Dialogue should be only way to reach eternal peace

President meets Mutu Sae Po

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 Jan—President U Thein Sein met with Saw Mutu Sae Po, chairman of Karen National Union, and his party at the hall of the 500-acre model farm in Nay Pyi Taw, on 5 January.

Before their talks, the KNU chairman gave the president Kayin national dress as a New Year gift.

The President and the chairman discussed progress on a nationwide ceasefire, ongoing programs for political dialogue after reaching a ceasefire agreement and plans to build mutual trust.

After the meeting, the President and his party had a documentary photo taken together with the KNU chairman and his party.

The meeting was also attended by Vice-Chairman of the Union Peace-making Work Committee Union Minister U Aung Min, Union Ministers U Soe Than and U Khin Yi, Deputy Minister U Ye Htut and special advisers to the Myanmar Peace Centre (MPC).

The KNU chairman and party were accompanied by Secretary-General Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, CEC members Pado Saw Roger Khin, Pado Mahn Nyein Maung and Pado Saw Tar Domu, senior officers of the KNU (Headquarters) and brigade commanders.

It was the fourth meeting between the President and the chairman. Both sides reaffirmed that dialogue should be the single way to reach eternal peace and they stressed the need for all the organizations to harmoniously strive to fulfill the aspiration of the people for peace.—MNA

13,274 prisoners released under pardon

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 Jan—President Office of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued pardons under Order No (1/2014) dated 2 January 2014 to free prisoners in accord with Section (a) of the Constitution with the aim of contributing to peace and stability of the State, rule of law and national reconciliation and focusing humanitarian grounds to the honour 66th Anniversary Independence Day.

A total 13,274 prisoners, 11,124 men and 2,150 women, were released from various prisons across the country on 3 January 2014, according to the Ministry of Home Affairs.

It took one year and three days to finish the bridge and overpass, which cost K26,626 billion.

Bayintnaung Bridge is over 1427 ft long and over 57 ft wide, and can withstand 75 tons.

The overpass (Tha-maing Station Section) can hold 60 tons and is over 2414 ft long and over 32 ft wide.

Bayintnaung Bridge and Overpass were inaugurated today by several government officials including U Myint Swe, Chief Minister of Yangon Region.

Vehicles have been allowed to cross the Bayintnaung Bridge as of 31 October, 2013 and the overpass as of 24 November 2013.

It took one year and three days to finish the bridge and overpass, which cost K26,626 billion.

Bayintnaung Bridge is over 1427 ft long and over 57 ft wide, and can withstand 75 tons.

The overpass (Tha-maing Station Section) can hold 60 tons and is over 2414 ft long and over 32 ft wide.

The project is one of three overpass projects of the Union Government to ease the traffic congestion in Yangon.—MNA

Nay Pyi Taw, 5 Jan—According to the observations at 17:30 hrs MST today, the depression over Southwest Bay of Bengal is centered at about 50 miles North-Northeast of Trincomalee (Sri Lanka), about 135 miles Southeast of Nagapatnam (India) and about 755 miles Southwest of Cocosguyun (Myanmar). It is forecast to move West-Northwestwards and cross North Sri Lanka Coast and weaken during next 24 hrs.

The present stage of the depression is coded yellow stage and it is not moving towards Myanmar coast, announced by Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

NLM

Inauguration of Bayintnaung Bridge, Overpass in progress.—MNA

Storm News

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NLM
FOREIGN HEADS OF STATE/GOVERNMENT SEND FELICITATIONS TO PRESIDENT U THEIN SEIN

From Barack Obama
President of the United States
Excellency,

On behalf of the American people, it is my sincere pleasure to send our congratulations as your country celebrates National Day on January 4. It is with great pleasure that I convey the dedication of the American people to supporting this exciting year of your ASEAN Chairmanship.

Please accept my best wishes for continued prosperity and peace on this National Day.

From Raul Castro Ruz
President to the Councils of State and of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba
Excellency,

On the occasion of celebrating the 66th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I extend to you cordial congratulations.

Please receive the assurances of my highest consideration.

From Dilma Vana Rousseff
President of the Federative Republic of Brazil
Excellency,

On behalf of the people and the Government of Brazil, it is my honour to convey my sincere congratulations on the celebration of the 66th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. As your country takes the important role of Chairman of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations for 2014, please accept my wishes of great success in this endeavour.

From Mr. François Hollande
President of the French Republic
Excellency,

On the occasion of the Republic of the Union of Myan-
mar’s Independence Day, I have the pleasure to offer
my congratulations on this auspicious occasion of the
66th Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of
Myanmar.

Please accept, Mr President, the assurances of my high-
est felicitations on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Tony Tan Keng Yam
President of Singapore
Excellency,

On behalf of the people of Singapore, I would like to extend my hearty congratulations to you and the people of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the 66th Independ-
ence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Myanmar has undergone another remarkable year of economic progress and national reconciliation under your leadership. As a close friend and neighbor, Singapore will continue to support Myanmar’s development efforts and ASEAN Chairmanship. I look forward to the opening of the Vocational Training Institute in Yangon and greater bilateral cooperation between our two countries.

I wish you and Daw Khin Khin Win a happy Independence Day and continued good health and success.

From Xi Jinping
Emperor of Japan
Excellency,

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, have great pleasure in sending Your Excellency my heartfelt congratulations and sincere good wishes for Your happiness and for the prosperity of the people of Your country.

From Kim Yong Nam
President of the Supreme People’s Assembly
Excellency,

I extend warm congratulations to you and your government and people on the 66th anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I take this opportunity to convey my best wishes for your greater success in the work for the stability and prosperity of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Md. Abdul Hamid
President of People’s Republic of Bangladesh
Excellency,

I have immense pleasure in conveying to you and to the friendly people of Myanmar my sincere greetings and warmest felicitations on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Bangladesh and Myanmar enjoy excellent bilateral relations. I do hope that our two countries will continue to work together to further strengthen and consolidate the existing relations for the benefit of our peoples.

From Tony Tan Keng Yam
President of the Republic of Singapore
Excellency,

On behalf of the people of Singapore, I would like to extend my hearty congratulations to you and the people of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the 66th Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Myanmar has undergone another remarkable year of economic progress and national reconciliation under your leadership. As a close friend and neighbor, Singapore will continue to support Myanmar’s development efforts and ASEAN Chairmanship. I look forward to the opening of the Vocational Training Institute in Yangon and greater bilateral cooperation between our two countries.

I wish you and Daw Khin Khin Win a happy Independence Day and continued good health and success.

From Akihito
Emperor of Japan
Excellency,

On the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I wish you and your official visit to Paris, in July 2013, has testified to the special role of Chairman of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations for 2014, please accept my wishes of great success in this endeavour.

From Bhumibol Adulyadej
King of Thailand
Excellency,

It is with great pleasure that I convey to Your Excellency my sincere congratulations and best wishes for your happiness and well being as well as for the welfare and prosperity of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and her people.

From Xi Jinping
President of the People’s Republic of China
Excellency,

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

From Jin Yong Nam
President of the Supreme People’s Assembly
Excellency,

I extend warm congratulations to you and your government and people on the 66th anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I take this opportunity to convey my best wishes for your greater success in the work for the stability and the economic development of the country as well as the prosperity of the friendly Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From D.M. Jayaratne
Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Excellency,

It is with great pleasure that I convey to Your Excellency, my warm congratulations and good wishes on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

The principles of Theravada Buddhism have stood as a firm foundation in the development of long-standing between our countries. It is my fervent wish that the existing friendly relations and cooperation between Sri Lanka and Myanmar will further strengthen for the mutual benefit of our two nations.

