President U Thein Sein felicitates Bulgarian counterpart

President opens Yezin University of Agriculture convocation hall, attends prize awarding ceremony to mark Peasants’ Day

President U Thein Sein receives Norwegian Foreign Minister

16th BIMSTEC SOM reaches agreement on two MoAs, one MoU

Nay Pyi Taw, 2 March — The 16th BIMSTEC Senior Official Meeting reached agreement on the Memorandum of Association (MoA) on the establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat, the Memorandum of Association (MoA) concerning establishment of the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of the BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Commission (BCIC) and BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (BCIO).

The BIMSTEC would establish its Permanent Secretariat in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and start its functions in May. BIMSTEC Cultural Industries Observatory (BCIO) would be established in Bhutan.

The two MoAs and one MoU would be signed by respective ministers from seven-member Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) at its summit on March 4 in Nay Pyi Taw.

The two MoAs and one MoU would be beneficial all member countries in many ways, said Md Shahidul Haque, Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh.

BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate to be established in India would (See page 8)
**Reconstruction of Htee Hlaing Tank to be completed before monsoon**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 2 March—** Htee Hlaing Tank, built in Bagan era by King Anawrahta, near Htee Hlaing village in Wundwin Township is now under reconstruction as it was silted. Normally, it can irrigate 1407 acres but due to the siltation its irrigated area now stands at 270 acres only. Its water storage capacity reduced from 550 acre feet to 125. In 2013 a heavy rain flooded the tank and its spillways were destroyed. The reconstruction tasks started on 14 January this year. The task was carried out by Irrigation Department with the use of heavy machinery scheduled to complete before monsoon. On completion it can supply water to 1394 acres of land in addition to supplying of overflow to 12 small lakes which can help alleviate poverty in the region.

According to historians, King Anawrahta, one of the great kings in Myanmar history, built irrigation system in which river waters from Zaw Gyi and Padaung rivers were channeled to fields of Nine districts in arid zone. During his royal tour of the districts he instructed his men to build a lake near Htee Hlaing village in Wundwin Township.

**Fire victims in Meiktila get green light to rebuild houses before rain**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 2 March—** A meeting at Meiktila Commissioner Office reached a solution to rebuild houses of fire victims before the rainy season. Those who can show firm evidences of their properties and have no any other disputes were allowed to rebuild their houses in Thiri Mingalar Ward. Fire victims living near Koe Nawin Monastery in Aung Zeyar Ward will also get permission after scrutinizing. The plots in Thiri Mingalar Ward were cleared and roads were rebuilt for rebuilding before monsoon.

Meiktila Commissioner Office reached a solution to development of village libraries discussed in Meiktila

**Meiktila, 2 March—** Monthly meeting among members of social organizations took place at the hall of District Information and Public Relations Department in Meiktila on Sunday.

Head of District IPRD U Myint Aye said that the department has been providing publications for village libraries, linking with Myanmar Libraries Foundation to ensure cash assistance for construction of libraries, conducting librarian multiplier courses and holding talks. He invited all participation for development of ward/village libraries. Members of social organization discussed difficulties and ongoing work programmes and officials gave clarifications.

**Free health care at Meiktila General Hospital**

**Nay Pyi Taw, 2 March—** Meiktila General Hospital under the Ministry of Health gave free health care to people. They are now able to enjoy the service from their admission to discharging. NLM’s correspondent reported that the Ministry of Health provided K 300 million in 2013 for in-patients. EXPENSIVE anti-rabies vaccines have been provided free of charge since 2012 and up to this date, altogether 340 people have been vaccinated. Snakebite patients were also treated with antivenom.

Due to the increase in in-patients, the Ministry of Health made a plan to expand the hospital. Three two–storey wards are now under construction at a cost of K 300 million per each.

As the situation has improved at the hospital from worse to better, people expressed their delights in receiving treatments in Meiktila General Hospital.

**Census taking process clarified in Mohnyin**

**Mohnyin, 2 March—** “Advanced technology will be applied in taking census.” said Assistant Director U Sein Win of Mohnyin District Immigration and National Registration Department at a meeting held on 28 February in the town on taking population and housing census.

The census taking committee secretary Staff Officer MZaw Naw clarified drawing 5 maps and maps for census taking areas, and information tasks.

**Practice Makes Perfect : As a preparation for XXVIII SEA Games to be held in Singapore in 2015, triathlon contest was held on 1 March in Nay Pyi Taw. Mon man Chit Ko Ko and Ayeyawady woman Yin Nwe Oo emerged champions in the contest with 1 hr, 41 min and 42 second and; the woman with 2 hr 8 min and 31 second. Photo shows Chit Ko Ko in action. —NLM**
Thai vote goes smoothly as protesters regroup near Bangkok lakes

BANGKOK, 2 March — Thailand was holding re-run elections on Sunday in five provinces where voting was disrupted in last month’s poll by anti-government protesters trying to unseat Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra and officials said all was going smoothly.

Dozens of gunshots and at least two explosions raised tension on the eve of the February 2 general election, which was seen as incapable of restoring stability in deeply polarized Thailand whatever the result.

Protesters were gathering in central Lumpini Park in Bangkok on Sunday, where many already slept in tents alongside boating lakes, after protest leader Suthep Thaugsuban said they would abandon other sites in the city. Some of the other protest sites were being dismantled but the elevated highway along the south side of Lumpini Park on the edge of Bangkok’s financial district was still blocked.

Election re-runs planned for April in other provinces have been suspended pending a court decision on procedures.

Voting was disrupted on 2 February in 18 percent of constituencies, 69 out of 375, nationwide, the Election Commission said, affecting 18 of 77 provinces.

Commission secretary-general Puchong Nutravong said voting had gone ahead peacefully on Sunday.

The demonstrators, who have blocked intersections in the capital for weeks, say Yingluck must resign and make way for an appointed “people’s council” to overhaul a political system they say has been taken hostage by her billionaire brother and former premier, Thaksin Shinawatra.

The election is almost certain to return Yingluck to power, thanks to her support base in the largely rural north and northeast, a result the opposition will never accept.

The result cannot change the dysfunctional status quo in a country popular among tourists and investors yet blighted by eight years of turmoil, pitting the Bangkok-based middle class and royalist establishment against the mostly poor, rural supporters of the Shinawatra family.

“For those who worried that I may give up, I can reassure that an old man like me does not know how to give up,” Suthep said on Saturday, in reference to the scaled-down protest.

“That’s because there are millions of people who support me ... This is not a move to retreat, but it is an adjustment in our maneuver for fighting.”

Chinese security official vows harsh punishment for terrorists

KUNMING, 2 March — Senior Chinese security official Meng Jianzhu on Sunday pledged to harshly punish terrorist attackers in accordance with law to ensure social stability.

Meng, head of the Commission for Political and Legal Affairs of the Communist Party of China, inspected the crime scene at the Kunming Railway Station in Kunming, capital of southwest China’s Yunnan Province, on 2 March, 2014.—Xinhua

KUNMING, 2 March — Civilian and legal officials of the Communist Party of China worked on 2 February in Kunming at 5:30 am to oversee the anti-terrorism work following a deadly train station attack on Saturday night.

Twenty-nine innocent people died, and more than 130 were injured in Kunming. Mong called for a sweeping check-up for hidden dangers regarding violent terrorist attacks, urging to step up patrols at crowded places and harshly crack down on violent crimes to improve the sense of security among the public.

