President U Thein Sein felicitates Sri Lankan President, Prime Minister

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Feb—On the occasion of the 66th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka which falls on 4th February 2014, U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent messages of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa, President of the Democratic Socialist of Sri Lanka and His Excellency Mr. D.M. Jayarathne, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.—MNA

Vice-President U Nyan Tun visits Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone project

Vice-President U Nyan Tun looks round gas supply station in Kyaukpyu.—MNA

Fire Services Department added over 200 modern fire engines to its list

When open season falls, the people across the nation face the danger of fire. So, the government has purchased advanced fire engines and distributed them to the needy fire stations with a view to preventing fire outbreaks and reducing collateral damages.

“220 advanced fire engines have been purchased for Fire Services Department and those fire engines arrived in Myanmar before SEA Games as first batch and on 27 January as last batch. Last year, the department had added 100 fire engines to its list. The newly purchased Dongfeng-brand fire engines will be distributed to the fire services departments across the country and they will be sent to Nay Pyi Taw via Muse and Mandalay,” said a deputy staff officer from Muse Fire Services Department.

Thanks to purchase of new fire engines, it will enable to put fire outbreaks in time whenever fire breaks out and reduce damages that occur due to fire. The fire brigade also will have a chance to prevent the fire that can occur in any time or any season in advance.

Trs KHS
Myanma Alinn: 3-2-2014
New carriage of 56-down train launched on Myitkyina-Mandalay railroad section

MYITKYINA, 3 Feb—The new carriage of 56-down Myitkyina-Mandalay train was launched at Myitkyina Station on 1 February.

Chief Minister of Kachin State U La John Ngan Hsi addressed a speech.

Union Minister for Rail Transportation U Than Htay explained matters related to the running of the new carriage.

The 56-down train consists of two upper class carriages, one first class carriage, seven ordinary class carriages and one wagon.

Low-cost SIM cards allotted to pensioners in Yamethin Tsp

YAMETHIN, 3 Feb—Mandalay Region allotted 5300 WCDMA low-cost SIM cards for pensioners and shared 500 to Yamethin District.

In the allotment, Pyawbwe Township got 200 SIM cards.

The remaining 3000 SIM cards were allotted to pensioners of the township through draw lot system on 31 January.

At first, Chairman of Township Telephone Allotment Committee Township Administrator U Maung Maung said that the pensioners of the township will be allotted the SIM cards in sterial numbers. After taking draw lot that time, they no need to join more draw lots next month and need to wait for their serial numbers. The committee will share SIM cards to them at opportune time.

Later, officials presented SIM cards to draw lot winners.

Traffic lines along road in Zabuthiri Township

NAWPHO TAW, 3 Feb—Officials of Road and Bridge Department of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee drew traffic lines along the roads in Wanatheikdi Ward of Zabuthiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Council Area.

This morning, officials of the department drew the lines at junctions, roads, markets and in front of Nan Htaik Yadana Pre-Primary School of Social Welfare Department in the township with the use of modern machinery so as to prevent traffic accidents.

THAN NAING
(Zabuthiri)

Talks on drug elimination given in Pyay

PYAY, 3 Feb—Drug Addict Rehabilitation Association (Myanmar) of Yangon Region organized a talk on menace of narcotic drugs at the Basic Education High School No 1 in Pyay of Bago Region on 28 January morning.

The police major of Pyay District Police Force, the District Law Officer, officials of Social Welfare Association, Drug Addict Rehabilitation (Myanmar), and Shwepyitha Youth Training Camp gave talks on disadvantages of narcotic drugs, related problems and rehabilitation for cured addict youths.

It was also attended by the township administrator, the commander of District MPF, departmental officials and students.
White House: Obama awaits more Keystone reviews; timing unclear

WASHINGTON, 3 Feb — US President Barack Obama still wants to hear from other federal agencies before deciding whether to accept the State Department’s finding that the Keystone XL pipeline would have no major impact on climate change, his top aide said on Sunday.

White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough said Obama would decide once the Environmental Protection Agency, Energy Department and other federal experts offer their assessments of the State Department review, as well as their own analysis.

But McDonough offered no word how soon Obama may rule. Pressure on Obama to approve the project mounted on Friday with the release of the State Department report, which concluded the pipeline’s impact on climate change would not be significant.

Backers argue that the State Department’s finding should clear the way for prompt approval of a bid by TransCanada Corp to build the $5.4 billion project, which would transport crude from Alberta’s oil sands to refineries on the US Gulf Coast.

Xi’s Sochi visit to deepen Sino-Russian ties

BEIJING, 3 Feb — Russia, for the second time, will be Chinese President Xi Jinping’s first foreign destination of the year.

In March 2013, Xi took a state visit to Russia a few days after he took office as Chinese President. Xi’s announced Russian stay from 6 to 8 February and scheduled attendance to the opening ceremony of the Sochi Winter Olympic Games will be his first foreign trip in 2014. It will also be the first appearance by a Chinese president at a major overseas sports event, signaling China’s strong support for the Olympics and Russia’s efforts to host the games.

In addition, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev visited China in October, holding meetings with President Xi and Premier Li Keqiang. Li Hui, Chinese ambassador to Russia, told Xinhua that President Xi’s state visit last year opened a new page and brought the bilateral relations to a new height.

The two countries have displayed mutual support and understanding on issues that are vital to each other, Ambassador Li said.

As the two neighbouring countries mark the 65th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations in 2014, they are forging stronger and closer ties, under a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership.

Sri Lanka rejects ‘reckless’ US criticism of its rights record

COLOMBO, 3 Feb — Sri Lanka rejected US criticism of its human rights record as “grossly disproportionate” on Sunday, a day after a senior US official said Washington would table a UN resolution against Colombo.

Assistant Secretary of State Nisha Biswal expressed frustration on Saturday over Sri Lanka’s failure to punish military personnel responsible for atrocities in a civil war that the government won in 2009 against separatist Tamil rebels. Biswal, speaking in Colombo after a two-day visit, said the United States would table a third UN human rights resolution against Sri Lanka in March to address the war crimes allegations as its human rights record.

Sri Lanka is among US Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs, gestures during a news conference in Colombo on 1 Feb, 2014. REUTERS

The embattled head of state, caught in a tug of war between Russia and the West and facing mass protests that have prompted fears of civil war, announced he would return once the Environmental Protection Agency, Energy Department and other federal agencies be-
No evidence seen that Christie knew of traffic scheme

NEW YORK, 3 Feb — A New Jersey Democrat leading a probe of the bridge traffic scandal that has engulfed Governor Chris Christie said on Sunday he has seen no evidence to support claims that the governor had been aware of the apparently politically motivated traffic jams as they happened. The remarks by Assemblyman John Wisniewski, who co-leads the probe, came two days after a former Christie appointee at the agency overseeing the bridge who personally oversaw the lane closures said “evidence exists” that Christie had knowledge of the blockage when it happened.

If such evidence does exist, a state panel investigating the closures has not yet seen it, Wisniewski said. Separately on Sunday, Christie’s director of intergovernmental affairs, Christina Renna, resigned. Renna’s lawyer, Henry E Klingeman, confirmed to Reuters that she had resigned, effective on 31 January. Klingeman also said that Renna said she was among several top aides who have until Monday to respond to subpoenas in the scandal. However, in a statement provided by Klingeman, Renna said she had been considering leaving since shortly after Christie’s re-election last fall.