Please accept, Excellency, my best wishes for your personal wellbeing and for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.
US to support fight on al-Qaeda in Iraq without troops

JERUSALEM, 5 Jan — US Secretary of State John Kerry voiced confidence on Sunday the Iraqi government and tribes would be successful in their fight against al-Qaeda, and said Washington was not considering sending troops back to Iraq. Sectarian and ethnic tensions have risen in Iraq since the US withdrawal in December 2011, inflamed by the conflict in neighbouring Syria, where

not contemplating returning,” Kerry told reporters during a visit to Israel. “We will help them in their fight, but this fight, in the end, they will have to win and I am confident they can.”

The Iraqi military’s cooperation with the tribes against al-Qaeda echoed a decision by local tribes in 2006 to join forces with US troops and rise up against al-Qaeda forces who seized control of most of Iraq’s Sunni areas after the 2003 US invasion.

US troops and local tribes finally beat back al-Qaeda in heavy fighting after a “surge” of US forces in 2006-07.—Reuters

Japan eyes tank engine development with Turkey

TOKYO, 5 Jan — The Japanese government plans to embark on joint development of tank engines with Turkey under arms embargo rules eased in 2011, government sources said on Sunday. Turkey is showing interest in engine technology employed in the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force’s Type 10 tank, according to the sources.

To realize joint engine development, the Japanese government is considering forming a joint venture between Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd, which has developed the engine of the state-of-the-art tank, and the Turkish side, the sources said. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is expected to agree with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who will visit Japan for three days from Monday, to strengthen bilateral cooperation in defence areas with the planned joint development of a tank engine in mind, according to the sources.

In Japan, deployment of Type 10 tanks has already started, with the GSDF planning to procure 66 of them by March 2015. The tanks boast high mobility including moving backward at a speed of 70 kilometres per hour. In 2011 when the Democratic Party of Japan was in power, then Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda eased the rules on arms shipments to allow arms to be jointly developed and produced with other countries, on condition that they obtain Japan’s approval in advance when exporting the technology to a third party.—Kyodo News

Bangladesh votes in general election hit by violence, boycott

DACA, 5 Jan—Voters in Bangladesh went to the polls on Sunday in parliamentary elections all but certain to be won by the ruling Awami League due to a boycott by the main opposition alliance. Polling stations across the South Asian nation opened at 8 am and will close at 4 pm By 11 am, voter turnout in the capital Dhaka appeared to be very low. In a bid to stop the election, the opposition alliance called a 48-hour nationwide general strike that began Saturday morning.

The general election has been marred by violence, with dozens of people reportedly killed and more than 100 polling stations being torched in the build-up to voting. On Sunday alone, six people were reportedly killed in clashes between opposition supporters and security forces, according to local media. Of the 300 parliamentary constituencies, as many as 153 candidates, including 127 from the Awami League, have already won seats uncontested due to the boycott by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. The BNP’s boycott was caused by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s refusal to step down and hold the election under a neutral caretaker government. —Kyodo News

New Komeito party chief Yamaguchi leaves for India

NEW DELHI, 5 Jan — Nat-suo Yamaguchi, leader of the New Komeito party in the governing coalition, on Sunday left for India for talks with Indian leaders including Prime Minister Mamohan Singh.

Yamaguchi is expected to exchange views with the Indian leaders on strengthening bilateral economic and security ties.

India beefs up security along Bangladesh border

NEW DELHI, 5 Jan — India has beefed up security along its border with Bangladesh in the northeast Indian state of Assam ahead of the general elections in Bangladesh on Sunday.

India’s Border Security Force has intensified patrolling along the districts of Karimganj, Cachar and Dhubri bordering Bangladesh, according to official sources.—Xinhua

Thai protesters march again in bid to bring down government

BANGKOK, 5 Jan — Thousands of anti-government protesters marched through the Thai capital on Sunday, a prelude to a broader action next week when they say they will shut down Bangkok in their bid to scuttle a February election and topple Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

The protesters, who accuse Yingluck of being the puppet of her self-exiled brother and former premier, Thaksin Shinawatra, have vowed to stop the 2 February election. Instead, they want an appointed “people’s council” to oversee reforms before any future vote.

People hold candles as they form a peace sign during an anti-violence campaign in centre of Bangkok on 5 Jan, 2014. —Reuters

New Light of Myanmar

WORLD

Monday, 6 January, 2014
Chinese warship in Cyprus to aid Syrian chemical weapons removal

LIMASSOL (Cyprus), 5 Jan — A Chinese frigate which will help escort Syria’s stockpile of chemical weapons out of the country docked in Cyprus on Saturday as part of a delayed international mission.

The Yancheng, a missile frigate, will accompany a Norwegian-Danish convoy which is in international waters off Syria, waiting for the go-ahead from international watchdogs overseeing the removal of the chemical arsenal.

The mission to ship chemicals from Syria has missed its 31 December target date and Chinese and Cypriot officials said it was unclear exactly when it would begin.

“China supports the efforts of the international community to destroy the Syrian chemical weapons ... we wish this operation a success,” said Liu Xinzheng, the Chinese ambassador to Cyprus. Photos Photiou, the defence minister of Cyprus, said after meeting Chinese officials that he expected the operation would start “any day now”.

Russia will also be providing escort to the convoy carrying Syria’s chemical weapons, which will be loaded onto two cargo ships and escorted to Italy, where a US ship equipped with toxin neutralizing equipment will take over.

The US vessel, the Cape Ray, is due to leave the United States for the Mediterranean in about two weeks. Dozens of Chinese nationals in Cyprus converged on the quay of Limassol port, about 160 miles west of the Syrian port city of Latakia from where the chemicals will be shipped. Loudspeakers blamed Chinese music as Chinese flags were waved by women in traditional yellow and red costumes.

The 31 December deadline was missed because of poor weather, logistic delays and the conflict inside Syria, where President Bashar al-Assad’s forces have fought to clear rebels from roads along which the chemicals will be transported. — Reuters

Afgan Taleban claim attack on NATO convoy in Kabul

KABUL, 5 Jan — The Afghan Taleban claimed responsibility for an attack on a military convoy belonging to the NATO-led ISAF security force in Kabul on Saturday, striking at the heart of the capital but without causing any casualties.

Security sources said the bomb had targeted a military convoy near Camp Eggers, an ISAF base in the diplomatic quarter of the capital close to both the German and Italian Embassies.

Reuters reporters heard sirens and helicopters flying overhead, and a loudspeaker announcement ordered troops at the base to load their weapons and take up defensive positions.

The NATO-led force said only that there had been “an improvised explosive device detonation in the vicinity of Camp Eggers”, but that no casualties had resulted.

The Taleban, who frequently exaggerate the scale of their attacks, claimed in an emailed statement to have inflicted losses.

In a separate incident on Saturday, however, one ISAF soldier was killed in the east of the country by a suicide attack. The force did not disclose the victim’s nationality.

There was also another explosion in the capital on Saturday. “There was a small mine ... placed by enemies of Afghanistan, but no casualties,” a police spokesman said. — Reuters

Obama urges jobless benefits extension, avoiding self-inflicted pain

WASHINGTON, 5 Jan — US President Barack Obama on Saturday urged Congress to extend unemployment benefits for millions of unemployed Americans, saying inaction of Congress will lead to self-inflicted wound for the economy.

“Just a few days after Christmas, more than one million of our fellow Americans lost a vital economic lifeline — the temporary insurance that helps folks make ends meet while they look for a job.

Republican in Congress went home for the holidays and let that lifeline expire,” Obama said in his weekly address.

Approximately 1.3 million workers currently receiving extended unemployment insurance (UI) benefits lost them as the programme expired on 28 December.

About 3.6 million more people will lose access to UI benefits beyond 26 weeks by the end of 2014 if Congress fails to act, the White House figures showed.

“We don’t abandon our fellow Americans when times get tough — we keep the faith with them until they start that new job. What’s more, it actually slows down the economy for all of us,” Obama said.

“If folks can’t pay their bills or buy the basics, like food and clothes, local businesses take a hit and hire fewer workers.