Xinhua

Uruguay mobilizes for war, calls up reserves

President Barack Obama talks on the phone in the Oval Office with Russian President Vladimir Putin about the situation in Ukraine, 1 March, 2014.—Reuters

KYIV (Ukraine), 2 March — Ukraine mobilized on Sunday for war and called up its reserves, after Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened to invade in the biggest confrontation between Moscow and the West since the Cold War.

Ukraine’s security council ordered the general staff to immediately put all armed forces on highest alert, the council’s secretary Andriy Parshyann announced. The Defense Ministry was ordered to conduct the call-up, potentially of all men up to 40 in a country that still has universal male conscription.

Russian forces who have already bloodlessly seized Crimea - an isolated Black Sea peninsula where most of the population are ethnic Russians and Moscow has a naval base - tried to disarm the small Ukrainian contingents there on Sunday. Some Ukrainian commanders refused to give up weapons and bases were surrounded. Of potentially even greater concern are eastern swathes of the country, where most of the ethnic Ukrainians speak Russian as a native language.

Those areas saw violent protests on Saturday, with pro-Moscow demonstrators hoisting flags at government buildings and calling for Russia to defend them. Putin’s declaration that he has the right to invade his neighbor - for which he quickly received the unanimous approval of his parliament - brought the prospect of war to a country of 46 million people on the margins of Europe.

“President Obama expressed his deep concern over Russia’s clear violation of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity, which is a breach of international law,” the White House said after the leaders spoke for 90 minutes on Saturday. —Reuters

Pakistani Taliban announces month-long ceasefire

ISLAMABAD, 2 March — The Pakistani Taliban has decided to observe a month-long ceasefire and directed all its units to cease militant activities during this period, a statement issued by the group’s spokesman Shahidullah Shahid said on Saturday.

The statement said that the ceasefire was being observed to end the deadlock in negotiations between the government and the militant group and because of a positive response by the government to the group’s proposals.

Talks between government and Taliban representatives had deadlocked after a Taleban group on 17 February executed 23 paramilitary troops who had been kidnapped in 2010. After the executions, the government had demanded the Taleban to announce a unilateral ceasefire of their activities.

“The Taleban’s top leadership directs all its units to respect the ceasefire and desist from all ‘ji-hadi activities’ during this period,” the statement said.

The statement said that the decision to observe a ceasefire has been taken in response to appeals by religious leaders and in the best interests of Pakistan and Islam. Official sources said that the decision to observe a unilateral ceasefire for a month was taken by the leadership at an unspecified place. Irfan Siddiqui, the head of the government’s negotiating team, welcomed the decision and hoped that talks with the Taleban would be resumed as soon as possible.

Kyodo News

Anti-government protesters set up a tent inside Bangkok’s Lumpini Park on 1 March, 2014.—Reuters
Japan, Indonesia to arrange defence, foreign ministers’ meeting

JAKARTA, 2 March — Japan and Indonesia agreed on Saturday to convene a meeting of their defence and foreign ministers at an early date to enhance security ties, Japanese officials said. During talks in Jakarta, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and his counterpart Marty Natalegawa reaffirmed an accord reached by the two countries’ leaders last December in Tokyo to bolster security cooperation by holding a ministerial meeting.

Referring to territorial disputes in the South China Sea between China and some member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Kishida expressed Tokyo’s support for a code of conduct to avert conflicts. Natalegawa said it is important to expedite negotiations, according to the officials.

Kishida aired concerns over a recent Indonesian ban on exports of unrefined ores such as nickel in order to foster its own industries, saying such a ban would “seriously affect the Japanese economy,” they added.

Kyodo News

Venezuela foreign minister to meet Ban Ki-moon in Geneva

CARACAS, 2 March — Venezuela said on Saturday its foreign minister will meet United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Geneva on Tuesday amid growing international calls for dialogue between political players to ease the OPEC nation’s worst unrest in a decade.

At least 17 people have died in violence during a month of opposition protests. President Nicolas Maduro said his foes are trying to trigger a coup, while his opponents accuse troops and pro-government militants of attacking demonstrators.

Appeals for the two camps to sit down for talks have poured in from leaders around the world, including in the United States, and from Pope Francis.

Venezuela’s permanent representative to the United Nations, Jorge Valero, said on Saturday that the secretary general asked for a meeting with Foreign Minister Elias Jaua on Tuesday at the sidelines of a gathering of the UN Human Rights Council.

“He will have the opportunity to explain the policies for peace and promotion of dialogue that the government is pushing, and to denounce the terrorist plans that have been developing in Venezuela,” Valero told Noticias24 Radio in Caracas.

Maduro’s socialist administration blames what it calls opposition-led “fascist groups” for unrest the authorities say is aimed at triggering a coup like the one in 2002 that briefly ousted his mentor and predecessor, the late Hugo Chavez.

UN human rights commissioner Navan Pillay has called for an independent investigation into the recent deaths, and said on Friday that inflammatory rhetoric from both sides was unhelpful and risked escalating a tense situation. “It is time for all sides to move beyond verbal aggression and towards meaningful dialogue,” Pillay said. US Secretary of State John Kerry has said he is discussing with Colombia and other nations the possibility of international mediation in Venezuela.

To try to ease the crisis, Maduro has been holding talks with business and church leaders and some anti-government politicians, though the main opposition figures such as two-time presidential candidate Henrique Capriles have boycotted them.

They say they don’t want to provide the government with a “photo op,” though the 51-year-old president again offered on Friday to hold discussions with them in public or private.

Opposition protesters are demanding that Maduro quit over grievances that include high inflation, shocking rate of violent crime, shortage of basic foods in stores, and what they call his heavy-handed repression of political rivals.

About a thousand opposition protesters gathered in the Santa Monica neighbourhood of the capital Caracas on Saturday, beeping car and motorcycle horns, and waving placards bearing slogans such as “I’m swapping Carnival 2014 for a free Venezuela!”

“I want democracy,” said opposition supporter Nora Duenas, 69, as she stood in the open door of her car while banging together cooking implements above her head. “I want us to be able to live together in a democratic country where everyone has the freedom to think what they want - but without Maduro, because he’s too Communist.” —Reuters

Iran to start developing project of Bushehr nuclear plant in April

TEHRAN, 2 March — As talks are going on over Iran’s controversial nuclear program, the Islamic republic’s plans to begin developing project of Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant in southern the country in April, an Iranian atomic official said on Saturday.

Asghar Zare’an, deputy director for Protection and Security at the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), said the developing stage of the plant would begin on 9 April, the National Nuclear Technology Day, according to Press TV.

Earlier, the AEOI announced that it was in negotiations with the Russian side over the construction of the second phase of Bushehr nuclear power plant. Iran’s first nuclear power plant, the Bushehr plant, was first constructed in 1975 by several German companies.

However, the work was halted when the United States imposed an embargo on hi-tech supplies to Iran after the 1979 revolution. Russia signed a contract with Iran to complete the construction in 1998.

Ja Song Nam (R), North Korea’s new ambassador to the United Nations, shakes hands with UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon at the UN headquarters in New York on 28 Feb, 2014. Kyodo News

Turkey halts talks with Japan on joint tank engine development

CAIRO, 2 March— Turkey has suspended talks with Japan over proposed joint development of a tank engine, a senior Turkish defense ministry official was quoted by Turkish media as saying.