“I have spent almost four years working hard for a Governor I continue to respect and admire,” Renna said in the statement. “The transition from term one to term two is a natural time to pursue an opportunity in the private sector.” Christie, who is considered a leading Republican candidate for the White House in 2016, has repeatedly denied any knowledge of a plan to snarl traffic last September in Fort Lee, New Jersey, near the busy George Washington Bridge that connects New Jersey and New York City and severed ties with several top aides over their role in the incident.

Christie has been dogged by scandal for more than a month since it emerged that several of his top aides and appointees called for lane closures leading to the busiest edge in the United States, apparently as retribution against the Democratic mayor of Fort Lee for not endorsing the governor’s re-election campaign. Christie has repeatedly denied having any knowledge of the scheme and dismissed two of his top aides for their roles in it. Still, the scandal has hurt his image and recent polls show him losing ground as a potential presidential contender.—Reuters

Pakistan’s privatization tsar embarks on quest to revive economy

ISLAMABAD, 3 Feb — Mohammad Zubair was on a cruise dinner with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Thailand when he was offered the hardest job of his life: privatizing a huge chunk of the economy while fighting resistance from the opposition and trade unions. When the prime minister left the table, a colleague of former IBM executive Zubair rushed to his side.

“You are mad? This privatization minister has gone to jail and most have corruption cases hanging over their heads,” he said.

“Don’t take this job.”

But Pakistan’s new privatization tsar is determined to find buyers for 68 public companies, most of them loss-making, including two gas companies, an oil company, about 10 banks, the national airline and power distribution companies — all within the next two years.

The government sees the sell-offs as a life saver for Pakistan’s $225 billion economy crippled by power shortages, corruption and militant violence. Successful privatization is Sharif’s top political and economic goal.

“We lose 500 billion rupees ($5 billion) annually because of failing enterprises,” Zubair told Reuters. “Every day a file lands on a bureaucrat’s desk and he has to take a decision he isn’t qualified to.”

“This can’t go on, no matter what.”

Pakistan can raise up to $5 billion in privatization revenue in the next two years to ease pressure on strained public finance, Zubair said.

Last September, the International Monetary Fund saved Pakistan from a possible default by agreeing to lend it $5.7 billion over three years. In return, Pakistan must make good on a longstanding promise to privatize loss-making state companies.—Reuters

Iraqi army bombards Falluja in preparation for ground assault

BAGHDAD, 3 Feb — The Iraqi army intensified its shelling of Falluja on Sunday in preparation for a ground assault on the city, control of which has been under the control of militants for a month. Sunnis, Shiites and anti-government fighters, among them insurgents linked to al-Qaeda, overran Falluja in the western province of Anbar in January, taking a backdrop of deteriorating security across Iraq.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, whose Shiite-led government may in the Sunni minority accuse of discrimination, had held off an all-out offensive to give local tribesmen a chance to expel the militants themselves. But security officials told Reuters on Saturday that a decision had been made to enter Falluja on Sunday.

“Orders have been issued to start shelling the city with artillery and planes to detect the potential abilities of militants inside Falluja and try to find a gap to get into the city,” a top security official told Reuters on Sunday.

Troops and tribal fighters will also be in their positions just 15 minutes outside Falluja.” The official said militants had planted roadside bombs along the main roads into the city, and the army would use different routes to enter.

Earlier on Sunday, security officials said Maliki had received phone calls from the ambassadors of several countries in the region urging him not to storm the city, but preparations were going ahead nonetheless.

“We have finished all our preparations and are waiting for the final say, which must come from Maliki himself,” said a senior military commander.—Reuters

US immigration bill ‘in doubt’ this year, Republican Ryan says

WASHINGTON, 3 Feb — Republicans will be unlikely to compromise on immigration reform unless US borders are first secured, and the possibility of a broad immigration bill reaching President Barack Obama’s desk this year is “clearly in doubt,” Representative Paul Ryan said on Sunday.

“Security first, no amnesty, then we might be able to get somewhere,” Ryan said on ABC’s “This Week.”

Immigration reform legislation, which the Senate has already passed, has stalled in the Republican-controlled House. Ryan’s comments follow a House document released last week that presents a path toward legal status for 11 million undocumented workers now in the United States. The plan, rolled out by House Republican leaders, outlines “principles” for immigration reform and embraces an agenda that gives their candidates a campaign message that goes beyond political attacks on Obama.

Asked if Obama would get a bill to sign this year, Ryan replied: “I really don’t know the answer to that question. That’s clearly in doubt.” It remains unclear if the House principles will advance any further amid deep Republican divisions. The principles are seen as gauging the party’s willingness to tackle such a controversial issue during an election year, when all 435 House seats are at stake. Last June, the Senate passed a comprehensive bill that would provide a path to citizenship for the approximately 11 million immigrant workers living in the United States illegally and tighten border security.—Reuters

Dollar trades in lower 102 yen zone in early Tokyo deals

TOKYO, 3 Feb — The US dollar traded in the lower 102 yen zone early Monday morning in Tokyo, rising slightly from its levels in New York on Friday.

At 9 am, the dollar fetched 102.23-27 yen compared with 101.96-102.06 yen in New York and 102.48-50 yen in Tokyo at 3 pm on Friday.

The euro was quoted at $1.3487-3487 and 137.88-90 yen against $1.3481-3491 and 137.64-74 yen in New York and $1.3542-3544 and 138.78-82 yen in Tokyo late Friday afternoon.

In New York on Friday, persistent concerns over instability in emerging economies prompted market participants to buy the yen for the dollar as a safe haven, dealers said.

A fall in US long-term interest rates also led to dollar selling on expectations that the interest rate gap between Japan and the United States will narrow, they said. — Kyodo News

Chairman of Pakistan’s Privatization Commission Mohammad Zubair speaks during an interview with Reuters at his office in Islamabad on 29 Jan.—Reuters

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (second from front) departs City Hall in Fort Lee, New Jersey on 9 Jan, 2014.—Reuters
New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu wins re-election

NEW ORLEANS, 3 Feb — New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu won re-election to a second term on Saturday bolstered by a public perception the post-Hurricane Katrina recovery has created jobs and improved the local economy. Landrieu had 64 percent of the vote, with all precincts reporting, according to preliminary results from the website of the Louisiana secretary of state.

Landrieu needed more than 50 percent of the vote to avoid a runoff election and win another four-year term. His nearest challenger, state court Judge Michael Bagnères, had 33 percent of the vote. Race played a role in the election in the mostly black city, with Landrieu who is white, saying his policies have benefited all, while his opponents said the needs of impoverished blacks have been mostly ignored.

In the end, Landrieu, 53, a scion of one of the state’s pre-eminent Democratic political families, appeared to have benefited from the strong base of support for his efforts to rebuild the Crescent City from the destruction inflicted by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Landrieu addressed his jubilant supporters at his election night headquarters on Saturday.

“We have come a very, very long way together,” Landrieu told the crowd. The mayor was surrounded by his family, which included his sister, U.S. Senator Mary Landrieu, a Democrat, and his father, former New Orleans Mayor Moon Landrieu.

“Elections are America’s peaceful pathway to the future. They give full voice to the will of the people, and now the people of New Orleans have spoken again,” Landrieu said. Landrieu, heading into the election on Saturday, had been the frontrunner to win. But his two African-American challengers accused the mayor of failing impoverished communities with a call for the aftermath of Katrina. The final candidate on the mayoral ballot was veteran civil rights lawyer Danatus King, who also is black. He had run a distant third in political polls and finished with 3 percent of the vote in preliminary results. — Reuters

No more worries about parking in popular spots

Tokyo, 3 Feb — Finding a parking space near popular tourist spots and downtown areas in Japan is no mean feat, especially on weekends or holidays. On the other hand, only for a limited time, there are empty spaces at private housing or condominium parking lots near these locations, whose owners may wish to make good use of them. So, Nokisaki Inc offers parking lot rental service on a daily basis by connecting empty space owners with those looking for a place to park when driving to popular destinations.

