feet below a cave in a mountain in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, The Times of India newspaper reported. Head of the atomic research centre’s nuclear physics division Vivek Datar said that in terms of sheer dimensions the magnet being designed at the Trombay centre will be the largest in the world.

“It will be iron-based, weighing 50,000 tonnes while the weight of the one at CERN ranges between 4,000 and 5,000 tons,” he was quoted as saying. —Xinhua

Google controls too much of China’s smartphone sector

SHANGHAI, 6 March—Google Inc has too much control over China’s smartphone industry via its Android mobile operating system and has discriminated against some local firms, the technology ministry said in a white paper.

The white paper, authored by the research arm of China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, also said China had the ability to create its own mobile operating system. (here)

“Our country’s mobile operating system research and development is too dependent on Android,” the paper said, adding that it could develop its own mobile operating system. (here)

The ministry said that Google had discriminated against some Chinese companies developing their operating systems by delaying the sharing of codes. Google had also used commercial agreements to restrain the business development of mobile devices of these companies, it added.

A Google spokesman in China declined to comment. The ministry did not recommend any specific policies, regulatory actions or other measures.

Analysts said the white paper, which lauded Chinese companies such as Baidu Inc, Alibaba Group and Huawei Technologies for creating their own operating system, could be a signal to the industry that regulations against Android are on the horizon. —Reuters

How Apple iPhone got its name; it could have also been named the iPad

NEW DELHI, 6 March—What we today know as ‘iPhone’ could have been named ‘iPod’. According to a latest revelation by Apple advertising lead Ken Segall, Apple had mulled over many names before it adjudicated and ended up calling its smartphone ‘iPhone’, reports Reuters.

According to the report, Ken Segall, an event at the University of Arizona’s Department of Marketing, divulged details regarding the naming behind Apple’s popular smartphone iPhone.

Before Apple resolved to call it ‘iPhone’, it had considered a few other names—‘iPod’, ‘Telepod’, ‘Mobi’, ‘Tripod’. While the iPad ended up being the name for Apple’s tablet PC, the name was considered to be used for the smartphone. Imagine if the iPhone had been named ‘iPad’, what name the ‘iPod’, Apple’s tablet PC, would have been given? iTab?

According to Segall, “Apple considered calling the device ‘Telepod’ because it sounded like a futuristic twist to the word ‘telephone’.” Apple had also thought of naming its smartphone ‘Mobi’—a shortened version of the word ‘mobile’.

The report says, The name ‘Tripod’ did not win out, it did make a big impact on Apple’s original presentation and marketing for the iPhone. ‘Tripod’ stems from the iPhone being a combination phone + iPod + Internet communications device.” —PTI

E-tailers embrace same-day delivery, but US shoppers shrug

NEW YORK, 6 March—Same-day delivery, one of the hottest e-commerce trends, is too expensive for most US consumers, raising the risk that this turns into another online shopping fad that goes cold, according to a survey released on Tuesday.

The Boston Consulting Group recently asked 1,500 US consumers what would get them to shop more online and only 9 percent cited same-day delivery. Almost three quarters said free delivery would do the trick, while half of the respondents said speed is a priority.

The consumers said they would pay $7.50, on average, to get a $50 online purchase delivered on the same day. Almost is lower than the fees charged by most retailers and e-commerce companies now providing these services, the consulting firm noted.

Same-day delivery has become the latest retail battleground, with Wal-Mart Stores Inc, eBay Inc and several other big companies chasing Amazon.com Inc, which has been offering the service on selected items in certain cities since 2009.

Shuttle, a startup backed by United Parcel Service, has offered same-day delivery in the UK for three years and will be launching the service in the US in a few weeks. The US Postal Service and FedEx Corp each have recently started same-day delivery in some areas of the US.

But these players may find little room to make same-day delivery is destined to be a niche service, The Boston Consulting Group survey concluded. —Reuters

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Researchers identify 7 genetic risk factors associated with common eye disorder

WASHINGTON, 6 March — An international group of investigators has identified seven new genetic regions associated with age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a common cause of blindness in older individuals. The findings, reported online this week in Nature Genetics, could point to new biological pathways and therapeutic targets for AMD.

The AMD Gene Consortium, a network of 18 research groups supported by the US National Eye Institute, also confirmed 12 other genetic loci identified in previous studies. The study represents the most comprehensive genome-wide analysis of genetic variations associated with AMD.

The consortium’s efforts have now explained up to 65 percent of the genetics of AMD, said Jonathan Haines, director of the Vanderbilt Centre for Human Genetics Research. In addition to genetic causes, which may account for about half of all cases of AMD, risk factors include age, smoking, high blood pressure, obesity and diet.

“We’re getting closer and closer to understanding the full list of risk factors for AMD,” said Haines, one of the lead authors of the study and principal investigator of the coordinating centre for the consortium.

AMD is a progressive neurodegenerative disease that kills photoreceptor cells in the macula — the region of the retina responsible for sharp, detailed central vision. As AMD advances, it robs individuals of the central vision necessary for everyday activities like reading, driving, watching television and identifying faces.

In the Gulf Coast corridor, Shell plans to build the liquefaction unit at its Sarnia Manufacturing Centre for the Great Lakes corridor. This project will supply LNG to all five Great Lakes, their bordering US states and Canadian provinces and the St Lawrence Seaway.
Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez dies from cancer

CARACAS, 6 March—President Hugo Chavez died on Tuesday, ending a two-year battle with cancer, ending 14 years of tumultuous and divisive rule that won him passionate support among the poor but hatred from business leaders and wealthy Venezuelans.

The flamboyant 58-year-old had undergone four operations in Cuba for a cancer that was first detected in his pelvic region in mid-2011. He vanished from public view after 11 December surgery that resulted in complications and respiratory infections. He had been in a “moment of deep pain,” said Vice President Nicolas Maduro, his voice choking during a live TV address.

“This project, his flags will be raised with honour and dignity. Commander, thank you, thank you so much, on behalf of all the people you whom you protect,””

Venezuela’s military chiefs quickly pledged loyalty to Maduro, who will be caretaker president until elections are called within 30 days.

Chavez supporters poured onto the streets, weeping and chanting “Chavez lives!” and “We are Chavez!”

“Don’t let anyone try to convince you Chavez has gone—He will always be with us,” said the head of Congress, Diosdado Cabello.

State TV broadcast Chavez’s emotional last speech to the nation in December, shops in Caracas closed their doors for fear of looting, and condolences poured in from around the world, including messages from film maker Oliver Stone and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Chavez easily won a new six-year term in an election in October and his death is devastating for millions of supporters who adored his charismatic style, anti-US rhetoric and oil-financed policies that brought subsidized food and free health clinics to long-neglected slums. Reuters

UN hopes to approve Congo force by end of March

UNITED NATIONS, 6 March—The UN Security Council hopes to approve by the end of March a special force to combat rebels in the Democratic Republic of Congo, but some members have concerns that need to be addressed first, Russia’s UN envoy, Lyudmila Churkin said on Tuesday.

While Churkin did not divulge these concerns, some diplomats worry the creation of the intervention force within the existing peacekeeping operation, known as MONUSCO, could lead to two competing units. They want more detail on the new unit’s command structure.

“We think it’s very important that the intervention force is fully integrated into MONUSCO,” said one senior council envoy, speaking on the condition of anonymity. “I don’t see opposition to the proposal, he said, “but we need a lot of clarification.”

South Africa, Tanzania and Mozambique are the most likely candidates to supply the several thousand soldiers needed for the intervention force, but diplomats have questions about the ability of those troops to take on the rebel groups, including the M23, which have taken parts of eastern Congo.

“A lot of hard work is ahead of us in the next few weeks,” Churkin told reporters after UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefed the 15-member council on his proposal to strengthen and define MONUSCO’s mandate and create the intervention force.

“There are some issues to be sorted out ... Hopefully by the end of the month we will be able to adopt that mandate” resolution, said Churkin. M23 began taking parts of eastern Congo early last year, accusing the government of failing to honour a 2009 peace deal. That deal ended a previous rebellion and led to the rebels’ integration into the army, but they have since deserted. “The intervention brigade will be tasked with containing the expansion of both Congolese and foreign armed groups, neutralizing these groups, and disarming them,” Ban told the Security Council on Tuesday.