The official said in late February that joint tank engine development is currently off the list of topics at bilateral negotiations, according to the Turkish media. Negotiations may have hit a snag as Tokyo could not accept Istanbul’s plan to export tanks to other countries in the future due to concerns over the outflow of technologies.

Turkey was interested in adopting for its army’s Altay tank engine technology employed in Japan’s Ground Self-Defense Force’s Type 10 tank. Japan’s Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. developed the tank engine.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida answers reporters’ questions after attending the second Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development, in Jakarta on 1 March, 2014.—Kyodo News
Majority of disaster-hit municipality heads say recovery slow

SENDAI, 2 March—More than half of the 42 mayors of cities, towns and villages in northeastern Japan hit hard by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami view reconstruction work as slow or stalled, a Kyodo News survey showed Sunday. In the survey conducted in February ahead of the third anniversary of the disaster that triggered a major nuclear crisis, 22 mayors said recovery is behind schedule, while 17 said recovery work is proceeding as planned and no mayor said work is ahead of schedule.

The chiefs of the towns of Namie and Futaba in Fukushima Prefecture said there has been no progress at all on reconstruction, with all residents having evacuated their homes near the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

In Iwate and Miyagi prefectures, municipality heads said rebuilding of homes and infrastructure such as roads, railway and port facilities has been slow, while those in Fukushima Prefecture said they have seen delays in radiation cleanup, compensation for affected people and work to deal with the nuclear crisis at the plant.

Among the 42 municipality chiefs in the three prefectures covered by the survey, 40 said they think the memory of the calamity has faded among many people.—Kyodo News

Washington talks decisive for Mideast peace process

RAMALLAH, 2 March—The upcoming Palestinian-Israeli talks in Washington could be decisive for the future of the Middle East peace process, analysts and officials say, noting no deal is sealed, a nine-month ultimatum for the talks could be extended.

US President Barack Obama is slated to meet soon with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and later Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas at the White House. Observers believe it could be a “decisive moment” for the future of the Middle East peace process.

The United States sponsors the direct peace talks between the two sides. US Secretary of State John Kerry helped start these talks in late July last year, and also set a nine-month deadline for them to sign a framework peace agreement. But no significant progress has been made in the talks so far.

Netanyahu is heading to Washington on Sunday to meet with Obama, and Abbas will meet with the US president on 17 March. Reports unveiled that Obama may exert pressure on the two leaders to accept the US-sponsored framework agreement.

Obama’s invitation to both Netanyahu and Abbas came after Kerry and Abbas failed last week in Paris to bridge their gap on the framework agreement.

Mehkemer Abu Se’da, a political science professor at al-Azhar University in Gaza, said it’s obvious that the talks have reached a deadlock, and the Washington talks aim to find a way out of the current stalemate.

“Any new American ideas won’t end the impasse before the US intends to extend the nine-month ultimatum for the talks to avoid failure and give the parties more time to explore solutions and ideas,” says Abu Se’da.

The professor warns that a collapse of the peace negotiations “would certainly have negative consequences on the US image in the world and on the ties between Israel and the Palestinians.”

Samir Aawd, a West Bank-based political analyst, agrees with Se’da. He said if the two sides fail to reach an agreement this time, “the United States will at least announce an extension of the talks.”

Pakistan welcomes Taleban’s ceasefire

ISLAMABAD, 2 March—A Pakistani government committee, formed for peace talks with the Taleban militants, on Saturday welcomed ceasefire by the Taleban as a positive step that could revive the stalled dialogue process.

The Tehrik-e-Taleban Pakistan’s spokesman Shahidullah Shahid said the group has declared a ceasefire for a month, and the leadership has asked all the Taleban groups to respect the ceasefire and stop attacks. He also urged the government to “give a positive response” to the Taleban decision to make progress in the fragile peace process. The Taleban had earlier refused to stop attacks that had led to a deadlock in the peace talks started last month.

The Taleban announcement has raised hopes for restoration of the dialogue process. Coordinator of the government peace committee Irfan Siddiqui said the Taleban announcement is a “breakthrough” in the seven-day dialogue process.

“We will wait for formal communication on the ceasefire from the TTP and review it objectively. Once a written document is received, the government Committee will consider resuming the dialogue process,” Siddiqui told state radio in an interview.

He said the dialogue process was proceeding well but violent activities by the other side caused setback. “Therefore, it was felt that there will be no point in continuing the dialogue,” he expressed the hope that nothing will recur to derail the dialogue process again as series of the Taleban attacks and execution of 23 security personnel last month stalled the dialogue.

Member of Taleban dialogue committee, Professor Ibrahim, said all the Taleban groups would be bound to observe ceasefire.

“The Taleban ceasefire will help make dialogue process successful,” Siddiqui said, adding the committees welcomed the opening another session of a national conference for peace on Friday, seeking to put an end to the country’s weeks-long violent protests. —Xinhua

Pro-Russian forces seize airports in Crimea

KIEV, 2 March—Pro-Russian armed troops have seized three airports in Ukraine’s autonomous region of Crimea, raising the possibility of its separation from Ukraine, local reports said on Saturday.

Defence Minister Ihor Tenyukh of Ukraine’s new government formed after the ouster of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych said on Saturday about 6,000 Russian military personnel have been brought into Crimea.

Meanwhile the Russian Foreign Ministry, in a statement issued Saturday, accused the new Ukraine government of trying to destabilize Crimea.

US President Barack Obama said Friday he is “deeply concerned” by reports of Russian military movement in Crimea, south of Ukraine.

US media quoted a senior US official as saying Obama and European leaders would consider skipping a Group of Eight summit to be held in Sochi in June if Russia intervenes militarily in Ukraine.

“Any violation of Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity would be deeply destabilizing, which is not in the interest of Ukraine, Russia, or Europe,” Obama said in a statement, warning there would be “costs for any military intervention in Ukraine.”

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, in a statement issued Saturday, urged all parties to “exercise maximum restraint and take responsible action” as well as to “respect the rule of law and territorial integrity.”

The UN Security Council held an emergency meeting on Friday to discuss the crisis. Ukraine’s UN Ambassador Yuriy Sergeyev told reporters after the session that his country’s national authority is being challenged.—Kyodo News

Libyan High National Electoral Commission Chairman Nuri al-Abbar (L) speaks during a press conference to announce the preliminary results of the election to choose a committee to draft a new constitution in Tripoli, Libya, on March 1, 2014. —Xinhua

Legislators listen to the speech made by Argentina’s President Cristina Fernandez during the inaugural assembly of the 132nd regular session of the National Congress in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina, on March 1, 2014. —Xinhua

Demonstrators cover themselves during a protest in Altamira, in the municipality of Chacao, east of Caracas, Venezuela, on 28 Feb, 2014. Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro opened another session of a national conference for peace on Friday, seeking to put an end to the country’s weeks-long violent protests. —Xinhua

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, in a statement issued Saturday, accused the new Ukraine government of trying to destabilize Crimea.
LG Chem CEO says mulls electric car battery plant in China

SEOUL, 2 March — Executive chief of LG Chem said that the South Korean company was considering building an electric vehicle battery plant in China, according to a report in Xinhua.

LG Chem, which currently supplies electric-car batteries for General Motors Co’s Volt and Renault cars, will double the number of its customers to 20 in the near future.

“We are considering it (the China car battery plant), which should be in line with market demand,” Park said at a press briefing on Friday, adding that LG Chem is in discussions with a number of Chinese car manufacturers about possible joint ventures.

