President U Thein Sein to pay official visits to Norway, Finland, Austria, Belgium and Italy

Nay Pyi Taw, 22 Feb—At the invitations of His Excellency Mr. Sauli Niinisto, President of the Republic of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Heinz Fischer, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, His Excellency Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Republic of Italy, His Excellency Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway and His Excellency Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will pay official visits to the Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Finland, Republic of Austria, Kingdom of Belgium and the Republic of Italy in the near future.

President U Thein Sein holds talks with Serbian FM and party

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein received a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Mr Ivan Mrkic at Credentials hall of the Presidential Palace, here, at 11 am today.

Present at the call together with the President were Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Thane and departmental heads. The visiting delegation led by the Serbian Foreign Affairs Minister was accompanied by Charge d’Affaires as of Serbia Mr Nino Maljevic.

At the meeting, they had a cordial discussion on cooperation in education and culture, investment in energy, forest, rubber and foods production sectors and cooperation of Serbia in development sector of Myanmar. The President expressed thanks for being invited by the Serbian President to attend his oath-taking ceremony and said he would like to send message to the Serbian President through the Serbian FM to pay a visit to Myanmar. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Serbia said Myanmar Ambassador has been appointed in Belgrade and arrangement has been made to appoint Ambassador in Myanmar in coming May.

NAY PYI TAW, 22 Feb—At the invitations of His Excellency Mr. Sauli Niinisto, President of the Republic of Finland, His Excellency Mr. Heinz Fischer, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, His Excellency Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Republic of Italy, His Excellency Mr. Jens Stoltenberg, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway and His Excellency Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will pay official visits to the Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Finland, Republic of Austria, Kingdom of Belgium and the Republic of Italy in the near future.

Byline: Min Khant Soe (Kyemon)
Photo: Aung Kyaw Win

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein poses for a documentary photo with a delegation led by Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia Mr Ivan Mrkic. —MNA

Places of interest in Mandalay and its vicinity

Mandala Regional Park is situated in PyinOoLwin and it has an area of 6.6 square miles. There are orchid garden and three museums — butterfly museum, petrified wood museum and fossil museum. It is the famous botanical garden of Myanmar.

National Kandawgyi Gardens in PyinOoLwin offers visitors to see scale models of historic pagodas and cultural heritages in Myanmar. MahaMyatMuni Buddha Image, Mandalay Hill and Kyaukdawgyi Pagoda, Kuthodaw Pagoda, Sandamuni Pagoda, Yankin Hill, Yatagon Hill, Taungpyone, Yadana cave, Shwesaryan pagoda, Taungtaman lake and U Pein bridge are included in Mandalay Palace are included in places of interest in Mandalay.

Kyaemny (19-2-2013)
Trs: YM
Mandalay Region Chief Minister tours Madaya, Singu Townships

Mandalay, 21 Feb—Chief Minister of Mandalay Region U Ye Myint accompanied by Deputy Speaker of the Region Hluttaw U Aung Htay Kyaw and Region Minister for Social Affairs Dr Win Hlaing met trainees at the ward/village-tract administrator work efficiency courses at Madaya and Singu Township General Administration Departments of PyinOolwin District on 8 February. He explained duty and function of the ward and village administrators, regional development tasks and plans of the region government. He stressed the need for clerks and grassroots level administrators to abide by rules and regulations in running their machinery.

Then, he urged them to cooperate with the regional government in undertaking rural development and poverty alleviation. The Chief Minister inspected progress in reconstruction of NanAyeYa building of Singu Basic Education High School and attended to the needs of works. —Myanma Alinn

First-aid course for collegians concludes at Mandalay Technological University

Mandalay, 21 Feb—Red Cross Society of Mandalay Technological University under Technical and Vocational Education Department of the Ministry of Science and Technology and Mandalay Region Red Cross Supervisory Committee jointly organized the second basic first-aid course No 1/2013 at the three-storey building of the university on 15 February morning. At the concluding ceremony of the training course, Rector Dr Aye Myint made a speech. The rector presented first, second and third prizes to Maung Win Hlut Lin, Ma Le Le Pyone and Maung Min Thu Aung.

General Staff Officer Grade-1 U Phone Kyaw of Mandalay Region Red Cross Supervisory Committee presided over the trainees.—Myanma Alinn

New express bus serves passengers

Mandalay, 21 Feb—Mandalay Region Cooperative Syndicate launched the Mandalay-Nay Pyi Taw Express bus line for public convenience at the terminal department of Mandalay-Yangon Expressway on 13 February morning.

Mandalay Region Minister for Planning and Economic U Aung Zan sprinkled scented water on the route of Mandalay-Nay Pyi Taw Express bus line and officials. The express buses run the route of Mandalay-Nay Pyi Taw Tournoo as of 14 February.—Myanma Alinn

Disaster risk reduction talked in KhinU

KhinU, 21 Feb—Under the arrangements of Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Myanmar Engineering Society and SeacAsia toured earthquake hit areas and gave talks on disaster risk reduction in Sagaing Region by centering at Shwebo.

On 11 February, the members disseminated knowledge about disaster risk reduction. Daw Gaw Twe, U Ye Kyaw Thu, U Lin Thu Aung and Daw Wai Wai Aung gave lectures on disasters over tsunami, landslide, outbreak of fire, cyclone, tornado, flood, earthquake, lightning and thunders to those present.

About 160 people comprising local authorities, townsmen and enthusiast attended the talks. —Myanma Alinn

Anti-human trafficking, traffic rules knowledge disseminated

Pyinmana, 21 Feb—The talks on prevention against trafficking in person and traffic rules were given at No 1 Basic Education High School in Pyinmana on 11 February afternoon.


Director of Administration and Training Department of MPP Police Col Win Khaung (Writer Htet Khaung) encouraged the students for the examination.

Later, Police Win Khaung and reporter Khin Aung Min (Nay Pi Taw) donated books to the library of the school.

Local people satisfied with tube-well water

NyaungU, 21 Feb—Yinsan Village is one of the villages where water is scarcity. Rural Region Development Department sank a tube-well on 14 February morning.

The village administrator and officials drove stake at the designated place where the tube-well would be sunk. Over 200 local people happily greeted the skilled workers from the crew of sinking tube-well.

After the department had sunk the tube-well successfully, the local people enjoyed pumping out of water from the well. Nowadays, the Union government has been placing emphasis on serving the interest of the local people so as to supply potable water to them, said U Hla Shwe of Yinsan Village. —Myanma Alinn

Faculty members of Sittway University make field trips

Ponnagyun, 21 Feb—Dean of English Department Professor Daw Tin Hlaing and professors and faculty members of Sittway University of Rakhine State attended the coordination meeting on raising pass rate of matriculation examination at Tago Saya Tun hall of Ponnagyun Basic Education High School on 9 February.

Faculty members of the university gave lectures on Myanmar, English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Economics to students including five Basic Education High Schools from surrounding villages, totaling over 500. —Myanma Alinn

Narcotic drugs seized in Mawlu

Mawlu, 21 Feb—Police officers from Mawlu Police Station and witnesses searched the house of Hnin Maung in Mawlu Village of Manhe Village-tract at 7.45 pm on 10 February.

They seized what appears to be heroin from a penicillin bottle and a gas lighter weighing 0.255 gram from the pocket of Hnin Maung’s shirt.

Action was taken against the drug possessor under Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances Law. Investigation is being made for exposing the correct case.

At 10pm on 10 February, the authorities searched Ma Cho Suw Hostel road in Myaypalin Village and seized a plastic box containing 2.5 grams of what appears to be heroin and other equipment. Action was taken against her under the law. —Myanma Alinn

Chief Minister of Yangon Region U Myint Swe being welcomed by Kuwaiti Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Essa Y Al-Shamali at the reception to mark the 52nd National Day and the 22nd Independence Day of Kuwait at Sedona Hotel in Yangon on 20 February.—MNA
Georgian president greets Armenian counterpart on re-election

Tbilisi, 21 Feb — Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili on Wednesday congratulated his Armenian counterpart Serzh Sargsyan on re-election.

In a telephone call, the Georgian president wished Sargsyan successes and wellbeing, and congratulated the Armenian people on their democratic development. Sargsyan, who collected 58.64 percent of the votes in Monday’s election, has got several messages of congratulation.

Second in Armenian’s presidential vote is Raffi Hovanissian, who served as the country’s first foreign minister between 1991 and 1992. —Xinhua

China to develop closer relations with Mexico

Mexico City, 21 Feb — China attaches great importance to the development of a strategic partnership with Mexico, a senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC) said here on Wednesday.

Qiang Wei, member of the CPC Central Committee and secretary of the CPC Qinghai Provincial Committee, made the remarks during a meeting with Francisco Arroyo Vieyra, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Mexico.

Bilateral ties have achieved considerable progress since China and Mexico established diplomatic relations more than 40 years ago, Qiang said, adding that this year also marks the 10th anniversary of the two countries’ strategic partnership.

China is ready to work with Mexico to enrich their strategic partnership to promote the sustained and stable development of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries, he said.

Arroyo Vieyra said Mexico has consistently adhered to the one-China policy and respected China’s political system and development path, stressing that the two sides share broad consensus on major international issues and bilateral relations.

He believed that the good political relations between Mexico and China will surely promote continuous development of pragmatic cooperation in various fields.

A delegation headed by Qiang arrived here on Monday at the invitation of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party of Mexico —Xinhua

Afghan forces kill 14 Taliban including group commander

Kabul, 21 Feb — Afghan forces targeted Taliban hideouts and killed 14 militants including a group commander in the eastern Laghman Province 90 km east of the Afghan capital the Kabul city on Wednesday, Interior Ministry said.

“The security forces involving police and army targeted Taliban rebels in Gularam and Katasing villages outside provincial capital Mehterlan today during which 14 armed militants including their commander Qari Almas have been killed,” the statement asserted.

Qari Almas was involved in organizing anti-government activities in Mehterlan city and adjoining areas, the statement said. Adding Almas elimination is major setback to the militants operating in Laghman Province. Taliban militants have yet to make comment. —Xinhua

EU executive gets national budget vetting powers

Brussels, 21 Feb — The European Commission will check euro zone countries’ draft budgets to verify if they are in line with EU rules and will ask for changes if they are not, under a deal struck with the European Parliament.

After months of wrangling, EU lawmakers backed the new powers for the Commission, the EU executive, to further strengthen euro zone budget discipline and prevent another sovereign debt crisis.