Under the service named Nokisaki Parking, which means “parking under eaves,” drivers can reserve a parking space before leaving their homes, while space owners can make money just by renting out their spaces when they are not in use. “Our service has helped improve the surrounding environment as it alleviates traffic jams and reduces illegal parking,” Akiko Nishiura, the 44-year-old president of the Tokyo-based company, said in an interview.

In the service, people who wish to rent out their spaces can set dates when their spaces become available. They can also decide fees at any rate they want, but the company recommends they set a price about 10 percent lower than those offered by parking lots in their neighborhoods. In locations near sports stadiums or concert venues, the rate will be higher when popular musicians are set to perform or major sports events are to take place, according to the company.

Drivers who sign up with the service can choose a space and pay the designated fee on the company’s website. Space lenders receive 65 percent of the payments, while Nokisaki takes the remaining 35 percent for commission.

The company launched the service in October 2012 with parking spaces for about 10 cars near Tokyo Skytree, the world’s tallest broadcasting tower that opened in May that year.

Nokisaki now has a total of nearly 1,000 parking spaces registered mainly in Tokyo and Osaka, while the number of member users has swelled to about 200. Nishiura, who founded Nokisaki in 2009, said securing a space was one of the biggest hurdles when she thought of starting a business, which helped her come up with the space sharing arrangements. — Kyodo News

Cuban boat people land in Cayman, headed for Honduras

GEORGE TOWN, (Cayman Islands), 3 Feb — A 30-foot (9 metre) sailboat with about 30 Cuban refugees aboard docked in the Cayman Islands on Sunday and passengers said they were hoping to reach Honduras. The passengers told Reuters they were from Manzanillo in the southwestern province of Granma. Ranging in age from teenagers to retirees, said they decided to leave the island because of economic conditions in Cuba, and complained that recent private sector reforms had not been as broadly implemented in the eastern end of the island, far from the capital, Havana.

They were provided with supplies after landing in East End, on the island of Grand Cayman, and continued on their journey. Under an agreement between Cuba and the Cayman Islands signed more than a decade ago, Cuban migrant boats are allowed to pass through Cayman waters as long as they do not seek any assistance. Cayman and Cuban officials are due to meet soon to negotiate new terms of the 1999 migration agreement.

Cayman officials said last year that a growing number of Cuban migrant boats are being spotted in the territorial waters, apparently in response to possible changes in US immigration laws. Migrants fearing they could make it harder for them to enter the United States. Using makeshift boats or speed boats operated by smugglers, Cubans attempting to flee the communist-run island for the United States have long traveled through the waters of the Cayman Islands, a British territory located less than 100 miles south of Cuba.

The route offers favorable winds and sea currents for Cuban migrants trying to reach Honduras, from where they make the long journey overland to reach the US border with Mexico. — Reuters

Afghan presidential campaign kicks off amid tight security

KABUL, 3 Feb — Afghanistan’s third presidential election campaign since the collapse of Taliban regime in late 2001 formally kicked off in the conflict-plagued country on Sunday amid tight security as the militant group vowed to disrupt the polling process.

Supporters of presidential runoff candidates have begun decorating walls and streets of the Afghan capital Kabul by installing billboards, gluing the posters and pictures of their favorite candidates to muster support.

Nevertheless, the voters, particularly ordinary citizens seem doubtful over the ability of candidates to act upon what they promise to the people. “I want to use my suffrage, but I don’t know to whom I should vote, because in the previous elections we had received a lot of promises by the candidates but have seen little change in our living conditions,” Moham-mad Sadiq, 38, told Xinhua.

The poor ballot seller said that the candidates in 2009 had promised to create job opportunities for the citizens, improve security and ensure justice but all in vain.

“Security has been deteriorated since 2009. In 2009, I was able to travel around the country without any fear, but today, I am not able to visit my relatives in Hazar district of Logar Province,” Xinhua


Missing girl in Sapporo found safe, man arrested for confinement

SAPPORO, 3 Feb — A 26-year-old man was arrested on Sunday for allegedly confining a girl in Sapporo who had been missing since late January, Hokkaido police said. Rina Hataya, 9, was found safe at the apartment of Hajime Matsu in the Hokkaido city.

The police plan to search the apartment on Monday, suspecting Matsu abducted the girl, who is about 10 metres from the girl’s home. Matsu denies confining the girl. The girl went missing after leaving home at around 3 pm on 27 January to buy snacks.

Matsu allegedly took her to his apartment from a parking lot near the girl’s home at around 3:30 pm the same day. The Hokkaido police began soliciting information two days after the girl went missing and had obtained 250 pieces of information as of Sunday. — Kyodo News

Pakistani policemen inspect a site in a cinema in northwest Pakistan’s Peshawar on 2 Feb, 2014. At least five people were killed and 31 others injured on Sunday night when a hand grenade was thrown at a cinema in Pakistan’s northwestern city of Peshawar, officials said. — Xinhua
Global automakers scour India’s backroads in search of dream market

MUMBAI, 3 Feb — For global automakers, the dusty backroads of rural India could be the new El Dorado. As economic torpor suffocates demand for new cars in India’s megacities, incomes are growing faster in small towns and countryside areas. That’s pushing the likes of General Motors (GMN) and Honda Motor (7267.T) to fan out in search of buyers in places where fewer than 20 people live in every thousand square kilometre of land for now. Standing firmly in the way are strong home-ground brands. With local services plentiful and repairs cheap, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd (MRTLS.NS), Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd (MAHM.NS), and Tata Motors Ltd (TAMO.NS) dominate the rural vehicle market where foreign automakers are seen as expensive and distant. Foreign companies showing cars at the Delhi auto show, which starts on Wednesday, have already poured billions of dollars into factories, product development and marketing in India’s once-booming car market.

Still, no foreign car maker has a share of more than 6 percent in India’s passenger vehicle market, aside from South Korea’s Hyundai Motor Co (003300.KS) with 16.1 percent. Asian makers see success in rural areas as vital, as slow economic growth, high interest rates and rising fuel prices mean overall sales are headed for their second straight year of decline. Though the need for rural sales has been recognized, success could yet prove illusory.

Japan’s Honda entered India nearly two decades ago but will still have only 170 dealerships by end-March, compared with market-leading Maruti’s current 1,300. Of the 60 sales outlets Honda plans to open in India in the fiscal year that starts in April, 43 will be in small towns. “It’s very easy to travel once in three-four years to a place 100 kilometers away to buy,” said Janeswar Sen, senior vice president of sales and marketing at Honda India. “It becomes a bit of a hassle for the customer to travel 100 or 150 kilometers every few months to get the car serviced.”

GSK to launch late-stage clinical trials on 10 new drugs

BANGALORE, 3 Feb — GlaxoSmithKline is set to unveil plans to launch late-stage clinical trials on 10 new drugs over the next two years, the Telegraph reported, without citing sources. The new drugs, which have not been detailed to investors, will include cancer and respiratory disease medicines, the newspaper said on its website.

Britain’s biggest drugmaker is also expected to report that fourth-quarter sales in China, where it is embroiled in a major bribery probe, took a smaller hit than when the scandal first blew up during the summer quarter, the report said. The investigation began in July 2013, after Chinese police accused GSK of funneling up to 3 billion yuan ($495.05 million) to travel agencies to facilitate bribes to boost its drug sales.

