NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb—President Agga Maha Thayay Sithu, Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win hosted a dinner to mark the 66th Anniversary Union Day Celebration at the City Hall here this evening.

When the President and wife arrived at the City Hall, they were welcomed by Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham, Vice-President U Nyan Tun, Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint, Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of the Union Election Commission U Tin Aye, delegates from the invited peace groups, chairperson of the political parties and Union Day delegates.

A reception and dinner to mark the 66th Anniversary Union Day Celebration was also attended by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) General Soe Win, Deputy Speaker of Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Mya Nyein and their wives, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Hla Htay Win, Union ministers, chairmen of Hluttaw affairs committees and Union Day delegates from regions and states.

During the dinner, artistes from the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture and traditional cultural troupes of national races performed dances at the open hall theatre.

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MNA

University of Computer Studies (Mandalay) conducts AICT' 13 conference

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb—University of Computer Studies (Mandalay) held the 5th Conference on Applied Information and Communication Technology (AICT)’ 13 at the university on 9 February.

During the conference, 159 papers were read out by resource persons from national races and singers entertained the dignitaries to the accompaniment of the modern music band of the Myanmar Radio and Television.

After the dinner, artistes from the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture and traditional cultural troupes of national races performed dances at the open hall theatre.

MNA
House reduced to ashes by fire in Pakokku

The house was badly damaged by fire that started while pouring the petrol into a container from a barrel by U Win Naing, 49, and the fire swept through the whole house. Fire crews accompanied by eight fire engines put out the fire at about 1.10 pm together with police members and local peoples. Pakokku Police Station opened a case about the fire outbreak. — Kyemon

Mylaung Township to lessen water stress in summer

The ferry car plunged down the roadside and turned over at the corner of Bayintaunga street and Awaiai street in ward-7 of the township while driving side-by-side with the other vehicle along the road, leaving 29 women and one man who were on board the ferry car wounded. The injured were sent to Insein Hospital and Shwepyitha Hospital and no one was reported dead. It is learnt that the overturned vehicle is one of passenger cars running from Shwepyitha to Aung Mingala bus terminal. The road accident occurred while it was providing transport service to factory workers. The driver and the conductor of the overturned car went away from the incident. — Kyemon

Driver, conductor at large after hitting women

Yangon, 12 Feb — A Hilux of Insein-Shwepyitha bus line which was stationary near a garage on Myawady street in ward-1 of Mayangan Township was found with no driver on 6 February. The car was under the watchful eye of ward dwellers as the plastic wind mirror and side-view mirror of the left door of the car were broken and some hairs were twisted on the bar of the damaged side-view mirror.

Investigation revealed that the car knocked down a woman on that day, leaving her injured. The driver and the conductor transported the injured to Insein Hospital and left the car near the garage. They were still at large. — Kyemon

Cattle smugglers arrested in Yamethin Township

Yangon, 12 Feb — A group of 21 smugglers were arrested together with 46 heads of cattle near Hanbti Hill in Moe-htib-Moe-ri region, east of Yamethin Township in Mandalay Region on 30 January.

The 21-member smugglers including Thihla, 35, of Kyaukgywya in Tatkton Township were caught together with 46 heads of cattle on their way to Naungtayga of Pinlaung Township from Taktan Township by a combined force comprising police members led by Sub-inspector Chan Nyin Hla and security members of Shwe Moo Yan company near the foot of Hanbti Hill. Actions are being taken to charge them with smuggling cattle. — Kyemon

Daytime burglary occurs in Sagaing

Saggaing, 12 Feb — K 100,000 in cash and 10 kinds of gold wares were stolen in the daytime at a two-storey house in Podan ward of Sagaing on 8 February. As soon as they received information, the ward administrator and party and police members of No (1) Police Station rushed there.

They found the back door of the house was broken and K 100,000 kept in a handbag and 10 kinds of gold wares were lost in the house. Officials of No (1) Police Station is carrying out their investigation into the burglary in order to expose the burglary. — Kyemon

Cash and kind for quake victims in Mandalay, Sagaing Regions

Nay Pyi Taw, 12 Feb — Wellwishers are donating cash and kind for quake victims in Mandalay and Sagaing Regions through Relief and Resettlement Department (Head Office) under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and the office of the head of Yangon Region Relief and Resettlement Department.

From 1 to 6 February, KEIDENREN of Japan presented US$ 10711, U Han Myint and family K 15000, Asia Pacific Ladies Friendship Society K 3 million, Aryan clinic K 100,000 and clothing, Myanmar Consul in Beijing U Soe Han and Daw Lei Lei Wah and family US$ 200, Sino-Myanmar Friendship Association 5000 yuan and U Khin Shwe and Daw May Hlaing and family K 20000 for quake victims through officials.—MNA

Overturned ferry car hurts 30 passengers

The ferry car plunged down the roadside and turned over at the corner of Bayintaunga street and Awaiai street in ward-7 of the township while driving side-by-side with the other vehicle along the road, leaving 29 women and one man who were on board the ferry car wounded. The injured were sent to Insein Hospital and Shwepyitha Hospital and no one was reported dead. It is learnt that the overturned vehicle is one of passenger cars running from Shwepyitha to Aung Mingala bus terminal. The road accident occurred while it was providing transport service to factory workers. The driver and the conductor of the overturned car went away from the incident. — Kyemon

Man dies after slipping on a log truck

Yangon, 12 Feb — A log yard worker was killed while loading up a truck as he slipped while he was lifting a log and hit his head against the iron frame of the vehicle. — Kyemon

Thief with seven names arrested

Bago, 12 Feb — A thief was arrested by police members of Yangon Region Police Force in Hla Hmyetaya on 24 January while he was selling gold he had stolen.

No(3) Police Station in Bago filed a burglary case and police members are investigating the theft of two GSM mobile phones, a motorbike, 11 gold bracelets each weighing 0.50 tical, one gold necklace that weighs two ticals, two gold rings that weigh 0.50 tical each, three gold necklaces that weigh 0.50 tical each, two lockers that weigh 0.25 tical each, a pair of earrings that weigh 0.5 tical, three gold rings with a weight of 0.50 tical, two pairs of earrings with a weight of 0.25 tical and K 2 million from a house owned by U Hla Htya in ward-6 of Otho Myothit in Bago on 4 September 2012. After the thief was interrogated by police members of Bago Region Police Force, the thief with seven names— Zaw Min Oo (a) Zaw Htay (a), Nan Si (a) Athay Lay (a) Joak Sa Mut (a) Gadon (a) Win Than Htay — confessed to the burglary and a lawsuit against him was filed on 7 February. — Kyemon

According to local people, there is no worries about the possible drinking water scarcity although there was no more rainwater collected in the lakes in some villages of Myaung Township starting from the middle of the month of December. Thanks to collaborative efforts between the government, wellwishers and villagers, seeking ways and means for availability of drinking water in summer, water woes will be lessen in coming year”, an official said.

He continued regarding the measures taken for drinking water supply that water tanks with the capacity of 5000 gallons of water in Tamasya, Magyikan, Zayatkon and Lattayikha villages where local people heavily rely on the lakes collected with rainwater for their drinking water had run dry starting from the middle of the month of December. — Kyemon

Relief and Resettlement Department (Head Office) Relief and Resettlement Sagaing Regions through cash and kind for quake victims in Mandalay, Sagaing, Magyikan, Zayatkon, and Lattayikha villages, were filled with underground water from Nabal village through pipe lines. Other villages would be able to drink from river water pumping plant in Pareinnya village through the canals. — Kyemon

Photo shows a road accident in which a motorbike crashed into the back of a saloon that made a stop for pedestrians walking across the road at the zebra crossing on Mazin 1st street in Bago on 2 February. — Kyemon

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Biden says he senses urgency for gun control

**US Vice President Joe Biden (R) makes remarks next to Philadelphia Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey at the conclusion of a roundtable on gun control at Girard College in Philadelphia.** Reuters

**Philadelphia, 12 Feb—** Vice President Joe Biden, speaking hours after a shooting at a courthouse in his home state of Delaware, said on Monday there was an unprecedented sense of urgency among police and hospital enforcement officers that are here is a real sense of urgency.” Biden said after meeting Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, police chiefs, three US Representatives and a US senator.

He cited the shooting in Wilmington, Delaware, in which three people died and two were wounded in the New Castle County Courthouse.

He also referred to the 14 December mass shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, in which 20 children and six adults died.