The new law, called in EU jargon the “two-pack”, complements the existing budget rules, tightened at the end of 2011 through the introduction of swifter financial sanctions for those breaking debt limits and default.

It gives the Commission an extra level of oversight on member countries’ budgets. Governments of course are free to ignore the commission’s recommendations but risk EU legal action by doing so.

“When these new laws are a key element in building stronger economic governance for the euro area and boosting the EU’s armor against further economic crises,” European Parliament President Martin Schulz said.

Wednesday’s deal is expected to become law in March and will oblige euro zone governments to send draft budgets for the following year, based on independent economic forecasts, to the Commission before 15 October for verification.

“This will mean that the euro area can benefit from a more integrated and effective policy-setting framework already for the 2014 budgetary cycle,” the EU Economic and Monetary Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn said after the deal was reached.

Euro zone countries already agree, in a process that takes up the first six months of the year, on where their fiscal policy should be heading the following year. The Commission makes suggestions that must be approved by governments. The additional step of vetting draft national budgets in October before they are submitted to national parliaments for approval is meant to catch any divergences from what governments themselves had already agreed to earlier.

The new law will allow the Commission to put a country that is “threatened with financial difficulties” under strict surveillance. That means the government would be under an obligation to deal with the problems that led to the difficulties and entail quarterly reviews of its progress.

The agreement ends a long deadlock between the parliament and the Commission over the new legislation. Reuters

Ecuador’s President Rafael Correa speaks at the opening ceremony of the New Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Talabacita parish, about 20km (12.4 miles) northeast of Quito on 19 Feb, 2013. —Reuters

Ecuador’s Correa vows to make socialist revolution ‘irreversible’

quito, 21 Feb — Ecuador’s President Rafael Correa said his party likely won three-quarters of the seats in Congress in last weekend’s election and vowed on Wednesday to “steamroll” through reforms that will make his socialist model irreversible.

The 49-year-old economist was re-elected on Sunday with 57 percent of votes, some 34 percentage points more than the runner-up. During his six years in office, he has broad support with high spending on infrastructure and social welfare.

Results are still being compiled, but Correa said the ruling Alianza Pais party probably won about 73 percent of Congress’ 137 seats. That means he will be able to push through reforms, although he said he would respect different political opinions.

“This is going to be a legislative steamroller to serve the interests of the Ecuadorian people. ... In democracy, the winners rule, but the losers have to be respected,” he told foreign reporters at the presidential palace.

“We’re overwhelmed with the amount of support from people. ... We’re going to deepen the citizen’s revolution, build a new homeland and make it irreversible.”

Final results from Sunday’s and presidential votes are expected to be published in the coming days.

Correa first took office in 2007 vowing to increase revenue from the OPEC nation’s oil resources and cut debt obligations to fund spending on roads, hospitals and schools.

He also promised to press ahead with socialist reforms to empower the low-income majority and dismantle what he called an elitist system that controlled the state and neglected the poor.

He is also expected to pass a new mining law to ease investment terms that could pave the way for the development of some large and mid-sized projects that would let Ecuador diversify its economy away from a dependence on oil exports.

Correa said he did not want to play a leading role in the ALBA alliance of leftist Latin American presidents at a time when the bloc’s figurehead, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, has been silenced by his battle with cancer.

“No one is looking for anything for themselves,” he said, referring to other leftist presidents in the region, including Brazil’s Evo Morales. “We want to help people and if I can help by being Hugo’s chauffeur, that’s what I’ll do,” he said. Reuters
NASA loses regular communication with ISS

WASHINGTON, 21 Feb — The US space agency NASA announced on Tuesday that flight controllers lost regular communication with the International Space Station (ISS) in the morning, but the station was fine and the crew was doing well.

According to an alert from NASA, Houston’s Mission Control was updating software of the station’s onboard flight computers at 8:45 am EDT (1245 GMT) when one of the station’s data relay transmitters failed. Though a backup computer took over critical station functions from the primary computer, the station lost all communication, voice and command from Houston.

About an hour later, while flying over Russia, station commander Kevin Ford was able to briefly radio Moscow that everyone was well and they were working on the problem.

“This is the same way they used to do it in the 1960s, with Gemini and Apollo,” NASA spokesman Josh Byerly said. “The crew is working on this, and they’ll get it back up and running.” The ISS is carrying one American astronaut and two Russian cosmonauts, does not appear to be in danger. “It’s not a panicked mood that takes over mission control,” Byerly said. “Anybody who’s been here has seen this before.”

The ISS should be fixed later on Tuesday. Until then, astronauts can talk with Moscow control for a few minutes every 90 minutes.

Australian landscape soaked up one third of carbon emitted in 20 years

CANBERRA, 21 Feb — Australian landscape soaked up one third of the carbon emitted by fossil fuels in Australia over the past 20 years, a latest study from Australia’s top science institution CSIRO found recently.

The 3-year study, the Australian Terrestrial Carbon Budget, published this month in the journal Biogeosciences and outlined on Wednesday at the Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network symposium, Canberra. According to the findings, Australia exported 2.5 times more carbon in fossil fuels in 2009-2010 than was emitted from fossil fuels burned within Australia.

In the study, scientists quantified how much land carbon is lost or gained through plant and soil “breathing” in response to variable climate and rising carbon dioxide. Effects of fires, erosion and deforestation were also considered. All these processes together with fossil fuel emissions are critical to domestic carbon management and international reporting protocols.”

For Australia as a whole, increased exchanges of carbon dioxide has caused a per cent increase in plant production over the last two decades, relative to pre-industrial times,” Lead author Dr Vanessa Haverd said.

The study data will help the understanding of how carbon stored in the Australian landscape responds to climate variability—the swings between drought and flood. “It is important to know that carbon stored in the land during periods of high plant growth may disappear again during the next drought.”

US researchers discover biological marker of dyslexia

WASHINGTON, 21 Feb — US researchers have found a biological mechanism that appears to play an important role in dyslexia, a constellation of impairments unrelated to intelligence, hearing or vision that make learning to read a struggle for many children.

The researchers said that the results suggest that good readers profit from a stable neural representation of sound, and that stable neural responses are likely at a disadvantage when learning to read.

According to the researchers, the good news is that response consistency can be improved with auditory training.

Decades of research from laboratories worldwide have shown that reading ability is associated with auditory skills, including auditory memory and attention, the ability to rhyme sounds and the ability to suppress rapidly occurring sounds.

Cloud computing chance and challenge for big firms

Dubai, 21 Feb — Zaki Sabbagh, chief information officer (CIO) of Saudi Arabia’s Zamil Industrial Investment Company, said here on Tuesday that cloud computing enables small and medium enterprises (SMES) to operate like big players.

Speaking at the two-day Middle East CIO summit organized by global information technology (IT) research firm IDC, Sabbagh said Zamil Industrial Investment, as one of the largest Saudi industry conglomerates, started to implement cloud computing three years ago and the initiative needed another three years to complete the implementation. Zamil Industrial Investment is a stock-listed blue chip firm and employs 8,500 people in 55 countries.

Besides the time challenge, Sabbagh added that it will be crucial for big firms to deliver better services and increase the unique selling proposition “because SMES can provide the same IT-based services thanks to cloud computing and they need much less time for implementation in order to jump on the cloud wagon than a big market participant.” Cloud computing describes the use of hardware and software resources through a network, mostly the internet.

It advantages are increased economies of scale due to shared resources from many network participants. End-users can access cloud-based services through mobile and smart phone applications.

Whilst most companies do not have to hire new IT staff because cloud computing is mostly based on web-driven solutions, “a key challenge is to involve the entire company into the cloud computing scheme.”

Sony set to make pre-emptive strike on Microsoft with PS4

Tokyo, 21 Feb — Sony Corp is expected to showcase a new PlayStation console on Wednesday in a pre-emptive strike against Microsoft Corp’s bid to make its Xbox the world’s leading hub for household entertainment.

The rare PlayStation event in New York comes amid industry speculation that Microsoft is set to unveil the successor to its Xbox 360, which beats the seven-year-old PlayStation 3’s online network with features such as voice commands on interactive gaming and superior connectivity to smartphones and tablets.

“Their focus is on establishing a beachhead for the next generation of consoles, and that’s what 20 February is all about,” said PJ McNeely, CEO and founder of Digital World Research. “The reality is they have been playing catch-up.”

Pushing ahead of Microsoft’s Xbox and Nintendo Co Ltd’s new Wii U could help Sony revive an electronics business hurt by a dearth of hit gadgets, a collapse in TV sales and the al demand for smartphones and tablets.

Apple Inc and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd shipped 9.4 million phones, including 9 million smartphone, mainly in China where its smartphone business could not be profitable for the first time.

Yahoo co-founder Jerry Yang joins Lenovo board as observer

HONG KONG, 21 Feb — Lenovo Group said Yahoo! co-founder Jerry Yang is to join its board as an observer, as the world’s No 2 maker of PCs expands its mobile business to tap global demand for smartphones and tablets.

Yang, who co-founded Yahoo! in April 1995 and served as chief executive from June 2007 to January 2009, will not be able to vote or have any of the other rights of a director, Lenovo said on Wednesday.

The Hong Kong-listed company will pay Yang $61,875 per year and offer equity rights with a value of $135,000 in return for attending board meetings and providing views.

Yang, 44, resigned from Yahoo’s board last year when he also stepped down from the boards of Alibaba Group Holding and Yahoo! Japan.

Lenovo, the second-biggest smartphone vendor in China, is stepping up its expansion in the business. In its October-December quarter third quarter. Lenovo shipped 9.4 million phones, including 9 million smartphone, mainly in China where its smartphone business was profitable for the first time.

A man looks at Sony Corp products at an electronics store in Tokyo on 25 Dec, 2012. — REUTERs

Cloud computing chance and challenge for big firms

Dubai, 21 Feb — Zaki Sabbagh, chief information officer (CIO) of Saudi Arabia’s Zamil Industrial Investment Company, said here on Tuesday that cloud computing enables small and medium enterprises (SMES) to operate like big players.

Speaking at the two-day Middle East CIO summit organized by global information technology (IT) research firm IDC, Sabbagh said Zamil Industrial Investment, as one of the largest Saudi industry conglomerates, started to implement cloud computing three years ago and the time needed another three years to complete the implementation. Zamil Industrial Investment is a stock-listed blue chip firm and employs 8,500 people in 55 countries.