Park Jin-soo also said that LG Chem, which currently supplies electric-car batteries for General Motors Co’s Volt and Renault cars, will double the number of its customers to 20 in the near future.

An employee rests a hand on a table displaying iPads as part of the display is reflected on a glass surface at the Passeig de Gracia Apple store in Barcelona on 26 July, 2012. — Reuters

Honey, can you pick up a tablet at the grocery store?

BARCELONA, 2 March — Originally designed as a pricey niche product for geeks, tablet computers have become so common that supermarkets are now selling their own brands, pushing out low-cost rivals.

The shifting nature of the market underlines how millions of people are choosing simpler devices to surf the web, send emails and shop, putting pressure on traditional PC companies.

And since Apple pioneered the tablet market in early 2010, the gadgets now available at the lower end of the market are becoming commodity items that non-technology companies can order from Asian contractors using common components.

Reference designs for tablets and smartphones from companies like Qualcomm have drastically reduced barriers to entry and increased commoditization pressure in the hardware industry, said Sameer Singh, a technology analyst at firm Gartner.

LG Chem’s crosstown rival, Samsung SDI, said in January that it will form a joint venture in China to spend $600 million on building a car battery plant in Xi’an, Shaanxi province, by next year and on other electric car battery-related businesses over the next five years. — Reuters

China expects to launch cargo ship into space around 2016

BEIJING, 2 March — China is expected to launch a cargo ship into space around 2016 to serve the Tiangong-2 space lab, a leading space scientist said on Saturday.

A cargo ship, named “Tianzhou” or “Heavenly Vessel” in Chinese, will be delivered by the newly-developed Long March-7 carrier rocket and dock with Tiangong-2 automatically, said Zhou Jianping, chief designer of China’s manned space programme, in an exclusive interview with Xinhua.

Cargo transportation

Control circuit malfunction troubles China’s Yutu

BEIJING, 2 March — China’s Yutu (Jade Rabbit) moon rover suffered a control circuit malfunction in its driving unit, which troubled its dormancy in extremely low temperature, a scientist said on Saturday.

The control circuit problem prevented Yutu from entering the second dormancy as planned, Ye Peijian, chief scientist of the Chang’e-3 programme, told Xinhua in an exclusive interview.

“Normal dormancy needs Yutu to fold its mast and solar panels,” said Ye. “The driving unit malfunction prevented Yutu to do those actions.” Ye, a member of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, the country’s top political advisory body, added, “This means Yutu had to go through the lunar night in extremely low temperatures.”

Yutu, named after the pet rabbit of the lunar goddess Chang’e in Chinese mythology, touched down on the moon’s surface on 15 December, a few hours after lunar probe Chang’e-3 landed.

The rover was designed to roam the lunar surface for at least three months to survey the moon’s geological structure and surface features and look for natural resources.

India to send mission to probe Sun by 2020

NEW DELHI, 2 March — India will send a mission to probe the Sun by 2020, local media quoted a top space official as reporting on Saturday.

“The Aditya mission to the Sun has been planned between 2017 and 2020. The mission would be around the Earth. A few equipment are being planned for that,” the state-owned Indian Space Research Organization’s chief K. Radakrishnan told the media in the southern city of Chennai Friday.

Aditya was planned in 2008 to study the solar corona. This part of the Sun has temperatures of over 1 million degrees, with raging solar winds that reach a velocity of up to 1,000 km a second. The satellite, which will carry as its payload an advanced solar coronagraph, will weigh just 400 kg. It was initially projected to cost 10 million US dollars, but due to an upgraded mission profile, it is now estimated to cost 20 million US dollars. It is likely to be placed into a near Earth orbit of 800 km. The mission will study the fundamental problems of coronal heating, and other phenomena that take place in the Earth’s magnetosphere.

London, 2 March — Exclusive interview of Pen-y-n-sulva’s Representative commission of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. This part of the Sun has temperatures of over 1 million degrees.
**Elbit Systems wins homeland security contract**

**New York, 2 March —** The US customs and Border Protection awarded a subsidiary contract to Elbit Systems to deploy border surveillance technology in southern Arizona. Known as the Integrated Fixed Tower contract, it includes a base period quantity and options that CBP may exercise over several years. Currently, CBP awarded the base period quantity for a portion of the $145 million total contract amount, to be implemented over one year, Elbit said on Sunday. “Arizona has been waiting more than a decade for the Department of Homeland Security to place the needed technology along our border to support the Border Patrol and fully secure our southern border,” US Senator John McCain of Arizona said in a separate statement. “If this technology is developed, integrated and fielded correctly, these Integrated Fixed Towers in southern Arizona, coupled with the tremendous work of the Border Patrol, will give our agents the ability to detect, evaluate and respond to all illegal entries crossing our border.”

**Mattress covers may not help with dust mite allergies**

**New York, 2 March —** Based on two dozen clinical trials, US researchers find that expensive mattress covers make no difference in reducing dust mite allergies or their symptoms. Up to 40 percent of the world population has allergies, and dust mites are thought to be one of the most common causes. Doctors often tell patients to buy special mattress and pillow covers despite a lack of evidence they relieve the problem, the authors say. “Based on this analysis which combines data from many different studies, there doesn’t seem to be any benefit to using dust mite covers to prevent allergic disease or to prevent symptoms,” lead author Whitney Arroyave told Reuters Health. Arroyave, a researcher with the Tu­lane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine in New Orleans, and her colleagues combined results from 24 trials of methods to reduce dust mite exposure and prevent allergy signs and symptoms.

**Dengue fever on the rise in Malaysia**

**Beijing, 2 March —** The World Health Organization calls Dengue fever one of the greatest threats to global health. The WHO says a hundred million new cases are reported each year — mainly in urban areas of the tropics. Despite attempts to control the mosquitoes that spread the disease, the number of cases in Malaysia has witnessed a serious spike already this year.

Municipal crews swoop into action after several reports of dengue fever in this Kuala Lumpur suburb. They fog using chemicals aimed at controlling the aedes Egypti mosquitoes that spread dengue, which can breed in as little as a tablespoon of clear, stagnant water. Municipal health workers follow up on every dengue case. It’s in high density, lower income developments like this where dengue is most rampant.

To combat the disease, one Kuala Lumpur suburb is enlisting a mosquito species that’s benign to humans — the toxo. It’s four times the size of the aedes Egypti and feeds only on plant nectar. But it’s beefy larvae devour the larvae of the dengue carrying species.

But there’s a drawback. The toxo requires large amounts of vegetation to survive, so this method won’t work in places that are urban jungle alone. Conventional methods like inspections, fogging and public education will remain crucial. Only a combination of a concerted campaign against the mosquitoes and the public apathy that helps nurture them is going to turn the tide against this 21st-century plague.

**China becomes world’s largest goods trader**

**Beijing, 2 March —** China was the largest goods trading nation in 2013, a Ministry of Commerce statement said on Saturday, citing data from the World Trade Organization (WTO). China's goods trade topped 4.16 trillion US dollars last year, including 2.21 trillion dollars in exports and 1.95 trillion dollars in imports, the statement said.

This is a milestone in foreign trade for China as a developing country, and a great achievement, said Yao Jian, ministry spokesman. The country's exports and imports have leapfrogged in 35 years of reforms and opening-up, especially after China's entry into the WTO, he said.

China now is the largest trade partner for over 120 countries and regions and imported nearly 2 trillion US dollars of goods annually, providing lots of jobs and investment opportunities for global trade partners, Yao said.