That’s why the independent Congressional Budget Office says that unless Congress restores this insurance, we’ll feel a drag on our economic growth this year,” he added.

“And after our businesses created more than 2 million new jobs last year, that’s a self-inflicted wound we don’t need,” Obama said.

The US government is sending a heavy icebreaker to help free a Russian ship and a Chinese icebreaker grounded by Antarctic ice, the Coast Guard said on Saturday.

The Polar Star is responding to a request for assistance from Australian authorities as well as from the Russian and Chinese governments, the Coast Guard statement said.

“The US Coast Guard stands ready to respond to Australia’s request,” Coast Guard Pacific Area Commander Rear Admiral Paul Zukunft said. “Our highest priority is safety of life at sea, which is why we are assisting in breaking a navigational path for both of these vessels.”

Coast Guard Chief Warrant Officer Allyspon Conroy said the Polar Star was expected to arrive on the scene on 12 January and take two to three days to complete its mission. — Reuters

Hagel urges Japan to improve ties with neighbouring nations

WASHINGTON, 5 Jan — US Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel on Saturday urged Japan to improve relations with its neighbouring countries after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s visit to a war-linked shrine in Tokyo in late December fueled anger in China and South Korea.

“Secretary Hagel underscored the importance of Japan taking steps to improve relations with its neighbors,” Defence Department Press Secretary Rear Adm John Kirby said in a statement summarizing telephone talks between Hagel and Japanese Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera.

The US government has said it was “disappointed” to see Abe go ahead with the trip to Yasukuni as it would exacerbate tensions with China and South Korea.

Onodera sought the US government’s understanding of Abe’s visit to the shrine, telling Hagel that the prime minister renewed the pledge that Japan must never wage war again, Japanese officials said.

On bilateral relations, Hagel expressed appreciation for the Japanese government’s efforts in securing approval from the governor of Okinawa Prefecture for landfill work for the relocation of a US Marine Corps air base within the prefecture, Kirby said.

Kyodo News
**WORLD**

**Brazil’s Silva plans to run for vice president with Campos**

**RIO DE JANEIRO, 5 Jan —** Former Brazilian Environment Minister Marina Silva has agreed to run for vice president in October elections on the presidential ticket of Eduardo Campos, the governor of Brazil’s Paraná state. Globo newspaper reported on Saturday.

Silva, who will make her intention publicly known by mid-February, could announce her candidacy at a 17 January meeting of leaders of Campos’ Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB). Globo did not cite sources for its story, and officials for Silva and Campos did not immediately respond to telephone and e-mail requests from Reuters on Saturday.

Silva and Campos, two of the country’s most popular opposition leaders, surprised many when they said in October they would form an alliance but refused to say which of them would stand for president if they made a bid.

Pollsters say their decision to team up could form a serious challenge to President Dilma Rousseff’s hopes of re-election. Globo reported that in exchange for Silva’s pledge to run alongside Campos, his PSB party had agreed to end its support for the re-election of Geraldo Alckmin of the centrist Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB) as governor of Sao Paulo state.

Sao Paulo is Brazil’s richest, most-populous and most industrialized state. Alckmin is also a former presidential candidate. The PSDB has been working with the PSDB to create a wider electoral alliance in several states in hopes of boosting their chances to win governorships and the presidency in October. — Reuters

**Former Senator Marina Silva speaks during a news conference on her decision to join other parties to run for presidential elections in 2014 in Brazil, in Brasilia on 4 Oct- ber, 2013.**— Reuters

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**Nine dead after attackers dressed as police enter Mexican prison**

**MEXICO CITY, 5 Jan —** Nine people were killed during a gunfight at a prison in Mexico’s violent Guerrero state, after a gang dressed as police officers gained entry on Friday, authorities said.

Six gunmen wearing police uniforms were allowed to enter the prison by unsuspecting guards who believed the men were delivering another prisoner, state prosecutors said.

“Once inside the prison, the armed group began infighting which has strengthened Assad’s hand. Suddenly, a battle erupted.” — Reuters

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**Syrian residents flee their homes following clashes between opposition fighters and loyalists to Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad in the Adra area, east of Damascus, in this handout photograph distributed by Syria’s national news agency SANA on 3 Jan, 2014.**

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**One dead, three trapped in China coal mine explosion**

**CHENGUI, 5 Jan —** One person has been killed and three others are trapped after a coal mine explosion in southwest China’s Sichuan Province on Sunday.

The blast happened around 11 am at a coal mine in Xiaobei Township of Weiyuan County, when eight miners were carrying out a routine safety check, according to the county’s information office.

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**New Light of Myanmar**

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**Former Senator Marina Silva speaks during a news conference on her decision to join other parties to run for presidential elections in 2014 in Brazil, in Brasilia on 4 Oct- ber, 2013.**— Reuters

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New Light of Myanmar

BUSINESS & HEALTH

Boeing machinists approve contract securing 777X jet

Seattle/New York, 5 Jan — Boeing’s machinists on Friday narrowly approved a crucial labour contract that secured thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of economic activity for Washington state but will cost workers their pensions.

Had the voters rejected the offer, Boeing would have considered making the successor to its popular 777 widebody jet elsewhere, and had received offers from 22 states interested in hosting the new factory.

“This decision means Boeing hopefully will stop pursuit of another site for its 777X programme,” said a somber Jim Bearden, administrative assistant to machinist District 751 President Tom Wrobleski. “They held a gun to our head and our people were afraid,” said Lester Mullin, a District 751 council delegate who works on the current 777 wing production line. Boeing’s reaction was in stark contrast to the mood in the Seattle union hall where the results were announced.

“The future of Boeing in the Puget Sound region has never looked brighter,” said Boeing Commercial Airplanes Chief Executive Ray Conner said in a statement. “This will put our workforce on the cutting edge of composite technology, while sustaining thousands of local jobs for years to come.” In clinching the agreement, Boeing secured the location favoured by analysts and investors, who saw far lower risk in using the factory and workers who now build the 777.

Boeing also ensured that the machinists won’t have an opportunity to strike until 2024, when the new contract expires. —Reuters

Construction sector growth indicates continued UK economy recovery

London, 5 Jan — Healthy growth in the British construction sector over December was welcomed by economists on Friday as evidence that the economic recovery is continuing.

All three construction sub-sectors showed a good level of activity in December, with the housing market growing especially strong expansion with it growing for the 11th consecutive month, only just behind the November rate which had been a 10-year record.

Civil engineering growth held up well in December to almost match the near six-year high seen in August.

New orders in December were growing at their fastest rate since 2007, up for an eighth consecutive month.

Employment in the sector rose for the eighth month running, indicating the likelihood of continued job creation which could mean the Bank of England’s 7 percent unemploy- ment threshold for bank rate review could be reached sooner than the mid-2015 current target.

Martin Beck, UK economist with Capital Economics in London, told Xinhua “The economic recovery is proceeding; the PMI reading was quite high, driven in large part by recovery in the housing sector.”

He added, “Although the economic recovery in the UK is fairly broad based it appears some part is driven by the housing market. House prices are rising quite a rapid rate now so there are risks looking forward. How will house prices continue to rise? Will the recovery founder?”

Beck said that the construction sector was about 6 percent of the British economy.

He cautioned, “The sector is so volatile. It has fallen back so much in recent years that the recovery we are seeing in housing is driving a large part of the construction sector recovery.” Howard Archer, chief UK and European economist with IHS Global Insight, said the strength of the housing sub-sector was good news for the structure of the British economy, but growth in that area needed to be sustained over a long period.

He explained, “Improving housebuilding is particularly welcome news given that a shortage of properties is a major factor repeatedly putting upward pressure on UK house prices. Nevertheless, the fact remains that there needs to be extended, very strong housebuilding to make significant inroads into the problem.”