Besides the time challenge, Sabbagh added that it will be crucial for big firms to deliver better services and increase the unique selling proposition “because SMES can provide the same IT-based services thanks to cloud computing and they need much less time for implementation in order to jump on the cloud wagon than a big market participant.” Cloud computing describes the use of hardware and software resources through a network, mostly the internet.

It advantages are increased economies of scale due to shared resources from many network participants. End-users can access cloud-based services through mobile and smart phone applications.

Whilst most companies do not have to hire new IT staff because cloud computing is mostly based on web-driven solutions, “a key challenge is to involve the entire company into the cloud computing scheme.”

Sony set to make pre-emptive strike on Microsoft with PS4

Tokyo, 21 Feb — Sony Corp is expected to showcase a new PlayStation console on Wednesday in a pre-emptive strike against Microsoft Corp’s bid to make its Xbox the world’s leading hub for household entertainment.

The rare PlayStation event in New York comes amid industry speculation that Microsoft is set to unveil the successor to its Xbox 360, which beats the seven-year-old PlayStation 3’s online network with features such as voice commands on interactive gaming and superior connectivity to smartphones and tablets.

“Their focus is on establishing a beachhead for the next generation of consoles, and that’s what 20 February is all about,” said PJ McNeely, CEO and founder of Digital World Research. “The reality is they have been playing catch-up.”

Pushing ahead of Microsoft’s Xbox and Nintendo Co Ltd’s new Wii U could help Sony revive an electronics business hurt by a dearth of hit gadgets, a collapse in TV sales and the al demand for smartphones and tablets.

Apple Inc and Samsung Electronics Co Ltd shipped 9.4 million phones, including 9 million smartphone, mainly in China where its smartphone business was profitable for the first time.
The WIG20 index is seen reflected in clocks showing the time of the different cities in the world at the Warsaw Stock Exchange on 3 Jan, 2013. — Reuters

A man works in his shop selling pork products in Shanghai on 28 Sept, 2007.— Reuters

Federation spokesman told Reuters, the reasons for China’s timing and motives for additional verification on the ractopamine additive were unclear, but still speculation ranging from a political agenda to protection of that country’s pork industry.

The move by China, the world’s biggest producer and consumer of the meat and the third-largest market for US pork, baffled analysts since Beijing has not recently reported finding ractopamine in any pork from the United States. The step does, however, come on the heels of Russia

China seeks extra testing of US pork for feed additive

ChICAGO, 21 Feb — China wants a third party to verify beginning on 1 March that US pork shipped to the country is free of a feed additive used to promote lean muscle growth, a US Meat Export economist at Capital Economics. The pound slumped to an 8 1/2-month low against the dollar of $1.5336, while the yen gained to a near 16-month high of 87.565 pence, up almost 0.9 percent. Britain’s main FTSE 100 stock index .FTSE jumped 0.4 percent to 6,401.79 points, a fresh five-year high and above the 6,400 psychological level that some traders said could induce bigger moves higher.

The gains offset slightly weaker levels across other European markets to lift the MSCI World Equity index by 0.25 percent to its highest level since 2008.MIW.D000001PS. Global share markets had surged on Tuesday after forecast-beating German sentiment data pointed to an accelerating recovery in Europe’s largest economy and a rise in merger activity in the United States encouraged buyers on Wall Street.

China has also been notified (by US suppliers) and are checking whether the region’s recovery is taking hold. “Our goal throughout this entire process was to make sure SPEEA-represented employees were rewarded for the contributions they bring to this company every single day,” said Ray Goforth, executive director of SPEEA, in a statement.

Boeing engineers split on contract, talks to resume

Boeing engineers split on contract, talks to resume

Seattle, 21 Feb — The largest group of engineers working at Boeing Co approved the planemaker’s latest contract offer in a vote on Tuesday, likely paving the way for a full agreement as Boeing attempts to focus its resources on fixing battery problems on its 787 Dreamliner. However, members of the union representing about 23,000 engineers also authorized it to call a strike, giving the union some leverage as parties head back toward negotiations.

According to the Seattle-based Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), its “professional” members — who perform the main engineering duties on Boeing planes — voted narrowly in favour of accepting the contract, while a smaller group of “technical” members — who support the engineers — voted to reject it. The union groups voted in favour of authorizing the union to call a strike.

The groups negotiate together, but their contracts are separate. The partial resolution of the draw-

SIXING, 19 Dec — China’s agriculture ministry was unaware of the combination.

China’s timing and motives for adding another regulatory barrier to acquire the Chinese company and European regulators, as well as concerns from US suppliers about ractopamine, despite scientific evidence that it is safe. The United Nations has agreed on acceptable regulatory requirements, including competition approvals in Europe.

The quarantine bureau in May rejected a consignment of US pork after tests found traces of the drug. Steve Meyer, president of Iowa-based Paragon Economics, said: “My guess is they are trying to protect the domestic industry. They are trying to throw up roadblocks. That is always a possibility when you are dealing with Russia and China.” He said that any move by China to ban pork imports from the United States would benefit exporters such as Canada, Brazil and the European Union.

ICE, NYSE closer to combination

New York, 21 Feb — Leading commodity exchange IntercontinentalExchange (ICE) has made through a regulatory barrier to acquire NYSE Euronext. The two companies on Tuesday announced the expiration of the waiting period under the Hart-Scott-Rodino (HSR) Antitrust Improvements Act in connection with the proposed combination of the two companies.

According to the New York Stock Exchange, its proposal to buy Paragon was not yet labelled as an ‘acquisition’ by the US authorities, but analysts generally believe the deal of ICE and NYSE
Egypt adopts new tactic in curbing Gaza tunnels

GAZA, 21 Feb—The tunnels area on Gaza’s southern border with Egypt was lively and busy with trucks mostly loaded with construction materials and food making their way through the unpaved roads out. But smugglers said Egyptian security forces have started closing some tunnels with new tactics flooding them with waste water, noting that dozens of underground passages were flooded with sewage water, causing severe damage that takes weeks to be repaired.

Ahmed Barhoum, a resident of the Rafah border town, noted that the Egyptian crackdown focused on the neighbourhoods of al-Salam and al-Barazil, to the west of Rafah crossing point.

The Egyptian army and security forces flooded the tunnels with waste water last week, according to the residents and tunnels owners who live near the borders.

Mr. Abu el-Bara’a, 41, who owns a tunnel used to bring in cement and gravel, said his tunnel was swamped with sewage water, but he did not give up. “From our side, we used our own pumps to get the waste and sewage water out,” he said.

“If Egypt and Israel destroy the tunnels, we will dig more new tunnels,” he said.

Asking about the easing of the Israeli blockade, the smuggler said they are not satisfied. “We won’t stop until Israel and Egypt lift the siege completely,” he said.—Xinhua

Roadside bomb kills two Afghan police, wounds one

ASSADABAD, 21 Feb—Two personnel of Afghan Border Police Force were killed and another sustained injuries as a roadside bomb struck a police van in Kunar Province, 185 km east of Kabul on Wednesday, a local official said.

“A mine planted by militants on a road in Nari District, struck a vehicle of Border Police Force at 09:00 am local time today as a result two personnel were killed and another sustained injuries,” border police officer Ayub Hussainkhil told Xinhua.

Taleban militants who have been fighting the government and largely relying on suicide and roadside bombings have yet to claim responsibility.—Xinhua

France calls on nationals to immediately quit northern Cameroon

PARIS, 21 Feb—French Foreign Ministry on Wednesday urged French nationals to leave northern Cameroon area where seven French tourists have been kidnapped a day before “as soon as possible.”

“It’s essential that French nationals who are currently in the far north of Cameroon to move to a safe place and leave the area as soon as possible,” the ministry said.

The Quai d’Orsay also recommended French tourists to avoid northern parts of Cameroon near the Nigerian border until further notice.

On Tuesday, seven French expatriates including four children who ab ducted by a group of armed men on motorbikes near the Waza national park and Lake Chad where Westerners used to visit during holidays.

French President Francois Hollande said the French captives were held by a Nigerian-based “terrorist group” known to French authorities and the militant organization had taken the hostages towards Nigeria. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius, meanwhile, pointed the finger to the Islamist group Boko Haram to be behind Cameroon hostage taking.—Xinhua

Australia to expand ties with Laos

VIENTIANE, 21 Feb—Australia’s Foreign Minister Bob Carr wrapped up meetings with senior Lao ministers in Laos’ capital city of Vientiane on Wednesday, agreeing to deepen economic and political ties between the two countries.

During his four-day stay he met with his Lao counterpart Thongloun Sisoulith. After their talks, Sisoulith told a Press conference that both sides had discussed a broad range of issues and their extended cooperation and good relations were highly valued, according to state-run newspaper Vientiane Times.

The Australian delegation said they were pleased to continue their support of Laos’ education, sustainable growth in trade and investment, rural development, clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO), and infrastructure development in rural communities.

Laos, one of South East Asia’s least developed nations, is expected to receive just under 50 million US dollars in aid from Australia over 2012-2013.

On Wednesday Carr also announced that Australia would provide around 5.5 million US dollars to support UXO clearance efforts, as well as mine risk education, and survivor assistance.

This additional aid is expected to help in the clearance of around 2,500 hectares of land which could then be used for agriculture and transportation.

Carr also announced a second Trade Development Facility for Laos, which would be designed to streamline trade regulatory frameworks, stimulate investment and create jobs.

This would come as part of a wider plan to stimulate further engagement from the Australian business sector in Laos. After the meetings Bob Carr said, “this new round of Australian funding for the Trade Development Facility (TDF) is expected to halve the time taken to clear exports and imports through customs and halve the number of days taken to get an import licence,” according to an AUSAID Press release.

Carr and Sisoulith also discussed Australia’s priorities as a member of the UN Security Council, Laos’ accession to the World Trade Organization, and Australia’s aid contributions to Laos.—Xinhua

Ukraine to resume gas imports from Turkmenistan in 2013

KIEV, 21 Feb—Ukraine plans to resume imports of natural gas from Turkmenistan to ease a dependence on expensive Russian supply, a senior Ukrainian official said on Wednesday.

“We want to restart natural gas deliveries from Turkmenistan this year,” Energy and Coal Industry Minister Eduard Stavytsky told a Press conference.

Ukraine plans to buy 30-36 billion cubic meters of gas from Turkmenistan in 2013, Stavytsky said.