Cancer cases on rise in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 3 Feb — The number of cancer cases were on rise in Singapore in recent years, especially those associated with bad habits often seen in the modern lifestyle, daily local Straits Times reported on Monday. According to the latest available figures, 12,123 people were diagnosed with cancer in 2012, up nearly 15 percent from 10,576 in 2008, the report said.

The ageing population is one of the reasons, said Soo Khee Chee, director of National Cancer Centre Singapore.

“In developed countries like ours, people are living longer. Previously, people would die before they got cancer,” he said. But what is more worrying is how “lifestyle cancers” such as prostate, breast and colo-rectum cancers are contributing to the rise. Prostate cancer cases went up by 52 percent from 2003 to 2012, when cases of breast cancer also rose by 25 percent. These cancers are, respectively, among the top three most common in men and women. They are also known as “developed world cancers” because they are associated with the lifestyle in these countries.

One factor that increases the chances of cancer is smoking. Soo said, “Overall, the rate of smoking is moving downwards, but there is a trend of more younger people here taking it up,” he said. Health Promotion Board figures from 2010 showed that 16 percent of young people aged 18 to 29 smoked regularly, up from 12 percent in 2004.

Other factors contributing to the rise of cancer here are poor diet and lack of exercise, because we are “overfed and eating the wrong food.” Having fewer children and having them later also increase a woman’s chances of getting cancer, he added.

Cancer remains the most often seen cause of deaths in Singapore, with 30 percent of deaths in 2010 caused by cancer. But the outlook is not all bleak. The chances of getting cancer can be lowered dramatically by modifying one’s lifestyle.

Educated women driving China’s Internet shopping: New Zealand study

WELLINGTON, 3 Feb — Internet retailers might want to give a bit of extra attention to China’s middle-class educated women because they’re the future of on-line shopping in the world’s biggest market, according to a New Zealand study. The Lincoln University survey of Chinese Internet consumers found that well-educated employees appeared more inclined to shop online than any other group, possibly indicating their computer literacy and ready access to Internet technology.

The online shopping behaviour of friends and family also appeared to be a major influence on China’s e-shoppers, especially among women. The research found that Chinese female consumers were more likely to shop on-line than their male counterparts a trend that was becoming increasingly pronounced.

Researchers said in a statement from the university on Monday.

With China’s population spending about 1 billion hours on the Internet each day, it was important to understand the decision-making process and behaviours of on-line shoppers, senior lecturer in marketing Michael Clemes said in the statement. “What’s particularly interesting about China, however, is not only how little is known about e-shopping behaviours, but how few Chinese consumers relative to the country’s population actually use the Internet for e-purchases,” Clemes said.

The findings of the research are extremely important to the world of e-commerce, said Clemes.

The researchers suggested that marketers consider providing computer training courses to prospective customers or increasing the provision of public computers, and to consider providing on-line forums and chat rooms for female consumers to share their experiences. They also found that high-income Chinese consumers were much less inclined to shop online, possibly because they preferred to physically examine the more upmarket products they were buying and take advantage of support services offered in a store.

Novartis to cut or transfer up to 4,000 pharma jobs

ZURICH, 3 Feb — Swiss drugs group Novartis (NOVN.VX) intends to cut or transfer up to 4,000 jobs, the local newspaper NZZ am Sonntag reported on Sunday, citing an internal email. The plan affecting up to 6 percent of its pharmaceuticals workforce comes on top of a program to reduce the number of production sites and is part of a larger drive to cut costs, the newspaper said.

Global drugmakers are under increasing pressure from investors to step up restructuring as part of their overall drive to cut costs and take advantage of savings in the local newspaper.

The GlaxoSmithKline building is pictured in Hounslow, west London on 18 June, 2013.—REUTERS

The logo of Swiss drugmaker Novartis is seen at its headquarters in Basel on 22 Oct, 2013.—REUTERS
Sri Lankan PM felicitate Vice-Presidents Dr.Sai Mauk Kham, U Nyan Tun

**NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb—**The following is message of felicitations from the Sri Lankan Prime Minister sent to Vice-Presidents Dr Sai Mauk Kham and U Nyan Tun, on the occasion of the 66th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

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

It is with great pleasure that I convey to Your Excellency, my warm congratulations and 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 longstanding relations between our countries. It is my fervent wish that

BEHS (Branch)’s three-storey new school building opened in Salin

**NAGYAWAY, 3 Feb—**A ceremony to open BEHS (branch)’s three-storey new school building was held in Salin on 1 February, with an address by Union Minister Dr Kan Zaw. The Union minister, Japanese Ambassador Mr. Mikio Numata and party formally opened the school building.

Japanese Ambassador Mr. Mikio Numata, Deputy Minister for Education Dr San Lwin, Region Minister for Social Affairs U Aung Kyaw Min and township head,Win Maung formally opened the school building and the Japanese ambassador unveiled the signboard of the school building.

Chairman of school building construction committee handed over documents related to the school building to the township education officer and the chairman of school board of trustees presented gifts to the union minister and party.

Minister for Information U Pyke Htwe presented publications for the libraries in the township. The newly-opened school building was constructed at a cost of US$140,897 under Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects Scheme (GSPA) from Japan.—MNA

Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to President U Thein Sein

**NAV PHT TAW, 3 Feb—**The following are messages of felicitations from foreign Heads of State sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein, on the occasion of the 66th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Ms. Park Geun-hye President of the Republic of Korea

It is with great pleasure that I wish to extend to you my heartfelt congratulations to Your Excellency and to the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I sincerely hope that the relations between our two countries which have continued to grow and expand over the years will be further strengthened in the years to come. Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my best wishes to Your Excellency for your continued good health and the everlasting prosperity of your great country.

The embassy of the Republic of Korea avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar the assurances of its highest consideration.

From Mr. Taur Matan Ruuk President of the Republic of Timor-Leste

On behalf of the people of Timor-Leste and myself, I would like to extend my warm congratulations and wishes of continued success and peace on the occasion of the 66th independence anniversary of your country.

Timor-Leste and Myanmar have built robust relation of friendship and I will continue to reinforce this excellent relationship for the benefit of our two countries.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

From Mr. Islam Karimov President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

It is a pleasure for me to deliver my sincere congratulations on the occasion of National Day—the Independence Day of Your country.

Taking this opportunity I wish Your Excellency sound health and success in Your endeavors, to the nation of Your country—peace and prosperity.

Sincerely Yours,

From Dr. Boediono President of the Republic of Indonesia

On the occasion of the celebration of the National Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to convey to you, together with the Government and the people of Spain, My congratulations;

I reiterate, Mr. President. My best wishes for peace and prosperity for our friends, the people of Myanmar.

With My highest consideration,

From Majesty Juan Carlos R. King of Spain

Mr. President,

On the occasion of the 66th Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to extend to your Excellency my warmest congratulations and best wishes to you as well as to the Government and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Mr. Islam Karimov President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

It is a pleasure for me to deliver my sincere congratulations on the occasion of National Day—the Independence Day of Your country.

Taking this opportunity I wish Your Excellency sound health and success in Your endeavors, to the nation of Your country—peace and prosperity.

Sincerely Yours,

From Mr. U Nyan Tun Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

On this auspicious occasion of Independence Day of the Friendly Country, it gives me great pleasure to extend to Your Excellency my highest consideration and sincere wishes for your, and the happiness of the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Mr. Zeljko Komisic Croat Member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

On behalf of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and my own behalf, it is my pleasure to extend to you sincere congratulations on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, with sincere wishes for the lasting prosperity of your country.