In practical terms, UN diplomats say, troops in the brigade will have more freedom to open fire without being required to wait until they are attacked first, a limitation that is standard for UN peacekeepers deployed around the world.—Reuters

Four climbers killed in French Alps avalanche

PARIS, 6 March—Four climbers were killed by an avalanche in the range of the French Alps, Western Europe’s highest mountain, local media reported on Tuesday.

The incident, which occurred at 15:35 local time (1435 GMT) at Parpaillon Massif, had left four dead mountaineers and injured a professional guide, the daily Le Parisien said.

Mountain rescue teams have been dispatched on the site but unfavourable weather did not facilitate their mission, it added.

Xinhua

US to allow small knives to be carried onto airplanes

WASHINGTON, 6 March—The Transportation Security Administration said on Tuesday that passengers on passenger jets can soon bring small pocket knives on board airplanes for the first time since the 11 September attacks, sparking outrage from flight attendants who said the decision would endanger passengers and crew.

The TSA said effective on 25 April, it would allow small knives with blades that are 2.36 inches or less in length and less than 1/2 inch wide. Other items that will be allowed on board again as part of a passenger’s carry-on luggage include billiard cues, ski poles, hockey sticks and lacrosse sticks. Items that had been prohibited like razors, box cutters or knives with a fixed blade are still not allowed on board.

TSA spokesman David Castelveter said the decision was made to bring US regulations more in line with International Civil Aviation Organization standards and would also help provide a better experience for travelers. “This is part of an overall Risk-Based Security approach, which allows Transportation Security officers to better focus their efforts on finding higher-threat items such as explosives,” he said.

The Flight Attendants Union Coalition, which represents nearly 90,000 flight attendants from carriers across the country, called the decision a “poor and shortsighted decision” by the TSA.

“As the last line of defense in the cabin and key aviation partners, we believe that these proposed changes will further endanger the lives of all flight attendants and the passengers we work so hard to keep safe and顺畅 our coalition said in a statement.

Castelveter said the TSA has implemented a number of measures, including reinforced cockpit doors, allowing some pilots to be armed and federal air marshals on board airplanes. He said these measures would help ensure safety of the passengers and crew.—Reuters

Three killed in small plane crash along Iditarod trail

ANCHORAGE, (Alaska) 6 March—A small plane crashed near a mountain checkpoint along the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, killing all three people aboard, state officials said on Tuesday. Searchers found wreckage of the plane, a Cessna 182, on Tuesday near the 4,000-foot level of Rainy Pass in the Alaska Range north of Anchorage.

Rainy Pass is one of the early checkpoints in the 1,000-mile Iditarod, which began in Anchorage on Saturday. The search began late on Monday when the plane was reported missing, the Alaska National Guard said. It failed to reach its destination of Takotna, an Athabascan village that serves as a race checkpoint 176 miles beyond Rainy Pass. Killed were pilot Ted Smith, 59, a retired Anchorage police officer, and passengers Carolyn Sorvoja, 48, and Rosemarie Sorvoja, 10, the Alaska State Troopers said. All were from Eagle River.

The plane and those aboard were not part of the “Iditarod Air Force,” the group of volunteer pilots who ferry supplies and race officials to checkpoints and take dropped dogs back to Anchorage, said a race spokesman.

“All our pilots and all of our folks are accounted for,” said Iditarod race spokesman Erin McMannon. But skies above the Iditarod Trail are typically busy during the race with numerous other small aircraft carrying spectators. It was unclear whether the crash victims were following the Iditarod, said Megan Peters, a spokeswoman for the Alaska State Troopers. She said the two females were mother and daughter.

Russian Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin speaks to the media after a Security Council meeting at the United Nations in New York on 21 April, 2013. REUTERS

Russian Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin speaks to the media after a Security Council meeting at the United Nations in New York on 21 April, 2013. REUTERS

US to allow small knives to be carried onto airplanes

WASHINGTON, 6 March —The Transportation Security Administration said on Tuesday that passengers on passenger jets can soon bring small pocket knives on board airplanes for the first time since the 11 September attacks, sparking outrage from flight attendants who said the decision would endanger passengers and crew. The TSA said effective on 25 April, it would allow small knives with blades that are 2.36 inches or less in length and less than 1/2 inch wide. Other items that will be allowed on board again as part of a passenger’s carry-on luggage include billiard cues, ski poles, hockey sticks and lacrosse sticks. Items that had been prohibited like razors, box cutters or knives with a fixed blade are still not allowed on board.

TSA spokesman David Castelveter said the decision was made to bring US regulations more in line with International Civil Aviation Organization standards and would also help provide a better experience for travelers. “This is part of an overall Risk-Based Security approach, which allows Transportation Security officers to better focus their efforts on finding higher-threat items such as explosives,” he said. The Flight Attendants Union Coalition, which represents nearly 90,000 flight attendants from carriers across the country, called the decision a “poor and shortsighted decision” by the TSA.

“As the last line of defense in the cabin and key aviation partners, we believe that these proposed changes will further endanger the lives of all flight attendants and the passengers we work so hard to keep safe and顺畅 our coalition said in a statement.

Castelveter said the TSA has implemented a number of measures, including reinforced cockpit doors, allowing some pilots to be armed and federal air marshals on board airplanes. He said these measures would help ensure safety of the passengers and crew.—Reuters

Three killed in small plane crash along Iditarod trail

ANCHORAGE, (Alaska) 6 March—A small plane crashed near a mountain checkpoint along the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, killing all three people aboard, state officials said on Tuesday. Searchers found wreckage of the plane, a Cessna 182, on Tuesday near the 4,000-foot level of Rainy Pass in the Alaska Range north of Anchorage.

Rainy Pass is one of the early checkpoints in the 1,000-mile Iditarod, which began in Anchorage on Saturday. The search began late on Monday when the plane was reported missing, the Alaska National Guard said. It failed to reach its destination of Takotna, an Athabascan village that serves as a race checkpoint 176 miles beyond Rainy Pass. Killed were pilot Ted Smith, 59, a retired Anchorage police officer, and passengers Carolyn Sorvoja, 48, and Rosemarie Sorvoja, 10, the Alaska State Troopers said. All were from Eagle River.

The plane and those aboard were not part of the “Iditarod Air Force,” the group of volunteer pilots who ferry supplies and race officials to checkpoints and take dropped dogs back to Anchorage, said a race spokesman.

“All our pilots and all of our folks are accounted for,” said Iditarod race spokesman Erin McMannon. But skies above the Iditarod Trail are typically busy during the race with numerous other small aircraft carrying spectators. It was unclear whether the crash victims were following the Iditarod, said Megan Peters, a spokeswoman for the Alaska State Troopers. She said the two females were mother and daughter.

Russian Ambassador to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin speaks to the media after a Security Council meeting at the United Nations in New York on 21 April, 2013. REUTERS
Local authorities destroy poppy plantations in Loikaw Township

Loikaw, 6 March—According to information given by a dutiful local that poppy plantation was cultivated one mile west of Thayu Village in Htiseikha Village-tract of Loikaw Township in Kayah State, officials of the Township General Administration Department, responsible persons of peace organizations, policemen of Kayah State Police Force, Tatmadawmen, departmental personnel and members of Auxiliary Fire Brigade destroyed 1.5 acres of poppy plantation at 9 am on 25 February.

Free teaching provided to matric students

Yangon, 6 March—A free teaching was provided to the students who will sit for coming matriculation examination at No 5 Basic Education High School in Kamayut Township from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm every Saturday and Sunday as of 19 January.

The teaching was jointly sponsored by Kamayut Township General Administration Department and Township Women’s Affairs Organization. On 24 February, Deputy Commissioner U Kyaw Thu Zaw of Yangon West District General Administration Department and Chairperson of District Women’s Affairs Organization Daw Myint Kyi viewed the teaching and attended to the needs.