Though it is the largest trading nation, China still has a long way to go before becoming a strong trading country because its exports are of relatively low added value, it has relatively few independent brands, the marketing network is not sound enough, and its products are of relatively low quality, he stressed.

Facing new challenges, China should actively promote models of growth, restructure the economy and step up cooperation with trade partners to achieve mutual benefit, Yao said. — Xinhua

**Greece’s legendary winery looks to future to China**

**Patras, (Greece), 2 March —** On a green hill at the outskirts of the city port of Patras at the Peloponnesian peninsula, some 200 km west of Athens, are the headquarters of Achaia Clauss, a legendary winery in Greece with a history going back to the 19th century, which has conquered the hearts of both Greek as well as foreign wine lovers. Amidst the economic crisis, the company founded in 1861 by the Bavarian Gustav Clauss and run by Greek entrepreneurs for decades today looks to the future going East, as far away as China, Tonia Rapti, our tour guide, told Xinhua during a visit on Saturday.

With a 6-million-liter annual production and 70 percent exports in over 40 countries and regions worldwide so far, the vast Chinese market seems the next reasonable step for the winery, the retired PR officer explained. "We are currently making efforts to export to China. Our future undoubtedly lies there," she stressed. Rapti talks like she is working at the stone-made castle like facilities set up in 1861 by Clauss, who is considered as a pioneer in the industrialization of wine production in Greece. After a business trip she fell in love with the beauty of the natural landscape and a local girl. He created a company and a big family. After 33 years working at the winery, Rapti feels as a retired member of this extended family.

Her younger colleague Yorgos is a fourth generation worker at Achaia Clauss. One of his predecessors worked for the production of the first wine produced in modern Greece in 1873: Mavrodaphne, she explained while showing us the barrel which still contains it. A liquor with a red ruby colour, named after Daphne, Gustav’s late fiance, Mavrodaphne is one of the company’s best seller products. It is the wine used in the Holy Communion in Greek Orthodox Church. The 1873 wine is not for sale, but a bottle containing a few drops of the 1896 production, the year of the first modern Olympics, reaches up to 1,500 euros (2,055 US dollars), while a three-year-old wine costs about 5 euros. In one of the big oak carved barrels at the Imperial Cellar, Athena, the goddess of wisdom in ancient Greek mythology, is depicted offering wine to Hercules.

At the end of the tour, after taking a look at the two biggest barrels in Greece manufactured in 1882 in Trieste and each containing 13,195 liters of Mavrodaphne, Rapti and her colleagues offer visitors a unique opportunity to taste some of the excellent quality wine. The winery, located among the vineyards, is one of the topmost tourist sites in the region, attracting some 100,000 visitors per year. Before the crisis, the numbers were double. Still visitors leave the site impressed. — Xinhua
Establish commercial fruit, vegetable farms

With the rising popularity of healthy eating habits across the globe today, eating fruit after a meal has become a habit among the people, not only in the West but also in the East. Nowadays there has been an increase in fruit consumption today as the intake of fruit is good for health. Different kinds of fruits on the table in hotel can also be seen on the family table.

It is time to change from the system of growing fruit and vegetable on a manageable scale into commercial farming system. A sudden influx of visitors in the years to come will make enormous demands on fruit. A good plan is required for ensuring a significant increase in domestic fruit and vegetables production.

In his address at a farmer educative farmland in Nay Pyi Taw on 1 March, President U Thein Sein stressed the need for establishment of commercial farms in regions and states for production of marketable fruit and vegetables which are favourable to the climates of the respective regions.

So, respective regions and states should be under consideration for designation as fruit cultivation areas. It is necessary to produce a wide range of marketable fruit and vegetables with a competitive advantage in order to have access to a highly competitive international market.

But, success in commercial fruit and vegetable production cannot be brought about by farmer alone. It needs financial capital, technology and market access that are vital to the development of this sector. Only when a hi-tech agriculture develops in the country, will Myanmar, agro-based country, be transformed itself into a country with mechanized farming and advanced agricultural technology.

Nonetheless, it is required to boost fruit and vegetable production due to a possible surge in fruit and vegetable consumption. With the increased establishment of commercial fruit and vegetable farms across the nation, incomes of local people will be generated and agricultural success can be realized.

16th BIMSTEC SOM reaches ...

Help member countries ensuring getting quick information on storms and natural disasters as they would work together with India, which is considered as an expert for meteorology in the Bay of Bengal region, said U Kyaw Moe Oo, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Meteorology and Hydrology.

Myanmar which is taking a leading role in cooperation in two sectors: agriculture and energy sectors: among 14 cooperation areas of BIMSTEC, has invited investment in the two sectors.

Myanmar would make sure transparency in selecting its partners and would give priority to those which have experience and technology in energy sector, said U Pe Zin Tun, Director General of Energy Planning Department of the Ministry of Energy, a participant of the meeting.

Regarding the cooperation in the agriculture sector, there are nine proposed projects and two is led by Myanmar.

To implement the proposed projects, Myanmar would face difficulties to move forward without donors and development partners, said Dr Thanda Kyi, Director of Agricultural Planning of the Ministry Agriculture and Irrigation, a participant of the meeting.

Regarding the projects, other members of the BIMSTEC have asked Myanmar to host 4th expert group meeting.

BIMSTEC includes Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan. — NLM

President U Thein Sein receives Norwegian Foreign Minister

NA Pyi Taw, 2 March—President U Thein Sein received Norwegian Foreign Minister Mr Borge Brende and party at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on Sunday morning.

Both sides discussed Norwegian assistance in internal peace making process and further cooperation in hydro power sector, oil and natural gas production, human resources development and environmental conservation.

Union Ministers U Wunna Maung Lwin, Aung Kyi and U Soe Thane and officials concerned were also present at the call. The Norwegian Foreign Minister was accompanied by the Norwegian Ambassador to Myanmar—MNA

President opens Yezin University of Agriculture convocation hall, attends prize awarding ceremony to mark Peasants’ Day

NA Pyi Taw, 2 March—President U Thein Sein attended the opening ceremony of convocation building to mark the 90th anniversary of Yezin Agricultural University in Pyinmana Township in Nay Pyi Taw on Sunday.

The Agricultural University in Myanmar began its course in 1924 with the establishment of the Agricultural College and Research Institute of Mandalay, offering a 3-year diploma course. In 1938, the college became a constituent college of Yangon University. In 1947, the college reopened in Mandalay as a major agriculture department of Yangon University.

In 1958, the college was changed the major agriculture department of Mandalay University under the Ministry of Education. In 1964, the college was upgraded to a separate university. The university was moved to Yezin in Pyinmana Township in 1973 and it was renamed “Yezin Agricultural University” in 1998.

The convocation building is 180 feet long and wide and 45 feet high. The construction started on 31 May, 2012. It comprises convocation hall, meeting hall, student affairs department, account department and computer room on the ground floor and rector’s office and other rooms are on the first floor.

The President and party also attended the prizes awarding ceremony to mark the Peasants’ Day at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in Nay Pyi Taw on Sunday.

The President and dignitaries awarded prizes to a poet and musicians.

To mark the Peasants’ Day, fruit and vegetables show was held at Setsetyo 900-acre farmland in Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on Sunday morning. — MNA

Union Minister for Information U Aung Kyi awards prize to winner in music composition contest to mark Peasants’ Day. MNA
Natsinchaung Bridge put into commissioned

MYEIKTILA, 2 March—Natsinchaung Bridge, the life-blood for the dwellers from ten villages in Myeiktila was collapsed in October 2013 due to heavy rains. The officials reconstructed 80 ft long, 14 ft wide new Natsinchaung wooden type bridge in 2013-14 FY for the convenience of locals.