I would like to use this opportunity to express my belief that good and friendly relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar will continue to develop to the benefit of our countries.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration and sincere wishes for your, and the happiness of the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

From Mr. Nouri Abu-Shaima President of the Libyan General National Congress

Your Excellency,

On this auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of Your Friendly Country, it gives me great pleasure to extend to Your Excellency my highest consideration and sincere wishes for your, and the happiness of the people of friendly Myanmar further progress and prosperity.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my best regards and consideration.

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Sincerely Yours,
Vice-President visits

(From page 1)

roads by motor car and met with members of township management committee, township development support committee, township development affairs committee and townswelders at the lounge of Kyaukpyu Airport. He called for socio-economic status development, peace and stability and rule of law in the region. They then flew to MraukU via Kyaukpyu by helicopter in the evening and met locals at MraukU Hotel. He urged the locals and social organizations to participate in implementing regional development tasks in coordination with departmental officials. He stressed the need to importance of rule of law and stability, saying that participation of locals is vital for regional stability.

The locals reported on regional requirements and Union Minister U Htay Aung made supplementary report. After coordinating the essentials, the Vice-President made concluding remarks and greeted those present.—MNA

Housing

May our dream come true Today, Yangon sees the increasing population, Housings and apartments are in high demand in Yangon. People from other regions and states are flocking to the commercial hub, Yangon. Due to lower job opportunities, they moved to Yangon. The grassroots and the pensioners have to spend their income mostly on food and accommodation.

The squatter problems and higher living costs shine a light on it. How can they save their money? How can they own a house or an apartment? How can the pensioners own a house or apartment when they get retired? To own a house or an apartment is just a dream for the families from the middle and grass-root levels. Land prices and rental fees are skyrocketing. Recently, the government is implementing affordable housing projects. It is good news for the grassroots and the pensioners. Those who have to scrap their living have no extra money.

As a matter of fact, affordable housing prices are still high a lot. There occur squatter problems and skyrocketing land prices whenever there is news about new housing projects. On the other hand, skyrocketing land prices can cause a deterrent to the massive inflow of foreign investments into the country. And it may also nip “Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the bud”.

The situation remains unchanged even though the authority concerned regulates the land and property prices in term of taxation. Some opportunists are manipulating the property market.

Low-cost housing projects are to be implemented one after another to meet people’s housing demands. Affordable housing prices should be within their reach. The grassroots and the pensioners’ dream may come true.

Indian Consulate General visits Myingyan brokerage

Myingyan, 3 Feb—Indian Consulate General Mr. Madan Mohan Sethi and party paid a visit to Myingyan brokerage this afternoon.

At the brokerage, the Consulate General said that they came there to provide assistance in selling finished agricultural goods instead of raw materials, transforming traditional farming into mechanized farming, sending scholars to India and selling products directly to India.

Managing Director of Mahabandoola company Mrs Neha Goenka, who accompanied the delegation, shared knowledge about using farming equipment imported by Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd through a projector and answered the queries raised by the attendees. U Zaw Min Naing (Myingyan)

Options: Booze or Books

“We are working hard to develop our library for youths,” says in-charge of the Wunnatheikdi Library while registering borrowers, “I want young people to read books and to have high hopes for their future.”

While supervising the library, the personnel of the library are contributing voluntary services to a free funeral service association.

“We have cremated 40 men including who drank to death and who died in accidents under the influence of alcohol,” he said.

The victims lost their lives due to lack of knowledge and weak in rationalization,” he said, feeling that drinking related deaths are highly regrettable.

“Our aim is to organize the young people to participate in our social works and to love reading so that they can have high hopes for their future,” the man added.

Than Naing (Zabuthiri)

Than Naing (Zabuthiri)

Union FM felicitates Sri Lankan counterpart

Nay Pyi Taw, 4 Feb—On the occasion of the 66th Anniversary of Independence Day of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka which falls on 4th February 2014, U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitation to His Excellency Prof. G.L. Peiris, M.P., Minister of External Affairs of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.—MNA

ASEAN Library Development Forum 2014 kicks off

Union Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu poses for documentary photo with attendees at ASEAN Library Development Forum 2014.—MNA

Options: Booze or Books

It is easy for them to carry out the free funeral services as Nay Pyi Taw Development Affairs Committee has also provided the association with a hearse and cremation free.

In addition, the association can also arrange for needy people to get oxygen cylinders and blood when they need.

However, ads for alcohol in journals have posing hindrances to their efforts for putting the young people on right paths for their future.

Some alcohol ads are pretended as ads for bottled water and lucky draws,” he says, “but, we will carry on our works to help them distinguish right or wrong. We hope the books in the library can attract young people,” the man said.

Than Naing (Zabuthiri)

Than Naing (Zabuthiri)
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw ... (from page 16)
been undertaking across the country. He pointed out that mobile teams under the supervision of the illegal trade control central committee and Yangon Region government are cracking down on smuggling of illegal goods at border gates, entry and exit routes of smuggling illegal goods, airports, jetties and ports, warehouses and shopping malls and K 10.588 billion worth of illegal goods, accounting for 20% of the country’s total trade volume, were seized during the period from 1 November, 2013 to 31 January, 2014. Actions are being taken against seized illegal goods in accord with Marine Customs Law, he added.

He said that effective measures for prevention against entry of illegal goods through waterways would be taken after the already-formed marine force was provided with the vessels and manpower.

Regarding the two educational questions at the meeting on technical cooperation (EGAT) held a coordination meeting with the Ministry of Electric Power and Metropolitan Electricity Authority of Thailand to help reduce power losses in the power distribution system of Myanmar, entering into an agreement on bilateral cooperation for upgrading of electricity sector development of Myanmar, expressing thanks for assistance by Thailand to help reduce power losses in electricity distribution system of Yangon.

Union Minister U Hla Tun and U Ohn Myint, Deputy Speaker of Sagaing Region Hluttaw, here, this morning.

Minister U Khin Maung Soe said that he recently held a discussion with Thai Energy minister in Yangon on electricity sector development of Myanmar, entering into an agreement on bilateral cooperation in electricity sector was agreed in principle. He expressed thanks for assisting to reduce electric power losses in electricity distribution system of Yangon.

Officials from EGAT and Metropolitan Electricity Authority (MEA) explained work experience and ways and means to improve electricity distribution system. Those attendees discussed matters on construction of grid code for supply and distribution of electricity, technical exchange programmes, conducting courses and reduction of electric power losses in distribution system of Yangon Region.

Rural area of Yinmabin Tsp ... (from page 16)
Union Ministers U Hla Tun and U Ohn Myint, Deputy Speaker of Sagaing Region Hluttaw U Thaung Sein, deputy ministers, region ministers, departmental staff, townsenders, the chairman of village electrification committee and members and rural people were present on the occasion.

Chairman of village electrification in the village of Taepinkan in Sagaing Region.—MNA

Minister U Khin Maung Soe speaking at coordination meeting.—MNA

Earthquakes jolt outside Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb—A slight earthquake of magnitude (4.7) Richter Scale with its epicenter in the Bay of Bengal about (290) miles southwest of Mandalay seismological observatory was recorded at (23) hrs (15) min (07) sec MST yesterday and a moderate earthquake of magnitude (5.2) Richter Scale with its epicenter outside Myanmar (Andaman Island, India) about (307) miles south west of Kaba-Aye seismological observatory was recorded at (06) hrs (14) min (02) sec MST today, announced the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

Union Minister U Hla Tun presses a button to open the signboard of village electrification in Taepinkan Village in Sagaing Region.—MNA

Myanmar Financial Decentralization Workshop held

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb—Ministry of finance and World Bank jointly organized the Myanmar Financial Decentralization Workshop at Thingaha Hotel here this morning.