Altogether 20 students are attending the free teaching class that will last up to 20 March.

Legal affairs lectured at Taunggyi University

Taunggyi, 6 March—Organized by Law Department of Taunggyi University, legal experts gave talks on legal affairs to the students at the multi-purpose hall of the university on 22 February morning.

Part Time Professor U Win of Law Department and Chairperson General Administration Department U Zaw of Yangon West District Commissioned into Service

Bamaung Creek Bridge

Pauktaw, 6 March—A ceremony to inaugurate Bamaung Creek bridge on Pyahtokyan-Hlieu Road was held in Hlieu Village of Paukkuhaung Township of Pyay District on 26 February.

Companies allowed to open foreign exchange counters

Yangon, 6 March—Central Bank of Myanmar issued money changer licences to private banks in the past. As of 21 December, the Central Bank of Myanmar issues the licences to companies to exchange foreign currency.

So far, three companies are operating exchange of foreign currency in line with the prescribed rules. A total of 18 banks have been allowed by the Central Bank of Myanmar to open 212 money exchange counters.

Among these private banks, a total of 113 counters went into operation.

The companies allowed by the Central Bank of Myanmar plan to extend their foreign exchange counters at their branches across the nation.—Myanmar Alinn

Free eye surgical operations performed in Mandalay

Mandalay, 6 March—Eye specialists from the Chinese Ophthalmic medical team from the first people’s hospital of Yunnan Province of China and specialists from Mandalay Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Hospital jointly performed free surgical operations on eye patients at the Mandalay Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Hospital on 2 March.

Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint inspected the eye surgical operations at the specialist hospital and comforted the patients.

The Chief Minister heard reports on surgical operations for the eye patients and achievements up to 28 February presented by the Medical Superintendent Dr Tin Tin Mo of the specialist hospital, Professor Dean of Eye Department Dr Yi Yi Aung and surgeons, local people and national races from 11 wards and villages totalling over 120,000.

The combined specialist team provided eye care services to 168 people and six monks.

Pathana Desana recited in Pauktaw

Pauktaw, 6 March—A ceremony to recite Pathana Desana for the 25th time was held in Myintgahtih Village of Pauktaw Township in Rakhine State on 28 February morning.

Chief of Minbya Township Hlanyauk Pavarana Gana Sayadaw Bhaddanta Suvana, Presiding Nayaka of Sittway Seikta Thakka Pariyatti Monastery Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Gahtya vaça ka Pandita Bhaddanta Nandaka and Myintgahtih Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Suvita and members of the Sangha, wellwishers and local people. The Pathana recitation was held in Pauktaw up to 3 March.—Myanmar Alinn

Umbrella, diamond orb hoisted atop Bawkyo Pagoda

Hsipaw, 6 March—A ceremony to hoist umbrella atop Bawkyo Muhtaw Pagoda built over 2000 years ago by King Thiri Dhammasoka was held on the platform of the pagoda in Bawkyo Pagoda of Hsipaw Township on 25 February morning.

Present on the occasion were members of the Sangha, Chief Minister of Shan State U Sao Aung Myat, the commander of North-East Command, senior military officers, Deputy Commissioner U Soe Naing of Kyaukme District General Administration Department and departmental officials, local people and national races from 11 wards and villages totalling over 120,000.

The Chief Minister shared merits gained. He sprinkled scented water on the tiers of the umbrella before hoisting it atop the pagoda.

The diamond orb was also hoisted atop the pagoda at 9 am.—Myanmar Alinn

Yesagyo-Yangon express bus line launched

Yesagyo, 6 March—With the aim of enabling the people to enjoy fruits of better transport, Kyei Sin Moe express bus line was launched No 5 in Ywapoe Ward of Bogyoke Road in Yesagyo of Magway Region on 27 February.

The express bus will run the Yesagyo-Yangon route. The bus will leave Yesagyo at 2.30 pm daily.

Bus fare is K 11000 per passenger.

The tickets for up and down trip will be K 10,000 each per passenger, said the in-charge of the bus terminal. Local people are pleased with smooth and convenient transport services along Yesagyo-Yangon route.

Drive Safely
Tuition time

Myanmar is known to be a hot country where the summer is the hottest. The scorching summer has begun. The schoolchildren are off school after the sweating final exam. The summer is the holiday season for the schools in Myanmar. If you think the schoolchildren are taking a long rest before the next term which starts every June, it is not true. Few or no students fail the exam. A higher grade is guaranteed for an ordinary student. The education system is dubbed ‘No fail’. After a week-long break from the school, the students prepare for the next grade, receiving private tuitions. It is true for any ordinary student except some from very poor families and some from elite families. The poor simply spend their hot summer, earning extra income for their family. The rich need no more tuitions as they go to high-fee-paying private schools.

The tuitions which teach the same curriculum with the government schools are still ‘essential’ in the country even after two years of social reforms due to ‘market demand’. The capacity of low-paid government teachers is ever dubious. The tuitions guarantee the poor students’ understanding while the schools run on a calendar which features deadlines for each chapter.

The schools enforce uniformity and never advocate creativity. The syllabuses themselves do not encourage creativity, adding more boring school days. The tuitions represent the need of educational reforms. We need to reform the schools, inspiring creativity of both teachers and students. Regulating the tuitions more strictly is not the answer. It will only cost the service of skilled private teachers. The education reform should have a scheme helping them teach school. Money spent on education is money worth spending. That’s why lawmakers argue constantly for the education budget increase each year at the parliament. We need more money for education, not for the schools only. Money wasted on education is the losing bet on future. Train teachers. Develop creativity. Design better curricula. Create lively school campuses.

As soon as I read the dailies that carry “Printing and Publishing Bill”, I felt harassment because I realized that a bill which is drawn in conformity with the democratic system for printers and publishers has emerged. Seeing the phrase “Abolition of The Press Emergency Powers Act enacted in 1931 and Printers and Publishers Registration Law 1962” stated in Section 28 of Chapter (8) of the Bill made me happy again.

The reason why I was pleased to read is these two laws are totally impractical to the present media world. As everyone knows, the whole media had opposed pre-publication censorship of the central registration committee under Section 20 of Printers and Publishers Registration Law 1962, saying that it jeopardized the freedom of press. We all passed through such kind of long period. That’s why I believe that the news about the abolition of Printers and Publishers Registration Law 1962 after the emergence of new law would be a good news for everyone concerned in the media world. It seems right to say that the bill will be a sovereign law as it provides media men as well as the people with protection.

According to the Bill, it is not absolutely required to worry there would be a reversal of policy that allows censorship as Printers and Publishers Registration Law 1962 will be revoked.

The Bill consists of eight chapters and 28 sections. I made a thorough examination to be able to know the difference between the Bill and existing laws – The Press Emergency Powers Act 1931 and Printers and Publishers Registration Law 1962.

Sections 3 and 4 of Printers and Publishers Registration Law 1962 require all printers and publishers are required to sign the letter of confession before a first class magistrate of the area they are living. If not so, printing and publishing shall not be allowed. Sentences for failure to the letter of confession include imprisonment and fine in accord with the Section 16 of Printers and Publishers Registration Law.”

The Press Emergency Powers Act 1931 also carries similar provision and says “The judge shall have to direct the printers and publishers to submit a deposit.”

As the provisions of the two laws are very strict for printers and publishers, these provisions are not included in the proposed bill as a point of satisfaction for the media world.

Section 3, Chapter (2) of the Bill requires “printers, publishers and news agencies are to submit their applications to the registration officer”. Section 4 carries “the registration official shall issue a licence to the applicants who are consistent with the prescribed rules and regulations for the payment of the prescribed fees was done.” That’s why applicants will be granted the permission if they are consistent with prescribed rules and regulations. I am very glad to know that there is no need to wait for a long time and to go through endless red tape to get a permit.

