Gangaw region, located in Magway Region in the north-west of the nation, has been putting farmlands under edible oil crops such as sesame and groundnut. After conducting the cultivation on test, the region could achieve success in growing sunflower for 10 years. Up to now, local farmers are engaged in cultivation of sunflower in both monsoon and cold season through double and mix-cropping patterns.

In practical work, cold season sunflower boosts its per-acre yield more than that of monsoon sunflower. At present, Gangaw Township grows 2211 acres of monsoon sunflower, Htilin Township 7229 acres, Saw Township 1829 acres and Kyaukhtu Sub-Township 2356 acres. Likewise, Gangaw Township cultivates 19369 acres of cold season sunflower, Htilin Township 12188 acres, Saw Township 3333 acres and Kyaukhtu Sub-Township 6601 acres. Monsoon sunflower produces 19.16 baskets per acre and cold season sunflower, 31.46 baskets on average.

“I have been growing sunflower plantations for 10 years in addition to butter bean. Both strains are marketable. Sunflower has more resistance against weather than that of bean. Farmers can cost K 150,000 per acre for sunflower. One basket of sunflower can produce 4.5 viss of oil. Production of sunflower can fetch K 600,000 per acre. Now, we use Yezin hybrid and Shwekyar sunflower strains,” said farmer U Myint Lwin of Myinthar Village of Gangaw region.

He secured the township level sunflower best production award due to production of over 60 baskets of sunflower in 2011.

In Gangaw region, the local farmers grow sunflower and pea plantations through mix-cropping pattern.

Sunflower growers earn high income
Byline: Sein Kyaw (Waboochaung)

Nay Pyi Taw, 26 Jan—President U Thein Sein enjoyed the second round of 2nd Union Government Cup Golf Tournament at Myodaw and Yepyar courses, here, this morning. Prize presentation of 2nd Union Government Cup Golf Tournament was held at Myodaw golf course this evening and Vice-President Dr Sai Maung Kham presented prizes to the winners.

Chairman of Leading Committee Union Minister U Thein Nyunt second prize to Ministry of Defence in inter-team (handicap) event.

On behalf of President U Thein Sein, Vice-President Dr Sai Maung Kham presented Union Government Cup to Ministry of Defence in inter-team (scratch) event and Ministry of LFRD in inter-team (handicap) event.

Vice-President Dr Sai Maung Kham cordially greeted participant golfers and posed for a documentary photo with them.

After prize awarding ceremony, a dinner followed. The singers entertained those present together with Myanmar Athan modern music band.

Patrons of Leading Committee Union Minister U Thein Nyunt awarded third prize to Ministry of Home Affairs and Union Minister U Thein Nyunt second prize to Ministry of Defence in inter-team (handicap) event.

Japan, India agree to conduct naval drill with US
FM highlights China’s new reform drive at WEF
Tunisia premier lacks consensus on new caretaker cabinet
New Light of Myanmar

LOCAL NEWS

New building under construction at Htintan BEMS Branch

Yezagyo, 26 Jan—Under the management of Magway Region government, Htet Moe Pwint Co Ltd is constructing the building of Basic Education Middle School Branch in No. 1 Htintan Ward of Yezagyo. So far, the building has been completed by 75 per cent. The construction started on 17 January. The building will be 90 feet x 30 feet x 12 feet and funded K 32.4 million by the Ministry of Education in 2013-2014 fiscal year.

The ministry allotted K 32.4 million on construction of the building for Yezagyo BEMS Branch, K 32.4 million on Ngayaw BEMS Branch, K 21.6 million on Kaing-2 BEPS, K 14.4 million on Kyaukhlela BEPS and K 28.8 million on Shwehlan BEHS Branch.

Pay Your Tax

Traditional Medicine Department gives treatment to over 4000 patients

Mekitila, 26 Jan—GSM and CDMA 800 MHz SIM cards are sold at the market ranging from K 85000 to K 100,000 in Mekitila. Buyers pay K 85000 to K 90000 for CDMA SIM cards. They prefer purchase of GSM at K 100,000 and K 110,000 SIM cards that flowed from Magway, Taungdwingyi, Chaung Kyaukpyu and Myingyan are marketable in Mekitila. The mobile phone shops resell the CDMA cards at K 100,000 and K 110,000, said Ko Huu of Mekitila who is a broker of mobile SIM cards.

As of April 2013, region and state governments allotted 350,000 mobile phone cards worth K 1300 each to local people. So far, a total of over 7 million including 3.2 million of mobile SIM cards.

A plan is underway to allot more and more SIM cards to the people to enable each household to hold at least one mobile phone.

On 24 January, the ministry concerned issued a statement that 350,000 mobile phone SIM cards of CDMA 800, GSM and WCDMA will be sold to the people across the nation and 50000 WCDMA cards will be sold for the retired service personnel in the entire nation. Mmal-ChunTha (Mekitila)

Crime

Four suspects of snatching arrested

Yangon, 26 Jan—No 2 security company of Yangon Region Police Force discharge duty of security on Than Street Bus Stop on Insein Road in Hline Township on 23 January afternoon.

They found four suspects namely Ahtit (a) Aye Lwin, son of U Tin Shwe of Thakaya Township, Maung Kyaw (a) Maung Oo, son of U Tin Soe of Twantay Township and Thaik Soe Tun, son of U Thein Aung and Nyan Tun, son of U Aung Than of Himethaya Township along with K 47000. U d e r t h e interrogation, those four suspects snatched money from a slam bag of a woman who prepared to get down from a bus of No 226 bus line. Hlne Myoma Police Station opened files of lawsuit against them under the law. Kyemon-Soe Win (MLA)

Damaged vehicles go to iron casting

Lasheo, 26 Jan—Officials of Central Equipment Statistics and Inspection Department under the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development collected data of damaged vehicles where there are levels of casting or repairing from the courts in Shan State (North). The statistics stated list of confiscated vehicles and machinery to be cast. The list comprises 23 cars, 204 motorcycles, 17 trailery and 44 other machinery.

Of them, one car, one tractor, one trailery and 22 motorcycles from Lasheo District and Township courts were transported by crane to be sent to Vessel Abolish Factory (Thilawa) of Myanmar Economic Corporation as of 23 January. The remaining vehicles and machinery will be repaired under the systematic system. Mmal-Nay Myo Nwe
Japan, India agree to conduct naval drill with US

NEW DELHI, 26 Jan — Japan and India agreed Saturday to carry out a trilateral naval drill with the United States. In a meeting with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced a total of around $2 billion, or $2 billion, in loans to India mainly to help finance a project to expand the subway system in the capital.

It will be the first time for Japan’s Maritime Self-Defense Force to take part in a US-India naval exercise since the Japanese government purchased three of the four main islands in the Senkaku group from a private Japanese owner in 2012. Abe and Singh stressed their commitment to ensuring the freedom of navigation, unimpeded commerce and the peaceful settlement of conflicts in line with the principle of international law including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, according to a joint statement issued after the meeting. The two leaders affirmed maritime cooperation such as continuation of a Japan-India naval drill and a planned working-level meeting in March for exporting Japan’s US-2 amphibious planes for search and rescue purposes to India, the statement said.

“We hope to strengthen security ties with India,” Abe said in a joint news conference with Singh. To bolster bilateral security cooperation, the leaders agreed to launch regular consultations between Shotoru Yachi, head of the secretariat of Japan’s new National Security Council, and his Indian counterpart.

On the economic front, Abe and Singh agreed to complete by July next year a joint survey on the possible introduction of Japan’s shin-kansen bullet train technology for a high-speed train project between Mumbai and Ahmadabad in western India, according to the statement.

A Japanese prime minister Shinzo Abe and his wife Akie wave as they leave Tokyo International Airport in Tokyo on 25 Jan, 2014 for India. During a three-day visit to India, Abe will meet with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to discuss bilateral cooperation in the economic and security fields. KYODO NEWS

Suicide bomber kills four in Kabul attack on Afghan army bus

KABUL, 26 Jan — A suicide bomber attacked an Afghan army bus in Kabul on Sunday, killing four people and wounding up to 22, police said, the latest incident in a worrying surge of violence in the Afghan capital over the past 10 days.

The Taleban quickly claimed responsibility for the attack, the worst since a devastating assault on a popular restaurant on 17 January killed 21 foreigners and Afghans.

Hashmat Stanikzai, the chief spokesman for police in Kabul, said an investigation into the latest attack was under way.

“The number of victims might change,” he said. Stanikzai said the wounded included children who were nearby when the blast occurred. The Afghan capital was hit by at least two other attacks in the previous 24 hours, according to security officials.

Two people were wounded in an explosion in the north of the city late on Saturday, while security sources said a rocket landed near the international airport on Kabul’s outskirts without causing casualties.

The restaurant attack on 17 January was the worst on foreigners since the Taleban were thrown out of all Afghan forces in late 2001 and sent shockwaves through Kabul. Three United Nations staff and the International Monetary Fund’s top representatives in Afghanistan were among the 13 foreigners killed in that attack.

Afghan policemen inspect the wreckage of a bus hit by a suicide attack in Kabul on 26 Jan, 2014. A suicide bomber attacked an Afghan army bus in the capital, Kabul, on Sunday, killing three people and wounding at least 10, police said. The attack, the latest in a worrying upsurge of violence in Kabul and around Afghanistan, was claimed by the Taleban. —REUTERS

Police, protesters clash after Ukraine’s president offers foes posts

KIEV, 26 Jan — Police clashed with protesters who blocked aading a business in central Kiev on Sunday and the fate of Ukraine’s government was up in the air after embattled President Viktor Yanukovych offered opposition leaders key posts. One of the president’s main foes called his offer a “poisoned” attempt to kill off a protest movement in a country plunged into political unrest by Yanukovych’s U-turn away from the European Union and toward Russia.