Union Minister for Finance U Win Shein and Country Manager Mr Kanthan Shankar from World Bank made opening speeches at the workshop.

Reviewing international experiences including India, Indonesia and Thailand Ministry for Finance and officials concerned.

Myanmar Financial Decentralization Workshop in progress.—MNA

Acting Union Minister meets SDC’s guest

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb—Acting Union Minister for Education Dr Myo Myint received a delegation led by Mr Bernhard Huwiler of Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) at his office, here, this afternoon.

At the call, they had a cordial discussion on extension of Cyclone/Storm shelter school building project jointly cooperated by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Ministry of Education and cooperation in standardization of school building project.

MNA

MNA

MNA

MNA
Donations presented for all-round development of Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda

KYAIKTO, 3 Feb—Both local visitors and pilgrims and globetrotters paid visit to Hsandawshin Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda in Kyaukto Township of Mon State daily.

Census taking process discussed in Pekhon Tsp

PEKHON, 3 Feb—A clarification on census taking process was held at the town hall in Pekhon of Shan State (South) on 30 January morning.

Director of Shan State Immigration and National Registration Department U Htay Hlaing made a clarification on census taking process in 2014 for the whole nation, correct answer of people to 41 points questions, and systematic management of members of Township Census Committee.

Kayar National Affairs Minister U Laurence of Shan State Government, members of Township Development Supportive Committee, members of Township Census Committee and ward/village census committee raised questions what they wanted to know.

The director replied to their questions.

It was also attended by members of Township Development Supportive Committee, members of Township Census Committee and ward/village committee members and teachers who will discharge the duty of collecting data for population totalling 462.

Regional development tasks supervised in Tahley Sub-Township

TAHLEY, 3 Feb—A meeting on discussion of rural development was held at the hall of Tahley Sub-Township General Administration Department in Shan State (East) on 1 February.

Deputy Commissioner of Shan State GAD (Kengtung) U Tin Maung Swe made a speech.

Tahley Sub-Township Administrator U Aye Min Tun submitted the report on regional matters.

Local authorities from four wards also presented reports on respective sectors and requirement of the region. It was also attended by Tachilek District Deputy Commissioner U Thaung Tin Htwe and officials.

The Deputy Commissioner and party proceeded to Kengluk Sub-Township and inspected progress of building Myanmar-Laos Friendship Bridge and left necessary instructions.

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

Mya Kyun Tha Library opened in Tatkon Tsp

TATKON, 3 Feb—In commemoration of the 67th Anniversary Armed Forces, aceremony to put Mya Kyun Tha self-reliant library into service was held in Alekyun Model Village of Tatkon Township in Ottara District of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on 2 February.

Officials presented certificates of honour to well-wishers.—News & Photos—U Khin Maung Myint

Free clinic gives medical treatment

LAYMYETHNA, 3 Feb—Myat Cetana free clinic of Laymyethna Township in Ayeyawady Region gives health care to patients at its office in Ward 2 of the town on 30 January.

A total of 327 people received medical treatment.

Medical Officer Dr Yi Yi Khin of Laymyethna Township Hospital provide health care services to the patients weekly. The clinic has given health care to 6027 patients, costing K9,513,720 funded by wellwishers, personnel and local people.

On 28 January, the clinic committee given health care to 621 patients from Hlawkahta Station.
Cambodian, Vietnamese to discuss ties, cooperation next week

PHNOM PENH, 3 Feb — Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Hor Namhong will meet with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh next week to discuss possibilities to further enhance bilateral ties and cooperation, the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Monday.

The two top diplomats would co-chair the 13th meeting of the Cambodia-Vietnam Joint Commission for Economic, Cultural, Scientific and Technical Cooperation to be held from 10-11 February in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, said a ministry’s Press statement.

At both sides will sign the agreed minutes of the meeting, the statement said. Besides, Pham Binh Minh will pay a courtesy call on Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen at the Peace Palace. Cambodia shares 1,270 km of border with Vietnam to the east. The two neighbors have enjoyed good ties in trade, investment and tourism. The two-way trade volume reached 3.5 billion US dollars last year, according to the Association of Vietnamese Investors in Cambodia. On the investment side, Vietnam is the fifth largest investor in Cambodia, with 128 projects worth over 3 billion US dollars by 2013.

For tourism, Vietnam ranked the largest source of tourists to Cambodia with 850,000 Vietnamese visiting the country last year, said the Cambodian Tourism Ministry.
In respect of "Class 5: Dietary and nutritional supplements; dietary and/or food supplements comprising of vitamins and/or minerals; nutritionally fortified gum; nutritionally fortified baking powder; powders for effervescing beverages".

"Class 29: Nutritional beverages, namely, protein drinks for use as a meal replacement; beauty beverages, namely, protein drinks for use as a meal replacement; nutritionally fortified protein drinks not for medical purposes."
**Johnny Depp, Amber Heard to marry in Bahamas**

London, 3 Feb—Pirates of the Caribbean star Johnny Depp and Amber Heard are reportedly planning to get married in an intimate ceremony at his private island in the Bahamas. 

The 50-year-old actor owns a private island where he filmed scenes for the Pirates films and it is said while some of his rock star friends will be in attendance, it won’t be a big, glitzy party, reported *Daily Star*. 

“They’re having a small intimate ceremony barefoot on the beach in Little Hall’s Pond Cay. Afterwards they’ll have a barbecue where some of Johnny’s musician pals are going to perform, followed by limbo dancing,” a source said. “Neither Johnny nor Amber want a big, glitzy Hollywood bash. They are both very private.”

**Jennifer Lopez: Split with Marc Anthony was devastating**

London, 3 Feb—Pop star Jennifer Lopez has revealed that her divorce from the father of her children, Marc Anthony, left her completely devastated. 

The 44-year-old On The Floor hitmaker was doing the right thing here? ‘Am I hurting her? Am I hurting the kids. When you’re this little girl, you just cry yourself to sleep. But when you’re responsible for two other human beings and their lives and emotional wellbeing, that’s a biggie. You’re constantly wondering, ‘Am I doing the right thing here?’” Lopez is now happy in a relationship with choreographer Casper Smart, 26, and is pleased she can count Anthony — her third husband following failed marriages to Ojani Noa and Cris Judd — as a friend these days.

*PTI*

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**Bruno Mars gives high-wattage halftime act at Super Bowl**

East Rutherford, 3 Feb — Accompanied by a light show that featured 80,000 fans with illuminated hats, pop star Bruno Mars rocked the Super Bowl halftime show on Sunday with a selection of his hits including “Treasure” and “Runaway Baby.”

Dressed in a glittery, 50s style jacket and narrow tie, the bouffant-haired singer danced across the stage as fire effects and fireworks lit up East Rutherford, New Jersey’s Met Life Stadium.

He was backed by alternative rockers the Red Hot Chili Peppers, whose lead singer Anthony Kiedis straddled out onto the stage shirtless and in shorts even as the temperature dropped to 44 degrees Fahrenheit (7 degrees Celsius), belting out the group’s 1991 hit “Give It Away.”

*Reuters*

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**Johnny and Amber want a private wedding**

Jennifer Lopez said. “It took a lot a digging deep to do that. Right now I’d say it was the hardest thing I’ve ever been through, because of the kids. When you’re this little scrappy girl and things happen, you just cry yourself to sleep. But when you’re responsible for two other human beings and their lives and emotional wellbeing, that’s a biggie. You’re constantly wondering, ‘Am I doing the right thing here?’”

Jennifer Lopez said.