He added, “While housing activity remains the strongest performing sector fuelled by an improving housing market, and helped by the government’s Help to Buy initiative, the survey shows that the commercial and civil engineering sectors are now seeing robust activity.”

Archer said that the survey was further evidence that the economy in the fourth quarter of 2013 could have been the first time since 2008. "We have 0.8 percent quarter-on-quarter expansion achieved in the third quarter, which could give growth of up to 2 percent for 2013. “Much will clearly depend on how well the services sector performed in the fourth quarter and how well consumer spending held up. Most evidence suggests that the services sector had a good fourth quarter, but there is a lot of uncertainty over just how strong consumer spending was,” said Archer.

Xinhua

E-cigarette vapour contains nicotine, not other toxins

New York, 5 Jan — People standing near someone using an e-cigarette will be exposed to nicotine, but not to other chemicals found in tobacco cigarette smoke, according to a new study.

E-cigarettes, or electronic cigarettes, create a nicotine-rich vapor that can be inhaled, or ‘vaped.’ Researchers and regulators have questioned whether e-cigarettes are a smoking cessation aid or may lure more young people toward smoking, as well as what effects they have on health.

“There is ongoing public debate whether e-cigarettes should be allowed or prohibited in public spaces,” study co-author Maciej Goniewicz told Reuters.

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“There is ongoing public debate whether e-cigarettes should be allowed or prohibited in public spaces,” study co-author Maciej Goniewicz told Reuters.

Action call on smog, mental health link

Beijing, 5 Jan — Senior clinical psychiatrists have called for closer study of the negative impact of smoggy days on mental health.

Severe pollution has been linked to respiratory problems such as asthma and bronchitis, but few people realize it could trigger “smog depression”, said Tian Chenghua, a professor at the Institute for Psychiatric Research at Peking University’s No 6 Hospital.

He said it is scientifically proved that some types of depression are closely associated with conditions such as seasonal change and lack of sunlight. These are related to the production of the hormone melatonin, which lightens skin pigmentation.

Beijing Environmental Protection Bureau said on Thursday that the capital saw 58 days of serious non-users can be exposed to nicotine and other chemicals in situations when they are sitting in the same room with users of e-cigarettes,” Goniewicz said.

He and his colleagues conducted two studies of secondhand exposure to e-cigarette vapors in a laboratory. Their results were published in Nicotine and Tobacco Research.

PM 2.5 — airborne particulate matter smaller than 2.5 micrometers in diameter — is the major pollutant on most of these days, with the worst pollution occurring in autumn and winter, the bureau said.

“China lacks scientific studies and investigations into how smog relates to human emotions and mental health,” Tian said. “Experts in public health and clinical psychiatry could collaborate on this to better protect physical and mental health amid worsening air pollution.”

Pu Chengcheng, a psychiatrist at the hospital, said cases of increased anxiety and feelings of hopelessness caused by weather conditions such as smog, cloudy skies, rain and lack of sunlight are no longer rare.—Xinhua
BlackBerry sues Ryan Seacrest’s company over iPhone keyboard

TORONTO, 5 Jan.—BlackBerry Ltd said on Friday it had filed a lawsuit against a company co-founded by “American Idol” host Ryan Seacrest that offers a physical keyboard that can be attached to some of Apple Inc’s touchscreen iPhone 5 models.

The company, Typo Products LLC, is currently taking pre-orders for the $99 keyboard, which features angled miniature keys similar to those used on many of BlackBerry’s devices.

Canada’s BlackBerry, a once dominant smartphone maker that has lost market share to the iPhone and other touchscreen devices, said Typo’s keyboard infringes its own design.

“The allegation has not been proven in court. Typo and Seacrest could not immediately be reached to comment on the legal proceedings. “We are flattered by the desire to graft our keyboard onto other smartphones, but we will not tolerate such activity without fair compensation for using our intellectual property and our technological innovations,” BlackBerry’s chief legal officer, said in a statement.

BlackBerry posted billions in losses in recent quarters as its latest devices sold poorly, but it has maintained a loyal niche of customers who prefer to type on a physical keyboard. The BlackBerry complaint is case no. 3:14-cv-23 in the United States District Court for the northern district of California. Reuters

2013 confirmed as Australia’s hottest year on record

SYDNEY, 5 Jan.—Australia experienced its hottest year on record in 2013, breaking the previous record set in 2005, the government’s Bureau of Meteorology said on Friday. The bureau said in its Annual Climate Statement that average temperatures in the country last year were 1.2°C above the long-term average of 21.8°C, breaking the previous record set in 2005 by 0.17°C.

All states and territories recorded above-average temperatures in 2013, with Western Australia, Northern Territory and South Australia breaking their previous annual average temperature records.

Last year started with a heat wave in January in which Australia recorded its hottest day, hottest week, and hottest month on record. On 12 January, the temperature reached 49.6°C at Moomba in South Australia, the highest in the country since 1998. The meteorological bureau said Australian temperatures have warmed approximately 1°C since 1950, consistent with global climate trends. It noted that globally, each of the past 13 years has ranked among the 14th warmest on record. Kyodo News

Indian heavy lift satellite launch vehicle to blast off on Sunday

NEW DELHI, 5 Jan.—India is set to launch at 16:18 PM local time on Sunday its heavy lift Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) using indigenous cryogenic fuel technology, after two previous failures.

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) will attempt to launch a 1,982 kg Indian communication satellite GSAT 14 aboard its new and improved version of the indigenous GSLV called the GSLV D5.

This launch is crucial for the launching of manned missions into space, said ISRO officials.

The scheduled launch of the GSLV D5 will be ISRO’s second attempt at deploying indigenously developed cryogenic upper stage fuel technology for its heavy lift rockets, after the first attempt on 15 April, 2010 ended with the cryogenic third stage of the GSLV failing to fire. A second attempt on 19 Aug, 2013 was aborted as well.

The cryogenic technology which enables rockets to place satellites weighing more than 2,000 kg in geo-synchronous orbits in space is known to be available to only five countries in the world — the United States, Russia, Japan, France and China.

Indian space scientists have been working on cryogenic fuel technology for nearly 20 years, according to Indian Express daily. ISRO had tried to source the technology in the 1990s from the United States but was denied the “strategic technology” in the aftermath of the nuclear tests in 1998. ISRO subsequently worked with seven cryo engines provided by Russia for early development of the GSLV programme while working in parallel on its own cryogenic stage for the rocket, according to the newspaper.

GSLV launches with Russian cryo stages have been a mixed bag for ISRO with two fully successful flights and two partially successful flights out of the seven attempts. Xinhua

Nepal can compete in digital world

KATHMANDU, 5 Jan.—Nepal has the potential to play a role in the software industry in the future as the ICT industry is growing rapidly in the country, an expert said here on Thursday.

“We may not be able to manufacture hardware products like China, but in terms of software, Nepal has a latent potential. We have a great human resource in the IT sector, but we must pull our experts and professionals currently abroad back to Nepal,” Binod Dhakal, president of the Computer Association of Nepal (CAN), told Xinhua.

According to statistics of the Nepal Telecommunication Authority, a total of 22.09 million people are now connected to telecommunications in the country, including mobile phones and fixed lines, which is more than 80 percent of Nepal’s total population.

Despite the leap forward, Nepal still lags behind other countries in terms of technological development.

“We have realized that the private sector still lacks adequate support. We expect the government to promote the ICT sector in the future since technology is becoming an integral part of people’s lives in Nepal,” said Dhakal.—Xinhua

AT&T pushes to lure T-Mobile customers; may herald price war

NEW YORK, 5 Jan.—AT&T Inc on Friday offered customers of No 4 US mobile provider T-Mobile US Inc a $200 credit to switch to its service, firing the first volley this year in what may become a price war that benefits consumers but plays havoc with profits across the industry.