In the latest violence, a few thousand protesters tried to storm an ornate cultural center where hundreds of security forces were gathered in central Kiev, a few hundred metres from the hub of weeks of opposition protests in Independence Square. Demonstrators threw stones and smoke bombs while police fired stun grenades and sprayed water into the crowd.

The peace and security forces later left the building, its windows shattered, and streamed out through a corridor created by the crowd after an opposition leader, Vitaly Klitschko, arrived at the scene and helped negotiate a solution.

Twenty-nine dead in clashes on anniversary of Egypt uprising

CAIRO, 26 Jan — Twenty-nine people were killed during anti-government marches on Saturday while thousands rallied in support of the army-led authorities, undermining Egypt’s fragile political fixes three years after the fall of autocrat Hosni Mubarak.

Security forces lobbed teargas and some fired automatic weapons in the air to try to prevent demonstrators opposed to the government reaching Tahrir Square, the symbolic heart of the 2011 uprising that toppled the former air force commander. As police tried to calm Cairo’s politically-charged streets, a car bomb exploded near a police camp in the Egyptian city of Suez, security sources said.

The blast, which was followed by a fierce exchange of gunfire, suggested the authorities could be locked in a long-term battle with Islamist insurgents who are gaining momentum. But the growing violence has not dented the popularity of General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, whose ouster of Islamist Mohamed Mursi, Egypt’s first freely-elected president, plunged the country into turmoil.

Instead of commemorating Mubarak’s overthrow, tens of thousands of Egyptians gathered in Tahrir to pledge their support for Sisi in an event stage-managed by the state.

An army marching band played, while vendors sold t-shirts with the general’s image for five Egyptian pounds ($0.72). Huge banners and posters displayed Sisi in his trademark dark sunglasses at Saturday’s rally. Some women kissed posters.

Advance voting called off in Bangkok, S Thailand due to anti-gov’t protest

BANGKOK, 26 Jan — Sunday’s advance voting for the 2 February election in Bangkok and southern Thailand was called off in the face of the prolonged anti-government protest.

Election officials were forced to call off the advance voting in all 50 districts of the capital as well as most southern constituencies as hordes of protesters gathered to deny entries to the advance polling units. A brawl and fistfight briefly occurred between pro-government villagers and anti-government protesters at the polling unit in Ladkrabang district of the capital, police said.

Though the police managed to stop the clash outside the polling unit, election officials decided to call off the advance voting for fears of possible violence. Nevertheless, advance polling in all other regions of the country and the capital’s outlying provinces was held without effectual protests.

According to the officials, those who have been barred by the protesters from casting their advance votes on Sunday may do so on the date which is yet to be set for general voting.

It remains to be seen whether or not the caretaker government headed by acting premier Yingluck Shinawatra will agree to reschedule the nationwide election from 2 February as suggested by the Election Commission and endorsed by the Constitutional Court. Meanwhile, one leading guard for the protesters was killed and several others injured by gunshots at a polling unit in Bangna area, police said.

A Bangkok district officer stands inside the compound of a polling station in central Bangkok on 26 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

Supporters of Egypt’s army and police gather at Tahrir square in Cairo, on the third anniversary of Egypt’s uprising, on 25 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

Reuters

Reuters
Madagascar’s president takes over; grenade blast kills child

ANTANARIVO, 26 Jan — Madagascar’s newly elected President Hery Rajaonarimampianina (L) and outgoing President Andry Rajoelina (R) receive the key symbolising the transfer of power from outgoing president Andry Rajoelina during the handover ceremony at Iavoloha Presidential Palace in the capital Antananarivo, on 24 Jan, 2014. — Reuters

Antananarivo, 26 Jan — Madagascar’s newly elected President Hery Rajaonarimampianina, who won the first elections since a coup in 2009, took office on Saturday but his inauguration was marred by an explosion that killed one person and wounded dozens after the ceremony. The government said initial investigations showed the blast was caused by a grenade that was thrown near Mahamasina stadium where a musical show was taking place in the evening, hours after the inauguration took place.

“The new president had just been sworn in. We know the political situation. His inauguration may not have pleased everyone. That’s perhaps one of the reasons why this happened,” said Arsene Rakotondrazaka, minister of internal security, who was at the scene.

He said a child aged 12 was killed and 33 people were wounded, seven of them critically. Extra police were deployed after wards in several parts of the capital. Rajaonarimampianina had earlier pledged to create an investment-friendly climate in the Indian Ocean island.

Antananarivo said the grenade blast killed a local person and wounded another person in the afternoon, killing one man and wounding another man.

M6.1 quake hits Indonesia’s Java Island

JAKARTA, 26 Jan — An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.1 occurred near Indonesia’s Java Island on Saturday, the US Geological Survey said, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

According to the USGS, the quake struck the southeastern China with a magnitude of 6.4 occurred near the Chinese island of Taiwan on Saturday. The earthquake with a magnitude of 6.5 occurred near Indonesia’s Java Island on Saturday, the USGS said, but there were no immediate reports of casualties or damage.

Indonesia is located in the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire, where earthquakes and volcanic eruptions frequently occur.

Three dead, including gunman, in Maryland mall shooting

COLUMBIA, (Maryland), 26 Jan — A gunman opened fire with a shotgun in a skate shop at a crowded shopping mall near Balti more on Saturday, killing two store employees and wounding another person before apparently killing himself, police said.

Howard County police said they did not know the motive for the shooting at the large mall in Columbia, Maryland, about 20 miles west of Baltimore. Police identified the victims as Brianna Benlolo, 21, of College Park, Maryland, and Tyler Johnson, 25, of Ellicott City, Maryland.

Both were employees of Zumiez, a skate shop where the shooting took place. The name of the gunman has not been released.

One person suffered a gunshot wound to the foot, and four others were injured in the chaos, police said. Howard County General Hospital said all five people had been treated and released. The shooting happened at about 11:15 am EST (1615 GMT) on the mall’s upper level just above the food court. The mall, which has more than 200 stores, was crowded with weekend shoppers, many of whom shielded their faces with their hands after hearing the shots or seeing people fleeing.

Police, who were in the area on another case, responded to the emergency calls within two minutes and found all three bodies either in the store or just outside it. The gunman apparently had committed suicide.

“Still he had a large amount of ammunition on and about him and because of concerns about explosives and any other weapons he might have we are approaching this with an abundance of caution,” Howard County Police Chief Bill McMahon told reporters.

It took hours for state and Howard County police, joined by authorities from neighbouring counties, to clear the building of shoppers and employees and ensure there were no other shooters.

Howard County officials walk to deliver remarks after a shooting at a shopping mall in Columbia, Maryland on 25 Jan, 2014. — Reuters

“Though I have no imminent plans for such a decision, but am committed to the path of peaceful development, contribute more ‘Chinese power’ to world peace, undertake more international obligations, and play an even more active and productive role in resolving hot issues,” the Chinese president said.

Noting that Chinese President Xi Jinping had outlined the vision of the Chinese dream, which was to achieve the revitalization of the Chinese nation, Wang said the new round of reform launched in China was the right path to this goal.

“As an important member of the international community, China would also work with other countries and make its due contribution to the development and progress of mankind, the Chinese leader said.

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Tunisia premier lacks consensus on new caretaker cabinet

TUNIS, 26 Jan — Tunisia’s new Prime Minis-
ter Mehdi Jomaa on Sunday was forced to delay nam-
ing a caretaker government to lead until elections after failing to reach a consensus over the key post of interior minister.

Jomaa, a technocrat, was appointed in December after ruling Islamists agreed to step down in a compro-
mise with secular oppo-

tents to end a crisis threat-

ening to upend democratic transition after their 2011 “Arab Spring” revolt.

Jomaa had planned to present his cabinet before the president on Saturday, but just after midnight the premier told at a press brieﬁng there was no con-
sensus over the cabinet list and he could not name the government. “I have to inform the president that I do not have the list,” he said. “It is not a ques-
tion of a person, but rather I am looking for a real consensus in the govern-
ment. There should not be any division.” He said the president could reassign him to the task of forming a new cabinet but named another candidate.

It was a setback for Tunisia after its assem-

bly ﬁnished the country’s new constitution last week, and progress widely praised as a model in contrast to up-

heaval in Libya, Egypt and Yemen who also ousted leaders in 2011 uprisings. Party sources said Tu-

nish opposition leaders wanted to a new interior minister, but Jomaa pressed to keep the current minis-
ter to ensure continuity in key security matters as the country faces Islamist mili-

tants.

In the coming months of dead-

lock last year, North Afri-

can country’s Islamist party Ennahda agreed to step down in a compromise deal to pave the way for a non-po-

tical, technocrat govern-

tment to ease tensions and prepare for elections later this year.

One of the most secu-

rity agencies within the Arab World, Tunisia has strug-
gled with deepening di-

visions over the role of Islam and the rise of ultra-

conservative Salafists, who secularists worried would infringe on liberal education and rights.

No date has been set for elections, but the new government will have to tackle demands from in-
ternational lenders to cut public spending and curb the country’s budget deﬁcit without triggering protests over economic hardships. Islamist militants, like the al-Qaeda operations in North Africa, are also a growing threat for a country that relies heavily on Euro-

pean tourism and overseas remittances for its hard cur-

rency income.