Jennifer and Marc married in 2004 and officially separated in 2011.—*PTI*
McIlroy rues tricky greens as Euro title drought continues

DUBAI, 3 Feb — Rory McIlroy was left to rue some uncharacteristically wayward strokes clear of the field.

But he never recaptured on Thursday’s sparkle and the 24-year-old entered Sunday’s final round two shots adrift of eventual winner Stephen Gallacher. Gallacher blundered with successive bogeys on the first two holes to put McIlroy ahead, but that lead proved short-lived as the world number six regressed four bogeys between the seventh and 13th to slip back into the pack.

Anything that could go wrong did — okay, I hit a couple of loose drives, but I didn’t get away with them, stuff like that,” McIlroy told reporters.

“I didn’t get a couple of puts to go. I was struggling to read them for some reason, so I got (caddy) JP (Fitzgerald) to read them for me on the back nine and holed a couple more.

“When the greens get this firm they change color a little bit and it was very hard to see. Everything I read was straight even though it wasn’t — I just couldn’t see any movement.”

McIlroy’s winless streak on the European Tour — his last victory was at 2012’s DP World Tour Championships in Dubai, although he did triumph at December’s Australian Open — would not be troubling for most golfers.

But for McIlroy, who won his first tour title as a teenager and was a double major champion by the age of 23, it represents a steep decline from the glories of 2012. That year he became only the second golfer to top the money lists in both Europe and the United States in the same season as he become world number one.

Since then McIlroy has found it harder going, although Dubai’s joint-ninth placing means he has made the top five in five of his past six tour events and Desert Classic champion Gallacher had no doubt his playing partner would again challenge for golf’s top honours. — Reuters

England’s Kevin Pietersen and coach Ashley Giles (right) sit in the dugout as the rain falls before the second T20 international cricket match against New Zealand was abandoned at the Oval cricket ground, London on 27 June, 2013.— Reuters

LONDON, 3 Feb — Former test spin bowler Ashley Giles confirmed on Sunday that he would be “very interested” in succeeding Andy Flower as England’s team director following his resignation. Giles, who took over as limited-overs coach in 2012, was speaking applying for the post. “If I have to put an application in over the next couple of weeks then I’ll think about that and get it done.”

Giles has won 15 of his 38 matches in charge but does not expect to be the only candidate interested in taking over from former Zimbabwe wicketkeeper-batsman Flower. “I’m not silly, if it goes out to a process other people are going to apply,” added Giles who took 143 wickets during his test career with England.

“I’m not going to deny that and I’m sure I will be interested in doing the job, definitely,” Giles said in an interview with Sky Sports.

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Arsenal back on top as Liverpool slip up

LONDON, 3 Feb — Arsenal returned to the top of the Premier League on Sunday when they beat Crystal Palace 2-0 at the Emirates Stadium with both goals scored by Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain.

Arsenal will stay top at least until Monday’s match between Manchester City, who they knocked off the summit, and third-placed Chelsea at the Etihad Stadium.

Arsenal have 55 points from 24 games, followed by City on 53 from 22 and Chelsea on 50 from 23.

Liverpool, who were held to a 1-1 draw at West Bromwich Albion on Sunday, are fourth with 47 points. Palace, who have improved since Tony Pulis became manager at the end of November, remained just a point above the relegation zone.

Oxlade-Chamberlain, playing in central midfield rather than on the wing as usual, had a fine game in his first league start after returning from a long injury layoff.

He opened the scoring with a clever lofted shot after 47 minutes, his first goal of the season, and doubled Arsenal’s lead in the 73rd minute, firing home after a neat one-two with Olivier Giroud.

A dreadful mistake by defending Kolo Toure cost Liverpool victory when he gifted West Brom the equaliser in a 1-1 draw. — Reuters

Woods vows to work on putter after muted Dubai showing

DUBAI, 3 Feb — Tiger Woods vowed to improve his putting after another lacklustre performance at the Dubai Desert Classic on Sunday extended the world number one’s troubled start to 2014.

The 14-times major winner birdied the last three holes for a one-under-par final round of 71 on the Majlis course, giving him an aggregate six-under 282.

But such a score left Woods an also-ran at a tournament where the pack had been top billing with Northern Ireland’s Rory McIlroy.

“My iron game wasn’t as sharp as I’d like, I had seven lip-outs today,” Woods told reporters.

“I’m definitely going to work on my putting. My light putting needs to be better than it has been... I’m hitting my lines, I just don’t have the speed right.”

Woods began brightly in Dubai, racing to four-under after nine holes of Thursday’s first round, seemingly showing few ill effects from a dire showing at California’s Torrey Pines a few days earlier where he carded 79, the second-worst round of his professional career.

Yet wayward driving and then inconsistent putting saw the American make 10 birdies and eight bogeys over Dubai’s final 63 holes as he slipped out of contention. “I made a quick easy fix to my grip the other day and from then on I drove great,” said Woods, who will now fly to Delhi for an exhibition event, his first visit to India, before returning the United States. — Reuters

Japan down Canada to make maiden Davis Cup quarters

TOKYO, 3 Feb — Hosts Japan sailed into the Davis Cup quarter-finals for the first time with a 4-1 victory against an injury-plagued Canada on Sunday. Japanese number one Kei Nishikori was leading 6-2, 1-0 on the indoor hard court at Tokyo’s Ariake Coliseum when his opponent Frank Dancevic retired with injury, surrendering the tie in their first meeting since 1938.

“The pressure is always on me to win both singles matches,” said Nishikori, who won his opening singles against Peter Polansky on Friday before teaming up with Yasutaka Uchiyama to claim Saturday’s doubles.

“This time I was able to help win three matches,”

“The quarter-finals was our goal after getting back in the World Group. To do it in the first year is very rewarding.”

Back in World Group after a one-year absence, Japan now have a perfect 6-0 Davis Cup record against last year’s semi-finalists, who were laid low by a spate of injuries. Their top-ranked player Milos Raonic withdrew on Thursday with a foot injury he sustained at last month’s Australian Open, while world number 25 Vasek Pospisil also missed Saturday’s doubles with an injury he picked up at Melbourne Park. — Reuters

Tennis star Caroline Wozniacki (L) watches her boyfriend Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland as he tees off on the 16th hole during the final round of the 2014 Omega Dubai Desert Classic in Dubai on 2 Feb, 2014. — Reuters

Japan’s Kei Nishikori

Nishikori pocketed the first set in 29 minutes and broke Dancevic in the first game of the second when the world number 119 took an injury timeout but could not continue because of a stomach muscle injury.

“The pressure is always on me to win both singles matches,” said Nishikori, who won his opening singles against Peter Polansky on Friday before teaming up with Yasutaka Uchiyama to claim Saturday’s doubles.

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Arsenal's Jordan Henderson (L) challenges West Bromwich Albion's Youssouf Mulumbu during their English Premier League soccer match at the Hawthorns in West Bromwich, central England, on 2 Feb, 2014. — Reuters

Woods would be ‘very interested’ in succeeding Flower

LONDON, 3 Feb — Former test spin bowler Ashley Giles confirmed on Sunday that he would be “very interested” in succeeding Andy Flower as England’s team director following his resignation. Giles, who took over as limited-overs coach in 2012, was speaking applying for the post. “If I have to put an application in over the next couple of weeks then I’ll think about that and get it done.”

Giles has won 15 of his 38 matches in charge but does not expect to be the only candidate interested in taking over from former Zimbabwe wicketkeeper-batsman Flower. “I’m not silly, if it goes out to a process other people are going to apply,” added Giles who took 143 wickets during his test career with England.