AT&T, the No 2 US mobile provider, announced the promotion after months of direct marketing against it by T-Mobile, and in anticipation of a new offer from its smaller rival on 8 January. The news depressed shares in T-Mobile and Sprint Corp — which have been rallying in recent weeks on optimism about potential consolidation — and to a lesser extent industry leader Verizon Communications.

The move could kick off a year of discounts from US wireless operators, who are increasingly dependent on price to compete because they all offer similar phones and any network advantages are hard to prove, according to analysts.

MoffettNathanson analyst Craig Moffett described AT&T’s move as the “early makings of a price war” that would boost customer switching, also known as churn, and in turn hurt profits.

“Everybody’s fighting for market share because there simply isn’t an organic market share left to be had,” Moffett said. “The natural upshot to any strategy that pays customers to change service is higher churn.”

Analysts also worry that No 3 US rival Sprint, which has been losing customers for years, will unveil dramatic promotions in 2014 as its new 80 percent owner, SoftBank Corp, is expected to push Sprint to regain lost ground. "Reuters

Photo shows 2014’s first meteor shower observed in E China’s Shandong. Xinhua

Host Ryan Seacrest isset during a commercial break at the Season 12 finale of “American Idol!” in Los Angeles, California on 16 May, 2013.—REUTERS

An AT&T wireless store front is pictured in San Diego, California on 23 Oct, 2013.—REUTERS
OPINION

U Han Nyunt is a retired director-general of the Attorney’s General Office now living in Nay Pyi Taw. Ed

Time for many to step up, some to step back

Regional and global eyes will be on Myanmar this year.

After successfully hosting the 27th SEA Games in December last year, Myanmar is now preparing for regional and international meetings related to its assuming the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for 2014.

Tourism is also growing apace and visits to this country by people from around the world seem to grow by the day.

This is a perfect opportunity for Myanmar to show the world what is happening in this country and what can happen.

It is also a year in which everyone in the country needs to step up and do their part in making 2014 successful.

Whether a person is a foreign visitor or a local resident, much needs to be done in making that person feel welcome, important and properly served.

Too often, the reality is that unless someone higher up directly tells a person on the frontline exactly what to do, nothing gets done at all.

Too often is the answer to the simplest of questions “I don’t know” or “It’s not my job.”

“This who cares, my boss didn’t tell me what to do” attitude needs to change, and it needs to change fast.

Everyone needs to step up, make decisions and serve.

It doesn’t matter if it is in the corridors of power, on the shop floor, in a hotel lobby or in the local market, when someone needs help, it is our duty to provide it.

Sitting back waiting for a “higher up” to make the simplest of decisions not only gives an extremely bad impression to visitors, it is inefficient in the extreme and irritates locals and visitors alike.

Waiting for word from “on high” does no one any good.

There is a children’s game in which one person whispers an instruction to the next person in a line. That person whispers to the person beside her and so one, for maybe 10 people. Then the final person says out loud what the first person whispered.

By the time the phrase is repeated “Let’s go to the market” it can change into “He doesn’t like peas.”

The meaning is lost and nothing has been learnt.

Person No. 2 needs to accept responsibility and go to the market if anything is to get done.

This is “stepping up.”

Similarly, some at the top need to step back, encourage those in their charge to make their own decisions and allow them to make mistakes.

The only way people learn is by making a mistake every now and then.

The only way people never make a mistake is if they never do anything.

Hardly the best way to impress our visitors!

ARTICLE

Tears of joy

U Han Nyunt is a retired director-general of the Attorney’s General Office now living in Nay Pyi Taw. Ed

Tears

“Men never cry,” my dad once said.

I have remembered the phrase every struggling moment of mine.

Fewer successes, more losses, more defeats, more struggles, more shattered hopes.

That’s the nature of life.

There were times I was depressed. I was sad. I felt unfulfilled and unappreciated. Tears welled up in my eyes. I was about to weep. I was about to cry. No, remember dad’s words! I am a man and I am a Myanmar. Men don’t cry.

SEA Games

It takes 44 years for the SEA Games to return to Myanmar’s soil. Everyone was happy to welcome it back, but we had doubts.

Infrastructures, spaces, international experience, technology, security, there were a host of things we worried about. We could not afford to lose face on the international stage.

Impressive host

We hosted XXVII SEA Games successfully. Eleven nations participated in the games where 33 sports were played. Thailand stood first, followed by Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Brunei according to their standing in medal tally.

We could show what Myanmar is. What Myanmar culture is, what Myanmar’s morale is and Myanmar, how we are united and how much we love our nation.

Seeing is believing

Many foreigners flocked to the SEA Games—leaders, athletes, politicians, businesspeople. They witnessed Myanmar’s sportsmanship.

Fish-paste lovers

I have been in foreign countries as a legal officer or a delegate by the State. I talked to chief justices, attorneys general and directors general of foreign countries.

I was in meetings, I was in luncheons, but no matter how special their menus are and how delicious their food, I couldn’t help missing typical Myanmar dinner with fish paste.

Shwedagon Pagoda

Shwedagon is somewhere you can’t skip on a Myanmar visit. All the lovely guests from Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, Timor-Leste and Brunei showed their respects to Myanmar, the golden land, the clean land and the land of hospitable people.

“Myanmar”

I love the word ‘Myanmar’, but I don’t know why. It was a combination of two separate words in Myanmar language ‘myan’ and ‘mar’: ‘Myan’ means quickness, and ‘mar’ means strength. We are literally strong and quick people. Once, it was known ‘Burma’. We have now replaced the phrase ‘Union of Burma’ with ‘Union of Myanmar’. The words ‘Burma’, ‘Burman’ and ‘Burmese’ have now been replaced by ‘Myanmar’. The name change was legislated with Law No. 15/89.

Myanmar! Myanmar!

Myanmar! Myanmar!

We overwhelmedly heard chants, “Myanmar! Myanmar! Myanmar!” It reached every nook and corner of the nation. The state flag flew high, the national anthem sung enthusiastically.

Still the dark side

There are achievements, yet there are still losses and frustrations as well.

The SEA Games became the success thanks to those who devoted all of their times and efforts to the games. It would not be perfect, but weaknesses and failures are lessons learnt.

Football

“Football loss is most devastating,” a son of mine murmured. He then cried.

He wasn’t the only one who wept on Myanmar football team’s loss. It was all the 60 million people who were reduced to tears.

I myself shed tears as well.

Review

The SEA Games was hosted successfully. Now it is time to review our strengths and weaknesses.

We prayed for the success.

Yes, we did make it happen.

Sports and Culture Ministries

The SEA Games was overseen by Vice-President U Nyan Tun and the Sports Ministry, the Culture Ministry, the Home Ministry and the Information Ministry and other ministries shared major duties. Volunteers’ hard work was seen. It is the sign that we embrace love for the nation, rule of law, politeness, honesty, unity, tolerance, philanthropy and civic responsibility. That’s why we succeeded.

Winner or loser

Every game will have winners and losers. We learnt to accept loss. The law enforcement will not tolerate any one running riot on loss.

Myanmar Police Force

The Myanmar Police Force must be congratulated. They proved their capacity. They ensured security. They also showed, “We can do it.” They have become the police force loved by the people.

All those worth acknowledgement

Volunteers received certificates of honours from the president, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw speaker and MPs. Athletes, volunteers, artists and the people are worthy of acknowledgement for their united efforts.

That’s Myanmar

I was in tears watching the opening and closing ceremonies which featured Myanmar’s unique characters. That’s Myanmar. We could show what Myanmar is.

I was in tears, yes. And who wasn’t?

Tears of joy

I am not forgetting Myanmar dad’s words that men are not supposed to cry. Dad, these are neither coward’s tears nor tears of rage. These are happy tears. These are tears filled with pride, kindness and joy. These are Myanmar tears.