Turkmenistan supplied Ukraine with around 36 billion cubic meters of gas annually until 2006 when Ukraine switched over to Russian gas.

Currently, Kiev is seeking to slash gas imports from its northern neighbour, an intention that Moscow said violates their energy deal signed in 2009.

Under their contract, Ukraine agreed to buy 52 billion cubic metres of gas per year or pay for a minimum of 80 percent of that volume, regardless of the actual amount taken.

Kiev, which currently pays 432 US dollars per 1,000 cubic meters of gas, is reported to have imported 24.9 billion cubic meters from Russia last year.

Russia on 25 January demanded that Ukraine pay 7 billion dollars for failing to import the contracted amount of gas.—Xinhua

Tourists visit the Huangshan Mountain scenic area after a snow in east China’s Anhui Province, on 20 Feb, 2013. Xinhua
**NATIONAL**

**Myanmar, Serbia to promote cooperation in education, culture and economy**

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—Minister of Serbia Mr Ivan Mrkic received a delegation led by Foreign Affairs Minister of Serbia Mr Ivan Mrkic at Zabuthiri Hall in Hluttaw Building, here, this evening.

At the meeting, both sides had an ad hoc discussion on further promoting amity between two governments, parliaments and peoples, cooperation in the sectors of education, culture and economy and Myanmar’s political and economic reforms and democratization process.

Rehabilitation tasks in Rakhine, Kachin and Kayin States discussed

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin held a discussion with a delegation led by Mr George Rupp, Chairman of International Rescue Committee (IRC) led by Mr George Rupp, Chairman of International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo, secretaries Dr Soe Yin and U Maung Toe and officials from Hluttaw Office.—MNA

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets Indian Ambassador

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—Indian Ambassador to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Dr V S Seshadri who has completed his tour of duty paid a call on Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing at Zeyathiri Beikman, here, at 10 am today.

Both sides frankly discussed bilateral cooperation between the two countries and between the two armed forces.

Also present at the call together with Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General were Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Khan Aung Myint and Lt-Gen Kyaw Swe from office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army). The delegation was accompanied by Military Attaché Col-Rajesh Kumar.

After the meeting, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing presented gift to the Indian Ambassador.—MNA

Judges, judicial officers take oaths

Yangon, 21 Feb—Oath-taking ceremonies of judges and judicial officers from Yangon Region High Court and district courts and district-level judges from refresher course No.5/2012, township-level judges and judicial officers took place at Yangon Region High Court yesterday morning and afternoon.

At the ceremony, Chief Justice of Yangon Region Hlaing presented gifts to the course instructors.

**LOCAL NEWS**

Construction of self-reliant library coordinated

Toungoo, 21 Feb—a coordination meeting on construction of self-reliant library was held at the hall of administrative office in Ward 11 in Toungoo on 12 February.

Ward elders made speeches.

Conflict news writing course conducted in Lashio

Lashio, 21 Feb—The Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC) and International Media Support (IMS) jointly conducted the conflict news writing course at Golden Hill Hotel in Lashio on 11 February.

Course instructor Binod Bhattachar discharging Lecturer at ACE Management University of Nepal provide economic news writing and management subject and Myanmar journalists U Myint Kyaw and Daw Tin Zat Zaw gave lectures to the trainees. Altogether 21 journalists from Shan State (North) attended the three-day course.

Work efficiency course conducted

Mandalay, 21 Feb—Chanayethazan Township General Administration Department of Mandalay Region opened the work efficiency course for ward administrators at its office from 28 January to 8 February, attended by 20 ward administrators and 19 clerks.

The concluding ceremony of the work efficiency course was held at the meeting hall of the department at 2 pm on 13 February. At first, Township Administrator gave a speech and presented certificates to the trainees.

Later, officials presented gifts to the course instructors.

Aid presented to displaced persons

Myitkyina, 21 Feb—A ceremony to donate 971 items of supplies worth K 15.26 million donated by Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and 503 sets of family kit and kitchen sets by Kachin State Red Cross Society were distributed to displaced persons of Phukant Township from 7 to 10 February.

Kyaunggon dwellers donate blood sixth time

Kyaunggon, 21 Feb—Kyaunggon Blood Donors Association of Kyaunggon held the sixth blood donation at the national blood centre of Yangon General Hospital. Administrator U Aung Lwin gave a speech and presented certificates to the trainees.

Later, officials presented gifts to the course instructors.

Myanmar Alinn
Quality health care

Health is very precious one for our human beings. If we have money, we can buy everything we want, but healthy life. Everybody wants to enjoy healthy life. Both mental health and physical health are crucial for our human beings. Everybody wants to live longer without any physical and mental illness. The country should have better health care system. We can measure the health standard of a country by the different parameters. In doing so, it needs to review its overall system.

The majority of the people is used to review it based on their practical experience, mostly on health care service they receive. Here, the quality of care is of prime importance. The problem Myanmar is now facing is the shortage of quality doctors.

There is no balanced ratio of patients and doctors. While there is weakness in the quality of care, diagnostic tests are poor. We frequently hear the news that medical check-up results are wrong. These days, private hospitals are mushrooming one after another.

But the majority has no access to them because of high costs. Only the rich can receive medical treatment there. Everybody should have access to social security system. People from grass-roots level cannot afford to go to such special clinics and hospitals. And they have to rely on the government hospitals. So, these hospitals should give quality health care to people with low costs. Now the country is on the track to democracy. We can build up the country only with healthy person. Everybody wants to live longer without any physical and mental illness. The country should have better health care system. We can measure the health standard of a country by the different parameters. In doing so, it needs to review its overall system.

The majority of the people is used to review it based on their practical experience, mostly on health care service they receive. Here, the quality of care is of prime importance. The problem Myanmar is now facing is the shortage of quality doctors.

There is no balanced ratio of patients and doctors. While there is weakness in the quality of care, diagnostic tests are poor. We frequently hear the news that medical check-up results are wrong. These days, private hospitals are mushrooming one after another.

But the majority has no access to them because of high costs. Only the rich can receive medical treatment there. Everybody should have access to social security system. People from grass-roots level cannot afford to go to such special clinics and hospitals. And they have to rely on the government hospitals. So, these hospitals should give quality health care to people with low costs. Now the country is on the track to democracy. We can build up the country only with healthy person.
Local energy demand expected to increase steadily till 2015, deputy energy minister

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—Local demand of crude oil is estimated to increase by 7.3 percent yearly and that of natural gas by 4.5 percent up to 2015-2016 FY, Deputy Minister for Energy U Htin Aung said at today’s Pyithu Hluttaw regular session in his answer to U Kyi Tha of Gwa Constituency.

The MP said the number of vehicles would be doubled in 2015 with 13 cars in each 10,000 citizens, pointing out the need of more fuel supply.

The deputy minister said the ministry is seeking alternative energy sources to satisfy the growing demand.

The country’s current energy demand per day is 750,000 barrels of crude oil and about 500-600 cubic feet of natural gas, he added.

Bids have been invited for 18 petroleum blocks since 17 January and joint ventures would be formed with international energy companies, the deputy minister updated the parliament on the ministry’s bid for energy sufficiency.

Tenders for new liquefied petroleum gas ports have been invited on 3 February through dailies.

He said, “The utilization of firewood and coal will be reduced by 58 percent by 2020 and 46 percent by 2030.”

A National Energy Security Strategy will be drafted by National Energy Management Committee headed by the Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the deputy minister added.

Deputy Industry Minister U Thein Aung responded to questions.

No plan to build nuclear power plant: Dy EP Minister

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—Seven representatives held discussions on the proposal on urging the Union government to implement power generation from atomic energy in Myanmar as the country is not only a ASEAN member country as well as IAEA member, which is submitted by Dr Myint Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency No.8, at the 18th day session of Amyotha Hluttaw.

“Japan and the Republic of Korea have reached the developed countries status thanks to power generation from nuclear power plants. Myanmar should have at least one nuclear power plant by taking the examples of other countries,” said U Win Naung of Yangon Region Constituency No.5.

U Hla Swe of Magway Region Constituency No.12 pointed out that Myanmar should build a nuclear power plant so as to have static electric power and to keep abreast of neighbouring countries. In the long run, it has cost-effectiveness. And it should be implemented as quickly as possible.

Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Aung Than Oosadait that although Myanmar has hydropower, wind power and other renewable energy sources, building up a industrialized country might face difficulties in fulfilling high power demand in the long-run. Preliminary study should be conducted for construction of nuclear power plant although there is no plan to build a nuclear power plant at present. That proposal was rejected with 29 “Yes” votes and 110 “No” votes.

“It is not right time to carry out power generation power from atomic energy. Priority should be given to establishment of industries and businesses and creation of job opportunities as it can cost a lot. Research on renewable energy and other energy sources should be conducted,” said U Tin Maung Win of Mandalay Region Constituency No.3.

Dr Myint Kyi said that he submitted that proposal assuming that it can contribute much towards political and economic development of the country.

With regard to the question of U Saw Taw Pa Lae of Kayin State Constituency No.7 on Thunkhaykhat (1) hydro-power project, Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Myint Zaw replied that the ministry has no plan to implement Thunkhaykhat (1) hydro-power project at present. The meeting continues at 10 am tomorrow.

Union Attorney-General receives US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—US Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labour Mr Michael Posner and party paid a call on Union Attorney-General Dr Tun Shin, at the hall of the Union Attorney-General Office, here, this morning.

At the meeting, Mr Michael Posner asked measures for the rule of law in Myanmar. The Union Attorney-General elaborated on duties of the Union Attorney-General’s Office, supervision of Region/State Advocate-General Offices and protecting people’s rights with five writs under the Constitution. They held a discussion on human rights convention that includes in Universal Periodic Review and private law.

This is another step for... (from page 16)

NLM: Why the opium yield survey is important?

MT: Well, as there is the illicit drug problem, there is also the opium yield survey, and that is the main point. The survey will help expose the root cause. So, we will have the data on the opium poppy cultivation, the largest opium poppy cultivation areas, and per acre yield. Based on this data, we will find better ways to combat and eradicate the problem. CDDAC cannot do the job alone. Demand reduction in other countries is also required. And there must be the cooperation of our people.

NLM: Any more information for the readers?

MT: We had already conducted joint opium yield surveys for ten times with the US. Anyhow, the work was suspended after 2004. Now we have resumed the work. We hope we will have more such cooperation in the future.

NLM: As a MOFA official what is your message for the people?