“We can’t wait, we cannot wait, the images of those innocent little children being riddled with bullet holes has gripped the conscience of the nation and the nation is demanding that we act responsibly,” he said.

Gun control is likely to be a main topic for President Barack Obama’s State of the Union speech on Tuesday night.

Last month Obama launched the biggest US gun control push in generations, urging Congress to approve an assault weapons ban and background checks for all gun buyers to prevent mass shootings like the one in Newtown.

Many of the president’s proposals face tough opposition from gun enthusiasts led by the powerful National Rifle Association. Bringing back the military-style assault weapons ban that lapsed in 2004 would be particularly difficult because of resistance from Republicans and some Democrats in Congress.

**Attacks kill 12 in Iraq’s Mosul**

**Mosul, 12 Feb — A suicide car bomber and unidentified gunmen killed at least 12 people in the Iraqi city of Mosul on Monday, police and hospital sources said, as sectarian and ethnic tensions build ahead of elections in April.

The bomber drove a vehicle packed with explosives up to a military checkpoint in Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, and detonated it, killing eight people and wounding 18, among them soldiers. “The blast destroyed everything. It looks like there was nothing here before the explosion,” said a policeman at the scene who declined to be identified because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

In a separate incident in Mosul, gunmen using silenced weapons killed the bodyguard of a Kurdish member of the city’s provincial council and three others, police said.

A surge in violence since the withdrawal of US troops in late 2011 is stoking fears of a return to the sectarian strife that killed tens of thousands of Iraqis in 2006 and 2007.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a Shi’ite Muslim, is facing mass protests by disenchanted Sunnis and is at loggerheads with ethnic Kurds who run their northern region autonomously from Baghdad. The prospect of provincial elections is hardening the divisions as political leaders appeal to their constituencies with hostile and uncompromising rhetoric.

**Syria rebels seize dam, blast on Turkish border**

**Amdan/Herit, 12 Feb—** Rebels have captured Syria’s biggest hydroelectric dam and battled army tank units near the centre of Damascus, activists said as the opposition renewed an offer on Monday to negotiate with the departure of President Bashar al-Assad.

On the Turkish border, nine people were killed when a car arriving from rebel-held territory in northwestern Syria blew up at the Reyhanli frontier crossing, Turkish officials said it was unclear whether the blast was a suicide attack or an accident.

Moaz Alkhatib, exile leader of the opposition Syrian National Coalition, said he had had no response to his offer to discuss a handover of power with the Assad government but said the invitation still stood, despite the passing of an initial deadline for a response on Sunday.

The British-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights and other opposition activists said Islamist fighters seized army positions on Sunday around the Taqba dam, near the town of Thawra, some 150 km (90 miles) southeast of Aleppo. It was unclear how far the electricity plant was still operating.

“The dam was protected by an artillery battery and many intelligence units. The rebels moved on them in a lightning offensive yesterday, overrunning their positions

A man walks past a damaged gate after an explosion at Cilvegozu border gate on the Turkish-Syrian border in Hatay Province on 11 Feb, 2013. The dam’s generating capacity has long fallen short of early hopes and with power already scarce in Aleppo, Syria’s biggest city, it was unclear whether the change of control at Taqba would have a major technical impact.—Reuters

**Algers, Moscow tied with strong, respect-based relations**

**Algers, 12 Feb—** Visiting Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Monday that Algers and Moscow are tied with strong and respect-based relations on both bilateral and international issues.

“Algeria is an important partner for Russia in several domains, including trade and economy, which sees a constant evolution,” the official APS news agency quoted Lavrov as saying at the end of talks he held with Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

“We’ve agreed to develop cooperation in the domains of economy, commerce, science and technology,” the Russian official said, adding that he is “optimistic about the outcome of the next session of the Algerian-Russian Joint Committee” in this respect. The head of Russian diplomacy recalled the “common will” of the two nations to deepen bilateral cooperation in the military field and “promote political dialogue and consultation at all levels.”

At international level, Lavrov said his “fruitful” talks with the Algerian president evoked the two countries’ positions on the necessity to reform the international system, which must defend the international law and provide the United Nations a central role.

He stressed in this context the need to give priority to peaceful options, rather than foreign intervention, in terms of the settlement of disputes, including the conflicts hitting Syria and Mali.

Lavrov arrived Monday evening in Algeria for a working visit at the request of his Algerian counterpart Mourad Medelci.

The visit is part of the regular political dialogue between Algeria and Russia, which aims to boost bilateral relations of friendship and cooperation between Algers and Moscow.—Xinhua

**Georgian president, speaker meet to soften political tensions**

**Tbilisi, 12 Feb—** The Georgian president on Monday met with the parliamentary chairman to discuss issues which have been causing tensions between the ruling coalition and the major opposition and between the government and the president.

David Bakradze, parliamentary minority leader and former speaker, met incumbent speaker Davit Usupashvili at the entrance to the presidential palace for the meeting.

“There have been interesting developments in recent days,” the speaker told the press before his meeting with the president. “As the prime minister noted there have been certain positive elements — I would say some initiatives as well — in the president’s recent public statement.

“We have always been ready for a constructive relationship and the prime minister stated that we are ready to continue the dialogue on all important issues.”

The parliamentary speaker said that they would discuss the issues of common interests but he expected there would be progress on the central issue on the constitutional change on limiting the presidential power to dissolve the government without the authorization of the legislature of the South Caucasus country.

“Tbilisi: The president has stated about his readiness on this issue, so we will find out today what his readiness means,” the speaker added. Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili made late on Friday his annual state-of-the-nation address in which he said that he was not against the initiative of limiting the presidential power to dissolve the government without the parliamentary agreement.

But in the same address which was made after changing the venue from the national library to the presidential palace in the wake of some incidents occurred between opponents and supporters of the president in front of the national library.

Xinhua

**World News**

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

Reuters

**Fireworks light up the Victoria Harbour during the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations in Hong Kong, south China, on 11 Feb, 2013. The Chinese Lunar New Year this year, the year of snake, started on 10 February. —Xinhua**

**New Light of Myanmar**

Wednesday, 13 February, 2013
Back cod lessens gloom over emptying oceans

ABOARD HAUNES, (Norwegian Sea), 12 Feb—It was hours before dawn on a heaving Arctic sea, and snow showers were making it hard for Kurt Ludvigsen to find his fishing buoys with therawler’s powerful searchlight. But the 49-year-old Norwegian was less bothered by the conditions than by the large numbers of cod flailing in the nets he and his younger brother Trond winched aboard the farskjaer brother Trond winched aboard.

The 11th most caught fish species in an FAO list led by the Peruvian anchovy, skipjack tuna and Atlantic herring, had had a mixed fate. While a 1990s moratorium off eastern Canada is still in place and European Union quotas are unchanged this year, the quota off northern Norway and Russia is a record 1.02 million metric tonnes, up a third from 2012 and six times as high in 1990. Part of the reason is that global warming has expanded the cod’s habitat northwards. And strict management of quotas by Oslo and Moscow have played a role, fisheries experts say.

We saw in 2006,” said Boris Worm, a professor of biology at Dalhousie University in Canada who was the lead author of the 2006 study in Science. “It’s more than isolated examples — it’s a substantial number of successes said.

A lot is at stake. Fisheries, both marine and farmed, provide livelihoods for up to 820 million people, according to the UN’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), which emphasizes that globally, over-fishing is still on the rise.

Cod is unloaded from the Haunes trawler at a fish processing plant near Sommaroya, north Norway on 31 Jan, 2013. The Haunes caught 2 tonnes of fish in one day — the area is teeming with fish as part of a record quota for 2013.—Reuters

Square scandal highlights growing pains at tech start-ups

SAN FRANCISCO, 12 Feb—When Square Chief Operating Officer Keith Rabois left his job last month, citing problems with learning from a young colleague with whom he had a two-year relationship, he threw a spotlight on the risks associated with the freewheeling startup culture that many entrepreneurs cherish.

Startups often thrive on a lack of rules and boundaries. But experts say that as they make the transition from a handful of people in a room to sizeable businesses, the hazards of operating without a formal structure — including lawsuits, reputational hits, and hiring employee morale — grow exponentially.