Myanmar Albania: 25.12.2013

Trs: HKA
President meets Mutu Sae Po

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein makes discussion with KNU Chairman Saw Mutu Sae Po and party.

MNA

(Monday, 6 January, 2014)

Sandar Win's family got K1.1 million from selling their two draught cattle and invested the money in 9,500 cabbage plants and 5,000 potato plants.

"Like in last winter, we hope again that we will get a good price for our cabbage, because we hear that the current price for one cauliflower has reached 350 kyats these days," Sandar Win said.

Seasonal farming offers "honest work"...

But they also know that by time their crop reaches market the prices may have fallen, particularly if other farmers across the country are also harvesting cauliflower and cabbage and bringing them to market at the same time.

"Sometimes we feel depressed, but we have no choice but to work. Our fate is fixed to the price for our crops," Sandar Win said.

(National (from page 16)

Union Industry Minister inspects Sugar Mill

Union Industry Minister U Maung Myint inspected a sugar mill in Pyu Township in the Bago Region yesterday.

The Union minister called on the employees of Sin Phyu Taw Sugar Mill to participate in solving the problems of the factory and increase production.

The mill produces 100 tons of white sugar and over four tons of molasses every day. Mill officials plan to produce about 150 tons of sugar in future using Thai sugarcane.

Vice-President attends pre-Golden Jubilee...

A 27-member executive body of the association was set up today that is obliged to collect all outstanding students selected during the period from 1964 to 1988 and to become a think tank for the country.

Union Minister U Maung Myint at Sugar Mill in Pyu Township in Bago Region.

MNA

(National (from page 16)

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo with KNU Chairman Saw Mutu Sae Po and party.—MNA

President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein makes discussion with KNU Chairman Saw Mutu Sae Po and party.

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New market opens in Magway

**LOCAL NEWS**

### Tamu border trade expected to top K 35 million in 2013-2014

TAMU, 5 Jan—Trade volume at the India-Myanmar Tamu border trade camp is expected to surpass K 35 million in the 2013-2014 financial year.

The camp has free access to trade with the use of ICT cards by any person who is 18 years old or older.

### Haka City marks 66th Independence Day with ceremony, sports events

HAKA, 5 Jan—A flag-hoisting ceremony and various sports events were held in the capital of Chin State, Haka, yesterday to mark the 66th anniversary of Independence Day.

The ceremony was held at Yamthumong sports ground, with Chief Minister of Chin State Thiri Pyanchi U Hong Ngai reading out a message sent by President U Thein Sein. Among the various events held to celebrate the day, prizes were given to the winners of the best essay and poem contest.

Official had also organized many sports events, with several state, district and township officials watching the contests.—MMAL-Chin State (IPRD)

### Sunflower plantations thriving in Kalay Township

KALAY, 5 Jan—Kalay District Management Committee Chairman U Maung Htoo made an inspection tour of cultivable lands in Indin Village in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region on 4 January as part of making the regional development.

The chairman viewed the sunflower plantation of farmer U Myint Naing and left instructions to boost edible oil crops production.

**MMAL-Chindwin Tha (IPRD)**

### Health Care

Ottarathiri residents receive health care

NAY PYI TAW, 5 Jan.—A medical team from Ottarathiri Township Health Department conducted health care services for local residents at the 50-bed hospital on 3 January.

At the hospital, the team gave vaccinations to 50 children under 2 years and tetanus vaccinations to 20 expectant mothers.

**MMAL-District IPRD**

### Electrification

Thingangyun residents get full electrification

NAY PYI TAW, 5 Jan—Electricians installed a 315 KV transformer at the corner of Bawga Street in Ward-8, Thingangyun Township, Yangon Region recently to supply electricity to the people at full capacity.

The work was supervised by officials of Thingangyun Township Administrator and engineers under the Yangon City Electricity Supply Board (YESB).

The installation of the transformer was funded by YESB to supply electricity through 66 KV power lines to the people.

**MMAL-Mway Mway (Thingangyun)**

### Prisoners released from Myeik Prison

MYEIK, 5 Jan—The government released 115 prisoners from Myeik Prison under Order No 1 (2014) of the President yesterday.

A ceremony to free prisoners took place at the hall of the Myanmar Correctional Department in Myeik on 3 January. Commander of the District Police Force Police Lt-Col Shwe Nyar Maung, Township Administrator U Thein Win and Assistant Director U Nyunt Win from Myeik Prison gave advice to the inmates and presented prison department certificates and K 1,000 to each of them. The prisoners from Dawei Prison, Myeik Prison, Kawthoung Prison and Hsinbyuyin in work camp in Taninthayi Region were released at the ceremony.

**MMAL-Myeik District IPRD**

### New market opens in Magway

Magway, 5 Jan—To mark the 66th Anniversary Independence Day, three new storey market building opened in Magway region.

The construction work was started last 4 September.

Magway Region Chief Minister U Phone Shwe Shwe formally opened the new market and about 200 local people attended the opening ceremony.

The local people were also satisfied with upgrading of roads in downtown areas, the repairing of drains and extensions of infrastructures construction.

**MMAL-Ko Htay (Magway)**

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The chairman viewed the sunflower plantation of farmer U Myint Naing and left instructions to boost edible oil crops production.

Farmers in Kalay Township grow edible oil crops such as sunflowers, groundnuts, and sesame.

In late December, 58,245 acres of farmland were growing edible oil crops in the township.

**MMAL-Chindwin Tha (IPRD)**

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**MMAL-District IPRD**
Violence against Afghan women more frequent, brutal in 2013

KABUL, 5 Jan — Violent crime against women in Afghanistan hit record levels and became increasingly brutal in 2013, the head of the country’s human rights commission said on Saturday, a sign that hard won rights are being rolled back as foreign troops prepare to withdraw.

Restoring women’s rights after the Taliban was ousted by a US-led coalition of troops in 2001 was cited as one of the main obstacles to peace. Under Taliban rule, women were required to wear the head-to-toe covering burqa and barred from leaving their homes without being escorted by a male relative. Schools for girls were shut down. Sima Samar, chair of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), told Reuters in a telephone interview that the brutality of attacks on women had greatly intensified last year.

Indonesia’s volcano erupts again, more people evacuated

JAKARTA, 5 Jan — Mount Sinabung, one of the most active volcanoes in Indonesia, erupted again on Saturday, shooting a column of ash 4,000 meters to the sky.

The authorities evacuated all the villagers on Friday and Saturday, adding the total number of displaced people to 5,036 on Saturday morning and 19,286 on the previous day, said Sutopo. Besides, the authorities also extended the emergency relief period ended on 5 to 18 January, he said. “The column of hot ash rose, official said. The authorities evacuated all the villagers on Friday and Saturday, adding the total number of displaced people to 5,036 on Saturday morning and 19,286 on the previous day, said Sutopo. Besides, the authorities also extended the emergency relief period ended on 5 to 18 January, he said. The column of hot ash rose, official said.

India to hold general election from mid-April to early May

NEW DELHI, 5 Jan — India will start its general election in mid-April and complete it by early May in five phases, said Pranab Mukherjee, India on Sunday.

The country’s election commission is all set to hold Lok Sabha or Lower House of Parliament election starting mid-April and spread it over at least five phases till early May, said the report. The announcement for the polls is likely to be made by the end of February or early March, for which work has already begun, the news agency quoted top election commission sources as saying.

The term of the current Lok Sabha expires on June 1 and the new House has to be constituted by 31 May, said the report.
US urges “rapid, tangible” progress in South Sudan peace talks

WASHINGTON, 5 Jan — The United States on Saturday urged the warring parties in South Sudan to achieve “rapid, tangible” progress in ending their conflicts through direct talks, stressing there is no military solution.

“The parties must use these talks to make rapid, tangible progress on a cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access, and the status of political detainees,” Harf said in a statement. “There can be no military solution to this conflict,” she added. “Forging a durable and lasting peace depends on resolving the underlying political causes of the conflict.”