HL: As our minister stated in his speech, the resumption of the bilateral cooperation with US is an encouraging sign. This anti-drug cooperation will lead to broader relations and deeper friendship between the two countries. This is my belief.
Serbian parliamentary group visits Chinese Embassy in Belgrade

BELGRADE, 21 Feb — The group of Serbian-Chinese friendship of Serbian Parliament visited Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on Wednesday, and they attended a cocktail under invitation by Ambassador Zhang Wanxue.

The visit was arranged as the friendship group has recently doubled its size to enhance links with China, said Zhang.

"I wish to use this opportunity to thank you on your untiring work and significant contribution to bilateral relations of Serbia and China," said the ambassador. Parliament Speaker Nebojsa Stefanovic surprised his colleagues and embassy staff when he has thanked Zhang in Chinese language.

"I personally plan to continue learning Chinese, and I think that every man who wishes to progress should learn as much as possible China is one of the most important countries in the world," he said.

"We wish to reinforce our culture cooperation to promote learning of Chinese language in Serbia, but also greater presence of Serbian language in China," said Stefanovic.


Brazil, Russia enhance ties in defence, agriculture

BRASILIA, 21 Feb — Brazil and Russia agreed on Wednesday to negotiate the purchase of Russia's anti-aircraft defence systems, jointly develop defence products and transfer technology to Brazilian defence companies without restrictions. The agreement was reached during the talks between Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and visiting Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev, who arrived in Brazil on Wednesday for a three-day visit.

Brazil is interested in buying Russia's medium-range surface-to-air Pantir-S1 combined missile and artillery batteries and Igla-S shoulder-launched missiles, in part to beef up security during the World Cup soccer tournament next year and the 2016 Olympic Games. Contract negotiations are expected to begin in March.

The two countries have sought to deepen defence cooperation since they signed a Strategic Partnership Action Plan in December during Rousseff's visit to Moscow. Under the document, Brazil and Russia will strengthen cooperation in defence industry and training while setting up partnership for the purchase of defence systems.

During their talks on Wednesday, the two leaders also agreed to exchange information on organizing major sporting events. Russia is to host 2014 Winter Olympics and the World Cup in 2018.

In addition, Russia agreed to collaborate with Brazil's "Science Without Borders" scholarship programme by opening slots in graduate and post-graduate courses for Brazilian students in Russia.

On agriculture, the two countries sealed two agreements to eliminate trade barriers for Brazil to sell soy bran for animal feed in Russia and establish phytosanitary measures for Russian wheat exports to Brazil.

During their talks, Medvedev and Rousseff also discussed the ongoing global financial crisis and the political unrest in Syria, according to official sources from the Brazilian presidency.


Twelve European foreign ministers meet in Poland on cooperation

WARSAW, 21 Feb — Twelve foreign ministers of the Visegrad Group countries, the Baltic States and the Nordic countries met in Gdansk (North Poland), the Polish foreign minister said in a Press release on Wednesday.

According to local media reports, the meeting was to combat the economic crisis and ways of making Europe more competitive in the world and the Eastern Partnership agenda.

The Wednesday meeting in Gdansk was attended by foreign ministers of the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, and Sweden.

Poland Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said they are a very diverse group of countries but they have common interests.

Sikorski also said that the course of the debate proved that this is a good formula. The present financial perspective will finally allow them to implement what Central European leaders have outlined in Visegrad centuries ago — the building of north-south infrastructural and transport links.

During the meeting, the ministers also discussed the Eastern Partnership programme.

Sikorski said that the year 2013 may prove to be groundbreaking for the Partnership. He hopes that they will sign an association agreement with Ukraine and possibly end negotiations of agreements with three other Partnership countries Moldova, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The Eastern Partnership programme embraces Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

Sweden’s Foreign Minister Bildt assessed that the implementation of the Eastern partnership is difficult due to the diversity of the states covered by the programme.

They will help those countries to modernize their economies. Under the certain conditions—the countries involved must be governed by rule of law, open to the world and follow values observed in the EU.


Capital to expand public transportation

BEIJING, 21 Feb — Beijing is planning to further develop its public transport network, and 64 percent of the country will be opened to travel by subway and bus this year, authorities said. In 2012, more than 20 million daily journeys were made by public transport in the capital, and 44 percent of commuters used public transportation, according to the Beijing Commission of Transport.

The proportion was the highest in the country in 2012, and it is expected to reach 50 percent in 2015, Beijing Daily reported on 5 December. However, during bad weather and holidays, Beijing’s traffic system often experiences delays.

The traffic congestion index within the Fifth Ring Road, Beijing’s inner most area, will not rise above 5 in 2013, the commission said on Wednesday in a statement. The index, introduced in 2007, indicates the general traffic situation with a number from 0 to 10, with 10 indicating the heaviest traffic. On 28 December, snow caused heavy traffic on city roads in the late afternoon, and by 6 pm the traffic index within the Fifth Ring Road reached 9.5.

To ease traffic congestion, Beijing will develop a rapid public transport network of more than 600 km including subway lines and a bus system, the commission said.

Tong Lahong, a manager at Beijing MTR Construction Administration Corp, said on Wednesday that at the end of 2013, extensions of lines 8 and 14 and a connection line between Line 8 and Changping Line will be opened.

Construction of the last two stations of Line 10 is scheduled to be completed in May, making Beijing’s second subway loop line and the longest in the city, Tong said.

According to Beijing Commission of Transport, the capital now has 442 km of subway lines, the longest in China. By the end of 2013, the length will reach 465 km. To make public transportation more attractive, Beijing will continue to develop park-and-ride lots, with up to 10,000 spaces for vehicles.

According to the plan, the parking lots will be mainly located around subway stations in the rural urban fringe zones, allowing passengers to transfer to cars they have parked near the new stations.

In 2013, the capital will also develop short community bus lines as well as high-end bus lines for private-vehicle owners and business people, the commission said.


US Secretary of State John Kerry speaks at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, on 20 Feb, 2013. He stressed the importance of extending overseas aid in his first public speech.—Xinhua

Texas college evacuated over bomb threat

HOUSTON, 21 Feb — A college in the US state of Texas issued a Code Maroon alert and closed a stadium and adjacent facilities on Wednesday after receiving a bomb threat. Texas A&M University at College Station, Texas, said on its website on Wednesday that university authorities were notified of a "credible" threat on 10:50 am that a threat was "written on a wall of a non-academic facility on campus."

"An investigation was launched immediately, and a Code Maroon emergency message was subsequently issued," the university said.

Approximately 700 people were evacuated from Kyle Field, Reed Building, G Rollie White, Neetum Stree, and the Bright Athletics complex, and those evacuated buildings will "remain closed the rest of the day," it said.

Texas A&M University continues to investigate the incident, and federal agencies have been contacted to aid in the on-going investigation, the school said.

Code Maroon is the university’s emergency notification system, which uses multiple methods of contacting students, faculty and the community.
**REGIONAL**

**China to close over 5,000 non-coal mines in 2013**

**BEIJING, 21 Feb—** China’s safety watchdog said on Wednesday it will suspend or shut down operations in over 5,000 non-coal mines that do not meet safety standards this year.

The government will take steps to reduce accidents in non-coal mines and keep the death toll below 900 this year, according to a document released on Wednesday by the State Administration of Work Safety.

The administration said it will order mines to enhance safety measures, improve their emergency response mechanisms and build monitoring systems.

China’s hundreds of thousands of non-coal mines, most of which are operated at a small scale with poor safety conditions, are major targets of work safety campaigns.

To further regulate the sector, the administration said it will work with related departments to create policies stipulating operating standards, including minimum operation scales. —Xinhua

**Korea to raise natural gas prices by 4.4 pct**

**SEOUL, 21 Feb.—** South Korea planned to raise prices of natural gas used by households and industries by 4.4 percent on average this week as debts of the state-run gas supplier increased amid a hike in costs of materials, the economy ministry said on Wednesday.

Prices of natural gas for household heating and cooking will rise by 4.3 percent, while those for industrial use will be hiked by 4.6 percent, according to the Ministry of Knowledge Economy.

The hike will be effective from 22 February.

Korea Gas Corp (KOGAS), the state-run gas provider, was in a financial distress as the gas prices have been frozen since July 2012 to help stabilize consumer prices. KOGAS’s debt-to-equity ratio increased from 397 percent last year from 348 percent a year before.

The ministry said the hike was made to reflect rising costs of materials and sustain financial healthiness of the gas supplier, forecasting that it will lift the monthly gas bill of each household by 1,127 won (1.05 US dollar).

The Knowledge Economy Ministry approved a request from the state-run Korea Electric Power Corp (KEPCO) to hike electricity rates by an average 4 percent in early January.

The move was estimated to life the consumer price inflation by 0.04 percent growth and the producer price growth by 0.105 percent-

The country’s producer prices rebounded 0.2 percent in January from a month earlier after falling 0.3 percent in the prior month due to the hike in electricity prices. —Xinhua

**Missile destroyer Harbin (R) sail close to the supply ship Weishanhu at South China Sea,** 20 Feb, 2013. The supply ship Weishanhu reinforced the missile destroyer Harbin and the frigate Mianyang on Wednesday with fuel, fresh water and other materials. The 14th naval squad, sent by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy, departed Saturday from China to the Gulf of Aden and Somali waters to escort missions. The fleet comprises three ships—the missile destroyer Harbin, the frigate Mianyang and the supply ship Weishanhu—carrying two helicopters and a 730-strong troop. —Xinhua

**Cambodia’s listed water supplier records revenue up 25 pct last year**

**PHnom Penh, 21 Feb.—** The listed Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA) earned total revenues of 36.9 million US dollars in 2012, up 25 percent year-on-year, according to the firm’s unaudited financial statement on Wednesday.

The report said that the firm’s net income after tax was 8.56 million US dollars last year, a 39 percent rise from 6.16 million US dollars in a year earlier.

Speaking during the 1st annual meeting of the PPWSA on Wednesday, the firm’s chairman Meng Saktheara said the remarkable growth in revenue was attributed to good management and increase in water supply to customers. The firm predicted that it would make revenue of about 37.5 million US dollars in 2013.

The PPWSA is a state-owned enterprise. —Xinhua

**Vietnam ranks 7th worldwide in overseas remittances last year**

**HANOI, 21 Feb.—** Vietnam ranks 7th in the world in overseas remittances in 2012 when the country received over 10 billion US dollars, reported local Viet Nam News on Wednesday quoting sources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Since 1991, overseas remittances to Vietnam have contributed 60 percent to 70 percent of the country’s foreign capital inflows, which contributed to the national economic development, supported foreign exchange rate stability and increased foreign currency reserves, said the report.