Longtime employees sometimes chafe at the arrival of human resources professionals, coders of conduct and other policies that they fear will step on the company’s culture. Yet entrepreneurs and start-up investors say they ultimately have little choice. Take Facebook Inc, which displayed murals of naked women, some riding dogs, in the Palo Alto offices it leased as a small company in 2005. As proud as some of the early employees were of that — one was painted next to a particularly raunchy image on a pornography site. “That was the first time anywhere in the world, these IT firms are now being summoned by the Australian parliament to explain why they price their products so much higher in Australia compared to the United States,” said ruling Labour Party leader Bob Carr, who is also the author of the 2006 study. “It’s more than the higher prices for their services are hurting the popularity of the minority Labour government ahead of a September 14 election it is widely tipped to lose, giving political momentum to the inquiry.”

On Monday that Australia would provide 15 million Australian dollars (15.5 million US dollars) to rehabilitate 40 kilometres of main road in Kiribati, which has been undermined by rising sea levels and coastal erosion.

Australian Depart- ment of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) said in a statement that Carr, speaking from Kiribati, said the works were essential if the nation was to survive the impact of climate change. “Kiribati is at the front line of climate change,” Carr said.

The highest point of the island country is now just three metres above sea level. “Unless action is taken, Kiribati will be uninhabitable by 2030 as a result of coastal erosion, sea level rise and saltwater intrusion into drinking wa- ter,” Carr said.

Australia to extend aid to Kiribati to fight climate change

CAMEBRA, 12 Feb— Australia’s Foreign Min- ister Bob Carr announced on Monday that Australia would provide 15 million Australian dollars (15.5 million US dollars) to rehabilitate 40 kilometres of main road in Kiribati, which has been undermined by rising sea levels and coastal erosion.

This project will provide more than 40 percent of the population with better access to health clinics, schools and markets. Coastal roads will be rehabilitated to withstand rising sea levels and storm surges caused by climate change.” Australia will also sup- port the Kiribati Adaptation Program to replace 11 kilo- meters of damaged water mains and increase access to safe drinking water. Aus- tralia’s funding would be delivered over three years starting this year in partner- ship with the World Bank and Asian Development Bank .—Xinhua

An iPhone 5 is displayed in an Apple store in central Sydney shortly after going on sale to the public on 21 Sept, 2012.— Reuters

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An iPhone 5 is displayed in an Apple store in central Sydney shortly after going on sale to the public on 21 Sept, 2012.— Reuters
Has Volkswagen discovered the Holy Grail of carmakers?

BERLIN, 12 Feb—Ulrich Hackenberg isn’t yet a household name but if Volkswagen’s $70 billion bet on his big idea pays off, he may join the likes of Henry Ford, Alfred Sloan and Taiichi Ohno in the canon of auto industry pioneers. Since the heyday of Henry Ford and his Model T, the world’s automakers have considered the “global car” to be their Holy Grail — the same basic design that can be built, in subtle variations, and sold in different markets.

Take that fundamental concept, stretch it across many different vehicle types, sizes and brands, and build them by the millions, and you begin to sense the enormity of Volkswagen’s rapidly evolving mega-platform strategy and its potential impact on competitors around the globe. Auto engineer Hackenberg nurtured this bright idea for three decades, after early pitches to auto executives were largely ignored, until somebody finally bought it wholesale. The man who was Volkswagen Chief Executive Officer Martin Winterkorn.

Hackenberg’s fundamental rethink of vehicle platforms, the industrial Lego from which cars are designed and manufactured, is helping power the German company to the top of Ericsson wins $1 billion contract from India’s Reliance Comm

MUMBAI, 12 Feb—Indian mobile phone carrier Reliance Communications Ltd (RCLM.NS) said on Monday that it had awarded an eight-year contract valued at around $1 billion to telecom-communications equipment maker Ericsson (ERICb.ST) to manage its networks in the Indian and western states of India.

Last month, Reliance Communications gave Alcatel-Lucent SA (ALUA.PA) an eight-year contract valued at more than $1 billion to manage its mobile and fixed networks in east and south India.—Reuters

Novo Nordisk hit hard by insulin drug

COPENHAGEN, 12 Feb — US regulators dealt a major blow to Novo Nordisk’s hopes for its long-acting insulin Tresiba by demanding the Danish drugmaker conduct additional clinical tests to assess potential heart risksShares in Novo, the world’s biggest insulin maker, tumbled 15 percent on Monday morning as the company said the decision would make it harder to meet its long-term financial targets, while those in rival Sanofi rose 4 percent.

Novo said the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had requested additional data from a trial focused on cardiovascular effects before it would consider approving Tresiba and related product Ryzodeg.

The drugmaker—which is banking on the global sales charts several years ahead of its 2018 target. It could also make VW one of the most profitable carmakers in the world. The strategy is not without risk. It could, for instance, expose Volkswagen to the threat of a massive global recall if a single part, used in millions of cars, fails. But rivals have taken note of the power behind its move. Volkswagen’s modular platforms are being benchmarked by most of the world’s top automakers, including Toyota Motor Corp and Ford Motor Co, according to company executives.

“We’d be crazy not to,” said a senior Ford official, requesting anonymity because of the proprietary nature of the subject. VW’s work on its largest mega-platform, known internally as MQB, began in earnest in 2007 and is being implemented over the next four years at a cost of nearly $70 billion, estimates Morgan Stanley. The potential payoff is compelling: Projected annual gross savings by 2019 of $19 billion, according to the bank, with gross margins approaching 10 percent. The automaker is expected to announce a record profit for 2012 of more than $30 billion later this month (22 February), according to Bernstein Research, whose senior analyst, Max Warburton, observes: “VW looks to have unstoppable momentum — in China, the US, Europe and most of the rest of the world.”

That momentum has been building for some time, even before the initial deployment last year of Hackenberg’s brainchild. Industry-leading levels of commonality — the proportion of parts that can be shared among different models — are nothing new to VW.

Teen births continue to decline in US

NEW YORK, 12 Feb—The number of US babies born to teen mothers dropped to record lows in 2011, according to new data from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. Fewer women also gave birth in their 20s than in prior years, researchers found — but the birth rate increased for those in their late 30s and early 40s.

“The economy has declined, and that certainly is a factor that goes into people’s decisions about having a child,” said CDC statistician Brady Hamilton, lead author of the new report. Women may say to themselves, “It’s not a particularly good time right now… let’s wait a little bit,” he told Reuters Health. Older women, however, are typically more secure in their employment, he said—and understand that they don’t have as long to wait if they want to get pregnant.

The new data were published on Monday in the journal Pediatrics. They showed an eight-percent drop in teen births between 2010 and 2011. Just over three percent of 15- to 19-year-old had babies during that period. Hamilton and his colleagues calculated that 3.6 million more babies would have been born to women in that age group over the last two decades had the teen birth rate not been falling since the late 1990s.

But if Volkswagen’s MQB platform is the power behind its move, the company is also building for the future and is betting big on the concept of the connected vehicle. In 2013, Hackenberg said, Volkswagen’s online platform will allow customers to “personalize” their cars right from their phones.

In the US, where the online vehicle retailing market is still nascent, the potential of the connected vehicle is more clear-cut. Last year, for example, 9 percent of all new cars sold in the US came with the carmaker’s Infotainment system, which allows owners to connect their smartphone to their car to stream music, control climate and lighting and receive turn-by-turn navigation directions.

Bayer’s Riociguat submitted for approval in US, EU

FRANKFURT, 12 Feb—German drugmaker Bayer on Monday said it had submitted Riociguat, a drug to treat patients with two forms of pulmonary hypertension, for regulatory approval in the United States and the EU.

The drug is used to treat chronic thromboembolic pulmonary hypertension (CTEPH) and pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH), Bayer said.

Metro’s electronics retailer to boost online business

BERLIN, 12 Feb—German group Metro’s Media-Saturn consumer electronics retailer aims to step up its online business to compete with the likes of Amazon.com Inc, newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung said.

Media-Saturn, operator of Europe’s largest chain of consumer electronics stores, wants to more than double the share of total sales generated by the online business to 10 percent next year and double it again in the years to come. The unit chief Horst Norberg noted in a newspaper published on Sunday. “We’re stronger than Amazon,” the newspaper quoted Norberg as saying. The company also aims to add between 40 and 50 stores per year to its current global tally of 942, according to Norberg.
Colombia’s rebels ready to release three captives

BOGOTA, 12 Feb—The Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group on Monday announced the imminent release of two police officers and a soldier captured in January.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said the FARC was waiting for the Colombian government to “promote as soon as possible” the conditions for the release.