India celebrates Republic Day

NEW DELHI, 26 Jan — India on Sunday started its 65th Republic Day cere-

mony with ground-to-air security apparatus put in place in the capital by thou-

sands of armed personnel on the eight-km-long pa-

dade route from Rajpath to Red Fort here.

The ceremony started with military parades as usual. Among the military strength ﬁrst showcased at the parade were Indian Ar-

my’s main battle tank T-90 and mineweepers, fol-

lowed by army regiments.

Meanwhile, an im-

proved explosive device blast took place Sunday in the northeast state of Manipur’s Imphal, without causing any casualties. The blast took place near the divisional commissioner’s residence of the city, local TV CNN-IBN.

Indian President Pranab Mukherjee, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and visiting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and tens of thousands of people attended the celebration.

In his speech to the na-

tion on Saturday evening, Indian President Mukherjee called on Indians to elect a stable government in the general election this year and warned them against “populist anarchy” by the anti-graft party Aam Aadmi Party which has come to power in the capital last month. Prime Minister Singh paid tribute to India’s dead soldiers at the Indian Gate before the parade started.—Xinhua

Syrian civil war foes meet for ﬁrst time, focus on aid

GENEVA, 26 Jan — Syr-

ia’s civil war foes held their ﬁrst face-to-face meetings on Saturday, launching talks aimed at ending nearly three years of conﬂict which has killed 130,000 people and destabilized the wider Mid-

dle East.

Government and oppo-

sition delegates faced each other across a negotiating table at the United Nations headquarters for a total of three hours in the presence of mediator Lakhdar Brahimi, who described the meetings as “at the beginning”.

While political differ-

ences which Brahimi said must form the core of their talks appear insurmount-

able for now, the two sides focused on Saturday on a possible humanitarian deal aimed at building conﬁdence in the negotiating process.

Brahimi said he hoped that authorities in Syria would approve access on Sunday for an aid convoy to reach the rebel-held centre of Homs, allowing it to be de-

livered on Monday.

“We haven’t achieved much, but we are continu-

ing,” he told a news confer-

ence after the talks concluded for the day. Anxious to avoid any possible confrontations, organizers ensured the two parties entered and left the negotiation room for the morning and afternoon ses-

sions through separate doors.

Brahimi said they faced each other during the meet-

ing but addressed their re-

marks through him. “This is what happens in civilized discussions, you talk to the president or the speaker or the chairman,” he said.

The veteran internation-

al mediator also said he set out his plans for the talks over the coming weeks, stressing that they must ultimately be focused on implementing a June 2012 declaration which called for a transitional gov-

ernment to be set up with the consent of Syria’s oppos-

ing forces.

“We told us this is a po-

citical conference ... based on Geneva 1,” opposition dele-

gate Anas al-Abdah said, re-

ferring to the 2012 commu-

ique announced by world powers in the same Swiss city where Saturday’s talks took place.

President Bashar al-

Assad’s government delega-

tion said it broadly accepted Geneva 1, but reiterated its longstanding opposition to the idea of a transitional body, saying it was inappro-

priate and unnecessary.

“We have complete reservations regarding it,” Information Minister Omran Zoabi said, comparing the proposal to the transitional government set up in Iraq by US occupation forces after they toppled Saddam Hus-

sein in 2003.—Reuters

Death toll from Congo arms depot blast rises to over 20

KINSHASA, 26 Jan — The number of people known to have been killed by an ex-

plosion at an arms depot in Democratic Republic of Congo has risen to more than 20, the UN mission in the country said on Saturday.

The blast occurred on Friday when a lightning strike sparked a fire at the de-

pot near the diamond mining hub of Mbuji-Mayi, Congo’s third largest city.

“Over 20 people died, more than 50 were injured and many houses destroyed by the blast, causing desola-

tion in the city,” said a state-

ment released by the UN peacekeeping mission in the country, MONUSCO.

A senior government ofﬁcial had previously es-

timated that at least 10 peo-

ple were killed. “I instruc-

ted our ofﬁce in Mbuji-Mayi to stand by and support local authorities in dealing with the situation,” said Martin Kobler, head of MONUSCO.

Congo, a country the size of Western Europe in the heart of Africa, is home to around 65 million peo-

ple. In poverty despite its wealth of natu-

ral resources such as copper, cobalt, gold and diam-

onto. —Reuters

Bashar Jaafari, the Syr-

ian government’s Am-

basador to the United Na-

tions and a member of the Syrian government delegation, speaks to journalists upon his ar-

rival for the ﬁrst meeting face-to-face with the Syr-

ian opposition delegation and the UN-Arab League envoy for Syria Lakhdar Brahimi (not pictured) at a UN ofﬁce in Geneva on 25 Jan, 2014. — Reuters

LDP to discuss right of collective self-defence with coalition ally

TOKYO, 26 Jan — The No 2 lawmaker of the rul-

ing Liberal Democratic Party said on Sunday the party will discuss whether Japan should be allowed to exercise the right of col-

lective self-defence with its coalition partner the New Komeito party, which has expressed a cautious stance on the issue.

“We will discuss the issue with New Komeito to ﬁnd common ground,” LDP Secretary General Shigeru Ishiba said on an NHK TV program. “Before undergo-

ing the process, I will not say by when we will reach a conclusion.”

His comments came after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, the LDP chief, said in his policy speech at the Diet on Friday that Japan will review its self-imposed ban on exercising the right of collective self-defence to seek a greater security role abroad. New Komeito’s leader Natsuo Yamaguchi indicated last week in an interview that it will be dif-

cult to decide by the 22 June end of the Diet session whether to alter the long-standing interpre-

tation of the Constitution that Japan cannot exercise the right.

On Sunday, New Komeito Secretary General Yoshishige Ishiba reiterated the party’s cautious stance, telling the NHK pro-

gramme, “We need to form a national consensus while gaining the understanding of the international com-

munity.”

Ishiba, meanwhile, said that the economy was closely monitored to see whether the consumption tax should be hiked to 10 percent in October 2015 af-

fter being raised to 8 percent in April from the current 5 per-

cent.—Kyodo News

Tunisia’s premier-designate Mehdi Jomaa addresses the media during a news conference following a meeting with the Tunisian President at the Carthage Palace in Tunis on 10 Jan, 2014. — Reuters

Tunisia’s new Prime Minis-
ter Mehdi Jomaa addresses the media during a news conference following a meeting with the Tunisian President at the Carthage Palace in Tunis on 10 Jan, 2014. —Reuters
No serious side effects
with Merck allergy pill

NEW YORK, 26 Jan — No serious safety concerns were reported over Merck Co’s experimental pill for ragweed allergies, according to FDA documents on Friday, ahead of a meeting next week of outside medical experts who will discuss whether the drug merits approval.

The Allergenic Products Advisory Committee will meet on Tuesday to review Ragwitek, a pill placed under the tongue that, if approved, would be an alternative to regular injections administered by doctors for ragweed pollen allergies.

At the meeting, the panel will be asked to discuss whether available clinical trial data supports the safety and the efficacy of the product in persons 18 years of age and older and to make recommendations to the US Food and Drug Administration.

The committee will also be asked to recommend to the agency whether any additional studies of the drug might be needed. The FDA documents appeared to favor the drug’s safety, saying “none of the adverse events categorized as serious by investigators or (Merck) are considered related to the study drug.”

The document also said “there were no deaths in any of the five clinical development trials of Ragwitek.” About 30 million people in the United States suffer allergies to ragweed pollen, the FDA said.

Analysts see eventual Ragwitek sales of about $300 million. However, Morningstar analyst Dami en Conover said sales could reach as much as $1 billion a year.

The pill, which is comprised of extracts from short ragweed pollen, would be taken daily beginning 12 weeks prior to the start of the ragweed pollen season and throughout the season.

Merck filed its applications seeking US approval of Ragwitek last March. The drug, and another pill for grass pollen allergies called Grastek, are being developed along with Danish Drugmaker ALK-Abellio. In December, a FDA advisory committee unanimously recommended approval of Grastek. Merck shares were down 0.23 percent on Friday.

A Coca-Cola laptop theft could have compromised info for 74,000

DAVOS, (Switzerland), 26 Jan — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Christine Lagarde on Saturday said that the recovery of the world economy is a consolidation process and people should be aware of the risks.

Speaking at a session at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting here, Lagarde said the recovery happened at different rates in different areas and it is in consolidation process. Apart from the old risks which Lagarde categorized as the financial market reforms yet to be finished and unbalanced growth, Lagarde also mentioned some new risks, including the tapering in the United States and the possibility of deflation.

According to Lagarde, the possibility of deflation is low, but “the deflation risk is that it would occur if it is a shock to those economies that are now going at low inflation rates and certainly way below 2%.” If low inflation stays for a period of time, the risk is that longer term expectations will be anchored at a much lower level, said Lagarde.

In response, the European Central Bank (ECB) president Mario Draghi said inflation in the euro zone is going to stay on a very low level for a protracted time. According to Draghi, the ECB is aware of the risk of deflation if the low inflation lasts for a long time. Meanwhile, he reiterated that there is no deflation in the euro zone and the ECB is “ready and willing to act if needed.” —Xinhua

Coca-Cola logo is pictured on the back of one of their corporate delivery trucks in San Diego, California on 24 Sept, 2013. —Reuters
British scientists seek go-ahead for GM ‘Omega-3’ crop trial

LONDON, 26 Jan — British scientists have applied for permission to run an open-air field trial of a genetically modified (GM) crop they hope may one day become a sustainable and environmentally friendly source of healthy Omega-3 fats. The proposed trial — likely to generate controversy in a nation where GM foods have little public support — could start as early as May and will use Camelina plants engineered to produce seeds high in Omega-3 long chain fatty acids.