About 1,000 people have been killed and up to 190,000 others displaced since deadly clashes erupted between the warring parties in Juba, South Sudan’s capital, on 15 December and spilled over to other parts of the country.

US special envoy Donald Booth was in Addis Ababa for the talks, sponsored by the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Putin eases curbs on protests in Sochi for Olympics

MOSCOW, 5 Jan — President Vladimir Putin has eased curbs on demonstrations in the Winter Olympics venue of Sochi in a gesture likely to burnish Russia’s image ahead of an event dogged by security and human rights worries.

Keenly aware that the success or failure of the Games will help shape his legacy, Putin has closely identified himself with the $50 billion project. He identified himself with Russia’s own constitution.

Putin convened a decree to allow groups for everything from gay rights to political reform, offered a reminder of the continuing threat posed by militants who want to carve an Islamic state out of a sprawling Russian city of Volgograd, which killed at least 34 people.

Putin’s move came shortly after he ordered a further security clampdown following two suicide bomb attacks in the southern Russian city of Volgograd which killed at least 34 people.

No one has claimed responsibility for the blasts, but they were a reminder of the continuing threat posed by militants who want to carve an Islamic state out of a swath of southern Russia that includes Sochi.—Reuters

Putin, who on Saturday addressed the Games’ opening ceremony in Sochi, amended a decree to allow groups to hold some marches and gatherings at sites approved by the security services, the Kremlin said in a statement.

“Gatherings, rallies, demonstrations, marches and pickets, which are not directly connected to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, could be staged on 7January-21 March 2014... only after agreeing with... a local security body,” it said.

Campaign groups, calling for everything from gay rights to political reform, have complained that the ban on rallies, imposed in August as part of a security crackdown, violated Russia’s own constitution.

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One killed, two wounded in Houston party shooting

HOUSTON, 5 Jan — One person was killed and two others were wounded in a shooting at a large party in Houston on Saturday, US media reported.

Police responded to a call of a shooting early Sat-urday at a home in northwest Houston, local media KHOU reported.

Police said a cream-colored car pulled up to the party where there were about 50 to 60 teenagers and a gunman in the back-seat opened fire. As many as 10 shots were fired into the crowd which was in a parking lot next to the home.

Three male victims were shot and were taken to local hospitals. One of the victims died later.

Nobody has been ar-rested over the gunfire. Police are interviewing witnesses and trying to de-termine a motive for the shooting. No further details are available now.—Xinhua

Jinan, 5 Jan — Three people were killed and seven others injured in a road accident on Saturday morning in east China’s Shandong Province, sources with Jinan government said.

The accident happened around 7.30 am when a large goods vehicle collided with a motorized tricycle on a section of No 105 national road in the provincial capital of Jinan. The injured are receiving treatment in hospital.

A further investigation is under way.

One killed, two wounded in Houston party shooting

Putin eases curbs on protests in Sochi for Olympics
Leonardo DiCaprio defends The Wolf of Wall Street

LOS ANGELES, 5 Jan—Leonardo DiCaprio has denied that his latest collaboration with Martin Scorsese in The Wolf of Wall Street is a glorification of a criminal but glamorous lifestyle. The film has generated mixed reviews and some of the critics have blamed Scorsese for glorifying the lifestyle of Jordan Belfort, a Wall Street stockbroker who defrauded investors with fraudulent stock sales.

However, in an interview to HitFix, producer and film’s star Leonardo DiCaprio said their attempt was to create something that will endure and tell a cautionary story about modern times. “I think that at least the attempt going into it was to try to do something really outside of the box and I think Marty (Scorsese) had the same approach... In that regard I feel very proud of this performance. I think we took a lot of chances, and no matter what people think of the movie, we swung for the fences on this one,” he said.

“... I keep referencing ‘Caligula’ but you think about ‘Scarface’ films like that, I don’t know how people are going to react to it right off the bat, but I think as the years roll by people will appreciate what we were trying to do here.”

Responding to the controversy that the film celebrated Belfort’s hedonism, Leonardo DiCaprio said that they were condoning such behaviour but without being judgemental. “...the unique thing about Marty is that he doesn’t judge his characters. And that was something that you don’t quite understand while you’re making the movie, but he allows the freedom of this almost hypnotic, drug-fused, wild ride that these characters go on. And he allows you, as an audience —guilty or not — to enjoy in that ride without judging who these people are. I mean ultimately I think if anyone watches this movie, at the end of Wall Street they’re going to see that we’re not at all condoning this behaviour.

In fact we’re saying that this is something that is in our very culture and it needs to be looked at and it needs to be talked about,” he added.

Miley Cyrus thanks Ryan Seacrest for midnight kiss

LOS ANGELES, 5 Jan—Pop star Miley Cyrus kissed anchor-producer Ryan Seacrest to ring in the New Year 2014. She later thanked him for it. The 21-year-old first thought that her lip-lock with Ryan Seacrest had evaded the cameras, so she took to microblogging website Twitter in the wee hours of Wednesday to talk about it, report eonline.com. “They missed our New Years kiss,” she tweeted.

Miley later tweeted the photograph during the day, tweeting, “Yay! They caught our New Year midnight kiss! Happy New Year Ryan Seacrest and thank you for having me.”

Jennifer Lopez’s new video to premiere on 16 January

NEW YORK, 5 Jan—The video of pop star-actress Jennifer Lopez’s new single “Same Girl” will reportedly premiere on 16 January on singing reality show American Idol. Aceshowbiz.com reports that an undisclosed person, who worked with Jennifer Lopez on the video, gave the release date on microblogging Twitter by posting, “New Video Same girl from JLo on the premiere of American Idol 16 January 2014.” Jennifer Lopez, who will reprise her role as a judge on the upcoming season of the show, was recently spotted filming the video in the Castle Hill neighbourhood of The Bronx here.

The 44-year-old was wearing jeans, a black jacket and a Yankees cap. The new video is directed by Steven Gomillion and Dennis Leupold. Same girl was written by Lopez in collaboration with Chris Brown and Cory Rooney. The three of them were pictured hitting a studio recording together back in March.

The track will feature in her tenth studio album which is expected to drop later this year.—PTI

Beyonce Knowles worked hard for post baby figure

LOS ANGELES, 5 Jan—Pop star Beyonce Knowles has said that she “worked crazily” to get back in shape after giving birth to Blue Ivy.

The 32-year old tried extra hard to get back in shape after giving birth to her daughter in January 2012. That is why she wanted to show off the results with sexy videos for her newly released album Beyonce, which came out earlier this month.

“I was very aware of the fact I was showing my body, I was 195 pounds (approximately 88.50 kg) when I gave birth. I lost 65 pounds (approximately 29.50 kg). I worked crazily to get my body back and I wanted to show my body,” she said.

“I wanted to show that you can have a child, and you can work hard, and you can get your body back,” she added.—PTI

Jennifer Aniston splurges every month on anti-ageing products

LOS ANGELES, 5 Jan—Actress Jennifer Aniston reportedly spends over $19,500 a month on anti-ageing beauty products. The Friends star is said to spend a bomb on skincare products and laser treatments, reports femalefirst.co.uk. “She takes looking and feeling her best very seriously. Make no mistake, it takes a lot of money and effort to look as good as she does at 44,” a mailonline quoted a source.—PTI

Leonardo DiCaprio plays the role of a Wall Street stockbroker in the movie.
Serena fires her way to victory, Federer sets up Hewitt showdown

BRISBANE, 5 Jan — Serena Williams laid down an imposing marker as she won the first set, before being pegged back by World No. 85, Alize Cornet, in the second set, to win 6-3, 6-7(7), 6-4 to reach her ninth Australian Open semi-final in 12 years.

The women’s final was played under rain-soaked conditions at the Margaret Court Arena, as Williams proved too good for her younger opponent.