Cited by Colombian daily El Tiempo, FARC leader Rodrigo Granda confirmed that the release process has already begun.

The release “is going forward and it is certain that in the coming days or days there will be news about it,” said Granda.

Policemen Cristian Yate and Victor Gonzalez, together with soldier Josue Meneses, have been held by the FARC since January, when they were captured in military operations in combat zones.

Granda insisted their capture “is not a kidnapping. What we have are prisoners of war held by the FARC, who fell during a military operation in a war zone.”—Xinhua

Lebanon condemns aggression against any foreign country

BEIRUT, 12 Feb—Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati reiterated on Monday Lebanon’s condemnation and rejection of any aggression against any Arab or foreign country whatsoever, stressing the good ties between Lebanon and the countries of the European Union.

Mikati met at the Grand Serail with the EU Ambassador to Lebanon, Angelina Eichhorst, and discussed with her the upcoming visit of the EU neighborhood policy commissioner Stephan Fule on 4 and 5 March.

Bulgaria has charged two Lebanese with connection to Hezbollah of being behind the attack on an Israeli tourist bus in July 2012 in the city of Burgas, which left six dead and scores injured.

Eichhorst, for her part, said she discussed with Mikati the current situation and ways to improve the delivery of aid to Syrian refugees. She said “regarding the issue of the bombing in Burgas, the prime minister is aware of the position of the EU, which will discuss the related steps and actions. The Lebanese government’s stance has been expressed via its cooperation with Bulgaria and the EU at this level.” “Lebanon’s rejection of such bombings is of great importance. Indeed, we rely on the cooperation of the Lebanese authorities so as to protect the Lebanese people,” she added. She stressed that the growing number of Syrian refugees requires great patience and solidarity of the Lebanese people, and a wise behavior of the Lebanese government.—Xinhua

UN humanitarian fund gives over 5 mln USD to assist flood-stricken Mozambique

UNITED NATIONS, 12 Feb—The United Nations emergency humanitarian fund on Monday announced it will distribute more than 5 million US dollars to provide lifesaving assistance to hundreds of thousands of people who have been affected by the recent floods in Mozambique.

The UN allocations benefit the southern part of Mozambique last month, leading to massive flooding in the area and leaving 105 people killed and some 150,000 others displaced. Hundreds of houses were destroyed and crops and infrastructure severely damaged.

In a news release, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the government of Mozambique and its partners have already allocated 10 million dollars to cope with the emergency. However, given the scale of the disaster, more resources are required for those who lost everything in the floods.

The UN-allocated funds, totaling 5.13 million dollars, will be distributed from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which is managed by OCHA, to various UN agencies to provide basic needs and services such as shelter, food, medical aid, said the Press release.

While much has been done, much more is needed. These CERF funds will go a long way in ensuring that assistance is provided to those who need it most,” said the UN resident coordinator in Mozambique, Jennifer Topping.

The World Food Programme (WFP) will receive 2.3 million dollars, and more than 1 million dollars will be allocated to the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), respectively.—Xinhua

Libya to close border with Egypt, Tunisia for security precaution

TIRSOLO, 12 Feb—Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zaidan said on Monday evening that his government decided to close the borders with Tunisia and Egypt.

The borders would be closed temporarily from the 14 to 18 February, Zaidan said, adding that the entry of travelers through the airports of Tripoli and Benghaz would also be limited.

He said that these decisions are precautionary measures taken to avoid possible sabotage by the agents of the former regime or some of those who do not want security and stability in Libya.—Xinhua

Cruise ship to be towed to port after engine fire in Gulf of Mexico

HOUSTON, 12 Feb—A cruise ship in the Gulf of Mexico with more than 4,200 passengers and crew aboard will be towed to Mexico after an engine fire set the ship adrift, US media reported on Monday.

The Carnival Triumph, which left Galveston, Tex., Thursday and was due back Monday, will instead be towed to Progreso, Mexico, and the passengers will fly back to the United States aboard chartered planes, according to reports.

The ship has been floating about 240 km off Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula since a fire erupted in the aft engine room on Sunday morning, knocking out the ship’s propulsion system.

No one was injured and the fire was extinguished, according to reports. The ship has been operating on backup generator power since the incident, the Carnival Cruise Lines said in a statement.

Onboard power and sewer system outages have been reported. There are also reports of passengers complaining the sanitary conditions on board. —Xinhua

Suicide car bomb blast rocks central Somalia town

MOGADISHU, 12 Feb—A suicide car bomber on Monday rammed a vehicle laden with explosives into a convoy with deputy police commander of Puntland in the central Somali town of Galgalkyo, police and witnesses said.

The target of the attack was the deputy police commander of the semi-autonomous state of Puntland, General Mohyadied Ahmed who was the convoy but was slightly injured in the blast, Ahmed Mumin, a police officer told Xinhua.

“A number of other people were also injured but as far as we know no one was killed in the explosion except the criminal,” Mumin said.

Witnesses said the car bomb sped towards the convoy as they moved along a street in Galgalkyo’s northern part and rammed into one of the vehicles. Some of the vehicles used by the security of the deputy police commander reportedly caught fire and a number of soldiers and bystanders were injured in the blast.

Pro-Islamist website said the Al Shabaab militant fighters claimed responsibility for the attack but the group has not so far officially commented on the blast in Galgalkyo, provincial capital of Mudug region in northern Somalia.—Xinhua

Spain’s urban home purchases down 11.3 percent in 2012

MADRID, 12 Feb.—The number of people buying urban homes in Spain fell by 11.3 percent in 2012, according to data released on Monday by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE). The 2012 decline is less than that of 2011, when urban home sales dived by 17.7 percent, partly thanks to a year-end rush as potential homebuyers tried to avoid an increase on sales tax which rose from four percent to 10 percent in January 2013.

Some 114,003 houses in Spanish cities were sold in December 2012, down 1.9 percent year on year and 14.4 percent lower than the previous month, signaling continued pressure on Spain’s construction and real estate sector.—Xinhua

Photo taken from the top of the Juodvingas Mountain on 10 Feb, 2013 shows the scenery of the Minya Konka (Gongga Mountain), in Hanyuan County, southwest China’s Sichuan Province.—Xinhua

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According to the ICRC, the two police officers were killed as they were trying to stop the convoy.
Regional development tasks inspected in Sagaing Region

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb—Sagaing Region Chief Minister U Tha Aye inspected medical store and operation theatre at People's Hospital, construction of Sitagu Sangha Hospital and Basic Education Middle School in Thitayarmaing Ward in Kyunhla Township on 7 February.

The chief minister then visited Maha Shwesigyi Pagoda in Kanbalu Township and met with officials at Beikman Hall for holding Buddha Pujaniya. He also inspected repair work for Aungzeya Canal.

On 8 February morning, the chief minister attended the opening of Malika new school building at Ohntaw Basic Education High School in Sagaing Township.

At the ceremony, Region Forestry and Mining Energy Minister U Than Htay, Region Education Officer U Aung Kyaw Soe formally opened the new building and the chief minister pressed the button to unveil the signboard of the school.

Afterwards, the chief minister inspected site chosen for construction of Mu River retaining wall in Nyaungpinwun Village, completion of Basic Education Primary School in Pakokku Village and thriving wheat plantations of farmer U Net Tu in Kanphyar Village.

Pakokku, 12 Feb—Rice produced from Deltaic region is being transported to Pakokku through waterway.

“In summer, motorboats carrying bags of rice arrive in Pakokku. They spend four days due to sandbanks in the water course, the transport charge is cheap,” said a merchant from Pakokku.

Motorboats with the loads of rice from Myaungmya, Mawlamyine-gyun and Pathein arrive and depart Pakokku jetties daily while the motorboats carrying plam, jaggery and beans and pulses leave the jetties daily.

The merchants face higher transport charge along the motor ways due to toll gates and higher transport charge.

That is why most of the merchants are relying on the waterway transport.

Transport charge is K 25 for one viss of commodity or K 18 on the waterway way

Hlinethaya experiences two fires in single day

YANGON, 12 Feb—Fire broke out twice at Hlinethaya Township on 3 February.