“I’m not going to deny that and I’m sure I will be interested in doing the job, definitely,” Giles said in an interview with Sky Sports.

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Japanese high school student wins int'l ballet competition

LAUSANNE, Switzerland, 3 Feb — A 17-year-old Japanese boy on Saturday won an international ballet competition in Lausanne, Switzerland, for teenagers aiming to dance professionally. Haruo Niyma, a second-year student at a high school in Matsumoto, Nagano Prefecture, made a one-two finish with Japanese patroin Sae Maeda, a 15-year-old high school girl in Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture.

“I want to be a ballet dancer who can entertain an audience,” Niyma said after the award ceremony. Precious Adams of the United States was third.

The top six finishers will enter prestigious ballet schools for a year and receive 16,000 Swiss francs in support. Seventy-three young people from 15 countries participated in the ballet competition, with 20 advancing to the final to perform classic and contemporary works. Tetsuya Kumakawa of Japan, who performs internationally, captured the gold medal at the Lausanne event in 1989.

Four killed in attacks in southern Thailand

BANGKOK, 3 Feb —Four people were killed in bomb and shooting attacks in the southern Thai province of Pattani, police said on Sunday.

Insurgents launched a disguised attack on a checkpoint in Kokpho District in the province late Saturday, killing a district officer and three soldiers were also killed and two others injured in a separate bomb and shooting attack when soldiers inspected the bomb blast. Since the insurgency broke out in 2004, nearly 6,000 people have been killed in Thailand’s southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, and four districts of Songkhla Province.

Gallacher overcomes dire start to retain Dubai title

DUBAI, 3 Feb — Scotland’s Stephen Gallacher struck a final round 72 to clinch the $2.5 million (1.5 million pounds) Dubai Desert Classic on Saturday after a day in a gritty display to end on 272.

“When they arrived at the scene, the insurgents detonated an explosive device hidden under the road, killing the officer and injuring two village chiefs. Three soldiers were also killed and two others injured in a separate bomb and shooting attack when soldiers inspected the bomb blast. Since the insurgency broke out in 2004, nearly 6,000 people have been killed in Thailand’s southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, and four districts of Songkhla Province.

Both players faltered on an overcast Majlis course, although that made for a thrilling finale as four different players – Gallacher, McIlroy, Koepka and Grillo – claimed outright leadership at some stage, while England’s Robert Rock and Finland’s Mikko Ilonen also shared top spot. Gallacher hit his first two drives into the rough to begin with successive bogeys and gift playing partner McIlroy the lead.

Yet the Northern Irishman failed to capitalise. He slugged his tee shot at the par-three seventh into the water for a bogey and dropped three further shots between holes 10 and 13, dooming his hopes of ending a 14-month title drought on the European Tour as he slipped to a share of ninth.

The golf course played a lot differently today,” McIlroy said.

“When I look back, it’s like it was my day. The greens were firm. The rare times I did get the ball close I didn’t make any putts. It was one of those days.”

Gallacher, in contrast, was a man transformed after the turn, where a day earlier he had equalled a European Tour record with nine-under-par on the back nine.

“I think yesterday was the key – Saturday is when you’re trying to get into contention, to get a lead,” said Gallacher.

He did not quite reach the same heights on Sunday, but a chip from the rough on the 17th provided a one-foot birdie chance he duly converted to reclaim the outright lead, making par on the 18th with a nerveless three-foot putt to seal the title.

Gallacher is one of golf’s latest bloomers, rising from 461 in the rankings in 2010 to be on the cusp of the top 40 following back-to-back Dubai titles.

Stephen Gallacher of Scotland puts the ball on the 14th green during the final round of the 2014 Omega Dubai Desert Classic in Dubai on 2 Feb, 2014.—REUTERS

Gallacher is one of golf’s latest bloomers, rising from 461 in the rankings in 2010 to be on the cusp of the top 40 following back-to-back Dubai titles. He did not quite reach the same heights on Sunday, but a chip from the rough on the 17th provided a one-foot birdie chance he duly converted to reclaim the outright lead, making par on the 18th with a nerveless three-foot putt to seal the title.

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw forms implementation committee for constitutional amendment

Modified version of textbooks to be used in basic education school as of 2014-15 Academic Year

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb—Pyidaungsu Hluttaw approved formation of a committee for implementation of constitutional amendment today.

First, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker sought the approval of Hluttaw to form a new committee that will be responsible to draft a bill for constitutional amendment in accord with the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw’s decision made on 31 January, 2013 for formation of a committee to implement findings and points contained in the report of the Joint Constitutional Review Committee. With the approval of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the implementation committee was formed.

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb—A special bench comprising Chief Justice of the Union U Tun Tun Oo and all judges of the Supreme Court passed verdicts on six special civil appeal cases at the Office No. 1 of the Supreme Court of the Union today. Moreover, they heard six special civil appeal cases.—MNA

Special Bench sits to hear civil appeal cases

Rural area of Yinnabin Tsp enjoys electrification

Economic Holdings Ltd explained power grid supply system to the locals. On behalf of the residents, Chairman of village electrification committee U Soe Tint expressed words of thanks. Next, Sagaing Region Hluttaw Representative U Kyaw Myint Then, an official of Myanmar Wanbao Company and village administrator U Thaung Sein cut the ribbon to put power grid and a sub-power station into service. UMEHL and Myanmar Wanbao built 10673 feet long 11KV power line and the 400 V power line, 200 KVA sub-power station. Of 172 households of the village, about 130 have been installed with electric meters. (See page 9)

Thai protesters head for downtown Bangkok in bid to topple PM

Bangkok, 3 Feb—Thai anti-government protesters who have been camped out in north Bangkok packed their tents and marched downtown on Monday as they consolidated efforts to topple Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, a day after a disrupted general election. Some joined protest as Yingluck’s political backers, a day after the election, began efforts to topple Yingluck in a showdown that is likely to bring a crucial vote on constitutional change.

Anti-government protest leader Suthep Thaugsuban (L) collects donations from supporters as he leads the march through central Bangkok on 3 Feb, 2014. REUTERS

BANGKOK, 3 Feb—Thai anti-government protesters who have been camped out in north Bangkok packed their tents and marched downtown on Monday as they consolidated efforts to topple Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, a day after the election, began efforts to topple Yingluck in a showdown that is likely to bring a crucial vote on constitutional change.

NAY PYI TAW, 3 Feb—Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited and Myanmar Wanbao Company have provided financial support for electrification of Taepinkan Village in Yinnabin Township, Sagaing Region.

The village starts using electric power this morning. On the occasion, an official of Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd explained power grid supply system to the locals. On behalf of the residents, Chairman of village electrification committee U Soe Tint expressed words of thanks. Next, Sagaing Region Hluttaw Representative U Kyaw Myint Then, an official of Myanmar Wanbao Company and village administrator U Thaung Sein cut the ribbon to put power grid and a sub-power station into service. UMEHL and Myanmar Wanbao built 10673 feet long 11KV power line and the 400 V power line, 200 KVA sub-power station. Of 172 households of the village, about 130 have been installed with electric meters. (See page 9)

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Student kills two in Moscow school in possible revenge attack

MOSCOW, 3 Feb—A Moscow high-school student shot a teacher and a police officer dead and held more than 20 other students hostage in a classroom in a possible revenge attack on Monday, days before Russia hosts the Winter Olympics. The attack is a new in a string of attacks on schools across the world over the past two years.

A student killed two people and took 200 others hostage in a Moscow high school on Monday. Russian police said the suspect was 19-year-old Byambaa Enkhbaatar, who was arrested after a shooting at the school.

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