According to the Vietnam State Commission for Overseas Vietnamese Affairs, the remittances were sent home by over 4 million Vietnamese people living in more than 100 countries and territories worldwide.

A large proportion of remittances came from 400,000 Vietnamese guest workers working mostly in Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, China’s Taiwan, the Middle East, the United States and Europe.

Overseas remittances to Vietnam in 2012 hit a four-year record high, with an increase of over 10 percent year on year, reported the commission. —Xinhua

**China’s top microblog site boasts 500 mln users**

**BEIJING, 21 Feb—** Sina Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, had attracted over 500 million users by the end of 2012, a year-on-year increase of 74 percent, Sina Corp announced on Wednesday.

Sina Weibo’s active daily users have exceeded 46.2 million, the company said.

The site’s revenues totaled 665 million US dollars in 2012, of which 23 percent came from surging advertising income from value-added services.

The other 77 percent came from advertising, the revenues of which exceeded 50 million US dollars.

The company plans to further improve its user experience and expand its services while veering its focus to mobile Internet, said Cao Guowei, CEO and president of Sina.

Some 75 percent of Sina Weibo’s active users log in using mobile devices.

Sina also issued financial reports for the last quarter and full fiscal year of 2012 on Wednesday, showing that its net revenues hit 529.3 million US dollars with a year-on-year increase of 10 percent.

—Xinhua

**Vietnamese top legislator meets with IPU Secretary General in Hanoi**

**HANOI, 21 Feb—** The Vietnamese National Assembly will try its utmost to meet all requirements and successfully host the General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2015.

The statement was made here on Wednesday by Vietnamese top legislator, NA Chairman Nguyen Sinh Hung, at his reception for IPU Secretary General Anders B Johnsson during the latter’s visit to Vietnam.

While warming well coming the visit by IPU official the first foreign guest to Vietnam in the traditional lunar New Year, Hung informed the guest of the country’s situation in various areas.

Hung said that in recent years, Vietnam has maintained stable politics, security and national defence.

The Vietnamese National Assembly has implemented renewals in forms and contents of its activities towards promoting democracy, perfecting legal system and strengthening the law-governed principles. It has performed well as a representative of the people, ensuring gender equality and better protecting the human rights.

Hung also highly evaluated the role and achievements that the IPU has achieved in promoting democracy throughout the world, as well as supporting parliaments in handling challenges during their development.

—Xinhua

**Chinese economy has achieved in promoting human rights.**

—Xinhua

**China’s top microblog site boasts 500 mln users**

**BEIJING, 21 Feb—** Sina Weibo, the Chinese equivalent of Twitter, had attracted over 500 million users by the end of 2012, a year-on-year increase of 74 percent, Sina Corp announced on Wednesday.

Sina Weibo’s active daily users have exceeded 46.2 million, the company said.

The site’s revenues totaled 665 million US dollars in 2012, of which 23 percent came from surging advertising income from value-added services.

The other 77 percent came from advertising, the revenues of which exceeded 50 million US dollars.

The company plans to further improve its user experience and expand its services while veering its focus to mobile Internet, said Cao Guowei, CEO and president of Sina.

Some 75 percent of Sina Weibo’s active users log in using mobile devices.

Sina also issued financial reports for the last quarter and full fiscal year of 2012 on Wednesday, showing that its net revenues hit 529.3 million US dollars with a year-on-year increase of 10 percent.

—Xinhua

**Vietnamese top legislator meets with IPU Secretary General in Hanoi**

**HANOI, 21 Feb—** The Vietnamese National Assembly will try its utmost to meet all requirements and successfully host the General Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 2015.

The statement was made here on Wednesday by Vietnamese top legislator, NA Chairman Nguyen Sinh Hung, at his reception for IPU Secretary General Anders B Johnsson during the latter’s visit to Vietnam.

While welcoming well coming the visit by IPU official the first foreign guest to Vietnam in the traditional lunar New Year, Hung informed the guest of the country’s situation in various areas.

Hung said that in recent years, Vietnam has maintained stable politics, security and national defence. The Vietnamese National Assembly has implemented renewals in forms and contents of its activities towards promoting democracy, perfecting legal system and strengthening the law-governed principles. It has performed well as a representative of the people, ensuring gender equality and better protecting the human rights.

Hung also highly evaluated the role and achievements that the IPU has achieved in promoting democracy throughout the world, as well as supporting parliaments in handling challenges during their development.

—Xinhua

**Cambodia’s listed water supplier records revenue up 25 pct last year**

**PHnom Penh, 21 Feb.—** The listed Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA) earned total revenues of 36.9 million US dollars in 2012, up 25 percent year-on-year, according to the firm’s unaudited financial statement on Wednesday.

The report said that the firm’s net income after tax was 8.56 million US dollars last year, a 39 percent rise from 6.16 million US dollars in a year earlier. Speaking during the 1st annual meeting of the PPWSA on Wednesday, the firm’s chairman Meng Saktheara said the remarkable growth in revenue was attributed to good management and increase in water supply to customers. The firm predicted that it would make revenue of about 37.5 million US dollars in 2013. The PPWSA is a state-owned enterprise. —Xinhua
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
**MV BIENDONG NAVIGATOR VOY NO (010)**
Consignees of cargo carried on MV BIENDONG NAVIGATOR VOY NO (010) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-2-2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPEY AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**
**MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (495)**
Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (495) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-2-2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPEY AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**
**MV KOTA TABAH VOY NO (537)**
Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TABAH VOY NO (537) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-2-2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPEY AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

**UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is seeking applications from Syria and highly motivated Myanmar nationals for the following vacancies with UNDP Yangon. Details of the terms of reference are available at the website.

**National Project Manager/ Senior Economic Statistician**
- SC-9
- Type of Contract: Service Contract
- Location of Assignment: Triple Tower, Yangon, Myanmar
- Duty Station: Yangon (Frequently travel to Nay Pyi Taw and survey sites as required)

**Competencies Required:**
- Demonstrating/safeguarding office and integrity; Demonstrating corporate knowledge and sound judgment; self-development; result-taking; acting as a team player and facilitating team work; facilitating and encouraging open communication in the team, communicating effectively; creating synergies through self-control; managing conflict; learning and sharing knowledge and encourage the learning of others. Promoting learning and knowledge management/sharing is the responsibility of each staff member; informed and transparent decision making.

**Qualifications:**
- Master Degree in Applied Statistics, Development Studies, and Applied Economics or other relevant development master degree with at least minimum 2 years experience in survey design, price surveys; Knowledge and experience of project management and 1993/2008 System of National Account is highly desirable. Experience in project management, excellent knowledge and experience in large scale statistical survey design and analysis, experience in prices data collecting methods, expert understanding of Access and SPSS and relevant experience with government department and agencies. Fluency in both written and spoken English is a must. Female candidates are encouraged to apply. Candidates should clearly indicate the post title in their application, and should submit them together with complete P-11 Form. Applications should be addressed to Deputy Resident Representative (Operations) Attention: Human Resources Unit, 6, Natmak Road, UNDP, Yangon or apply online through application.myn@undp.org

Only those candidates in whose qualifications and expertise the Organization has further interest will be contacted for subsequent interview(s). UNDP is an equal opportunity employer. UNDP regrets its inability to reply individually or attend to telephone queries on the advertised posts.

Closing Date: 13 March 2013

**United Nations, 21 Feb—Civilian casualties in Afghanistan's armed conflict decreased for the first time in six years, the United Nations said here on Tuesday, but attacks on women and children, and threats on perceived government supporters, are on the rise.**

**United Nations' Special Envoy to Afghanistan Martin Nesirky** made the remarks at a daily news briefing here, citing the annual report of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

The report, which was released on Tuesday, was compiled in coordination with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). "The report says that there was a 12 percent drop in civilian deaths last year, compared with 2011," Nesirky said.

"The report says that the reduction in civilian casualties in 2012 was the result, among other things, of fewer civilian deaths and injuries from ground engagement among parties to the conflict, as well as a decline in suicide attacks and reduced numbers of aerial operations." Xinhua

**Bulgaria bombers not transit through Romania**

**Bucharest, 21 Feb—There are no elements or indications so far that the persons identified in the attack in Burgas, Bulgaria, would have carried out preparatory activities in Romania, the Romanian Intelligence Service said on Tuesday.**

The agency underlined in a Press release that Romanian authorities have no legal means to act preventively in case of people who have no travel restrictions, or those who do not appear on the international lists with terrorism suspects and who transit Romania.

Bulgarian Interior Minister Tsvetan Tsvetanov said in a recent interview that it is believed that three accused would have come to Romania from different parts of Europe and entered Bulgaria crossing on foot the border between Romania and Bulgaria a few days ahead of the anti-Israeli attack on 18 July, last year. Xinhua

**Hungary finds horsemeat in beef lasagna in Slovenia's supermarket**

LJUBLJANA, 21 Feb—Slovenia has found horsemeat mixed up in beef lasagna sold in local supermarket, a senior government official told reporters here on Tuesday.

Following a recent horsemeat food contamination scandal in some European countries, Slovenian food security authorities have checked all products in different retailers that could potentially contain horsemeat.

Of all 29 products tested at the National Veterinary Institute, 28 tested negative for horsemeat, while one sample was found positive in the testing, said Jernej Drofenik, acting director general of the Food Safety, Veterinary and Plant Protection Administration.

The sample in question is a 450-gram beef lasagna, manufactured by Trada, a company in Luxembourg, distributed by Croatian company Ledo, and found in local retailer Interspar, according to the official.

Further analyses are under way, he added. Xinhua

**Japanese industry minister Toshimitsu Motegi** (R) and his Kazakh counterpart Asst. Ekelesheen sign a joint statement in Tokyo on 19 Feb, 2013.—Kyodo News

**Chinese food companies Rumi Seafood company Rumi Japan on 19 Feb, 2013, holds a yellowtail tasting event for Israeli food officials at the official residence of the Japanese ambassador to Israel, serving a variety of dishes using the fatty fish known as "hamachi" in Japan. The company has started exporting frozen yellowtail to Israel.** Kyodo News

**Former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori** (C) is seen at Narita airport, near Tokyo, before his departure for Russia on 20 Feb, 2013. Mori will visit Russia as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s special envoy for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin, planned for the following day in Moscow. Kyodo News
Sunny Leone to do her first item number

Mumbai, 21 Feb — Get ready to see Sunny Leone in her first ever Bollywood item number. The film star, who set the mercury soaring in Jism 2, will be seeing doing the latkas and jhatkas in Sanjay Gupta’s Shootout At Wadala.