Section 8 (i) of the 1962 Law carries “an registration official concerned shall issue the temporary registration certificates to the applicant after appropriate investigation into the registration was carried out when he received the application of a printer or a publisher” and Section 8 (ii), “the case including a report in which whether he is satisfied with the investigation into the aims of printing and publishing and contents shown in application and it is agreed that the registration certificate should be submitted to the central registration committee by an registration official concerned” and Section 8 (iii), “the central registration committee shall have to make an order to issue or not to issue the certificate after taking the case that was sent in accord with the sub-section (2) into consideration”.

It is found that the permanent registration certificate was issued in accord with the decision of the central registration after one more investigation into the temporary registration certificate was conducted by the registration officer. These two certificates are called temporary and permanent certificates by those of media world.

A temporary registration certificate holder is used to wait for ages to receive a registration certificate (permanent) in the past. But the proposed Bill guarantees not to conduct an investigation into the application. Moreover, one such certificate will be realized as the certificate will not be described as temporary and permanent one.

The significant point of the Bill is that the registration official is given power to deal with the registration process directly and formation of central registration committee under Section 5 of the 1962 Law is not included in the Bill. It is sure that everyone welcomes the procedure that will be managed by an official concerned after cutting the bureaucratic red tape.

Five rules stated in Section 7 the Printing and Publishing Bill for the printing and publishing industry to adhere as are follow:

(a) Publication of contents detrimental to the relations between one national race and another or among national races and to other races;
(b) Undermining the rule of law and/or inciting violence;
(c) Publication of pornographic text;
(d) Support and stimulating crime, brutality, violence, gambling and stimulant drug-related crime;
(e) Publication of writings which are contrary to the provisions of the constitution and other existing laws.

These provisions are prescribed to safeguard the national security and public morality. The 1931 Press (Emergency Powers) Act Section 4 has nine provisos while the new bill cut it to essential five. I think the addition of the phrase “to one faiths or” before the phrase “to other faiths” would make it complete.

Section 8 of the Bill is the provision to declare publications which print texts that go against the Section 7 as “illegal publication”. It was amazed by the lack of provision to search and seize the illegal publications.

Section 14 of 1962 Law prescribes, “Police officer or any person assigned to the case shall seize any newspapers, periodicals, journals, magazines, books and publications against the law at any place; The building suspected to keep such publication shall be searched with the warrant issued by the judge and seize the finds.”

Section 15 of 1962 Law prescribes, “The printing and publishing illegal publication shall be searched and seized with the warrant issued by the judge and submitted to the judge.” The 1931 Law prescribes, “After declaration of illegal publication, the police officer shall seize that publication at any place and search the storage and building with the warrant issued by the judge.”

The bill omits the provisions of the police search and seizure, the fact that these owners should welcome.

In comparison with Undesirable Publications Act of Singapore and The Printing Presses and Publishers Act of Malaysia as regards ‘the declaration of illegal publication’, they also prescribe provisions to...
President U Thein Sein meets President of European Council, European Parliament

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 March—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein met President of European Council Mr Herman Van Rompuy at the office of the European Council in Brussels in Belgium at 10.45 am local standard time yesterday.

At the meeting, they frankly focused on democratic reforms in Myanmar, political and economic reforms and peace making processes, cooperation in education, health, tourism and exchange of culture between Myanmar and EU, raising of human rights and lifting of sanctions.

Afterwards, President U Thein Sein and the President of EC held a press conference and explained matters related to the meeting.

In the afternoon, Vice-President of European Commission and Chief of International Relations Mr Herman Van Rompuy at the office of the European Council met President U Thein Sein and the President of European Parliament met the press. The President greeted MP Mr Nirj Deva, who founded the EU-Myanmar Friendship Group, and party.

At 6.15 pm, the President received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Didier Reynders of Belgium at Sheraton Hotel. In the evening, the President met embassy families at the residence of the Myanmar Ambassador to Belgium and the EU and presented gifts to them.

While the President arrived at the EU, Myanmar Ambassador to Belgium and the EU U Paw Lwin Sein and Managing Director Mr Agostino Miozzo of Foreign Relations Department of the EU signed an agreement on cooperation in Crisis Response between Myanmar and EU in the yesterday afternoon.

MISIS exchanges views with ICWA

Yangon, 6 March—The Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) jointly conducted the exchange of views between the two think tanks at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, here, this morning.

Ambassador Rajiv Kumar Bhatia, Director of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and UNyunt Maung Shein, Ambassador (Rtd.), Chairman of the Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies (MISIS) delivered the welcomed remarks at the inaugural session.

The issue discussed between the MISIS and the ICWA ranged from Reform Process: Achievements and the Way Forward, Bilateral Political Relations, Defence and Security Cooperation and Bilateral Economic Engagements and Technical Cooperation. The exchange of views was attended by both Myanmar and Indian scholars, as well as officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Indian Embassy.

Printing and Publishing Bill...

(from page 8) search and seize newspapers, periodicals, journals, magazines and books which breach the restrictions of the law. To my knowledge, the number of publications has been reduced to 12 to avoid economic damages of publishers. After the bill is approved, the number would be further reduced.

Chapter 7 of the bill ‘Offences and Penalties’ includes three sections while the 1962 law includes five.

Sections 16 and 18 of the 1962 law prescribe the minimum imprisonment of six months or the maximum imprisonment of five years for the minimum fine of K 2000 or the maximum fine of K 20,000.” Sections 17, 19 and 20 prescribe the minimum imprisonment of one year or the maximum imprisonment of seven years and/or the minimum fine of K 3000 or the maximum fine of K 30,000.” These provisions of 1962 Law drew criticisms from the men of letters. The law should no more be valid in this new age.

Section 20 of the printing and publishing bill enforces the fine from K 5 million to K 10 million of imprisonment of six months. Section 21 prescribes the fine from K 1 million to K 5 million or the imprisonment of three months. Section 22 enforces the fine from K 0.1 million to 0.3 million or the imprisonment of seven days. These are appropriate penalties and not too strict.

The offences in the 1962 Law are cognizable offences. Those in the bill enforce the optional fines and are not cognizable ones. The lawsuits shall be filed at the court, assuring the secure future for the media world.

I imagine the men of letters, legal practitioners and the people discussing the bill, wearing beaming smiles. I would like to welcome the emergence of the new bill commensurate with the current age.

Trs: YM+HKA
Hluttaw representative’s call for granting general amnesty rejected

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 March—Daw Nan Wah Nu of Kunching Constituency asked about plans for dissemination of knowledge about existing laws, bylaws and procedures wide and far to rural regions at Pyithu Hluttaw session today, calling the rule of law as a prerequisite for flourishing of democracy.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann called it as the “massive task”, admitting that even the parliamentarians do not know them in detail. Daw Nan Wah Nu also called for publishing books on laws in ethnic languages, saying that such books are not easily accessible to the general public.

U Khine Maung Yi of Ahlon Constituency asked for the government for granting a general amnesty only to receive the negative answer from Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Maung.

U Khine Maung Yi called for embracing “Let bygones be bygones” attitude on the road forward. Though the blunt answer of the Union minister just“statistics-citing” parliament, making clear that ministries still cannot walk out of the conception of “quantities measurement”.

“let bygones be bygones” Hluttaw Representative U Aung Zin from Pazundaung Constituency raising queries.—MNA

Some questions were clearly evaded and some just answered with “what are being done” and not “how effective they have been”.

U Aung Zin of Pazundaung Constituency asked the Agriculture and Irrigation Ministry to provide low-interest loans to farmers against the security of their farms as farmers currently are only allowed to take out loans at the State-recognized banks while the procedures are complicated and there are no such banks opened near and procedures, leaving out the question of accessibility of banks.

He only said that the ministry is trying to take complete farmland census as quickly as possible.

Daw Khin Saw Wai of Yathedaung Constituency asked for adoption of a policy to bring about 30 per cent representation of women in respective legislative, executive and judicial bodies at Union and region/state level.

However, according to answer of the representatives from judicial and executive institutions, the proportion of women in such institutions is more than 30 per cent and some even reaching to over 60 per cent. The Speaker as regards to her questions amusingly said: “If only the women were elected for the next term according to public wish, then we could see a true ladies’ parliament.”—NLM

Complete removal of sanction relies on US Congress

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 March—Hluttaw representatives held discussions on the proposal on urging the Union government to review the grant of the licenses for mining plots in forest reserves and protected forests, giving the priority to the poorest Chin State for the reason of poverty alleviation tasks, which is submitted by U Zone Ht Htan of Chin State Constituency No. 2 at today’s Amyotha Hluttaw session.