At 7.20 pm, a fire broke out at the corner of Thiri Zeya and Bogoyoke streets. At 9.45 pm, one more fire broke out at No 1292 B on Mya Yeik and K 45 for one viss on the motorway.—Kyemon

Brigade members managed the control of the fire at the corner of Thiri Zeya and Bogoyoke streets with the use of four fire engines from Hlinethaya Township, two each from Kyauktada, Sangyoun, Ahlon, Kyinmyindine, Tanway, South Okkalapa, Hline, Mayangon and Bayintnaung fire stations, one from Shwepyitha, four from Insein, three from North Okkalapa, nine from the headquarters and one from Latha Auxiliary Fire Brigade together with five supporting vehicles and six management vehicles and put it out at 8.30 pm.

The fire destroyed 17 buildings and houses, leaving 725 people from 220 households homeless. The fire victims are being accommodated at the relief camp of Zeyathiri Dhammayon in Ward 5.

Another outbreak of fire was put out at 9.45 pm. Deputy Head of Township FSD U Kyaw Swa Lin inspected start of fire. Action is being taken against those who committed negligence of fire.

PyinOolwin supplies electricity to rural area

PYIN OO LWIN, 12 Feb—Supply of electricity was launched in Kyekkaing Village of PyinOolwin Township on 4 February morning.

The district electrical engineer and the deputy Township Administrator formally opened the supply of electricity.

Officials presented certificates of honour to wellwishers. U Kyaw Win of Livestock Breeding Entrepreneurs Association donated K 60 million, U Thet Phu of High Point Group agricultural farm K 30 million, U Thuta Hlaing of Shwe Yamon tea shop K 11 million and Daw Hnin YU Wai and U Tun Nwe Oo of Railway Station Housing of PyinOolwin K 10 million.

Townseller U Kyaw Win spoke words of thanks.

The project cost about K 150 million and it was launched to supply electricity to the local people in commemoration of the 66th Anniversary Union Day.

Myawra Ailin

Thamma Seikta BEMS awards five-distinction winner

NYAUNGLEBIN, 12 Feb—Thamma Seikta Basic Education Middle School in Myoma 1 Ward, Nyaunglebin Township, Bago Region awarded the outstanding students for 2011-2012 academic year on 9 February.

Present on the occasion were acting township education officer headmistress of Basic Education High School No. 1 Daw Thamma Seikta BEMS

Khan Than Nu, Headmistress of Thamma Seikta BEMS Daw Than Hlaing and teachers and students.

Headmistress Daw Khin Than Nu awarded Ma Aye Moe Kyi, former student of Thamma Seikta BEMS, who won five distinctions in 2011-2012 academic year matriculation examination and got the highest scores in the entire township.

Myawra Ailin

Trishaw drivers in Pyay get loans

PYAY, 12 Feb—A ceremony to disburse loans to trishaw drivers was held at the hall of Township Development Affairs Committee in Pyay on 13 January afternoon.

Executive Officer U Myat Sao of Township Development Affairs Committee explained purpose of disbursing the loans to 670 trishaw drivers from 24 townships in Bago Region.

The committee has so far disbursed K 5.5 million to the trishaw drivers.

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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TASKS INSPECTED IN SAGAING REGION

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Ensure macroeconomic stability and strengthen reforms

Myanmar has embarked on a historic set of reforms to modernize and open up its economy. Managed well, these reforms will facilitate strong and inclusive growth that reduces poverty. The government has made rapid strides over the last two years and important macroeconomic reforms such as the managed float of the exchange rate are already bearing fruits. The government recognizes there is still a long way to go and further policy reform will be essential to deliver sustained inclusive growth.

The recent debt rescheduling agreements with the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the Paris Club demonstrate the international community’s commitment to supporting the reform process. The IMF is closely assisting the government develop and implement the policies to ensure macroeconomic stability and strengthen reforms under their SMP (Staff Monitored Programme). Meanwhile, the IMF will enhance its capacity building programmes which are crucial to human resources development.

Most recently, an IMF team led by Mr. Anoop Singh, Director of the Asia and Pacific Department, visited Myanmar and discussed intensification of the IMF’s relations with the government with the Union Minister for Finance and Revenue, the Union Minister for National Planning and Economic and Development, the Governor of Central Bank of Myanmar and other senior officials. They also had discussions with civil society representatives and development partners to ensure poverty alleviation.

Discussions with the authorities focused on the importance of intensifying the already strong partnership the IMF has with Myanmar for development of financial sector of the country. At a time when the country is in a critical period of transition we are confident that the impressive commitment of the IMF to economic and social reforms will deliver real improvements to the people of Myanmar and with this, we would be able to make good within a fair short period of time.

First Myanmar-Japan Human Rights Dialogue held

N A Y  P Y I  T A W 1 2  Feb—First Myanmar-Japan Human Rights Dialogue was held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday and Deputy Foreign Minister U Thant Kyaw delivered the opening statement.


As the peace efforts of the government have already resulted in ceasefire and ethnic armed groups out of the war zones, the meeting was attended by the Union ministers and distinguished guests, deputy ministers, national races affairs ministers from regions and states and departmental heads.

In his speech, the President said that it was the second meeting. As he promised at the first meeting, national races affairs ministers were invited to attend the Union Day ceremony. Constitutional Tribunal had already decided that the level of region/state national races affairs ministers was exactly the same as the region/state ministers. With this, arrangements are being made for enabling national races affairs ministers to enjoy privileges and emoluments.

National unity is related with development, perpetuation of sovereignty and long-existence of the country. Paying lip services alone was impossible to establish national unity. The government’s reform processes are not aimed at getting good name only for one. It was implementing peace and stability and socio-economic development which are the wishes of 60 million people.

The Government carried out political reforms, working together with all political parties and invited them to participate in the political process, he said. As the peace efforts of the government have already resulted in ceasefire agreement with 10 armed ethnic armed groups out of the war zones, the meeting was attended by the Union ministers and distinguished guests, deputy ministers, national races affairs ministers from regions and states and departmental heads.

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Relations between national races, sympathy, mutual...

(from page 8) of 11, he expressed his hope that Myanmar has seen the dawn of peace in Kachin State as good results came out of the Shweyi negotiation.

Myanmar is going to see the silence of guns for the first time since the independence in 1948, he added.

The government has taken three steps in making peace with armed groups. In the last step, delegates from all national races will participate in a meeting at Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, he said.

Quintana visits relief camps in Sittway District

Quintana, accompanied by Mr Tomas Ojea Quintana, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, met prisoners freely and separately at Sittway jail and visited men, women and hospital wards. From there, they met victims separately at Mangan and Thekalypin relief camps. After that, they held discussions on both sides’ views with townsenders at Sittway hotel and arrived back here in the evening.

Only when the country is in peace, will the rule of law be enforced effectively, he said.

Regarding the socio-economy of the people, the President said the Foreign Investment Law was enacted to attract foreign investments in the country as the country was insufficient in capital, technology and human resources despite its richness of natural resources, he added.

The government has made efforts for relaxation of the economic sanctions as a first step and for totally lifting the sanctions as a second step. The relations between Myanmar and international countries have improved and the economic sanctions imposed against the country were relaxed, he said.

He called on all national races to understand the good situation of the country and to work in unison.

Afterwards, the President and ministers for national races affairs visited the 500-acre mechanized farming for educating farmers.

They visited cow farm, production of pig gas and running generators on biogas, manageable piggeries, crop plantation and irrigated fields of rice.

Educational fund raising in Pyawbwe

Speaker of Pyidaungsu and Amyotha Hluttaw, Mr Tomas Ojea Quintana meeting with locals.—MNA

Peru, Colombia seek to improve life of border communities

LIMA, 12 Feb — Colombia and Peru are making efforts to improve life of border communities in the Amazonian region, an official with the Colombian Foreign Ministry said on Monday.

Francisco Coy Grana dos, Director of Territorial Sovereignty and Border Development of Colombia, said in the Peruvian border town of Iquitos that the two sides have tabled several projects including computer-aided long-distance medical treatment for people in the Putumayo River basin, as well as food security and fish farming.

At a meeting of the Bi-national Technical Committee on Border Development and Integration, Coy urged local governments to promote sustainable projects that could bring greater benefit to the border communities of both nations.

Feliz Denegri, Coy’s Peruvian counterpart, said the Peruvian government is working on strengthening towns along the border with Colombia in the Amazon region, where the presence of government institutions had been weak due to their size and lack of access.

“We can do it better if we work together with Colombia, with whom we share common problems,” the Peruvian official said.

Denegri also proposed the two nations adopt security measures to fight organized crime and other problems that afflict both countries.