As the bridge was completed by cent per cent, the locals can pass on it conveniently, said an official from Township Development Affairs Committee. “I want to express thanks to officials and staff from township development affairs committee, township development supportive committee and township management committee who contribute to construction of new bridge,” said a local. Similarly, Thedaw Bridge is being reconstructed. Upon completion, it will facilitate road transportation for the dwellers from twenty-five villages.

YANGON, 2 March—To reach international level National Bee competitions, Spelling Bee competition of the 2nd Annual Championship Bee-2014 took place at a branch of Brain Works Total Schools in Kamayut Township in Yangon on Saturday.

Prize winning students at the competition will have opportunities to visit Disneyland in Hong Kong with their parents.—MNA

Creating cookstoves market in Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 2 March—The Myanmar Stoves Campaign is being developed and managed by Orbis Development Partners with funding from the SLOW LIFE Foundation. The Campaign aimed to stimulate a market for clean cookstoves in order to prove access to modern technology to families across the rural areas in Myanmar. The vast majority of the rural population in Myanmar uses wood as a source of household fuel. By bringing clean cookstoves to rural communities in Myanmar through a network of certified village entrepreneurs, families are able to reduce their wood usage by over 60 percent.

Locals earn income from unloading at Bhamo Port

MANDALAY, 2 March—Myanmar Traditional Maha Thingyan Water Festival, participated by all nationals regardless of age and religion entered 40 days countdown.

Mandalay Mayor Maha Thingyan Central Pandal is under construction as of 18 February. Mandalay City Development Committee and Committee for holding 2014 Mandalay Mayor Maha Thingyan Festival will arrange to hold Myanmar Traditional Thingyan Festival on a grand scale. As Mandalay Mayor Maha Thingyan Festival will include colour photo and Thingyan decorated-car contests, decent prizes will be presented to the winners.

BHAMO, 2 March—The passenger river cruise vessels that ply between Bhamo and Mandalay route are docking at Nyaung-bintha Port due to siltation along Ayeyawady River near Bhamo in Kachin State. ManawzeyaMandalar Vessel Association is running Bhamo-Katha route from Myoma Ward Dock daily.

The commodities...
Sri Lanka probes suspected third mass grave

COLOMBO, 2 March — Sri Lankan authorities have launched investigations into the discovery of human bones from a location where fierce fighting took place between Tamil Tiger rebels and the military in 2009, the police said on Saturday. At least nine human bones and skeletal remains were found from a suspected mass grave in Pudukudiruppu in the Northern Mullaitivu town. The third such grave to have been discovered over the past two years.

The police spokesman Ajith Rohana said that the human bones and skeletal remains had been found when private land in the area was being cleared. The human bones have been sent for further investigations. The police spokesman said that an identity card was also recovered from the location.

The police spokesman said that the area was under LTE control for 20 years before it was captured by the army in 2009. Meanwhile, the army says some interested parties are attempting to portray the discovery of the bones as evidence of an incident for which the government and security forces should be held responsible.

“There is no factual basis for such conclusions and we reject these false and misleading allegations. It is implausible that such premature conclusions are drawn without allowing the investigations to proceed without hindrance. Such actions are misleading the local public as well as the international community,” the army said in a statement. — Xinhua

California governor signs $687 million drought relief legislation

LOS ANGELES, 2 March — California Governor Jerry Brown on Saturday signed into law a $687 million drought-relief package.

More than 700 people died in violence in Iraq in February, excluding Anbar. — Reuters

Iraq death toll exceeds 700 in February

BAGHDAD, 2 March — More than 700 people died in violence in Iraq in February, not including nearly 300 reported deaths in western Anbar Province, where security forces have been battling Sunni Muslim rebels since January, the United Nations said on Saturday. The world body said local authorities had recorded 298 civilian deaths in Anbar, but that it could not confirm the figures independently due to the chaos in the desert region.

Outside Anbar, the bloodshed was worst in Baghdad, where 239 civilians were killed, followed by Salahuddin Province to the north with 121 dead. A total of 1,381 people were wounded. The United Nations said it had confirmed 703 deaths in Iraq in February, compared to 733 in January, excluding Anbar.

The figures suggest that violence has not abated since 2013 when 7,818 civilians were killed. That was Iraq’s deadliest year since 2008, when the civil conflict stood at 6,787.

The bloodshed remains below the levels seen in 2006 and 2007 when sectarian Shi’ite-Sunni killings reached their peak. Insecurity worsened dramatically in April when troops and police forcibly cleared a Sunni protest camp north of Baghdad, killing dozens of protesters, most of them unarmed.

The bloodshed sparked widespread clashes pitting Sunni fighters against the Shi’ite-led government and marked the start of a relentless bombing campaign by al-Qaeda-linked militants against mostly Shi’ite targets.

The growing power of Sunni militants has profited from the civil war in neighbouring Syria, prompted Prime Minister Nuri Maliki to order an offensive in western Anbar in December. — Reuters

Son of Egypt’s Morsi arrested for drug possession

CAIRO, 2 March — A son of Egypt’s ousted president Mohamed Morsi was arrested Saturday in possession of hashish in a Cairo western suburb, official news agency MENA reported.

In a car with tinted windows, Abdullah, Morsi’s youngest son, was arrested along with another person smoking hashish cigarettes, MENA quoted an interior ministry source as saying.

Abdullah confessed his possession of the drug, and the two persons were referred to the prosecution for further investigations.

Meanwhile, Morsi’s elder son Osama posted on his twitter account that his brother was kidnapped by the police and the chargers were fabricated.

“The incident of kidnapping and then arresting Abdullah Morsi is to defame the honest people,” Osama said, noting the charges are very funny and absurd. — Xinhua

Filipe Nyusi to run for presidential election on behalf of Mozambique’s ruling party

MAPUTO, 2 March — Defence Minister Filipe Nyusi was chosen on Saturday night to be Mozambique’s ruling party candidate for this year’s presidential election slated for October.

Filipe Nyusi, 55, was born in the northern Province of Cabo Delgado. He had been a mechanical engineer before fully engaged in politics as the country’s defence minister.

Prior to his appointment to the cabinet by the current president Armando Guebuza, Nyusi worked for the state-owned Mozambique Ports and Railways authority. Guebuza, 71, has led Mozambique since 2005 and will step down later this year after serving a maximum of two terms in office. — Xinhua

People transfer an injured man to a hospital in northwest Pakistan’s Peshawar, on 1 March, 2014. The death toll rose to 14 in the bomb attacks that hit the vehicles of security personnel in Pakistan’s northwestern tribal region of Khyber Agency on Saturday, officials said. — Xinhua

Cowgirls attend the annual Houston Rodeo parade in Houston, the United States, on 1 March, 2014. — Xinhua

Municipal workers clean up the site of a car bomb attack in Baghdad’s Karadaa district on 26 Feb, 2014. — Reuters

The United Nations said it had confirmed 703 deaths in Iraq in February, compared to 733 in January, excluding Anbar. — Reuters

The bloodshed sparked widespread clashes pitting Sunni fighters against the Shi’ite-led government and marked the start of a relentless bombing campaign by al-Qaeda-linked militants against mostly Shi’ite targets. The growing power of Sunni militants has profited from the civil war in neighbouring Syria, prompted Prime Minister Nuri Maliki to order an offensive in western Anbar in December. — Reuters
Kyoto University warned by gov’t about lax iPS research laboratory control

KYOTO, 2 March — Kyoto University’s laboratory conducting experiments on induced pluripotent stem cells has been warned by the science ministry about its careless control of genetically engineered mice, sources familiar with the matter said on Saturday.