Regarding the proposal, Union Minister for Mines Dr Myint Aung replied that the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry would provide assistance with least environmental damages for Chin State development.

Five representatives discussed the proposal urging the Union government to ask the government of the United States of America to completely remove of sanctions on gems and jewellery, which is submitted by U Hla Swe of Magway Region Constituency No. 12. U San Pyae of Kachin State Constituency No. 7 said that due to the sanction, both countries had to suffer the losses. Providing assistance and cooperation would bring about human rights and democracy rights.

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Zin Yaw replied that thanks to Myanmar’s political reforms, the country had seen international recognitions, assistance and lifting of sanctions. The complete removal of sanction relied on US Congress and needed cooperation between governments, legal and technical experts, Hluttaw representatives, political parties and all social community. The proposal was approved by Hluttaw.

Hluttaw agreed to discuss the proposal urging the Union government to allow the famers do farming in farm lands and crop lands and villages included in forest reserve and protected forest reserves submitted by U Saw Taw Pa Lac of Kayin State Constituency No. 7.

Ambassador U Kyaw Myo Htut presents his credentials to the King of Norway

Nay Pyi Taw, 7 March—U Kyaw Myo Htut, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Norway, presented his Credentials to His Majesty King Harald V. King of Norway, on 28 February 2013, in Oslo.—MNA

Liaison office of KNU/KNLA Brigade-1 opened

Nay Pyi Taw, 6 March—Opening of the Liaison Office of KNU/KNLA Brigade (1) yesterday took place in Naungbo Village, Thaton Township in Mon State.

Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Zeyer Aung, in his opening speech, said that the Union government is making great strides in peace making process. Only desire and goodwill could help us overcome challenges.

Next, Mon State Chief Minister U Ohn Myint and KNU Chairman General Muttu Say Phoe made speeches.

Union Minister U Zeyer Aung, the Chief Minister, South-East Command Commander Maj-Gen Tin Maung Win, the KNU Chairman, Commander of KNU/KNLA Brigade (1) Brig-Gen Saw Kyaw Linn formally opened the office.

State Minister for Security and Border Affairs Col Htay Myint Aung handed over documents related to data to the Chairman of Thaton District KNU U Saw Pa Nu, and Max Myanmar Co Chairman U Zaw Zaw presented other related documents to Commander of KNU KNLA Brigade (1) Brig-Gen Saw Kyaw Linn.

National race dance troupes of Mon State Culture Committee staged their Yein dance with the song entitled “Learn Mon Literature”.

Amyotha Hluttaw representatives attends 22nd day session.—MNA

MNA
HANOI, 6 March — Viet- nam and Russian defence ministers met in Hanoi’s capital Hanoi on Tuesday to discuss measures to lift bi lateral defence ties to a new height.

“The meeting, the two sides discussed issues of implementing the consensus reached by the two countries’ leaders, exchange of visits by high-ranking military officials, cooperation in military engineering, human resources training, and weapons purchase,” said Vietnamese Defence Minister Phung Quang Thanh during a Press briefing after the meeting. The two sides also agreed on establishment of a deputy ministerial level defence dialogue, Thanh added.

The two ministers also discussed about cooperation at the biennial regional multilateral defence forum ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus (ADMM+).

Thanh said that Vietnam wanted to invite veterans of Russia and other former Soviet Union countries to visit Vietnam in order to strengthen relations.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu said that the two sides have worked on issues which are vital to the relationship between the two countries, creating stronger impetus to cooperation in specific areas.

“We will join efforts to actively develop bilateral defence cooperation,” Shoigu said.

The Russian defence minister spoke highly of Vietnam’s decision to develop its navy force in coordination with Russia’s leading companies. Shoigu expressed his hope that a re- sort for Russian army men would be built in Vietnam.

Thanh unveiled that the Vietnamese government has allowed Russia to set up a ship maintenance facility at Vietnam’s Cam Ranh port in central Khanh Hoa Prov- ince after the Press briefing. Shoigu is on a two-day visit to Vietnam at the invitation of his Vietnamese counterpart.

At the meeting, the two sides have worked on issues which are vital to the relationship between the two countries, creating stronger impetus to cooperation in specific areas.

A citizen donates blood in Taiyuan, capital of north China’s Shanxi Province, on 5 March, 2013, as an ef- fort to learn from Lei Feng, a young Chinese soldier in the 1960s, who is known for devoting almost all of his spare time and money to selflessly helping the needy. The premier said that farmers across the far north Northland region of New Zealand are badly need some rainfall during March and April to help prepare for the winter and set up for next spring,” he said.

The continuing dry weather pushed up global dairy prices on Wednesday at 6:15 production, a dairy giant Fonterra seeing its highest prices since June 2011 on the GlobalDairy Trade Weighted Index.

A state of drought had been officially declared in South Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Hawkes Bay regions, following on from last week’s declaration in the far north Northland region.

“This is recognition that farmers across the North Island are facing extremely difficult condi- tions,” Guy said in a statement.

The opening of the sea tourist route is scheduled to be put into operation in early April this year with frequency of two times a week, carrying around 800 passengers each time.

With the lifting of the workers’ deployment ban on Iraq, Yemen, and Eritrea, Shoigu said that Iraq, Yemen, and Eritrea are now included in the list of “com- pliant countries” under the amended Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act. With the lifting of the deployment ban, Baldoz said that the government will now allow the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to work in these countries.

But in the case of Iraq, she said that before dispatching the returning workers or the rehires to Iraq, Manila has to receive first the list of areas identified as “no-go” zones by the government. The Philippines had imposed deployment ban on the three countries due to unstable peace and order situation, which could put the lives of OFWs at risk.

Cambodian PM hails China for its non-biased foreign policy toward developing nations

PHNOM PENH, 6 March — Cambodian Prime Minis- ter Hun Sen on Tuesday hailed China for its non-biased foreign policy toward developing countries, saying such policy will make China get more friends among developing nations.

“All developing coun- tries in the world want ‘equal status, equal rights’, and China has its own plan toward such countries, this point so, I believe that China will have more friends in the world because there are a lot of developing countries,” the premier said during a groundbreaking ceremony for the construc- tion of a China-funded road in eastern Kampong Cham Province.

“Cambodia and other developing countries are pleased with China’s foreign policy that gives value to the opinions of developing countries. We are poor, small, developing coun- tries, but China honours us and treats us equal status, equal rights,” he said.

The premier said that China is the only developing country among the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and China has pro- vided the importance for the weak voice of developing countries.

Dairy prices rise as New Zealand drought declaration extended

WELLINGTON, 6 March — The New Zealand govern- ment on Wednesday de- clared a state of drought across much of the top half of the North Island and warned further declarations could follow soon if the dry weather continued.

The continuing dry weather pushed up global dairy prices on Wednesday at 6:15 production, a dairy giant Fonterra seeing its highest prices since June 2011 on the GlobalDairy Trade Weighted Index.

A man walks through a flooded area with a boat in Cawang, East Jakarta, Indonesia, on 5 March, 2013. The National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB) on Tuesday warned that Jakarta could experience another big flood this week, as many areas in the city have already been swamped after the water level at Bogor’s Katulampa dam reached 250 centimetres on Monday.

The Beiyou speedboat 16 of China’s Xin’ao Cor- poration carrying 22 crew members docked at Tian Chau port in Vietnam’s northeastern Quang Ninh Province, Vietnam’s state- run news agency reported.

After the trial run, the sea tourism route is sched- uled to be put into operation in early April this year with frequency of two times a week, carrying around 800 passengers each time.

The opening of the sea tourist route is expected to boost sea tourism service between China and Vietnam.