Sources say the rehearsals of the dance sequence are already underway and the item number is being choreographed by Ahmed Khan.

An insider says, “The rehearsals of the song have already started on the sets of director Bhushan Patel’s upcoming film. It was Gupta’s idea to get Sunny to do the item song and Ahmed is the new hot favourite. Sunny will be seen in a ghagra choli for the first time on screen.”

The track will be shot with over 50 male dancers. Ahmed says, “I was impressed with Sunny’s idea. Sunny is quite an obedient student. As it is her first item song, it will be interesting to see her thumbs.” —PTI

128 designers to participate at upcoming WIFW 2013

New Delhi, 21 Feb — About 128 designers, including leading and upcoming, are set to take part in the autumn-winter 2013 edition of the Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week.

The five-day fashion event will be held from 13 to 17 March, with designers showing their collections through a total of 32 shows.—PTI

Oscars in Hollywood cliffhanger over Best Picture, Director

Los Angeles, 21 Feb — Sunday’s Oscar ceremony is set for a cliffhanger ending after a topsy-turvy awards season that has left the two top prizes — Best Picture and Best Director — too close to call. With just days to go before the movie industry’s highest honours are handed out on 24 February, awards watchers are keyed up for one of the most exciting nights in recent Academy Awards history. Despite entering the Oscar race with a leading 12 nominations in January, the front-runner Best Picture status of Steven Spielberg’s presidential drama “Lincoln” has been undermined by a slew of awards picked up Ben Affleck’s Iran hostage thriller “Argo.”

But an “Argo” win despite Affleck’s omission from the Best Director shortlist would defy the conventional wisdom that says the Oscar for Best Film usually brings a trophy for its director. “Argo” would be the first movie to take home the statuette for Best Picture without its director winning even a nomination since “Driving Miss Daisy” in 1990. “Everything is kind of haywire, so those of us in the (awards prediction) business are all left scratching our heads and saying what does it mean?” said Matt Atchity, editor in chief of movie review website Rotten Tomatoes. After beating “Lincoln” at the Golden Globes, Screen Actors Guild, directors and writers guides, “Argo” now has the edge in the Best Picture race.

“Even if ‘Argo’ wins for Best Picture, which is kind of a foregone conclusion at this point, it still feels exciting because ‘Argo’ has managed to keep this underdog status even though it has been winning every award,” Dave Karger, chief correspondent for Fandango.com told Reuters. —Reuters

Paul McCartney tops Bonnaroo music festival lineup

Nashville, (Tenn), 21 Feb — Paul McCartney will perform at the Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in Tennessee in June along with Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, Mumford & Sons, Bjork and Wilco, festival organizers said on Tuesday.

“Top to bottom, this is one of the strongest lineup we have ever had,” Bonnaroo organizer Jeff Cuellar said in an interview. “Looking at the festival landscape out there … no other American festival has Mumford & Sons, Paul McCartney and Bjork all under one roof.” Bonnaroo is among the top live music gatherings of the year, much like the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California and the Glastonbury Festival in Britain.

Musician Paul McCartney performs during the “12-12-12” benefit concert for victims of Superstorm Sandy at Madison Square Garden in New York, on 13 Dec, 2012.—REUTERS

Beyonce reveals baby Blue Ivy is ‘already reading flashcards’

London, 21 Feb — Pop star Beyonce has revealed that her 13-months old daughter Blue Ivy is already reading ‘scratchcards’. “She’s very smart. She’s already reading flashcards. She’s beautiful,” Beyonce told chatshow host Oprah Winfrey. The singer made these revelations about her intimate life, during her interview to promote her documentary “Life Is But A Dream”, the Daily Mail reported. Beyonce also opened up about the miscarriage she suffered prior to falling pregnant with Blue Ivy. “It was the saddest thing I’ve ever been through,” she said. Music megastar also talked to Oprah about the joys of becoming a mother for the first time. She said, “It’s what I’m most proud of and it just made everything make sense to me. I couldn’t imagine my life if I did not have my daughter.” —PTI

Ben Affleck in a scene from the film “Argo.”

Freida Pinto to host pre-Oscar bash

Los Angeles, 21 Feb — “Slumdog Millionaire” star Freida Pinto will host a special pre-Oscar party where she will promote the issue of girl child education.

A week-long celebration leading up to the Academy Awards by Vanity Fair magazine is one of the most attended and sought after celebratory events and the 28-year-old beauty is the first Indian origin actress to host the event. —PTI
**Sports**

Weary Marino bids farewell to WTA and cyber-bullies

After thinking long and hard, I do not have the passion or enjoyment to drive myself to the level I would like to be at in professional tennis,” Marino explained in a conference call. “I have previously been number 38 in the WTA singles rankings so I realize the amount of work and sacrifices that have to be put in and at this point I do not think it is worth sacrificing my happiness. I feel there is more to life than just tennis.

Big and powerful, Marino appeared destined for a promising career on the WTA circuit and under-scored her potential in a hard fought second round clash with Venus Williams at the 2010 US Open. “Now I know what it’s like to play myself,” Williams told reporters after winning the match 7-6, 6-3. The following season, Marino backed up that potential by reaching her first career WTA final in Memphis and advancing to the third round of the French Open but the climb up the rankings had already begun to take its toll on the Canadian and in February 2012 she took a seven month break from the sport citing mental and physical fatigue.—Reuters

Rival countries join forces in bid to reverse IOC decision

TEHERAN 21 Feb—Officials from 10 of the world’s top wrestling nations including Japan met on Wednesday in Iran in a bid to reverse the International Olympic Committee’s decision to drop wrestling from the 2020 Games, The Associated Press reported.

Delegations from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan, the United States, Russia and Turkey will gather to discuss how to reverse the IOC’s decision, the report said.

Sabres fire head coach Ruff after 16 years in job

NEW YORK, 21 Feb — Lindy Ruff’s long run as head coach of the Buffalo Sabres came to an end on Wednesday when the National Hockey League (NHL) team fired him after 16 years at the helm. Ron Rolston, coach of the Rochester Americans, Buffalo’s American Hockey League affiliate, will serve as interim coach of the NHL team for the rest of the season starting with Thursday’s game against Toronto, general manager Darcy Regier said.

Regier said allowing Rolston to coach the rest of the season “will provide us and him the opportunity to get to know each other, and if things go well, he’ll have the opportunity to become the head coach.” The moves followed a loss to the Winnipeg Jets on Tuesday that left the Sabres with a 6-10-1 mark and at the bottom of the Northeast Division with 13 points. Ruff, who also played most of his NHL career in Buffalo, began coaching the Sabres in 1997-98 and was the longest-tenured coach in the league.

“The hockey world knows how I and the entire Buffalo Sabres organization feel about Lindy Ruff not only as a coach but also as a person,” Sabres owner Terry Pegula said in a statement.

Australia avenge Olympic defeat, Hammer wins fifth title

MELBOURNE, 21 Feb—Australia got a measure of revenge for losing the Olympic gold to Brazil by beating their arch-rivals in the men’s team pursuit final at the world track cycling championships on Wednesday.

The Australian quartet of Glenn O’Shea, Alexander Edmondson, Michael Hepburn and Alexander Morgan completed the 4,000 metres at the wooden velodrome in the Belarus capital in three minutes 57.51 seconds to clinch the gold medal.

However, the result was well short of the world record of 3:51.659, set by the British at the London Games last August. Britain only had two riders, Steven Burke and Ed Clancy, returning from London, with newcomers Samuel Harrison and Andrew Tennant replacing Geraint Thomas and Peter Kennaugh. The new quartet could only manage the time of 4:00.567 in the final.

Denmark beat Spain in the consolation final to win the bronze in 3:59.821. Earlier, American Sarah Hammer won her fifth world title in the women’s individual pursuit over 3,000 metres while France’s Francois Pervis clinched his first in another non-Olympic event — the men’s one-kilometre time trial.—Reuters

Grizzlies edge Raptors to extend win streak

TORONTO, 20 Feb—The Memphis Grizzlies, playing against Rudy Gay for the first time since trading his top scorer to Toronto, scored an 88-82 win over the Raptors on Wednesday.

The Grizzlies (35-18) led by Gay to 13 points, one of his lowest outings since joining Toronto last month, en route to a fifth straight victory that strengthens their bid for homecourt advantage in the playoffs.

Zach Randolph had a team-high 17 points for the Grizzlies, who tightened their grip on fourth place in the NBA’s Western Conference.

A fierce fourth-quarter rally was not enough to give the Raptors (22-33) their first six-game winning streak since 2009. Toronto were limited to 36.6 percent shooting in the loss.—Reuters
Motor cycle thief caught in Mawlamyine

Mawlamyine, 21 Feb — Motor cycle thief was caught at Myineyadanar Market in Mawlamyine by SIP Khin Maung Zaw of Myoma police station. 

The fugitive was Aung Htet(a) Zar Ni Aung from Bo Tun street Bo Tun Zan ward Dawbon Township. He was formally convicted with panel code 379(bicycle) and got seven years sentence in prison.

Serena Williams of the US listens during a news conference after she was defeated in her men's singles semi-final match by Andy Murray of Britain at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on 26 Jan, 2013.—Reuters

Serena pulls out from Dubai with back injury

Dubai, 21 Feb—Serena Williams withdrew from the Dubai Championships because of a lower back injury just minutes before she was due on court for a second round match against Frenchwoman Marion Barotli on Wednesday. 

The American's withdrawal means that the world's top two players are both out of the tournament after Victoria Azarenka, who beat Williams in the Qatar Open final on Sunday, also pulled out earlier in the week with a foot injury. Williams, the newly installed world number one, aims to return at the Sony Ericsson Open, which starts in Miami on 18 March. "I've just had some back problems the past couple weeks," Williams told a hastily arranged Press conference. "I thought it would get better as the week went on but it didn't. I don't want to keep pushing it and make it worse," Williams, 31, said her back also troubled her in last week's Qatar Open.

"It's not as a level where I can compete where I feel comfortable to not make it worse," said Williams, who came on court to apologize to fans for her abrupt withdrawal.