The Frenchwoman, who was seeking her first Grand Slam title, was outplayed by Williams, who has now won 20 major singles titles.

Williams served the first set, and Cornet battled back to win the second before the American rallied to win the third set.

“It was a good match,” Williams said. “I think both of us played well, but I was able to stay focused and execute my game plan.”

In the final, Williams will face either Victoria Azarenka or Eugenie Bouchard, who will meet in the other semi-final.

Solskjær makes instant impact as Cardiff stun Newcastle

LONDON, 5 Jan — Ole Gunnar Solskjaer made an instant impact as he guided Cardiff City to victory over Newcastle United, with a 3-1 win in the Premier League.

The Norwegian manager, who was appointed on a short-term basis earlier this month, led his team to a crucial victory, which keeps them in the relegation battle.

“It’s been a long time coming,” said Solskjaer. “I’m delighted for the players and the fans.”

Cardiff City’s manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

Sharp wedge game helps Johnson take control in Hawaii

HAWAII, 5 Jan — Zach Johnson shot an eagle at No. 15, then added a 6-iron to the mix to take control of the leaderboard in the Hyundai Tournament of Champions.

Johnson, who had been struggling with his putting, found a way to make it count, shooting a 6-under par 66.

“It was one of those days where everything kind of clicked,” Johnson said. “I was able to make some of those longer putts fall.”

Johnson leads the field by two strokes over Tiger Woods and Dustin Johnson, who both shot 7-under par 65.

Sergio Kaloks, a member of the European Ryder Cup team, also shot 6-under, and is in contention for the title.

Victoria Azarenka of Belarus

Dortmund’s Lewandowski to join Bayern next season

DORTMUND, 5 Jan — Robert Lewandowski is set to leave Borussia Dortmund and join Bayern Munich next season, according to reports in Germany.

The Polish striker has been linked with a move to the Bavarian giants for some time, and has now made it clear that he wants to leave the Signal Iduna Park.

Lewandowski has scored 29 goals in all competitions this season, and is considered one of the best strikers in Europe.

“Bayern Munich are a great club, and I think this is the right time for me to move,” Lewandowski said. “I’ve had a great season with Dortmund, but now I want to challenge myself in a new league.”

Doha, 5 Jan — Nakib Momen

Nadal beats Monfils to win Qatar title

Doha, 5 Jan — Rafael Nadal began his year in perfect fashion with a three-set victory over Frenchman Gael Monfils in the Qatar Open.

The Spaniard cruised to the final after a comfortable victory over Monfils, who was unable to find his rhythm.

“I was very comfortable from the start,” Nadal said. “I played well in all three sets, and I’m really happy to win the title.”

Nadal extended his lead at the top of the world rankings over Novak Djokovic, who opted not to play this week.

“Every victory is important, and the title today means a lot to me. It is the first time in my career that I am able to start the season with a victory. That’s always important,” Nadal said after adding Qatar to his long list of successful venues.
CHINA TO HELP UGANDA DEVELOP SPORTS SECTOR

KAMPALA, 5 Jan — China is in talks with Uganda to help the East African country develop its sports sector, China’s envoy here said on Saturday. Zhao Yali, China’s Ambassador to Uganda told Xinhua that China is ready to have more partnerships with the Ugandan government in the area of sports.

“We are ready to help Uganda especially in the field of coaching exchange. We shall do what we can to promote corporation between the two countries. We have already spoken with the National Council of Sports on the way how to help Uganda,” said Zhao who added that they are open to several initiatives.

In 2012, fifteen Chinese youth volunteers arrived in Uganda in another measure to boost the cooperation between China and Uganda. The 15 volunteers according to agreements signed between the two governments were to offer their expertise to teaching Chinese language, sports and aquaculture.

Zhao was at the MTN Arena in the capital Kampala where the Chinese community in Uganda were taking part in the game of table tennis. “It is good to bring together all Chinese in Uganda to unite and through sporting activities like this we get together and get to know each other better,” said Zhao who was also a participant.

There were about 100 Chinese living in Uganda who were taking part in the table tennis event. The best participants were awarded trophies.—Xinhua

ARSENAL ADVANCE AS WALCOTT PROVOKES SPURS FANS

LONDON, 5 Jan — Arsenal winger Theo Walcott angered Tottenham Hotspur fans while being carted off on a stretcher during his side’s comfortable 2-0 win over their London rivals in the FA Cup on Saturday.

Arsenal were already heading into the fourth round draw, with goals from Santi Cazorla and Tomas Rosicky, and the mood of the visiting supporters was not helped by Walcott gesturing the scoreline with his fingers after injuring his knee.

His actions could yet take some of the gloss off an impressive Gunners display if the FA take a dim view of his actions, although Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger played down the incident which saw a grinning Walcott showered with coins.

“The doctor said to me that the coins were already raining over his head and they had to protect him before he made the gesture, but what he did was not offensive,” Wenger told reporters. “I don’t think the FA will take any action, I’ve seen the pictures and he’s not being aggressive, he’s smiling. I hope he’s not banned or doesn’t miss any matches because of the injury. “With Theo, he has a knee problem. We don’t know if it’s a stretched ligament or just a kick, he got two kicks on to his knee,” added Wenger. “Of course, if we lose Theo for a longer period, it’s a problem.”

However, he did have some positive news on Denmark striker Nicklas Bendtner, who was injured scoring Arsenal’s first goal in Wednesday’s 2-0 Premier League home win over Cardiff City.

“For Bendtner, it will be for one month, we expected it could have been more, we had good news,” said the Frenchman.

Arsenal’s victory over their arch-rivals Tottenham handed Wenger’s opposite number Tim Sherwood his first defeat since being permanently appointed as the club’s head coach last month in place of the sacked Portuguese Andre Villas-Boas.

Cazorla’s arrowed drive after 31 minutes and a second goal by Rosicky just past the hour mark following a mistake from Tottenham left back Danny Rose on the halfway line when he lost possession to Rosicky, secured Arsenal’s place in the last 32. Czech international Rosicky’s goal all but ended the contest after he ran half the length of the pitch before lifting the ball over keeper Hugo Lloris with Kyle Walker chasing him down.

Mainly restricting Spurs to half-chances and the occasional counter-attack, Premier League leaders Arsenal held out for a deserved win even though they played the last few minutes with 10 men after Walcott was carried off with a knee injury.
Seasonal farming offers “honest work”, but no profit guarantees

By Aye Min Soe

Farmers in Myanmar have no choice but to tempt the profit fates when they plant their seasonal crops.

“We are working, but must leave the profits to our fate,” Sandar Win, 24, a mother of two, said as she dug small ditch to irrigate her cabbage plants in Kya-ThayAing Village in Tatkon Township.

Sandar Win has worked together with her husband and her father-in-law on their farmland since she got married five years ago.

In their village about 200 acres of farmland are owned by the farmers.

Sandar Win said the vagaries of price fluctuations mean some of her friends have lost their land or their draught animals because at harvest times prices turned out not to be high enough to pay off debts incurred at planting time.

With good prices at harvest, the farmers can gain decent profits, but as many need to borrow to pay for seed and other needs at planting time, a poor crop or low prices at harvest can mean hardship, if not loss of their livelihood altogether.

Last year, cabbage and cauliflower prices in early winter were good, but by the late winter harvest prices had fallen significantly.

Sandar Win’s family lost money on their cauliflower and cabbage last year, even though they had expected good profits. But good prices for their potato crop offset the losses on the other vegetables.

“We are able to defeat pests and to harvest good crops, but we can’t say definitely that we will profit from our crops,” Soe Htike, 31, Sandar Win’s husband, said. This winter, they decided to avoid borrowing money at 10 per cent to 15 per cent interest rates from private lenders, but they had to sell two draught cattle to make ends meet. Other farmers made the same decision.

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