Australia role in Afghanistan after transition waits on US decision

Canberra, 12 Feb— Australia needs to get precision from the United States about what the United States sees as the scale of its transition draw down in Afghanistan, and its post-2014 transition proposals, Defence Minister Stephen Smith said on Tuesday.

According to his speech to the Australian Defence Magazine congress in Canberra today, Australian government is about to start the conversation with NATO, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the US on Australia’s role next year and beyond 2014.

“What the United States and Afghanistan agree about the United States presence in Afghanistan post 2014 transition, and what role any United States forces left behind will play, is the starting point,” Smith said.

“One that is clearer, then Australia and other NATO-ISAF countries will be able to make a judgment about what role, if any, others, including Australia, might play,” Smith said.

Minister Smith said Australia had committed 100 million-a-year (almost 102.91 million USD) for three years from 2015 to support the Afghan National Security Forces beyond the withdrawal of western forces.—Xinhua

Italy to reopen consulate in Benghazi

TRIPOLI, 12 Feb — Italy will reopen its consulate in the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi in the near future, a diplomatic source at the Italian embassy in Tripoli told Xinhua on Wednesday.

A new Italian consul will also be appointed in Benghazi, the source said on condition of anonymity.

The Italian government announced the temporary closure of its consulate in Benghazi and withdrew its employees in Libya last month after a failed attack on Italian consul Guido De Sanctis in Benghazi.

A group of militants shot at the bullet-proof car of De Sanctis when the diplomat was on the way to his residence on 12 January. No one was injured in the attack.

Xinhua

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Mr Quintana meeting with locals.—MNA

Regional Forestry and Mine Minister, departmental officials, townsenders and donors.—MNA

New Light of Myanmar

Wednesday, 13 February, 2013

NATIONAL
Social harmony key to growth for multinational states

DUBAI, 12 Feb.—A former Singaporean minister said here on Monday that well organized and technologically advanced government services are essential to keep societies where many ethnic groups live by side by side stable.

Speaking at a panel discussion of the two-day United Arab Emirates Government Summit, which started in its first edition on Monday, Chan Soo Sen, Singapore’s former minister of state for education, trade and industry, said Singapore’s economic success story was not only based on building up a liberal and well—connected economy, but also on social harmony. “Social harmony through good government and public services is key for sustainable prosperity,” said Chan, “especially for city state like Singapore, which has no natural resources but has a multicultural society.”

According to the official, 75 percent of the 5.3 million Singaporeans are of Chinese origin, while 15 percent are Malay, 8 percent are Indians and 2 percent are of other origins. Religious diversity is likewise high. While Buddhists and Taoists make up to 53 percent of the total population, Muslims and Christians stand for 16 percent and 18 percent, respectively.

Chan gave a number of examples of how stability can be reached among people of different ethnics. Every citizen in Singapore is obliged to speak the language of his origin and English, he said, “This is compulsory and important, otherwise Singaporeans would feel their origin has no place in society and we could not communicate with each other or with the world.”

In addition, Singapore established a National Council that supports voluntary organizations so that people get a feeling that helping each other is supported by the state. The city state also upgraded its government services by re—warding the use of e—public services. “If I apply for a new passport at the ministry of interior, I have to pay 80 US dollars, but if I do so online, I get a 10—US dollar discount,” Chan said such incentives made people happy and contributed to social harmony. —Xinhua

Zuma gives estimates for sending troops to CAR

CAPE TOWN, 12 Feb.—The deployment of peace troopers in the war—torn Central African Republic (CAR) could cost South African taxpayers 1.2 billion rand (about 136 million US dollars) over five years, President Jacob Zuma said on Monday.

Zuma clarified that his initial estimate of 65 million rand (about 7.4 million dollars) for the deployment of 400 SA National Defense Force (SANDEF) members was only for the period from 1 January to 31 March.

Zuma made the clarification in a letter to National Assembly speaker Max Sisulu, according to the South African Press Association. “No provision has been made yet for the financial year 2013/14 for this employment,” said Zuma.

Zuma has been criticized by the opposition Democratic Alliance for the amount the government would spend taxpayers’ money on sending troops to CAR.

Zuma said that while no budgetary allocation had been made, the deployment of a troops would run to on 31 March, 2018, in terms of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between South Africa and the CAR.

“Therefore, this employment will run up to the end of the duration of our MoU, however if the situation improves in the intervening period, we will re—view the protection element accordingly.”

Zuma said the Treasury was being consulted on the additional funds needed for the deployment. —Xinhua

Ukraine’s perinatal care programme boosts healthcare efficiency

KIEV, 12 Feb.—A nationwide perinatal care programme gave pregnant women and newborn babies facing the risk of complications access to affordable and high—quality medical care, an official from the Ukrainian president’s office said on Monday.

“The project entitled “New Life” is well under way. A total of eight perinatal centers have been built in Ukraine. Around 20,000 babies were born there,” Iryna Akimova, first deputy head of the Presidential Administration said during her visit to Kiev perinatal center.

The programme, initiated by Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych two years ago, made it possible for women with limited financial resources to give birth to healthy children, Akimova said.

According to official data, the newborn death rate in Ukraine has nearly halved in the last two years. Xinhu
Indonesian capital to become Asia’s ultimate property market, expert says

JAKARTA, 12 Feb—Indonesian capital city of Jakarta is estimated to become an ultimate property market in Asia due to robust housing, apartment demands and economic policies that apparently effective in curbing inflation, a prominent property expert said here on Tuesday.

“Jakarta will be a prime destination of property business in Asia,” Andy Roberts, general manager of a property broker firm Ru mah123.com said, citing to the results of 2012 property surveys in Asia exposed to the media here.

Due to the government’s orchestrated policies to keep inflation at low level, Jakarta becomes a competitive place to invest in property business if compared to other Asian major cities like Shanghai, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Sydney in Australia.

“Development of property market in Indonesia has been essentially backed up by the low inflation rate,” Andy said, adding that Indonesia recorded inflation rate below 5 percent in the last 17 months.

He said that such a level is regarded as a good indicator for the future of property business in the country. “We are convinced that Indonesian property business will continue to robust in the future,” he said as quoted by the Antara news agency.

According to results of a property survey conducted by property consultant Colliers International, Indonesian condominium market grew significantly in the first three quarters last year.

Results of another survey conducted by a credible firm in property business, Jones Lang La Salle, said that Jakarta will see 27,130 new condominiums from 2013 to 2016 in which 61.4 percent of those condominiums have been sold out.

Commonwealth chief in Sri Lanka for pre-summit talks

COLOMBO, 12 Feb—Commonwealth Secretary General Kamalesh Sharma began talks in Sri Lanka on Monday where he will push for advancing Commonwealth values and principles, including the independence of the judiciary and the separation of powers, the Commonwealth Secretariat said in a statement issued in Colombo.

Richard Uku, official spokesperson and director of Communications and Public Affairs at the Commonwealth Secretariat said that the Secretary-General will discuss matters of shared interest between Sri Lanka and the Commonwealth, including the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) which takes place in Sri Lanka in November.

He said that the Secretary-General will review organizational preparations for CHOGM and discuss possible outcomes that Sri Lanka and Commonwealth leaders will want to achieve at the summit.

“We want the 2013 summit to achieve significant outcomes for all members. It should show ways in which all Commonwealth citizens — be they city dwellers or residents of remote communities — can increasingly become beneficiaries of national development and growth, and be confident that they can share their societies through democratic culture and processes. Development and democracy are mutually reinforcing,” Uku said.

Roadside bomb strikes Afghan army van, kills one, wounds one

JALALABAD, 12 Feb—Roadside bomb hit a vehicle of Afghan army in the eastern Nangarhar Province 120 km east of Kabul on Monday, leaving one person dead and injuring another, a local official said.

“A mine planted by militants on a road in Kho- gyani district, struck a vehicle of national army in Mimila village at around 10:00 am local time to day killing a soldier and injuring another,” a security official Hazrat Hussain Mashriqwal told Xinhua.

A bulldozer works to open an alternative pathway beside the crashed bridge on the No. 304 Provincial Highway, the Shuitao Village, Hongshuao District of Wuzhong City, northwest China’s Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on 10 Feb, 2013. According to local highway authorities, an overloaded truck carrying the outsized cargo, with a gross weight of 100 tons, crashed the bridge with design load of only 55 tons when the truck tried to pass over it. —Xinhua

China’s coal mines less deadly, still dangerous

BEIJING, 12 Feb—China reported fewer coal mine deaths last year but safety hazards still abound in the country’s coal production, a work safety regulator has said.