A total of 21 mice, including five genetically engineered ones, were found in a room for cleaning breeding cases. They were believed to have been taken to the room unnoticed in the breeding cases filled with wooden chips, the sources said.

Shinya Yamanaka, who heads the research center, apologized for the incident and said keeping mice from escaping the facility is among the priorities of the research operations there.

The research center currently keeps about 4,000 mice and 60 percent-70 percent of them are genetically engineered.

Kidnapped Filipino-Chinese student escapes in S Philippines

ZAMBOANGA CITY, (Philippines), 2 March — A Filipino-Chinese college student, who was kidnapped in southern Philippine Province of Zamboanga del Sur last Thursday, managed to escape from his captors on the following day, local police said on Saturday.

According to Ariel Huesca, the spokesman for regional police office, the kidnapped victim, identified as Stephen Tan, escaped from his abductors during transportation at around 1:30 pm on Friday in Little Baguio village, Imelda town in Zamboanga Sibugay, a neighbour Province of Zamboanga del Sur.

Initial police investigation disclosed that the victim managed to escape from his abductors after the latter took off his blindfold while he was being transported. Then, Tan jumped from a cliff. His bodyguard then chased him, but he was able to hide at a grassy portion and later sought help from locals to contact his family.—Xinhua

China closes 5,000 illegal clinics

BEIJING, 2 March — China has closed 5,088 illegal clinics in three months amid a crackdown on illicit medical practices, the country’s health authority has announced.

A year-long campaign began in October targeting unlicensed clinics and unqualified doctors, according to a National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC) statement.

In the first three months, the authorities received 7,316 reports and complaints from the public, out of which 6,538 have been settled.

Health authorities at all levels investigated 30,462 cases of illegal practices and revoked licenses of 121 medical and family planning clinics for violations, the statement said.

A total of 964 cases have been transferred to the police for further investigation.

The police have investigated 767 cases and busted 22 groups.

Military departments have closed 46 unauthorized medical websites and investigated 13 people who posed as military doctors, according to the statement.

The campaign was launched by six Chinese authorities, including the NHFPC, the Ministry of Public Security and the health department with the Chinese People’s Liberation Army General Logistics Department.

The statement said the six authorities recently issued a circular, urging better efforts to crack down on unqualified medical cosmetic services, including those carried out by unlicensed foreign doctors, as well as illegal.—Xinhua

S Korea to launch new opposition coalition party ahead of local elections

SEOUL, 2 March — South Korea’s main opposition party chief and a political heavyweight agreed on Sunday to launch a new coalition party ahead of local elections in June, which are widely seen as a mid-term confidence vote for the Park Geun-hye administration.

Democratic Party leader Kim Han-gil and independent lawmaker Ahn Chul-soo said at a joint press conference that both sides agreed to form a united political party as soon as possible to realize the transfer of power in the 2017 presidential election.

Ahn, who contested the 2012 presidential election as an independent candidate, dropped the 2012 presidential campaign pledge of abolishing the party nomination system for candidates in local elections.

The pledge to scrap the nomination system under which political parties put up candidates was made by both the ruling and opposition parties as well as Ahn in order to get rid of chronic political woe such as bribing the party into nomination.—Xinhua

Xi vows punishment on terrorists, careful rescue for victims

BEIJING, 2 March — Chinese president Xi Jinping has urged the law enforcement to investigate and solve the case of Kunming terrorist attack with all-out efforts and punish the terrorists in accordance with the law.

More than 10 terrorist suspects attacked people at the square and ticket hall of Kunming Railway Station at 9:20 pm on Saturday, killing at least 28 civilians and injuring 113 others.

Police shot dead five attackers and are hunting for the rest.

Xi stressed the careful rescue and treatment of injured civilians and proper handling of the dead.

He ordered relevant parties to firmly suppress terrorists’ rampant momentum, be fully aware of the grave and complex anti-terrorism situation and strengthen bottomline thinking.

The president, also head of China’s national security commission, asked law enforcement to crack down on violent terrorist activities in all forms, safeguard social stability and guarantee the safety of people’s lives and property.—Xinhua

China discovers huge oil, gas deposits

BEIJING, 2 March — China discovered nearly 1.1 billion tonnes of oil deposits and 616.4 billion cubic meters of natural gas reserves in 2013, said the Ministry of Land and Resources.

Of the new discoveries, 202 million tonnes of oil and 381.9 billion cubic meters of natural gas can be exploited with the current technologies, according to the ministry.

The production of oil and natural gas last year stood at 210 million tonnes and 117.6 billion cubic meters, rising 1.4 percent and 9.1 percent year-on-year, respectively.

“Oil and natural gas discoveries maintained a strong momentum in 2013 with steady production increase as China strengthened its exploration efforts and made breakthroughs,” said the ministry.

China is one of the world’s largest energy consumers, and a large part of its demands, especially in oil and natural gas, depends on imports.—Xinhua

Xi: 1,100 Linxiangrou oilfields discovered

LINXIANG, March 2 (Xinhua) — China has discovered 1,100 oilfields in the Linxiangrou region, the country’s second largest discovery, the Chinese Academy of Sciences said Monday.

The discovery, located in the southern part of the Beibu Gulf, extends over an area of more than 3,700 square kilometers and has been proved to contain 1.1 billion tonnes of oil deposits and 616.4 billion cubic meters of natural gas reserves

The oilfields discovered include 874 oil deposits and 226 gas deposits, according to the academy.

Construction of an oilfield in the discovery area is expected to begin next year, with commercial production expected to start in 2016 and the total production expected to reach 100,000 tonnes in 2017, the academy said.

The discovery is of great significance to China’s energy security, as it will help reduce the country’s dependence on imported oil, it said.

The discovery is part of China’s drive to build up its energy reserves and meet the soaring demand for energy as the country’s economic growth continues.
16 Afghan militants killed in two operations

KABUL, 2 March — Sixteen Taliban militants were killed in two military operations carried out by the Afghan security forces, officials said on Sunday.

Nine militants were killed and five others wounded when Afghan army commandos launched an operation in Dar-e-Sangara area of Ailingar district in the eastern Province of Laghman early Sunday morning, the provincial government said in a statement.

Four militants, including a would-be suicide bomber, were also detained, the statement said, adding that a Taliban rocket leader named Abdul Jabbar was among the dead.

On Saturday, seven militants, including their leader named Haji Rais was killed when the army conducted a cleanup operation in southern Helmand province, according to Colonel Mohammad Rassoul Zai of the Army Corps 215 Maiwand.

The army specialists also defused 20 roadside bombs, Zai noted.

Indonesia reiterates support for Palestinian independence

JAKARTA, 2 March — Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono reaffirmed here Saturday that Indonesia will consistently support the establishment of an independent State of Palestine and the recognition of a full member state status in the United Nations (UN). Yudhoyono made the remarks at the opening ceremony of the second Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD) held here.

“An independent and economically viable State of Palestine and not to mention a full member state of the UN will surely contribute to global peace and stability in the Middle East,” Yudhoyono said.