Some seven million tourists came to Quang Ninh Province known for its World Heritage Site Ha Long Bay last year, up 8 percent over the previ- ous year, with international tourists accounting for about 2.4 million, accord- ing to Quang Ninh Provin- cial Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

The Philippine govern- ment official said here on Tuesday. Labour Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz said that the lifting of the ban was contained in three separate resolutions issued by the Philippine Overseas Em- ployment Administration (POEA) Governing Board, which she chairs.

With the lifting of the deployment ban, Baldoz said that the government will now allow the overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to work in these countries.

But in the case of Iraq, she said that before dispatch- ing the returning workers or the rehires to Iraq, Manila has to receive first the list of areas identified as “no-go” zones by the government. The Philippines had imposed deployment ban on the three countries due to unstable peace and order situation, which could put the lives of OFWs at risk.

Visitors wait to enter the 30th Hong Kong International Jewellery Show in Hong Kong, south China, on 5 March, 2013. The jewellery show held by Hong Kong Trade Development Council kicked off on Tuesday. More than 3,300 jewellers from 49 countries and regions attended the show.

Manila, 6 March — The Philippine govern- ment has lifted the ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq, Yemen and Eritrea, a senior govern- ment official said here on Tuesday. Labour Secretary Rosalinda Baldoz said that the lifting of the ban was contained in three separate resolutions issued by the Philippine Overseas Em- ployment Administration (POEA) Governing Board, which she chairs.

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Visitors wait to enter the 30th Hong Kong International Jewellery Show in Hong Kong, south China, on 5 March, 2013. The jewellery show held by Hong Kong Trade Development Council kicked off on Tuesday. More than 3,300 jewellers from 49 countries and regions attended the show.

Philippines lifts workers’ deployment ban on Iraq, Yemen, Eritrea

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Mongolia holds saker falcon festival

ULAN BATOR, 6 March—Mongolia held a saker falcon festival on Tuesday to celebrate the Asian country’s national bird.

The festival, rich in ethnic characteristics, took place in Genghis Khan camp outside the capital of Ulan Bator.

Twenty Kazakh falcons from western Mongolia rode past the podium on horseback as the sakers spread their wings for the audience.

Under the guidance of the masters, the saker falcons caught rabbits, foxes and other prey before a “King Saker Falcon” was selected by both professional judges and tourists.

Tsedevdamba Oyungerel, minister of culture, sports and tourism, said Mongolia would declare the event a traditional Mongolian festival and celebrate it annually to promote tourism.

The saker falcon was named Mongolia’s national bird last year.—Xinhua

More green cars feature in Geneva motor show

GENEVA, 6 March—More green cars than ever before will feature at the Geneva Motor Show this year, which will open to public from 7 to 17 March. More than 30 manufacturers will present some 90 models of green cars, powered by alternative technologies or with less than 100g/km CO2 emissions.

The world premiere of the Volvo V60 Plug-in Hybrid and the European premiere of Chevrolet Spark electric vehicle is also expected at the show.

Under the guidance of the Geneve Motor Show, said the development and proliferation of alternative fuel vehicles, including electric, hybrid and fuel cell, is one of the main draws of the motor show this year.

“There is practically no major manufacturer that does not include at least one in its range,” he was quoted as saying by the Motor Show Magazine.

The 83rd Geneva Motor Show will also have some 260 manufacturers presenting 900 models of vehicles, among which more than 130 will make their world or European debut.

The event is expected to attract more than 700,000 visitors.—Xinhua

Indian market increasingly catches Poland’s interest

WARSAW, 6 March—Polish companies are increasingly interested in the Indian market, Poland’s Economy Ministry said in a statement summing up the results of a recently completed Polish trade mission to India.

According to the statement, the main themes of the mission included trade cooperation, promotion of Poland’s economy, incentives for investing in Poland and Poland’s strategic partnership in the CeBIT 2013 IT fair in Hannover.

Deputy Economy Minister Dariusz Bodgan discussed cooperation in the coal, energy and environment protection sectors with India’s Secretary of Ministry of Commerce and Industry Shri Saurabh Chandra and with Secretary of Ministry of Coal Shri SK Srivastava.

Poland exports electric and machinery equipment, chemicals and metals to India, and it imports chiefly textiles and chemicals.

Polish exports to India reached 665 million US dollars in 2012 while imports stood at 1.24 billion US dollars, producing a trade deficit of 574 million US dollars.

Xinhua

World’s oldest living woman celebrates 115th birthday

OSAKA, 6 March—The world’s oldest woman celebrated on Tuesday her 115th birthday in the western Japanese city of Osaka, local Press reported.

Mizao Okawa, who was born to a clothing merchant in 1898 and now lives in central Osaka, received a bouquet of flowers from care staff at the dining room of a nursing home, and enjoyed her birthday cake with the staff and friends at lunchtime on Tuesday, according to the daily Asahi Shimbun.

Replying to a congratulatory message sent with a gift by the mayor of Osaka, she told reporters that she was deeply obliged to the mayor’s special arrangements which were delivered to “such an aged person like her.”

The report said Okawa married in 1919 and has three children, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.—Xinhua

Vietnamese children at risk of vitamin deficiency

HANOI, 6 March—Over 50 percent of Vietnamese children fail to get enough vitamins A, B1, C and D, or iron in their daily meals, the National Institute of Nutrition said on Tuesday.

The institute’s recent surveys showed that the rate of vitamin deficiency Vietnamese children is higher than those in other three countries in the region, namely Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand.

Surveys on nutrition in Southeast Asia conducted by the Vietnam Nutrition Association and the Friesland Campina Institute took place at the same time in each country for comparison.

Results revealed that the number of children in urban areas lacking vitamins was higher than that in rural areas. Girls in urban areas led the list, accounting for 50 percent. Nutritionists said the most serious consequence of vitamin deficiency is that it will affect the children’s height or lead to rickets.

Xinhua

Daughter of “Cocaine Kingpin” kidnapped in Bulgaria

SOFIA, 6 March—Three masked men abducted the 10-year-old daughter of a convicted Bulgarian gang- land boss on Tuesday, police said, in a brazen attack underscoring the Balkan country’s failure to tackle rampant organized crime.

The European Union’s poorest member state has been repeatedly criticised by Brussels for doing too little to fight corruption and gangsterism. The failure to implement rule of law helped spark protests that toppled the government last month.

Driving an SUV, the three men blocked a car taking the daughter of Evelin Banev to school, shot and wounded its driver and abducted the girl, police said in a statement. The driver was hospitalised but his life was not in danger, doctors said.

“Police blocked roads into and out of (the capital) Sofia. All operational and search measures are being taken to establish the location of the accused to at least 16 years in jail. ($1 = 0.7687 euros)

Reuters

Don’t Smoke
Taylor Swift slams Tina Fey, Amy Poehler on love life joke

LOS ANGELES, 6 March — Country pop singer Taylor Swift hit back at comedians Tina Fey and Amy Poehler for mocking her love life at Hollywood’s Golden Globe Awards this year, calling the jab sexist in an interview with magazine Vanity Fair on Tuesday. During the awards broadcast, hosts Fey and Poehler threw a barb at the singer, telling her to “stay away” from actor Michael J Fox’s 23-year-old son. The Grammy-winning singer is well known for documenting her personal relationships in her songs, often leaving little clues in the lyrics that hint at the subject.

She has been linked to high profile celebrities such as John Mayer, Jake Gyllenhaal, Taylor Lautner, Joe Jonas and more recently, Conor Kennedy and One Direction’s Harry Styles. In the Vanity Fair interview, Swift, 23, responded to the Golden Globes incident by citing a saying told to her by talk show host Katie Couric that “there’s a special place in hell for women who don’t help other women.” — Reuters

“Django” and “Ted” lead comedies, superheros at MTV Movie Award

LOS ANGELES, 6 March — “Django Unchained” and raunchy comedy “Ted” landed seven MTV Movie Awards nominations on Tuesday, leading a slew of comedies and superhero blockbusters among the nominees at the annual film awards voted for by youth audiences. Oscar-winner Jennifer Lawrence, 22, landed five nominations, including Best Female Performance for her role as young widow Tiffany in quirky comedy “Silver Linings Playbook,” as well as Best Kiss, Best On-Screen Duo and Best Musical Moment with her co-star Bradley Cooper. Cooper, 38, who plays bipolar character Pat in “Silver Linings,” tied with Seth MacFarlane as pot-smoking foul-mouthed bear Ted for four nominations each.