No GM crops are currently grown commercially in Britain and only two — a pest-resistant type of maize and a potato with enhanced starch content — are licensed for cultivation in the European Union (EU). But scientists at Britain’s agricultural lab Rothamsted Research have developed Camelina plants to produce Omega-3 fats that are known to be beneficial to health but normally found only in oils in increasingly limited fish stocks.

The idea, they told journalists at a briefing on their plans, is initially to supply the fish farming industry which currently consumes around 80 percent of fish oils taken from the sea — with a non-fish source of these Omega-3s. Beyond that, possibly within a decade, the GM-produced Omega-3 oils could be used in food products such as margarine, the researchers said.

“We now have a vegetable oil enhanced with these two critical fish oils,” said Johnathan Napier, a professor of plant science and head of a 15-year research project which has so far shown that the fish-oil producing plants can be grown successfully in greenhouses. “We know it works in the glasshouse, now (we need to see) does it work in the real world?” he said. The researchers estimate that although the trial would be in the open air, there was no risk of cross-pollination between the Camelina plant and other field crops grown in Britain. The application for permission to conduct the trial, which submitted to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on Monday, is subject to a public consultation and an inquiry by a scientific committee that monitors such GM plans.

A decision could be made within 90 days. While Britain’s GM regulators have been very reticent about the use of GM crops, they are commonplace elsewhere. The first GM seeds were planted in the United States more than 15 years ago and so far no evidence has been documented of adverse health impacts for people eating GM-derived foods. GM crops can also be imported into Britain and used to produce ingredients for human food and for animal feed.

While he acknowledged there is likely to be public opposition to the idea of a GM field trial, Napier said he hoped the potential for boosting health and protecting the environment would persuade sceptics of the project’s value.

“If you have a crop that has got potential health benefits and sustainability and environmental benefits, and we can articulate that clearly, I think people will see this is an OK thing to do,” he said. Omega-3 oils found in fish are known to help reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases including heart attacks and strokes.

US court system targeted in cyber attack

WASHINGTON, 26 Jan — Unidentified hackers temporarily blocked access to the federal court system’s public website on Friday, preventing lawyers from filing legal documents, Politico reported.

The denial-of-service attack hit uscourts.gov, as well as other federal court websites around the country, a spokesman for the Administrative Office of the US Courts told Politico. PACER, the court system access page that provides information on cases, and its electronic filing system also were affected.

The spokesman said the court system was investigating to determine who was responsible.

The blockage meant that attorneys could not file documents and that documents could not be retrieved online. Reuters was not immediately able to confirm the report.

Rommian hacker ‘Guccifer’ appeals against arrest

BUCHAREST, 26 Jan — Romanian hacker “Gucci-fer”, famous for breaking into emails of former US president George W Bush’s family and entertainment figures, appealed against his arrest on Friday but the chances for his release appeared slim.

A source in the prosecutor’s office confirmed that masked police had netted Marcel Lazar Lehel, known by the aliases “Gu- cifer” and “Small Fume”, on Wednesday and said he was currently being detained for 29 days in Bucha- rest pending a criminal in- vestigation. The hacker shot to fame last February after he hacked into Bush family emails and posted artwork by the former president, including self-portraits in the shower and bathtub.

“(Guccifer) was as- signed a criminal defense lawyer,” the prosecutor’s office source said, adding his appeal against his deten- tion would be considered by the court on Monday or Tuesday. Asked by Reuters whether it had received an extradition request for Gucci- fer from the United States, Romania’s justice ministry said it had no information on the matter.

Local media in Gucci- fer’s home region of Arad in northwestern Romania near the Hungarian border said he was a taxi driver by trade, but this could not be confirmed. Top Roma- nian lawyer Catalin Dancu said there was “close to no chance” of Guccifer’s request to be freed being granted. “Investigating hacking on such a scale... is an offence that cannot be done with the suspect at large,” said Dancu.

Usmanov tightens hold on Russian social network VKontakte as founder sells stake

Moscow, 26 Jan — Pavel Durov, founder of Russia’s biggest social network, said he sold his stake in VKontakte (www. vk.com) to an ally of tycoon Alisher Usmanov, the site’s second-largest shareholder, who has long wanted to secure control. Durov sold his 12 percent stake to Ivan Tavrin, the chief executive officer of Russian mobile phone operator Megafon, which Usmanov controls, Durov said on his VK page on Friday.

This means that Us- manov and his allies now control around 52 percent of the company. According to

to business daily Vedomo- sti, the deal took place last month and was probably based on a valuation of $3 billion-$4 billion for all of VK, Russia’s answer to Face- book. Tavrin could not imme- diately be reached for com- ment. VKontakte’s press office did not respond to an

email request for com- ment. VK is 39.9 percent owned by Russian internet group Mail.Ru, which is part owned by Usmanov and has long been seeking to increase its stake to gain control of the network of more than 100 million users. In 2012, Mail.Ru

space-raised flies more susceptible to fungus

WASHINGTON, 26 Jan — Drosophila flies that grow up in space had a weakened im- mune system after returning to Earth, US researchers said on Friday. It’s well-established that spaceflight affects immune responses. Lead researcher Deborah Kimbrell from the University of California, Da- vis, and her colleagues from the Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology in the UC Davis College of Bio- logical Sciences, used Dros- ophila to study the relation- ship between immunity and gravity because Drosophila share many fundamentals of the immune system with mammals such as mice and humans.

The flies, which take about 10 days to develop into adults, were sent into space as eggs on a 12-day mission aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery. After they re- turned to Earth, the research- ers tested their responses to two different infections: a fungus, which flies fight off through a pathway mediated by the Toll receptor, and a bacterial infection that flies resist through a gene called IMD. Both the Toll and IMD pathways have counterparts in humans and other mam- mals.

While the response through the IMD pathway was robust, the Toll path- way was “non-functional” in space-raised flies, Kimbrell said. In Earth-based experi- ments, the researchers found that when flies were tested in a centrifuge under hyper- gravity, or increased gravity, their resistance to the fungus was improved, suggesting that their Toll pathway was boosted.

Future spacecraft de- signed for long missions, said Kimbrell, should in- clude centrifuges that crew could use to keep up bone and muscle mass, as this might also have a beneficial effect on astronauts’ immune systems. The findings were published in the US journal PLOS ONE. —Xinhua

Uzbek-born Russian businessman Alisher Us- manov lends a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan at the Novo-Ogaryovo state resi- dence, outside Moscow on 12 Sept, 2013. —REUTERS
The good and the bad

The world is a mixture of good and bad. We all must accept the good and discard the bad meaning we must take the good examples and models while leaving behind all the bad deeds and habits. We must associate with the wise while avoiding the foolish. Likewise, we must be prudent enough to know which one is the right path and which one is the wrong path.

And that the message we should take from the entertainment industry.

Marble hill ranges of Sagyin acquire not only commercial and industrial fame but also sacredness and sublimity due to increasing use of these stones for religious purposes. Generations of miners with their hereditary profession, marble stone miners and sculptors of old capitals, Inwa, Amayarand and Mandalay carry on their works without fail. Market demands for their products increase even in the lean years.

Happy main reason for it is that Buddhism continues to flourish in the country and Sagyin marble is becoming popular and favorite stone for sculptors to produce religious objects not only for Buddhism but also for other faiths such as Mahayana Buddhism, Hinduism, Sla-rin, Confucianism, and Christianity. To-day at stone sculptors’ quarters in Mandalay we find status, images and symbols of Hindu gods and goddesses. Chinar, Guin Yin, gods and goddesses, Japanese Shinto, Jesus, Virgin Mary and holy crosses of Christianity to gather with Buddha statues and nats spiritism in their workshops and sale centres. Sagyin marble stone had already made appearance in foreign countries since early 19th Century or even earlier. In People’s Republic of China, North and South Korea, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Malayasia and Indonesia, (especially Bali), Sagyin marble Buddha images and nats spiritism in their workshops and sale centres. Sagyin marble stone had already made appearance in foreign countries since early 19th Century or even earlier. In People’s Republic of China, North and South Korea, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Malayasia and Indonesia, (especially Bali), Sagyin marble Buddha images and nats spiritism in their workshops and sale centres. Sagyin marble stone had already made appearance in foreign countries since early 19th Century or even earlier. In People’s Republic of China, North and South Korea, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Malayasia and Indonesia, (especially Bali), Sagyin marble Buddha images and nats spiritism in their workshops and sale centres. Sagyin marble stone had already made appearance in foreign countries since early 19th Century or even earlier. In People’s Republic of China, North and South Korea, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Malayasia and Indonesia, (especially Bali), Sagyin marble Buddha images and nats spiritism in their workshops and sale centres.