The American's problems appear to stem from January's Australian Open, where she suffered a shock quarter-final loss to US teenager Sloane Stephens. Having been forced to briefly leave the court for medical treatment after jarring her back, Bartoli will now play former world number one Caroline Wozniacki in the quarter-finals after the Dane routed Chinese qualifier Zheng Jie 6-0, 6-1. 

Serena Williams of the US listens during a news conference at the WTA Dubai Tennis Championships in Dubai on 20 Feb, 2013.—Reuters

Pele urges Neymar to choose Barcelona over Man City

RIO DE JANEIRO, 21 Feb—Brazil legend Pele has urged starlet Neymar to choose Barcelona over a move to Manchester City or Real Madrid. His comments followed reports the Premier League outfit was preparing a bid to offer Neymar's club Santos 55 million British pounds to sign the striker in the European summer.

Usually a staunch supporter of Neymar's decision to resist offers from European clubs, Pele claimed the 21-year-old's lack of top-level experience had made him a "regular player" for the S elecao.

"He is an excellent player but he doesn't have any experience outside Brazil," the three-time World Cup winner told Estado de S.Paulo on Wednesday. "In every game he plays outside Brazil, he doesn't do well. Everybody thinks Neymar can solve the Selecao's problems, but he isn't ready for that burden. We have a great deal of confidence in him but he has become a regular player for the national team.

When asked which European club would be the ideal destination for Neymar, Pele replied: "The game is tougher in England, Italy and Germany because the referees usually let play go on. Barcelona would be ideal for him. Santos need him and for that reason I don't think he should leave but if he must go it should be to Barcelona." The 72-year-old said Neymar's long list of off-field commitments and celebrity status in Brazil have affected his form.

Neymar's face can be seen on magazine covers, billboards and television commercials across the South America's biggest country.—Reuters

Roger Federer of Switzerland attends a news conference after he was defeated in his men's singles semi-final match by Andy Murray of Britain at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on 26 Jan, 2013.—Reuters

Federer plays big brother to village children

GOVU (South Africa), 21 Feb—"Big brother Roger," as the village schoolchildren call him, smiles at the small children and asks them to guess which sport he plays.

Most of the bright-eyed three-year-olds have no idea who their visitor is but one, quicker than the eyeged three-year-olds have, has a question. "How many times have you won a grand slam?"

"I've won 17," Federer answers. "And this year I want to win another 20." Delighted, Roger Federer turns his palms up to reveal a badly calloused right hand finished by 23 years of holding a racquet, showing the children the difference from the smoother left one. 

There are few parts of the world the man considered as the greatest ever tennis player and holder of a record 17 grand slam titles is not instantly recognized. Here, in rural South Africa where he is visiting one of the village pre-schools his charitable foundation supports, the Swiss is unfamiliar to the children but commands their attention and curiosity. In a small, cool classroom, the toddlers sheltering from the heat stand with heads tipped back and eyes fixed on the towering champion as he hits a tennis ball against a wall, demonstrating how to swing a racquet.

Federer looks composed in the sweltering heat of Limpopo province, on the border with Zimbabwe, even though his bright red shirt, wet with sweat by noon, gives him away.

Deep in the densely vegetated village some 20 kilometres from the nearest paved road, the ground is parched and dust flies into the air as brightly-costumed Venda women dance to entertain their world-famous guest. "My heart is in South Africa, through my mum," Federer, the son of a Swiss father and a South African mother, told Reuters. "My mum being from here, me spending a lot of time here as well, I feel most connected to this part of the world." The Roger Federer Foundation supports 40 pre-schools in the area and spends over $3 million a year on educational projects in South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Ethiopia and Federer's home country Switzerland. Over 50,000 children have benefited from the foundation's efforts in 2012 to improve quality education in pre-schools and primary schools.

"It's not at a level where I can solve the Selecao's problems, but he isn't ready for that burden. We have a great deal of confidence in him but he has become a regular player for the national team.

"The fugitive was Aung Htet(a) Zar Ni Aung from Bo Tun street Bo Tun Zan ward Dawbon Township. He was formally convicted with panel code 379(bicycle) and got seven years sentence in prison.

Roger Federer of Switzerland attends a news conference after he was defeated in his men's singles semi-final match by Andy Murray of Britain at the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne on 26 Jan, 2013.—Reuters

Pele urges Neymar to choose Barcelona over Man City

RIO DE JANEIRO, 21 Feb—Brazil legend Pele has urged starlet Neymar to choose Barcelona over a move to Manchester City or Real Madrid. His comments followed reports the Premier League outfit was preparing a bid to offer Neymar's club Santos 55 million British pounds to sign the striker in the European summer. Usually a staunch supporter of Neymar's decision to resist offers from European clubs, Pele claimed the 21-year-old's lack of top-level experience had made him a "regular player" for the Selecao.

"He is an excellent player but he doesn’t have any experience outside Brazil," the three-time World Cup winner told Estado de S.Paulo on Wednesday. "In every game he plays outside Brazil, he doesn’t do well. Everybody thinks Neymar can solve the Selecao’s problems, but he isn’t ready for that burden. We have a great deal of confidence in him but he has become a regular player for the national team.

When asked which European club would be the ideal destination for Neymar, Pele replied: “The game is tougher in England, Italy and Germany because the referees usually let play go on. Barcelona would be ideal for him. Santos need him and for that reason I don’t think he should leave but if he must go it should be to Barcelona.” The 72-year-old said Neymar’s long list of off-field commitments and celebrity status in Brazil have affected his form. Neymar’s face can be seen on magazine covers, billboards and television commercials across the South America’s biggest country.—Reuters
Only when there is an increase in trade volume, will national development undertakings be realized through income tax: Vice-President

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham called for heightening awareness of environmental conservation in meeting with officials at the meeting hall of the supervisory committee of establishment of Hpa-an Industrial Zone in Kayin State yesterday.

On his arrival at Myawady Trade Zone of Industrial Zone in Kayin, he met with officials, responsible persons of border trade association and townelders, the Vice-President stressed the need of mass participation in the fight against illegal trade while six mobile teams were formed for elimination of illegal trade. Only when there is an increase in trade volume, will national development undertakings be realized through income tax.

He stressed the need to ensure the legitimacy of border trade for development of border regions, saying that only remarkable progress in businesses could generate national income, thereby contributing towards national development.

Next, the Vice-President visited Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge and inspected functionning of staff of Myanmar border checkpoint. Then he proceeded to Myawady district hospital where he comforted patients.

In meeting with rectors, faculty members and students of Hpa-an University, University of Computer Science (Hpa-an), University of Technology (Hpa-an) and Institut of Education (Hpa-an) at Hpa-an University, the Vice-President called on faculty members to be proficient in their subjects as they are to turn out well-educated youths. Only when qualified educated youths emerge, will the nation stand tall among the world nations. He called for competence in every sector as the nation has to face challenges of free flow of skilled workers, investment and information in 2015 when ASEAN Community is realized. He gave an account of yearly increased educational budget and cooperation with international universities. He assured those present of government’s assistances to fulfillment of requirements.

Next, the Vice-President observed subject-wise publications, theses of faculty members and students and inspected construction of two three-storey buildings for the university.

On his arrival at Hpa-an Township people’s hospital, he oversaw construction of three-storey building.

The Vice-President left Hpa-an by helicopter and arrived back in Yangon in the evening.

The Signing Ceremony of the Letter of Agreement on Cooperation with Counter-Narcotic Agencies between Myanmar and USA in progress.—MNA

The New Light of Myanmar

Friday, 22 February, 2013

This is another step for overall relationship: US Ambassador

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—MNA conducted a short interview with US Ambassador Mr. Derek J Mitchell, Police Col Myint Thein of CCDAC and Director U Htin Lin of Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Myat Tawwin Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw where the Letter of Agreement on Cooperation with Counter-narcotics Agencies Establishing the Opium Yield Survey and other purposes between the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Government of the United States of America was held, here, today. The letter of Agreement was signed by U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs and Ambassador Mr. Derek J. Mitchell, Ambassador of the United States of America to Myanmar on behalf of their respective governments.

By this agreement, the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Government of the United States of America will carry out a joint opium yield survey in early 2013 and re-establish channels of coope-ration on counter-narcotics issues as a means of assisting law enforcement entities of Myanmar in addressing the production and trafficking of opium, and combat transitional crime. MNA

Only when there is an increase in trade volume, will national development undertakings be realized through income tax.

He stressed the need to ensure the legitimacy of border trade for development of border regions, saying that only remarkable progress in businesses could generate national income, thereby contributing towards national development.

Next, the Vice-President visited Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge and inspected functionning of staff of Myanmar border checkpoint. Then he proceeded to Myawady district hospital where he comforted patients.

In meeting with rectors, faculty members and students of Hpa-an University, University of Computer Science (Hpa-an), University of Technology (Hpa-an) and Institut of Education (Hpa-an) at Hpa-an University, the Vice-President called on faculty members to be proficient in their subjects as they are to turn out well-educated youths. Only when qualified educated youths emerge, will the nation stand tall among the world nations. He called for competence in every sector as the nation has to face challenges of free flow of skilled workers, investment and information in 2015 when ASEAN Community is realized. He gave an account of yearly increased educational budget and cooperation with international universities. He assured those present of government’s assistances to fulfillment of requirements.

Next, the Vice-President observed subject-wise publications, theses of faculty members and students and inspected construction of two three-storey buildings for the university.

On his arrival at Hpa-an Township people’s hospital, he oversaw construction of three-storey building.

The Vice-President left Hpa-an by helicopter and arrived back in Yangon in the evening.

Nay Pyi Taw, 21 Feb—NLM: Can you tell me what is your future programme with regard to the implementation process?

DJM: Well, take it to established time, I think next week the survey will start and we’ll engage each other on the ground and then we will see what the next step will be. I think these things are seasonal because whether we will have to do this now or probably the next stage will be next year. It is part of the overall momentum in the relationship. So we will see what will come up after this.

NLM: Your comments on today’s auspicious ceremony.

DJM: I am just very pleased, very pleased and grateful for the continued partnership and rebuilding up the relationship.

NLM: Can you tell me the possible organizations that you are counting on for the 2013 opium yield survey?

MT: As for an opium yield survey system, Myanmar is going to cooperate with the US government. Representa- tives of the CCDAC of the Myanmar government, the Armed Forces, the agriculture enterprise, and anti-narcotics special squad will be the participants. (See page 9)