Mine accidents killed 37 workers for every 100 million tonnes of coal produced in 2012, said Huang Yi, chief engineer of the State Administration of Work Safety.

That was down from 56.4 deaths per 100 million tonnes of coal output in 2011, but still well above the US level of 1.9 in 2011, according to the administration’s data.

In total, 1,384 people were killed in coal mine accidents last year, declining from 1,973 in 2011, Huang said. “The work safety situation at coal mines remains grim and we can not be blindly optimistic,” he said.

The administration last month put into effect rules that hold coal mine managers accountable for protecting workers’ lives. Managers are required to guarantee proper licenses of operation, ventilation and better trained workers. Illegal coal production at mines without valid licenses accounted for 43 percent of major accidents that occurred in the past decade, according to Huang. —Xinhua

Chopper crashes near Baku, killing three

BAKI, 12 Feb—All three crew members were supposedly killed when a military helicopter crashed into the Caspian Sea soon after taking off, Azerbai- jan’s defense ministry said on Monday.

The Azerbaijani air forces’ Mi-8MT helicopter, flying to Kurdamir from Baku to the autonomous region, on 10 Feb, 2013. According to local highway authorities, an overloaded truck carrying the outsized cargo, with a gross weight of 100 tons, crashed the bridge with design load of only 55 tons when the truck tried to pass over it. —Xinhua

11 Taleban militants killed in Afghan raids

KABUL, 12 Feb—Security forces have killed 11 Taleban militants in different provinces within the last 24 hours, the Afghan Interi- or Ministry said on Tuesday.

“Afghan police, army and intelligence agency in part- nership with the NATO-led coalition forces conducted six cleanup operations in Kapisa, Kandahar, Zabul, Uruzgan, Wardak and Pa- ktiya provinces, killing 11 armed Taleban militants and detaining nine others,” the ministry said in a state- ment, adding that two militants were wounded in the raids.

They also found and seized weapons, the state- ment said, without saying if there were any casualties on the side of security forces.

The Taleban insurgent group, which has been wag- ing an insurgency of more than one decade, has yet to make comments. —Xinhua

Cambodia greets 333,900 Chinese tourists in 2012, up 35 pct

PHNOM PENH, 12 Feb—Cambodia attracted 333,900 Chinese tourists last year, a 35 percent rise compared with 247,200 Chinese visi- tors in a year earlier, accord- ing to a report of the Minis- try of Tourism on Tuesday.

“China is the 3rd largest tourist arrival group to Cambodia last year after Vietnam and South Korea,” said Kong Sophearthea, chief of the statistics and planning department at the Ministry of Tourism, told Xinhua over telephone. “We see a steady rise of Chinese tourists to Cambodia from year to year, and we foresee that the country will receive up to 1 million Chinese by 2020.” He attributed the in- crease to more direct flight connection between Cam- bodia and China and Cam- bodia’s attractive tourism destinations. “Moreover, the very good relationship between the royal government of Cambodia and the gov- ernment of China has en- couraged more Chinese in- vestors and businesspeople to do businesses in Cambo- dia,” he stressed. —Xinhua

Investigators inspect the railway station where a stampede occurred on 10 February in Allahabad, India, on 11 Feb, 2013. At least 36 people were dead and over 30 others injured in a stampede taking place at the busy railway station in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh’s holy town of Allahabad on Sunday night. —Xinhua

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“One Identity Thief” braves blizzard to become No 1 at N America box office

Los Angeles, 12 Feb—Jason Bateman and Melissa McCarthy have proven that they are the cinematic draw to moviegoers in the United States and Canada this weekend, as their new film “Identity Thief” opened as No. 1 release in spite of a massive blizzard which hit the major part of East Coast of the United States, cutting a fairly part of revenues off.

The Universal R-rated comedy, which stars Bate-man as a guy whose identity is stolen by a woman (McCarthy), debuted with a robust $36.6 million dollar gate, marking as the 13th largest February debut of all time before the ticket price is adjusted for inflation.

Although many theaters in New England were closed on Saturday due to Winter Storm Nemo, which may have taken a 10 percent bite out of the total, this seemed to have not had a negative impact on the flick, as it opened in 3,141 venues and siphoned a healthy revenue from other films in the marketplace.

The movie is a slightly female-skewing piece, as 58 percent was women. It also has an appeal to older filmgoers, as 57 percent was 30 years and older. Those who have seen it as signed a “B” CinemaScore to it. “Warning: Bod-ies,” Lionsgate’s PG-13 zombie comedy which opened last weekend as No. 1, slipped to No 2 with a 11.5 million dollars gross. Steve Soderbergh-directed “Side Ef-fects” opened as No 3 with a 10 million dollar weekend.

The Open Road’s thriller received a “B” rating on CinemaScore. Rounding out the top 10 most popu-lar films in North America this week-end were “Silver Linings Playbook” (6.9 million dollars), “Hansel and Gre-tel: Witch Hunters” (5.8 million), “Mama” (4.5 mil-lion), “Zero Dark Thirty” (4 million), “Argo” (2.5 million), “Django Un-chained” (2.3 million), and “Bullet To The Head” (2 dollar).

Black Keys win three as Grammys spread widely

Los Angeles, 12 Feb — The Grammy awards were bestowed widely on Sunday as Australian singer Gotye, New York indie-pop trio FUN. and British folk band Mumford & Sons took home top honors on the music’s industry’s biggest night.

On an evening that re-warded mostly young or lesser known artists over veterans and household names, British folk band Mumford & Sons picked up two Grammys, including the coveted Album of the Year for “Babel.”

Unlike last year, when British singer Adele swept the board with six trophies, there was no single big winner. Ohio rockers The Black Keys, formed by Dan Auerbach and Patrick Carney, took home three Grammys including Best Rock Album for “El Cami-no.” Auerbach also won the prestigious Producer of the Year award, bring his tally to four.—Reuters
**SPORTS**

**Gremio confirms loan deal for Arsenal defender Santos**

**RIO DE JANEIRO, 12 Feb—**Brazilian club Gremio has confirmed the signing of Arsenal defender Andre Santos on a one-year loan deal. Santos trained with the Portuguese outfit on Monday and is expected to play in the side’s 2013 Copa Libertadores opener against Chile’s Huachipato at Arena do Gremio on Thursday.

The left-back has made just 23 first-team appearances for the Gunners since his move from Turkey’s Fenerbahce. Gremio officials also confirmed Argentina’s football federation (CBF) ahead of Tuesday’s deadline for Copa Libertadores team squads.

The 28-year-old joined Gremio last week after his former club Palmeiras accepted a three-million US dollar transfer fee and five players on loan. Barcos is hopeful the move will improve his chances regaining his place in Argentine national team ahead of next year’s FIFA World Cup. “I want to play as well as I can at my new club to have another chance of representing my country,” Barcos said.—Xinhua

**Dutch wildcard Sijsling knocks out third seed Tsonga**

**ROTTERDAM, 12 Feb—**French third seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga suffered a shock 7-6 , 4-6 ,6-4 defeat by Dutch wildcard Igor Sijsling in the first round of the World Indoor Tournament on Monday. The 27-year-old Tsonga squandered five breakpoints before surrendering the first set 7-3 in the tiebreak but appeared to have gained control of the match when he leveled the contest at one-set all.

But Tsonga’s serve, which had produced 14 aces, collapsed in the 10th game of decisive set and that allowed his 77th-ranked opponent to pull off an unlikely victory. “I can’t say I played bad tennis but on this kind of surface matches are always tight,” Tsonga, the highest seed in action on Monday in a tournament headed by Roger Federer, told reporters.

“It is disappointing to drop out early at such a big tournament.” Tsonga’s compatriot Gilles Simon eased past German Daniel Brands with a 7-6 , 6-4. Both players dropped their serve twice before Simon clinched the tiebreak and won the second set to set up a second round match with Italian qualifier Matteo Viola.—Reuters

**New York, 12 Feb—**Former Cy Young winner Justin Verlander has left open the possibility of participating in the World Baseball Classic (WBC). Verlander, who helped the Tigers reach last year’s World Series, had left open the possibility of participating in the WBC campaign on 1 April. The hard-throwing right-hander decided he needed to give his arm a rest after throwing 266 innings last year following a 271-inning season in 2011.