The Latest Colossal Sagyin marble Buddha Image

Hidtaw (umbrella) and diamond orb hoisting atop ancient Tharkho Hill Pagoda in progress in Ouhbin Village of Taikton Township on 23 January.—AYE THAN

The Myanmar delegation observed ICT and Educational Leaders Briefing jointly organized by Microsoft and British Council, and clarified educational progress in Myanmar and use of ICT in learning process. They also held discussions with Director of Partners in Learning of Microsoft Mr. James Bernard and of enormous size in the cold month of Tabodwe (February) 2000. Before discovery of it, U Taw Taw told the writer of this article that he had a few auspicious dreams presaging good happenings in near future. U Taw Taw a devout Buddhist and staunch believer in nat spirits never failed to observe and practice the five moral precepts prescribed by Lord Buddha and propitiated all nat spirits and ancestors with due rites and offerings. He also paid yearly homage to his mines and quarries in Sagyin marble hill ranges. On that auspicious day in February he and sons were taking a leisurely walk on the hill. Suddenly a white statue of Buddha’s eyes. They did not believe it was there for in the past they only noticed grasses and wild vegetation and birds there. Why only that day they noticed the white statue amongst the green covers, much to their amazement it was a boulder of immense size. Only with the help of quarry workers they could see the entire statue sparkling in the bright sun shine, never seen before in their life and career. After washing it with water from nearby pool, U Taw Taw found that the marble was of high quality with many veins of bluish colour spreading the entire surface of statue in its texture. The father and sons, at first, were happily prospecting the number of images and statues to be carved out of its stones and very likely to they would obtain. But U Taw Taw being a devout Buddhist and faithful Myanmar citizen decided to present their discovery to the State, though they had all legal rights of it as their own property. His sons all agreed to father’s decision. Through proper channel they presented the matter and their noble decision to the then Government of the Armed Forces Total Coup (STARC), the Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). The Chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and his Cabinet after discussion, unanimously decided that the big stone be fashioned into a sitting Buddha Image and that it should be

Maha Saddhamma Jotika dhaja
Sithu Dr.Khin Maung Nyunt

Acting Union Education Minister attends Education World Forum 2014

YANGON, 26 Jan—Acting Union Minister for Educa-
tion Dr Myo Myint attended Education World Forum 2014 in London, Britain from 20 to 22 January.

During his tour, Acting Union Minister Dr Myo Myint met Ri Hon Alan Duncan MP, Minister of State for International Development of the UK at House of Parliament. They discussed matters on implementation of pragmatic education promotion and Britain’s assistance for success of education reform in Myanmar.

He held talks with Member of Parliament Lord Alton, Sir Vernon Ellis, Chair of British Council and officials from Universities of Oxford, Nottingham, London and Manchester separately.

The Myanmar delegation observed ICT and Educational BETT Exhibition, attended Microsoft in education Leaders Briefing jointly organized by Microsoft and British Council, and clarified educational progress in Myanmar and use of ICT in learning process. They also held discussions with Director of Partners in Learning of Microsoft Mr. James Bernard and
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker... (from page 16)

Unity of national people, national reconciliation and the rule of law and should encourage the multi-party democratic system and the market oriented economic system.

He said that Myanmar should take lessons from her bitter experiences in the past not to happen such events again while practicing the democratic system, stressing the need for practicing a democratic system which is suitable for Myanmar’s history and situation. — MNA

MWA awards winners in 1st Manuscript Award Contest

YANGON, 26 Jan—Myanmar Writers Association held the 1st manuscript awarding ceremony for poem, article and short story competition at its hall on Pansodan Street, here, this morning.

On the occasion, Union Minister for Information U Aung Kyi said that language, literature and culture of a nation reflect the national symbols like State flag and money, praising the undertakings of the association.

Chairman of Myanmar Writers Association Sithu U Tin Hlaing (Ledwintha Saw Chit) delivered an opening address and reported on follow-up plans for the emergence of literature serving the national interest.

Committee chairman for holding manuscript competition U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe) explained the purpose of the competition.

The Union Minister awarded first prize winner Zaw Myo Han (Ngathainggyoung) in poem competition. Myanmar Writers Association Chairman Sithu U Tin Hlaing (Ledwintha Saw Chit), Vice-Chairmen U Kyaw Win (Manoktha Kyaw Win) and U Ohn Maung (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe) also awarded the winners.

After the ceremony, the Union Minister had a documentary photo taken together with the officials and winners.— MNA

1st Overseas Job Fair opens

YANGON, 26 Jan—Under the supervision of Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Thu Kha Su San Services Co Ltd organized 1st Overseas Job Fair, at the training school of the company in Hmehthaya Township this morning, with an address by Union Minister U Aye Myint.

The Union minister said that the government has been carrying out reform processes to alleviate poverty and create suitable jobs for the people. There are nearly 240 million migrants around the globe in 2012, according to the report of United Nations. The number of migrants will reach about 400 million in 2050, he added. He continued the government is trying to satisfy the local and foreign labour demand, urging employment agencies to protect rights of Myanmar workers. He called on employment agencies to conduct language, law, custom and work proficiency courses for the workers before sending them to abroad.

Region Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding U Soe Min said that the State has invited foreign investments to grasp job opportunities, technical skill and capital and encourages development of industrial production of the national race entrepreneurs.

Union Minister U Aye Myint and party formally opened the job fair. A total of 41 booths from 41 overseas employment agencies are being displayed at three-day fair.— MNA

Workshop on Advancing UN Global Compact in Myanmar: delivering prosperity and opportunity widely held

YANGON, 26 Jan—Workshop on “Advancing the UN Global Compact in Myanmar: delivering prosperity and opportunity widely” took place at UMFCCI on Min Ye Kyaw Swa Road, here, on 22 January.

The forum, jointly conducted by UMFCCI and UN Global Compact, intends to uphold corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Myanmar’s economic community far and wide.

It was attended by Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Thane, UNGC Foundation Chairman Sir Mark Moody-Stuart, Pro Dr Aung Tun Thet and entrepreneurs. — Sagawath

Myanmar, Japan mark 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties

YANGON, 26 Jan—More cultural exchange events would be organized, said Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Mikio Numata.

The first ever event is one of the events and projects to strengthen the cultural exchange between the two countries and the events would promote the bilateral friendship and future, said Union Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu.

Union Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu presents gifts to performers of Myanmar-Japan Hip-Hop Concert. — MNA
Students join all-round outstanding exam in Langkho District

Langkho, 26 Jan—The examination to select all-round outstanding students was held at district level at Langkho Basic Education High School in 2013-14 academic year as of 24 January.

The students took the English and Myanmar writing examination on 24 January, skill for life, Public Ethics and Myanmar Customs, general knowledge on 25 January and physical training on 26 January, said District Education Officer Daw Kyi Aye. Two students each from respective standards will be chosen to be sent to State all-round education outstanding student camp.

Specialists give health care to patients at Yinnyeinpan Free Clinic

Natogyi, 26 Jan—Specialists from Mandalay made field trips to grassroots level.

At Yinnyeinpan free clinic in Pyinsi Model Village of Natogyi Township, the specialists gave health care to the local people on 25 January, said U Hla Oo of Pyinsi Village.

Local people warmly welcomed the medical specialists team for their treatment. The specialists performed medical checkups at patients with eye, teeth and general diseases from Pyinsi Village and its surrounding villages. The free clinic provided all sorts of costs for the patients including medicines and health care, said local people.

Patron of the clinic Thabyei Monastery Sayadaw said that they are trying hard to give medical treatment to the patients round the clock. At present, the clinic accepts over 60 patients on Saturday and Sunday weekly.

Uniforms provided to members of Auxiliary Fire Brigade

Twantay, 26 Jan— A ceremony to present uniforms to members of Auxiliary Fire Brigade of wards and villages was held at the hall of Twantay Township General Administration Department, here, Yangon South District on 25 January morning.

At the ceremony, officials gave 467 sets of uniforms to 467 auxiliary fire fighters from 37 village-tracts.

Outstanding staff honoured in Pakokku

Pakokku, 26 Jan—In commemoration of anniversary celebration of Information and Public Relations Department, Pakokku District IPRD held the outstanding award presentation ceremony at its office in Ward 1 of Pakokku of Magway Region, on 25 January afternoon.

Head of Township IPRD Daw Win May explained the winner list at township level, information sending level and librarian level.

Staff Officer of the District IPRD U Tin Win presented prizes to respective winning township IPRDs.

Sunlun Bridge put into service in Myingyan

Myingyan, 26 Jan—Special Bridge Construction Group No 16 of Public Works has already built Sunlun Bridge as two-way facility in Myingyan so as to enable the vehicles not to wait for coming of opposite way. The bridge is 120 feet long.

Myingyan, at the level of district, one of the arid zone townships, is located between Sunlun Creek and Pyaungpya Creek. Two Pyaungpya Bridges are in parallel for serving convenience of transportation for the dwellers. As newly-built Sunlun Bridge has two-way lane, the local people are enjoying convenience of transportation without traffic congestion.

National Objectives of 67th Anniversary Union Day 2014

- For all the national races to cultivate the Union Spirit to perpetuate the Union
- For all the national races to live in unity and harmony
- For all the national races to build up the prevailing national reconciliation
- For all citizens to participate in tasks for tranquility and the rule of law
- For all the national races to join efforts for modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation
Six policemen killed in terrorist attacks in Pakistan's Karachi

ISLAMABAD, 26 Jan — At least six policemen were killed and another was injured Saturday night in two different terrorist attacks in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, local media reported.
The two incidents took place within half an hour in the Landhi area of Karachi when some unknown terrorists attacked two police vehicles at different locations.

In first incident, the miscreants hurled hand grenades at a police mobile, killing three policemen on duty outside the house of a politician.

A few minutes later, some unknown gunmen opened fire at another police vehicle in the same area, killing three policemen on the spot and wounding an officer in charge.

In both attacks, miscreants managed to flee the scenes after the assaults.

According to earlier reports, it was a single attack in which six policemen were killed, but police said later that there were two different attacks.

Police and rescuers rushed the bodies and the injured to the Jinnah Hospital of the city.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet. Earlier in the day, at least 10 people including a police inspector were killed and several others injured in different firing and target killing incidents in the city.—Xinhua

Fire hits SW China ancient village

GUIyang, 26 Jan — A fire in an ancient ethnic village in southwest China's Guizhou Province has destroyed more than 100 houses.
The fire broke out at 11:30 pm on Saturday in Baoping Dong Village of Zhenyuan County. It was put out at around 3:50 am on Sunday, local officials said.