Turning 40 was best for Rachel Weisz

LOS ANGELES, 6 March — Actress Rachel Weisz says turning 40 was one of the “best years” of her life — both professionally and personally.

The 42-year-old actress didn’t mind reaching the milestone age because she married James Bond star Daniel Craig in 2011, and took on more “interesting” and “complicated” characters on the stage as well as the big screen, reports femalefirst.co.uk. “When I turned 40 I was one of the best years of my life; I played Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire, Hester Collyer in The Deep Blue Sea and got married — none of which I’d ever done before. As age, the characters you play get more interesting, more complicated,” Wiesz told Daily Telegraph.

Canadian singer Justin Bieber apologizes to angry fans for late UK show

LONDON, 6 March — Canadian singer Justin Bieber apologized on Tuesday after fans booed him for turning up nearly two hours late to a London concert, blaming technical issues for his late performance. The 19-year-old teen idol had been scheduled to take the stage at London’s 02 Arena at 8.30 pm but said in a Twitter message that the time was pushed back to 9.35 pm due to “some technical issues”.

Many fans and the venue itself, appeared not to have got the message after complaints poured in that Bieber was nearly two hours late when he finally appeared at around 10.20 pm. “Last night I was scheduled after 3 opening acts to go on stage at 935 not 830 but because of some technical issues, ” Bieber wrote on Twitter, the micro-blogging site where he boasts the largest following of more than 35 million people. “I got on at 10:10 so...I was 40 min late to stage. there is no excuse for that and I apologize for anyone we upset. However it was great show and I’m proud of that.” — Reuters

Shah Rukh Khan to act in R Balki’s next movie

NEW DELHI, 6 March — Looks like superstar Shah Rukh Khan’s plate is full this year with films like Chennai Express and Happy New Year in the pipeline. And if rumours are to be believed the Baadshah Khan will soon be seen in director R Balki’s next movie. There are also rumours doing the rounds that Aamir Khan and Deepika Padukone will also feature in the yet untitled project. In a recent interview to NDTV, Sridevi confirmed that she would be acting in R Balki’s upcoming movie. R Balki has already directed Aamir Khan in critically acclaimed films like Cheeni Kum and Paa. Reportedly, the movie will be a short film dealing with a sensitive issue and Shah Rukh Khan will be the face of the project. — PTI

Bieber apologizes to angry fans for late UK show

Canadian singer Justin Bieber

Country pop singer Taylor Swift

Actress Rachel Weisz

Shah Rukh Khan

Actress Rachel Weisz
**NBA’s Lakers, Rockets to tour Asia in October**

Panama, Canada, US, Mexico lead CONCACAF U-17 Championship

Panama City, 6 March — Panama, Canada, the United States and Mexico will lead Group A. B. C and D respectively, in the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) U-17 Championship, to be held in Panama from 6 to 19 April, according to the draw held on Tuesday in Panama City.

The Panamanian team will face Barbados and Jamaica in the Agustín Muqrita Sanchez stadium in La Chorrera in western Panama Province (state), while Group B, including Canada, Costa Rica and Trinidad and Tobago, will also play in La Chorrera. The teams will compete for four slots in the FIFA U-17 World Championship in the United Arab Emirates from 17 October to 8 November.

Groups C includes US, Guatemala and Haiti and Group D has Mexico, Honduras and Cuba. Both groups will play in Rommel Fernandez stadium in Panama City, said CONCACAF President Jeffrey Webb. —Xinhua

Manchester, 6 March — Nani’s controversial red card became the turning point of the battle at Old Trafford on Tuesday as Real Madrid knocked out Manchester United 3-2 on aggregate to reach the last eight of Champions League. United, who paved the way for a promising quarterfinal berth after a first leg 1-1 draw at Madrid, seemed on course three minutes after the restart.

Danny Welbeck and Robin van Persie’s shots were both denied by Real’s blocks. However, defender Sergio Ramos failed to clear Nani’s subsequent low cross and kicked it past his keeper Diego Lopez to score an own goal. United, with the lead, suffered a huge blow just seven minutes later. Nani, a fearless threat to visitors on the left flank, was shown a straight red card after he made a aerial challenge on Real’s right back Alvaro Arbeloa. “Independent of the decision, the best team lost,” said Real manager Jose Mourinho after the tie. “I doubt that 11 against 11 we win the match,” he added.

Real showed their depth in the 66th minute. The ex-Tottenham playmaker Luka Modric came off the bench, rounded one United player at the edge of the box and then delivered a 20-yard powerful shot to beat keeper David de Gea. Just three minutes later, Cristiano Ronaldo, who returned to Old Trafford for the first time since his 2009’s move to Real, stunned the home team as the Portuguese winger picked up a sharp low cross from Gonzalo Higuain at far post to seal the 2-1 victory. In front of the fanatic dressing room and a distraught manager. That’s why I am sitting here,” said assistant manager Mike Phelan. He said the decision was disappointing and spoiled the game. — Xinhua

**Real Madrid’s Luka Modric (C) scores against Manchester United during their Champions League soccer match at Old Trafford stadium in Manchester. — Xinhua**

**Neymar rejects Barca talk**

Rio de Janeiro, 6 March — Neymar has rejected the latest reports linking him with a move to Barcelona by insisting he has still not considered leaving Brazilian club Santos. Last week Barcelona defender and Neymar’s Brazilian teammate Daniel Alves claimed the striker had already agreed to join the Catalan outfit after next year’s World Cup.

“Daniel Alves is a good friend but if I say that (Lionel) Messi is coming to Santos, would you believe me?” Neymar said. “I appreciate what Daniel is saying but I am happy here.” According to Spanish media, Barcelona has made a down payment of 10 million euros for the starlet, whose contract with Santos expires in July next year. Among the clubs jostling with Barcelona for the 21-year-old’s signature are Real Madrid, Chelsea and Manchester City.

In a thinly-veiled swipe at Alves, Neymar called for an end to speculation about his future. “Those who say that I am ready to leave don’t know anything about my life,” he said. “When I feel ready to leave I will leave. It’s my decision to make and nobody else’s. I am happy at Santos.” — Xinhua

**Real Madrid knocks out Man United to reach Champions League quarters**

Manchester, 6 March — Real Madrid have announced an agreement to extend the contract of coach, Diego Simeone for a further four seasons. The Argentinean, whose current deal was due to expire at the end of the current season, has agreed a new contact to keep him at the club until the end of June 2017.

The deal, which was announced at around 17:30 local time on the Atletico Madrid website, is a reward for the excellent work which Simeone has done in the Vicente Calderon Stadium since replacing Gregorio Manzano as Atletico coach at the end of December 2011. Simeone resurrected a side that was looking doomed to mid-table obscurity and led them to the 2012 Europa League title, defeating Athletic Club Bilbao 3-0 in the final which was held in Bucharest.

He was able to impart the fighting spirit which won him the affections of the Atletico Madrid supporters during two spells as a player with the club, between 1994-97 and 2003-05 into his squad, which became incredibly difficult to beat. This season’s work with Atletico Madrid has been equally impressive and his side is currently second in the BBVA Primera Liga table, all be it 11 points behind league leaders FC Barcelona. However, importantly for Atletico fans the club is ahead of bitter local rivals, Real Madrid in the classification and under Simeone’s leadership the club last week qualified for the final of the Copa del Rey after defeating Sevilla in the semi-final. — Xinhua

**Atletico Madrid coach Diego Simeone**

**Costa Rican artists perform during the opening ceremony of the 2013 San Jose Central American Games at the National Stadium in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 3 March, 2013. — Xinhua**
**New Light of Myanmar**

**NEW YORK, 6 March — Taipei and the Netherlands advanced to the second round of the World Baseball Classic on Tuesday, joining Japan and Cuba for the next phase of the elite, 16-team tournament in Tokyo. Baltimore Orioles prospect Jonathan Schoop belted a two-run homer to lead the Dutch team to a 4-1 victory over Australia for their second win in Pool B round-robin play in Taichung, Taipei.** Taipei also advanced in Pool B despite losing 3-2 to 2009 finalists South Korea, who could not overcome an earlier 5-0 loss to the Netherlands and were eliminated by a tiebreaker.