“I knew it was going to be a long shot the whole time,” said Verlander, who fell just short of repeating as Cy Young winner after going 17-8 with a 2.64 earned run average last season.—Reuters

**Judo: Tachimoto takes 3rd gold for women’s team in Paris Grand Slam**

**PARIS, 12 Feb—**Japanese third seed Megumi Tachimoto won the women’s 78-kilogram gold medal on the final day of the Paris Grand Slam on Sunday.

In the final, Tachimoto defeated Cuba’s London Olympic champion Idalis Ortiz, who was disqualified for her fourth penalty. The gold was the third for Japan’s women’s team, which competed in the wake of an abuse scandal that has rocked sports in the country.

In the women’s 78-kilogram class, Japan’s Akari Ogata finished second after losing the final by yuko to France’s Lucie Louette. Ruika Sato joined Ogata on the podium with a bronze medal.—Kyodo News

**Mourinho: Real Madrid - Manchester United - what the world is waiting for**

**Madrid, 12 Feb—**Real Madrid coach Jose Mourinho has the Champions League tie between his side and Manchester United Wednesday as one of the biggest matches of the season. The reigning English and Spanish league champions go head to head in the first leg of their last 16 tie in the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium on Wednesday night with the return three weeks later in Old Trafford.

While Manchester United go into the game 12 points clear at the top of the Barclay’s Premier League in England, Madrid are 16 points behind FC Barcelona and the Champions League is the chance to redeem a season tainted by disappointment and controversy.

However, Mourinho’s men showed what they can do with a 4-0 thrash- ing of Sevilla on Saturday in a game in which former Manchester United striker, Cristiano Ronaldo scored a blistering hat-trick and that has wetted Mourinho’s appetite for the match.

“It is the match the world is waiting for,” the Real Madrid coach said in an interview on MUTV in which he highlighted the quality of two sides who would normally have expected to meet at a later stage of the competition.

—Reuters
Alpine skiing: Ligety’s risk strategy nets second gold


Reuters

SCHLADMING, (AUSTRIA), 12 Feb — American Ted Ligety’s risky strategy earned him the super-combined title on Monday and his second gold medal of the alpine skiing world championships.

Seven years after winning the discipline’s Olympic crown in Sestriere, Ligety proved he was more versatile than ever, clinching victory in a combined time of two minutes 56.96 seconds.

Ligety, who won the super-G last week, will also be the hot favorite in the defense of his giant slalom crown on Friday as he bids for a formidable hat-trick.

His performance was all the more spectacular as he had never won either a super-G or a super-combined in the World Cup before the world championships and the 28-year-old from Salt Lake City could even be a threat in Sunday’s slalom.

On the steep and icy slalom course at the bottom of the Planai piste, home of a famous floodlit slalom on the World Cup circuit, Ligety adopted a dangerous strategy. “I took all the risks after my great downhill run. I knew I had a chance but I was looking to ski smart also, it was easy to ski out as the run was so tough,” he told reporters.

“I have huge routine being on the tour for nine years, so I can handle pressure well and these worlds have been pretty exciting for me so far,” he added. He promised more excitement in the week ahead. — Reuters

Deja vu Devils repeat 3-1 victory over Penguins

The New Jersey Devils dished out a second 3-1 defeat in as many days against the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday to strengthen their position at the top of the Eastern Conference.

A day after beating their Atlantic Division rivals by an identical score in New Jersey, the Devils repeated the feat in Pittsburgh on the back of one goal from Ilya Kovalchuk and two from David Clarkson, who took his tally to nine for the season.

The win was the fifth in a row for the visitors and improved their record to 8-1-3, while the Pens dipped to 8-5-0. “It’s just coming together as a team and buying into the system. I think we are just working as a team and into the system,” James Neal, who scored a consolation goal for the Penguins during a powerplay early in the final period but the visitors were unable to make any further inroads into New Jersey’s advantage over the final 19 minutes.

— Reuters

Federer calls for biological passports to detect doping

Tennis similar to those used in cycling to detect possible doping. “A blood passport will be necessary as some substances can’t be discovered right now but might in the future, and that risk of discovery can chase cheaters away,” the 31-year-old Swiss said on the opening day of the World Indoor Tournament in Rotterdam.

“By there also should be more blood tests and out of competition controls in tennis,” he added. According to figures on the International Tennis Federation website (www.itftennis.com), sport’s governing body carried out only 21 out-of-competition blood tests in the professional game in 2011.

Cycling’s governing body the UCI carried out more than 3,314 out-of-competition blood tests in the same year.

The UCI introduced biological passports in 2008 to track any blood changes in riders against an original profile which could mean they had taken illegal substances. — Reuters

Nadal says give me more time before judging me

Rafa Nadal’s worst defeat on a claycourt for nine years offered official ammunition to the naysayers but the Spaniard says his recovery from knee injury should be judged over time.

The seven-times French Open champion’s narrow loss to Argentine world No 73 Horacio Zeballos in Vina del Mar on Sunday was rightly regarded as a shock as Nadal’s defeats on clay over the past eight years can be counted on two hands.

Even those rare reversals have come against players of the calibre of Roger Federer and, most notably Novak Djokovic in 2011 and the last time he lost to a player outside the world’s top 20 on clay was five years ago in Rome when former world number one Juan Carlos Ferrero got the upper hand. You have to go back to Palermo in 2004, before Nadal had won his first French title, to find the Spaniard losing to one of the game’s journeymen, Frenchman Olivier Munnis who was then ranked outside the top 100.

Zeballos, who had never won a title before, played admirably but Nadal was clearly not firing on all cylinders despite reaching the final without dropping a set. — Reuters

Spain’s Rafael Nadal prepares to serve to Argentina’s Horacio Zeballos during the men’s singles final match at the Chilean Open tennis tournament in Vina del Mar on 10 Feb, 2013. —Reuters
Ten members of Mon Peace Defence Group return to legal fold

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb—Two members of Mon Peace Defence Group—Naing Nyo with the rank of major and Achan with the rank of lieutenant—returned to the legal fold bringing along with one M.32 pistol, one .30 carmine and accessories to the local battalion at Laynyar sub-township, Taninthayi Region on 10 February morning.

Thanks to a warm welcome given by Tatmadaw, they made contact with the remaining groups. As a result, another eight-member group led by Soe Myint with the rank of major joined them bringing along with one .30 carmine, two M.16s, two HKs, one AK-47, one .22 guns, one smoothbore gun, one 40 mm RPG, one handmade gun and accessories yesterday.

Those ten members who returned to legal fold brought along with 12 guns, 1207 rounds of ammunition and 22 magazines. Officials provided them with foodstuff and clothing and arrangements are being made to provide more assistance to them for rehabilitation and security of their families.

Tatmadaw holds ceasefire in Kachin State

NAY PYI TAW, 12 Feb—The Tatmadaw is taking measures not to happen fighting except self-defence, following the instructions dated on 11 December, 2011, of the President Office, and in accordance with the press release 3/2013 of the Union Government.

While discharging duties for regional security in Hpakant, Kachin State, a Tatmadaw platoon was greeted by a ten-member troop of KIA Battalion-6 near Waelon/Wakha Village yesterday afternoon. After friendly greeting them, the Tatmadaw troop continued their journey to their outpost, said Ministry of Defence.

Since 4 February, the Tatmadaw has maintained the situation in order to prevent the occurrence of skirmishes, it said.

Indian parliamentary goodwill delegation arrives in Yangon

YANGON, 12 Feb—At the invitation of Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann, Indian parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of Lok Sabha of the Republic of India Honourable Shri Meira Kumar arrived here by air this morning.

The Indian parliamentary delegation was welcomed by Yangon Region Hluttaw Speaker U Sein Tin Win, Deputy Speaker U Tin Aung, Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee Secretary U Ko Ko Tun, Yangon Region Hluttaw Legislation Committee Chairman U Hla Tun and region Hluttaw representatives. Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Dr Villur Sundararajan Seshadri and departmental officials of the Union ministers, the commander of the Management Committee, national race ministers of regions and states, departmental heads and guests totaling over 2300.

Ministries, offices, the Nay Pyi Taw City Hall, roundabouts, Myanmar Gem Museum, Mani Yadana Jade Hall and Jade Garden, markets in Nay Pyi Taw, buildings and staff quarters were illuminated in commemoration of the 66th Anniversary Union Day at the nights of yesterday and today.—MNA

Indian parliamentary goodwill delegation at King Zafar Shah’s Tomb.—MNA