Baojing Dong Village has destroyed more than 2,000 traditional wooden homes in the ancient Ti-betan village of Dukezong in southwest China's Yunnan Province.—Xinhua

Police people transfer an injured man to a hospital in southern Pakistan port city of Karachi on 25 Jan, 2014. At least six policemen were killed Saturday night in a terrorist attack in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi, local media reported.

Beijing H7N9 tests find no positive samples

BEIJING, 26 Jan — A round of tests for H7N9 bird flu on samples taken from Beijing's poultry markets have so far not found any positive samples, local authorities said on Sunday.
The tests have been carried out since December 23 on 22,595 samples from 12,000 poultry farms and households in the city.

A total of 6.05 million poultry, from 27,000 farms and households have received compulsory immunizations since December 22. Bird flu, or avian influenza, is a contagious disease of animal origin caused by viruses that normally only infect birds, and, less commonly, pigs. It can be fatal to humans.

Several regions, including Shanghai, Beijing, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Guangdong, Fujian, have reported H7N9 human infections so far this year.

Beijing reported its first human infection case of this year on 23 January. —Xinhua

Poverty relief to become priority for poor counties

BEIJING, 26 Jan — Chinese officials in poverty-stricken counties can stop worrying too much about regional GDP figures from now on, as the central authorities have moved to make poverty relief the priority for their work.

The country will reform the evaluation system for officials from poor counties by prioritizing the work of poverty reduction rather than the regional GDP, according to a guideline released Saturday jointly by the general offices of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council, the Cabinet. GDP figures will no longer be a standard for counties with fragile ecology or where development is restricted by the government to ensure sustainable growth, the guideline said.

“The country will take improving the livelihood of people in poverty and reducing poor population as major indicators” to guide officials in poor regions to put their work priority on poverty relief, it said.

A villager collects date juice on the outskirts of Calcutta, capital of eastern Indian state West Bengal, on 25 Jan, 2014. Date molasses from date palm trees is a delicacy in West Bengal and neighbouring country Bangladesh. It is also served as basic ingredient for making traditional sweet during the winter.—Xinhua

Beijing — Nepal's largest party selects PM candidate

KATHMANDU, 26 Jan — Nepal's largest party Nepali Congress (NC) on Sunday selected its president Su- shil Koirala as a party's prime ministerial candidate through internal election.

Out of 194 party's lawmakers, 105 lawmakers voted for Koirala electing him to be party's Parlia- mentary Party (PP) leader while his rival party's senior leader Sher Bahadur Deuba secured 89 votes.

According to party's statute only PP leader of the party is eligible to become the party's candidate for prime ministerial berth.

Deuba has already become the prime minister three times after 1990 political change, while Koirala has not taken by ministerial position in his 50 years political career.

Three leaders — Koi- rala, Deuba and vice-Pres- ident Ram Chandra Poudel — were competing for the PP leader. But, Poudel gave up the race after the Koirala agreed to entrust him the post of party's acting vice-president. In the election, Poudel surprised Koirala in defeating the Koirala, NC, a centrist party, which has emerged as a largest party from the No- vember 19, 2013 Con- stitution Assembly (CA) has staked the claim for the leadership of the unity government. After being elected, Koirala told the reporters that his priority is to form a national consensus government. “We will consult with all parties to form a consensus govern- ment which is necessary to promulgate a new constitutions within a year,” Koirala told media.

The government formation process is likely to start soon as the first meet- ing of parliamentary ses- sion of the Constituent As- sembly (CA) will begin on Sunday.

Tourists view the scenery of the Nam Co Lake in southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region, on 24 Jan, 2013. Nam Co, the highest saltwater lake in the world with an elevation of 4,718 metres, is regarded as a sacred lake in Tibetan Buddhism.—Xinhua

China police issue traffic safety tips for Spring Festival travel rush

BEIJING, 26 Jan — Chi- na traffic police on Satur- day issued safety tips for the Spring Festival travel rush. As people are rushing back home for family reunion in the traditional Chi- nese Lunar New Year, the number of road passengers every day exceeds 90 mil- lion, with more traffic acci- dents being reported.

Traffic police said among accidents that re- sulted in five or more fatali- ties, two thirds involved in vehicles from other places and the major reasons were fatigue driving and unfa- miliarity with roads.

Two thirds of accidents happened on expressways for the reasons of rear-end collisions, overspeed, and failing to keep safe distance, traffic police said. The Traffic police urged passengers and drivers to check vehicles conditions before driving, learn the roadmaps and weather information, and avoid fatigue driving and overspeed. It also urged people to choose passenger vehicles with operating li- censes, and avoid overman and overload. Self-aware- ness of safety should be improved, said the traffic police.—Xinhua

A flash flood that hit the province two weeks ago, claiming 19 lives, was the heaviest flash flood in recent years. —Xinhua
Albania hails Slovakia’s support for its European integration

TIRANA, 26 Jan — Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama on Friday appreciated Slovakia’s support for Tirana’s efforts to join the European Union (EU).

“Albania has been lucky to enjoy everlasting and unwavering support from Slovakia on its path toward European integration,” Rama told a joint press conference with Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico. Rama also thanked Fico for continuously encouraging the EU-mediated dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia.

“The agreement between Kosovo and Serbia is one of the most important events toward a new era in our region,” said Rama.

The two countries have agreed to establish a joint working group through which Slovakia will help Albania carry out reforms and improve governance, said Rama. Fico, who is on his first official visit to Albania, said that Slovakia will offer Albania its experience on its EU integration process and help Albania fulfill its justified ambition of joining the EU.

On bilateral cooperation between their countries, Fico saw business and investment opportunities in Albania, particularly in tourism.

“Albania has hundreds of kilometers of coastline with magnificent beaches and it can be an excellent destination for the Slovak tourists,” he said. — Xinhua

Azerbaijan, UNESCO sign agreement in cooperation of youth

BAKU, 26 Jan — Azerbaijan and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) signed a Young Professional Programme cooperation agreement, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday.

The agreement will allow young Azerbaijani specialists to work in the UNESCO ESCO Secretariat and gain international experience.

The Programme is geared specifically for candidates from unrepresented or under-represented countries in the UNESCO Secrartiat. The eligibility of a Member State is determined at the date of the call for applications. This programme provides 10 recent college graduates and young professionals under the age of 30 with the opportunity to start a career in an international organization.

In 2013 the Government of Azerbaijan and UNESCO signed a framework agreement on cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture and communication.—Xinhua

German Finance Minister speaks highly of progress in crisis countries

DAVOS, (Switzerland), 26 Jan — The finance minister of Germany on Saturday spoke highly of the progress made in the crisis countries in euro zone.

Wolfgang Schaeuble told the participants at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting here that the most successful countries in the euro zone in the last several years were the program countries.

“Because they delivered what they had to deliver,” said Schaeuble. Ireland, Portugal were doing well and Spain was doing “extremely well,” and Greece did “much better than everyone expected two years ago,” Schaeuble went on to explain.

In a clear response to criticism about German’s trade surplus, Schaeuble said that Germany had started to boost its domestic demand.

Roadside bomb strikes wedding party bus, killing one in Afghanistan

JALALABAD, (Afghanistam), 26 Jan — A roadside bomb struck a wedding party bus in the eastern Nangarhar Province on Sunday, leaving one person dead and wounding six others, spokesman for provincial government Ahmad Zia Abdulzai said.

“A bus was carrying villagers including men, women and children to attend a wedding party in Achid District this morning but unfortunately a mine planted by rebels on the road struck it killing one on the spot and injuring six others,” Abdulzai told Xinhua. Nangarhar with Jalalabad as its capital 120 km east of Kabul has been regarded as relatively peaceful province in Afghanistan.

He also blamed the enemies of peace a term used for rocket attacks on Lebanon’s east Bekaa city of Hermel. The attack occurred when people were making their way to a wedding party in the coastal city of Alexandria.

Al-Qaeda-linked groups claim responsibility for rocket attacks in east Lebanon

BEIRUT, 26 Jan — The al-Nusra Front in Lebanon and the Marwan al-Hadidi Brigades claimed responsibility on Saturday for rocket attacks on Lebanon’s east Bekaa city of Hermel.

The statement was made by the two extremist groups on their Twitter accounts.

Seven rockets fired from Lebanon’s eastern mountain range hit Hermel, the National News Agency reported on Saturday.

The incident comes a day after four rockets hit the area and caused no casualties but material damage.

Marwan al-Hadidi Brigades is linked to Abdullah Azzam Brigades, an al-Qaeda-affiliate that claimed responsibility for the twin suicide bombings against the Iranian embassy in Beirut which killed 25 people and injured more than 70 others.

Syrian rebel fighters have claimed responsibility for firing many rockets that recently landed in Hermel. Lebanese President Michel Suleiman has repeatedly called for “all necessary procedures to protect citizens and Leba- nese towns and prevent any attack against them.” — Xinhua
New Delhi, 26 Jan — In a world ruled by social media, Justin Bieber's brand of music proved an opiate for the digital masses. As music critics listened and watched in growing disbelief, young YouTube star became a super-sova of sorts, shored up by a vast bank of mostly-young fans on Bieberers.

Now 19, Justin announced he was retiring in December 2013 — though his team L.L.A. said he was “kidding” — and was recently arrested for drunk driving and drag racing in Miami. In between, the former clean-cut teen idol was accused of vandalizing a neighbour’s house, spitting on fans, reckless driving, assaulting a bodyguard, detained at an airport for using foul language, vandalizing a hotel in Australia and visiting a Brazilian brothel. Drugs were found on his tour bus and he has had multiple confrontations, some violent, with paparazzi.