**Ray Chang’s clutch two-run single in the bottom of the eighth inning capped a five-run rally that propelled China to their first victory, a 5-2 win over Brazil in Pool A that clinched them an automatic berth in the 2017 Classic. Unbeaten Cuba and Japan, the two-time defending champions, play the Pool A finale on Wednesday to determine seeding for the second round that begins on Friday at the Tokyo Dome. The other two first-round pools get underway on Thursday. Venezuela meets the Dominican Republic to open Pool C play in San Juan, Puerto Rico, with Spain and the host team playing on Friday. Team USA, with reigning National League Cy Young winner RA Dickey on the mound, play their first game on Friday in Phoenix against Mexico, after Italy and Mexico begin competition in Pool D Canada round out the group and open against Italy on Friday.**

**Ray Chang of China celebrates with a teammate after hitting a two-run home run during their match against Brazil in the World Baseball Classic on 5 March, 2013.— Reuters**

**Ray Chang of China celebrates with a teammate after hitting a two-run home run during their match against Brazil in the World Baseball Classic on 5 March, 2013.— Reuters**

**Fox's new sports network “Fox Sports 1” in New York, on 5 March, 2013.— Reuters**

**Els regrets not talking McIlroy out of walk-off**

**Miami, 6 March — British Open champion Ernie Els says he regrets not advising Rory McIlroy against walking out of the Classic last week but understands the pressure the world number one is facing.**

**McIlroy, who was playing with South African Els at PGA National, withdrew after slumping to seven over par through eight holes of his second round on Friday.**

**Initially he said he was not in a “good place mentally” before later blaming a painful wisdom tooth for his withdrawal.**

**“The Northern Irishman has since conceded he was wrong to walk out on the tournament where he was the defending champion but the experienced Els wishes he had said something to him.**

**“I must say, when I shook his hand on 18, I wanted to say something to him, but I didn’t, and I kind of regret that. It was obviously a heat of the moment thing. He is who he is. You’ve got to respect the individual at that moment is like, and he wanted to get off,” Els told a news conference.**

**“We obviously heard that he had his wisdom tooth was bothering him, and if that was the reason, that was that.**

**I would have been out of my depth at that stage to say something to him if something was bothering him. So I didn’t, but I thought I should have,”**

**Els said. McIlroy is facing intense scrutiny of his poor start to the year after switching to Nike clubs and Els, a former world number one in 1997 and 1998, said the status can be a burden. “I wouldn’t say lonely is the word, but you’re exposed. People look at you and you’re kind of the leader of the pack. In a way, you have to act accordingly. You have to show that you’re number one in your game. You’ve got to perform,” he said.**

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We will continue tirelessly on the path to peace until we have a peace that is just and durable

NAYPYITAW, 6 March—President U Thein Sein explained Myanmar’s reform processes at a meeting with the Chairman of European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs and members, at European parliament in Brussels yesterday evening.

The President said; Myanmar is working tirelessly for democratic change and for a lasting peace. We must couple these efforts with broad-based growth, new jobs and rising incomes. We asked that EU end all sanctions and actively help us in ensuring that no other sanctions remain in place.

I would also like to take this opportunity to share some important changes that are reshaping the labour environment in Myanmar. My government has made a priority to tackle forced labour and have made significant progress in that area. We have worked within International Labour Organization’s Tripartite System with other stakeholders to implement measures that improve workplace conditions. I believe we are on track to eradicate forced labour. More than that, I see the seeds of freedom of association beginning to sprout in Myanmar. My government has worked hard to implement regulations allowing the formation and registration of labour unions. I would strongly like to urge the EU to adopt the EU commission’s proposal to restore Myanmar’s trade preferences. The removal of tariffs and quotas and the reinstatement of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) will go a long way towards opening EU markets for Myanmar exports and provide impetus for the implementation of the export-oriented economic and industrial development strategies. The preferential access to the EU market would not only from employment and production creation but also from greater export earning potential. Moreover, it will have profound impact on our pursuit of poverty alleviation goals as well as raising the standard of living for Myanmar workers in the labour intensive industries and other related sectors. Lastly, trade and economic development is fundamental for the recent political reforms to take root and ensure future political stability in Myanmar.

I would also like to take this time to discuss the steps my government is taking to build investor confidence and promote responsible investment in Myanmar. Myanmar is ready to work with the international investors as an equal partner. My office worked hand in hand with the legislative branch to promulgate the Foreign Direct Investment Law in the later part of last year. We are currently working to implement procedures and processes that are more transparent, accountable, legitimate and predictable. The FDI law is just one dimension in an integrated framework for political, economic, social and legal priorities that will determine the counters of Myanmar’s investment regime. My government is also forging ahead to reform and bring Myanmar’s Arbitration System in line with the accepted international standards. While encouraging investment, it is important to promote the welfare of the Myanmar People and protect the environment upon which their livelihoods depend. I have recently formed the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI) Leading Authority in Myanmar to take the necessary actions to deliver on our commitment to implement EITI. In line with peoples’ wishes for responsible investment, my Government is serious about establishing a framework for dialogue about the governance of Myanmar’s natural resources.

We will continue tirelessly on the path to peace until we have a peace that is just and durable. Myanmar has experienced internal armed conflict since its independence in 1948. This must stop. We must find a political and negotiated solution. My government is absolutely committed to this goal. We have over the past 18 months signed ceasefires with no fewer than ten non-state armed groups. We will now double our effort to reach an agreement with the last remaining major non-state armed group, the Kachin Independence Organization. Current success and progress in the peace process stems from genuine will and desire of all Myanmar People for peace. To move from ceasefires to lasting peace, we must establish an inclusive framework for political dialogues with involvement from all relevant stakeholders and individuals.

We must find ways of addressing long-standing grievances and discuss and work toward a new and more inclusive Myanmar citizenship and a new and more inclusive Myanmar.

Myanmar Peace Centre was recently established to serve as a focal point for all peace related activities in the country. I would like to personally thank European Union for generous support to be financial and technical in establishing Myanmar Peace Center.—MNA

Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw IRC meets USAID delegation

NAYPYITAW, 6 March—Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw Committee for International Relations U Hla Myint Oo received a delegation led by Assistant Administrator Mr. Gregory A. Beck of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) at Hall No. (1) of the Hluttaw Complex, here, this morning.

The meeting focused on the exchange visits of the two countries.—MNA

Visitors observe Hluttaws

NAYPYITAW, 6 March—The 130-trainee group led by the Principal of Central Training School of USDfP visited the 22nd day sixth regular session of first Pyithu and Amyotha Hluttaws today.

Union Minister inspects arrival of farm and rice milling equipment from Korea and Japan

NAYPYITAW, 6 March—The agriculturists from the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation Department in cooperation with private sector is carrying out a task of transforming conventional farming into mechanized one centered at Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

Union Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Myint Hlaing met those from Alliance Stars Co., Ltd and viewed worksite for setting up rice mill bought from Japan in Pobbathiri Township, here, this morning.

On arrival at temporary warehouse in which modern power tillers are being kept, Specialist Mr Scott Mun of KUJE Co., Ltd of Korea and Chairman of Alliance Stars U Tin Lin Pyae explained capacity of modern power tillers.

Moreover they reported on available of farming equipment with three years guarantee to the Union Minister.

The Union Minister visited the temporary warehouse in which Japanese-made rice milling equipment are being kept.—MNA

MNA

The New Light of Myanmar

Thursday, 7 March, 2013

New Light of Myanmar, 6 March—

President U Thein Sein explains Myanmar’s reform processes in meeting with the Chairman of European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs.—MNA

Union A&I Minister U Myint Hlaing views rice milling equipment.—MNA

MNA