As the focus shifted from his music to his behavior, celebrities handed out advice to him. Actor, former rapper and reformed bad boy Mark Wahlberg said during a web chat: “Justin are you listening? Don’t be so naugty, yeah? Be a nice boy, pull your trousers up, make your mum proud.” Actor Channing Tatum told Vanity Fair magazine: “That kid’s wildly talented. I hope he doesn’t fall down into the usual ways of young kids because it’s so hard for someone to be responsible when they’re not asked to.”

Justin Drew Bieber was born on 1 March, 1994 in Ontario, Canada. His parents, Patricia Mallette and Jeremy Bieber, never married but remain friends. Patricia, who was 17 when Justin was born, is credited by her son both for raising him and for helping launch his career. Growing up, Justin and his friend, Selena Gomez, attended a performing arts school. Justin played hockey, football and chess. He also taught himself the piano, guitar, trumpet and drums. After winning second prize in a singing competition, Justin Bieber is the second most-followed celebrity on Twitter.

No competition with Alia, Sidharth

Mumbai, 26 Jan — Young actor Varun Dhawan, who made his Bollywood debut with Alia Bhatt and Sidharth Malhotra in Student Of The Year, says the trio has discussed competition but he believes their camaraderie goes beyond it.

“We (Alia Bhatt, Sidharth Malhotra and I) have discussed competition, we do discuss these things but I think when you do your first film with someone, you form a bond and it’s like (they are) family,” Varun said here at the launch of the trailer of his second film Main Tera Hero. “You are just bonded for life. So you overlook that (competition) thing. I just have lot of love in my heart for both of them,” he added. In fact, he says that Alia and Sidharth “were more nervous for me than I am right now (for my film Main Tera Hero)”. “That’s how the relationship is,” added the son of filmmaker David Dhawan. Karan Johar’s directorial, Student Of The Year, released in 2012. It turned out to be a hit and set Alia, Sidharth and Varun’s careers on roll in the Hindi film industry.

Varun is awaiting the release of Main Tera Hero, while Alia is waiting for Highway to hit the screens and Sidharth is looking forward to Hasee Toh Phasee. Varun has showered praises on the trailers of both the films and he has even urged the audience to go and watch them.

“Sid (Sidharth Malhotra) and Alia’s films are releasing in the same month (February) and mine (releases) in April. I have loved the promo of Hasee Toh Phasee and Highway and you all must go and watch the films, the 26-year-old said. While Hasee Toh Phasee will hit the theatres on 7 February, Highway starring Alia Bhatt and Randeep Hooda, will release on 21 February. Meanwhile, Varun’s Main Tera Hero, directed by his father, is slated to release on 4 April. It also features Beans D’ Cruz and Nargis Fakhri as the female leads.

Country music singer Hunter Hayes poses during a media opportunity in Beverly Hills, California on 23 Jan, 2014.—Reuters

For young performers at the Grammys, exposure could be the award

LOS ANGELES, 26 Jan — Winning a Grammy Award may be the goal on Sunday, but getting a chance to perform at the annual awards show in front of tens of millions of TV viewers worldwide could be the biggest career maker of the night for up-and-coming singers and musicians.

The Grammys, rated by Billboard magazine as the second-best promotional opportunity for an artist or group behind performing at football’s Super Bowl halftime show, will offer that chance to several young singers like country music’s Kacey Musgraves, Hunter Hayes and New Zealand teen pop wunderkind Lorde. “It is a humongous opportunity,” said the 22-year-old Hayes, who is nominated for best country solo performance this year after earning three nods as a newcomer in 2013. “It’s a huge introduction and endorsement, not only to get to perform in front of these pioneers and musical mainstreams but to get the endorsement from the Academy in that way,” added Hayes, referring to Grammy organizer, the Recording Academy, which tapped him to perform last year too. This year’s top performances include pop stars Beyonce, Katy Perry, promising rappers Kendrick Lamar, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis, as well as former Beatles Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr.

Grammys can be notoriously difficult to predict and this year seems to be particularly vexing because there is no predominant genre or theme. The nominees for the top award, album of the year, represent five different sounds, from country pop’s Taylor Swift to French DJ duo Daft Punk. “I’d have to say it is a bit of an odd year in music and not only a bad year,” said producer Jeff Bhasker, nominated for three top awards this year including song of the year for “Just Give Me a Reason,” by Pink and Nate Ruess.

He sees a “reshuffling of the deck as far as what listeners are hungry for,” noting that popular music is becoming more intimate and slowing down from the up-tempo dance music of years past.

Scarlett Johansson: My fiancé is my buddy

Varun’s Main Tera Hero releases on 4 April.

LOS ANGELES, 26 Jan — Actress Scarlett Johansson, who has found love again with Romain Dauriac after her divorce with Ryan Reynolds, says her fiancé is her best friend but they don’t want to rush into marriage. Johansson currently stars in Oscar nominated film Her as the voice of the computer operating system who falls in love with a lonely letter writer, played by Joaquin Phoenix in the Spike Jonze directed movie.

“I’m very happy. He’s my husband,” Johansson told People magazine while talking about her journalist fiancé. The couple got engaged last August but do not want to “rush through it” and plan to take their time in planning a wedding.

“Being engaged is an exciting time to enjoy and to really savor,” she says. Johansson was earlier married to Reynolds but they divorced in 2011. She was briefly linked to Sean Penn following her divorce.

Scarlett Johansson says she is very happy with her fiancé.
**SPORTS**

**Aguero saves City from Cup shock, Liverpool advance**

LONDON, 26 Jan — Second-tier Watford were half an hour away from a seismic FA Cup shock at Manchester City on Saturday before Sergio Aguero ruined the script with a hat-trick as his side stormed back to reach the last 16 with a 4-2 win.

Only European champions Bayern Munich had returned victorious from City’s Eithad Stadium for this season but goals by Fernando Forestieri and Troy Deeney had the Watford fans dreaming of a famous result.

The London side were still leading 2-0 after an hour but eventually succumbed to the siege as Aguero cancelled out the deficit, Aleksandar Kolarov put City ahead three minutes from time and their Argentinian striker completed a treble to maintain Manuel Pellegrini’s side’s four-pronged assault on silverware.

“I wanted to change all of my players at half-time, all 11 of them,” a relieved Pellegrini said.

“The whole team was a disaster in the first half.”

Liverpool had no such problems as they reached the last-16 with a 2-0 win at second-tier Bournemouth — Victor Moses and Daniel Sturridge scoring for the seventh-time winners who were made to work hard on the south coast.

Moses opened the scoring after 26 minutes and Sturridge linked with Luis Suarez on the hour to ease Liverpool through and make sure there was no repeat of last season’s humbling defeat to third-tier Oldham Athletic.

Kidderminster, the only survivors from outside England’s top four divisions, battled valiantly at League Cup finalists Sunderland but slipped out 1-0 while fourth-tier Southend United were beaten 2-0 at home by Premier League Hull City.

League One Sheffield United, who face Premier League Fulham on Sunday, are now the only side not in the top two divisions still in the competition after Everton crushed Stevenage 4-0 in Saturday’s late kickoff.

Everton paid a price for their victory though with Costa Rica fullback Bryan Oviedo suffering a suspected broken leg.

Holders Wigan Athletic, who were relegated to the Championship after beating Manchester City in last year’s final, kept alive their hopes of an unlikely successful defence of the trophy with a 2-1 win over top flight Crystal Palace.

**Woods endures nightmare day at Torrey Pines**

SAN DIEGO, 26 Jan — Defending champion Tiger Woods plunged to new depths when he missed a secondary cut on the PGA Tour for the first time after struggling badly in Saturday’s third round of the Farmers Insurance Open outside San Diego.

Though he made the second-cut cut by a stroke on Friday after carding a one-under-par 71 on the easier North Course, the world number one was badly out of sorts on a difficult day for scoring as he laboured to a 79 on the brutal South layout.

It was his worst ever score at the event, which he has won at Torrey Pines a record seven times, and ensured he would miss the third-round cut for the leading 70 players and ties, giving him the unwanted label of ‘MDF’ (made cut, did not finish). His score matched the second worst of his professional career, and is eclipsed only by the 81 he shot in strong winds and driving rain in the third round of the 2002 British Open at Muirfield.

Woods, whose remarkable playoff win at the 2008 U.S. Open also took place at Torrey Pines, declined to speak to Golf Channel and CBS Sports after he had signed his scorecard, and also turned down requests to talk to reporters.

“I’m done,” the 14-times major champion said before signing a few autographs for fans and then being driven away from the course in a van.

Woods, who won last year’s Farmers Insurance Open by four shots in a fog-delayed Monday finish, endured a damaging run of back-to-back double bogeys followed by five straight bogeys from the 18th, his ninth hole, to finish at six-over-par 222.

**Ronaldo helps lift Real Madrid to the top**

MADRID, 26 Jan — Cristiano Ronaldo scored his 22nd La Liga goal of the season to set Real Madrid up for a 2-0 win at home to Granada on Saturday that lifted them above Barcelona and Atletico Madrid to the top of the table.

Barca and Atletico, who play on Sunday, have drawn their last two outings including a 0-0 stalemate between the pair at the Calderon stadium in Madrid that allowed Real to narrow the gap in the three-horse title race. Saturday’s laboured victory at the Bernabeu was Real’s fifth in a row in La Liga since a 2-2 draw at Osasuna in December and they lead the way for the first time since winning the title in 2011-12.

France forward Karim Benzema was also on target as Carlo Ancelotti’s side moved on to 55 points from 21 matches.

Barca and Atletico have 51 points ahead of their games on Sunday at home to 50-point Malaga and at second from bottom Rayo Vallecano respectively.

“The most important thing is the balance the team has at the moment, that’s the key,” Ancelotti told a news conference. “We are defending well and attacking well,” added the Italian, in his first season in charge after taking over from Jose Mourinho. “There is always room for improvement and sometimes we need to increase the tempo but the key is the team’s balance.”

After a shaky start to the campaign, Real have tightened up their defence and have not conceded in seven straight games in all competitions, equalising their best run of clean sheets from the 1994-95 season.

Their pickup in form, which coincided with the return from injury of Xabi Alonso, put them on the brink of a place in the Champions League for a seventh consecutive year.

**Wawrinka takes two-set lead against ailing Nadal**

Stanislas Wawrinka of Switzerland hits a return to Rafael Nadal of Spain during their men’s singles final match at the Australian Open 2014 tennis tournament in Melbourne 26 Jan, 2014. REUTERS

REUTERS

MELBOURNE, 26 Jan — Stanislas Wawrinka raced into a 6-3 6-2 lead against Rafa Nadal in the Australian Open final on Sunday as the top seeded Spaniard appeared severely hampered by a back injury he picked up early in the second set.

The eighth-seeded Swiss won the first set, broke Nadal in the opening game of the second and held serve to take a 2-0 lead before Nadal grimaced in pain and clutched at his back after playing a shot from the baseline midway through the next game.

Nadal successfully held serve to trail 2-1 but quickly left the court for a medical time-out, leaving Wawrinka to argue with the chair umpire about the lack of disclosure over the injury. Nadal re-emerged after six minutes amid some jeers from the Rod Laver Arena crowd but his movement was clearly restricted and he was unable to generate any pace on his serve.

Wawrinka simply went about his business, marching to a 4-1 lead as Nadal double-faulted repeatedly and struggled to reach wide balls. Nadal had more treatment on his back from a physio at the change of ends, then underlined his fighting spirit by holding serve to trail 5-2, but Wawrinka went on to serve out the set with an ace.—Reuters

**Pacquiao set for April re-match in Vegas with Bradley**

LOS ANGELES, 26 Jan — Filipino southpaw Manny Pacquiao will return to the ring for a re-match and the chance of revenge against American Timothy Bradley on 12 April in Las Vegas, the promoter said on Saturday.

The fight will be held at the MGM Grand Garden Arena where Bradley (31-0, 12 knockouts) will defend his World Boxing Organization welterweight title, promoter Bob Arum said in a statement.

Pacquiao controversially lost to the American on points when they first met in June 2012, the crowd responding with a chorus of boos after the shock split decision was announced.

It was Pacquiao’s first defeat since he lost to Erik Morales in Las Vegas in March 2005, ending a run of 15 consecutive wins by the Filipino who has won world titles in an unprecedented eight weight divisions.

“We’ve never been as ashamed to be associated with the sport of boxing as I am tonight,” promoter Arum said at the time.

Reuters
Small Quebec town prepares to mourn 32 seniors killed in fire

L’ÎLE-VERTE, (Quebec), 26 Jan — The small grief-struck Quebec town of L’Île-Verte will hold a memorial service on Sunday for the 32 people who died in a massive fire that engulfed a three-storey wooden residence for seniors. Despite media reports alleging a cigarette ignited the blaze early on Thursday, police say they still do not know the cause of what appears to be Canada’s second-most deadly disaster in a retirement home.

Ten bodies have been recovered and 22 people are still missing in the frozen ruins of the Residence du Havre in L’Île-Verte, a town of 1,500 people on the St. Lawrence River north-east of Quebec City and 65 km (40 miles) north of Maine.

The memorial service, due to start at 2 pm EST (1900 GMT), will be led by local priest Gilles Frigon. He said the church wanted to help rebuild the hearts of the community.

“We celebrate with them but when they suffer, we suffer,” he told report-

ers tearfully on Saturday.

Only part of the residence was equipped with sprinklers. Quebec law does not require sprinkler systems in residences where the occupants have some means of detection.

Quebec Premier Pauline Marois cut short a visit to Europe and plans to be present at the service to mark the province’s second calamity in a matter of months.

In July 2013, a runway tanker train carrying light crude from North Dakota’s Bakken region derailed and exploded in the heart of the town of Lac Mégantic, Quebec, killing 47.

Brunet said that while he appreciated locals were impatient to know what had happened, it could take months to determine the cause of the fire.— Reuters

Malaysian woman arrested in Singapore for heroin smuggling

SINGAPORE, 26 Jan — Singapore Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB) has ar-

rested a Malaysian woman on suspicion of smuggling nearly 940 grams of heroin into Singapore.

In a statement on Sunday, CNB said the 22-year-old Malaysian was arrested at Woodlands Checkpoint on Saturday night.

The woman was one of two passengers traveling in a Malaysian-registered vehicle that was stopped at the checkpoint.

Two female CNB of-
ficers conducted a search on her, and found two bundles of heroin hidden in her under\nderwear. CNB said the heroin amounted to 937 grams, and has a street value of about 84,000 US dollars.

After her arrest, CNB officers carried out follow-up operations through the night.

Their efforts led to the arrests of three Singaporean men, aged 44 to 57, at Telok Blangah Crescent and Pempi Road.

The three men are sus-
ppected to be involved in coordinating and bringing drugs into Singapore before re-distributing them in the streets. One of them is sus-
ppected to be the leader of the syndicate.

Investigations are on-
going.—Xinhua

Annan arrives in Teheran for talks on regional issues

TEHERAN, 26 Jan — Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan arrived in the Iranian capital of Tehe-

ran on Sunday to hold talks with Iranian officials on regi-
nonal issues.

Annan, serves now as the chairman of the Elders organization, a group of former global leaders, ar-

rived in Teheran along with former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari, who is also a member of the organ-

ization, Press TV reported.

“The visit is to en-
courage and advance the new spirit of openness and dialogue between Iran and the international com-

munity, and to explore what could be done to enhance cooperation on regional is-

sues,” said the report.

Xinhua

Nestor eyes mixed doubles grand slam after Melbourne win

MELBOURNE, 26 Jan — Canada’s Daniel Nestor has targeted a mixed doubles grand slam in 2014 after pairing up with Frenchwoman Kristina Mladenovic to beat Sania Mirza and Horia Tecau and win the Australian Open title on Sunday.

The Wimbledon cham-
opion pairing were nominally the underdogs against the sixth-seeded opponents but wrapped up a comfortable 6-3 6-2 victory inside an hour on Rod Laver Arena.

It was a third Mel-
bourne Park mixed doubles title for Canadian Nestor after his 2007 triumph with Elena Likhovtsova and 2011 victory with Katarina Srebotnik.

Nestor then told his 20-year-old partner Mladenovic on court that he would now like to target a sweep of the major titles to complete the grand slam in one year.

“I was half joking but I always tell my friends my best chance of winning grand slams nowadays is in mixed,” the 41-year-old, who now has won a total of 12 grand slam doubles titles, later told reporters.

“But obviously I’d still like to win men’s dou-

bles titles, too… I just think this is the best chance, but I’ll keep playing both and hopefully good will come out of it.”

The last time a single partnership won doubles titles at all four majors in one year was when Martina Navratilova and Pam Shriv-

er performed the feat in women’s doubles in 1984.

Defeat for Indian Mirza and her Romanian partner Tecau denied Asia a second Australian Open champion in two years af-

ter China’s Li Na won the women’s singles title on Saturday evening.

“I’ve had a good week in the mixed so it’s a good start to the year,” said Mir-
za, who no longer plays sin-
gles.—Reuters
**Vice-President U Nyan Tun participates in Public and Private Stakeholders Roundtable Discussion on Energy and Infrastructure**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 26 Jan—A Public and Private Stakeholders Roundtable Discussion on Energy and Infrastructure, co-sponsored by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the World Bank, took place with the participation of Vice-President U Nyan Tun and World Bank’s President Mr. Jim Young Kim at Thingaha Hotel, here, this evening.**

Participants to the roundtable discussed their views on infrastructure development in Myanmar, formulation of short-term and long-term development plans, infrastructure development in energy and communication sectors and ongoing projects.

The Vice-President also took part in the discussion, focusing on reform processes taking place in Myanmar, infrastructure development projects and action plans, challenges that the country encounters and implementation of follow-up tasks for the success of target realization.

Also present were the Union ministers, the deputy ministers, Ms. Karin Finkelston, World Bank Vice-President, Mr. Axel Van Trotsenburg, Vice-President for East Asia and Pacific Region of World Bank, development partners organizations, investors and guests.—MNA

**Stakeholders Roundtable Discussion on Energy and Infrastructure**

**Nay Pyi Taw**

**Vice-President U Nyan Tun holding talks with World Bank President Mr. Jim Young Kim at Thingaha Hotel.—MNA**

**Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker discusses development tasks in Monywa, Yinmabin districts**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 26 Jan—Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw, held talks with local authorities and town elders from Monywa and Yinmabin districts on implementing development tasks in the areas.**

The meeting held at the town hall in Monywa yesterday was also attended by members of management committees for development, support groups for development and political parties and town elders from townships from the two districts.

During the meeting, he said that the constitution should not be amended hurriedly and meanwhile, it is unreasonably to assume that it is early to amend the constitution as it has been into practice for not so long.

He also suggested that constitutional amendments should not harm current stability and development. (See page 9)

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