The UN General Assembly in late 2012 approved a resolution, granting Palestine non-member observer state status at the UN, a long-sought victory for the Palestinians.

Real independence, however, will remain a dream until Palestine negotiates a peace deal with Israel, who warned that the resolution will only delay a lasting solution.

Yudhoyono called on all participants in the meeting to support the Palestinian pursuit for independence, saying the people of Palestine have been struggling to realize this dream for more than five and a half decades. “Providing them with capacity building is critical,” the president said, adding that his country will continue to provide Palestine with not only political support, but also economic and development assistance.

Rami Hamdallah, Palestinian prime minister, expressed gratitude for the collective efforts by the donor nations at the opening ceremony, saying he still believes the two-state vision can be envisaged and realized despite obstacle ahead.

The F/A-18 fighter jet crashes during training in Nevada

WASHINGTON, 2 March — A US Navy F/A-18C Hornet fighter jet crashed Saturday during a training mission near a Nevada air base, the Navy said.

The status of the pilot was not immediately clear. Navy spokesman Commandor Ryan Perry said in a statement.

Perry said an investigation would be conducted to determine the cause of the crash, which occurred on a training range about 70 miles east of Naval Air Station Fallon in Nevada.

The F/A-18C Hornet is a single-seat fighter jet built by Boeing Co beginning in 1987. It is powered by two F404-GE-402 enhanced performance turbofan engines built by General Electric Co.
Los Angeles, 2 March — The most glamorous of all runways, the 500-foot-long Oscars red carpet, might be a fashion disaster on Sunday. A rare heavy rain storm on Friday in Southern California has soaked parts of the red carpet laid down on Hollywood Boulevard, where mainstream and Tinyseltown powerbrokers will make their grand entrance to the Academy Awards, film’s highest honours.

Dozens of workers spent the morning securing the red carpet from the pelt- ing rain and overflowing street gutters 48 hours before to a (a) rain plan. It is going to rain, there is going to be water, we have got to protect as best we can,” The rain began in Los Angeles on Thursday evening and according to the National Weather Service is not expected to let up until Sunday morning, hours before Hollywood’s movie stars begin their walk across the red carpet at 3 pm PST (2300 GMT).

“I think the carpet is probably wet underneath us, which is going to be a problem in a couple days,” said Doug Neal, the stage manager of the Oscars red carpet show. “But we are well protected. They have put this up a few days ago so I think we will be alright.” While the rain is a welcome sight for many in California, which is mired in its third year of a debilitating drought, high winds and debris caused road closures, power outages and about 1,000 homes in the Los Angeles area were ordered to be evacuated due to possible mudslides.

Paris, 2 March. A comedy about a young man who worships his mother and whose entire family treats him as a girl since childhood swept five trophies at the French Cesar awards ceremony including Best Film and Best Actor. Adapting a popular film, the film follows Galiennne through her childhood and adolescence, from dressing up in women’s clothing in his bedroom to heartbreak at a British boarding school and clubbing in the Paris gay scene. “This Cesar (award) is for my mother,” Galliennne said in his acceptance speech at the Cesar ceremony — France’s version of the Oscars - in Paris late on Thursday.

However, the jury was less enthusiastic about “Blue is the Warmest Colour”, a drama about a stormy relationship between two adolescent girls which won the top Palme d’Or award at the Cannes film festival in May. One of the film’s stars, the 20-year-old Adele Exarchopoulos, nevertheless took home an award for best new female actress.

Toronto, 2 March — Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, who became a popular target for late-night TV hosts after admitting to smoking crack cocaine in a “drunk- en stupor”, will appear on “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” and may join the comedian at the Oscars, Canadian media reported on Saturday. The Toronto Sun newspaper said Ford is scheduled to be on the Jimmy Kimmel show Monday night and is “looking forward to promoting Toronto on the world stage.”

The article also quoted Ford as saying he would attend this year’s Academy Awards, though another report by a local TV news channel said a plan for Ford to attend the ceremony with Kimmel was not confirmed. The mayor’s office did not immediately respond to a call seeking comment. But the mayor’s spokesmen sent a photo on his Twitter account showing Ford being met at the airport in Los Angeles by Kimmel. Ford, who last year pledged he would stay away from drugs and alcohol, has had other embarrassing episodes since last year’s crack scandal. In January, a video of Ford ranting in a Jamaican accent and sharing his words at a suburban eatery was posted online. He conceded he had been drinking the night the video was shot, but described it as a “minor setback” and said his personal life did not interfere with his job. Ford, who has been stripped of many of his powers by the city council, has refused calls to step down and said he expects to be re-elected in municipal elections.

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford (C) celebrates Team Canada’s gold medal win over Sweden in the men’s ice hockey gold medal game at the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic Games, in Toronto, on 23 Feb, 2014. — Reuters

Toronto’s oft-lampooned mayor to guest on “Jimmy Kimmel”

French actor Guillaume Gallienne (C) holds his trophy during a photocall after receiving the Best Actor, Best First Film, Best adapted Screenplay and best film awards in the film “Les garçons et Guillaume, a table!” (Me, Myself and Mum) at the 30th Cesar Awards ceremony in Paris on 28 Feb, 2014. —Reuters

Comedy on gender confusion sweeps French Cesar film awards
Federer beats Berdych to win Dubai Open for six time

Dubai, 2 March — In the final of the 22nd Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships, Swiss Roger Federer defeated Tomas Berdych from the Czech Republic in a tough match in three sets 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 here on Saturday, cashing in 465,830 US dollars worth of prize money.

Like in the semi-fi nal against Novak Djokovic, Federer, the world’s number eight in the ATP ranking, started with some difficulties in the sold-out Dubai Duty Free tennis stadium and needed several points to find his rhythm against 26-year-old Berdych, the number six in global men’s tennis.

After the tournament for the sixth time, the 32-year-old Federer said: “It sounds good. I am very happy with my game, Tomas had an advantage and I got a little lucky,” the tennis ace said in his typical modest style. Asked how he managed the turnaround after losing the first set, Federer said: “I stayed calm and really started to play better, but it remained till the end a really tough match. Tomas is a great player and I wish Tomas all the best for the coming weeks Sunday, the 3rd.

With 17 Grand Slam titles and overall 302 weeks he held number one in the world, Federer is considered one of the greatest tennis players of all times. No other star has made more matches than Federer, who is now 19-2 in 2014.

“I am very happy with myself, the turnaround after losing the first set, Federer said: “I stayed calm and really started to play better, but it remained till the end a really tough match. Tomas is a great player and I wish Tomas all the best for the coming weeks Sunday, the 3rd.

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Federer’s performance in Dubai was quite impressive, as he defeated Berdych in straight sets, 6-3, 6-4, 6-2.

“When I played against him in the past, he was a bit better than me,” Federer said after the match. “But I was able to play my best today and that’s why I won. I am happy with the win.”

Federer is looking forward to his next match against Rafael Nadal in the semi-finals of the Australian Open, which will take place on Wednesday.

Federer’s win in Dubai is his 10th title in the Middle East, and it is his 8th victory in the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships.

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Federer’s win in Dubai is his 10th title in the Middle East, and it is his 8th victory in the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships.
Trinidad and Tobago footballer dies after heart attack

PORT OF SPAIN, 2 March — Kevon Carter, a 30-year-old Trinidad and Tobago national footballer, died after training with his club team due to suspected heart attack, local media reported on Saturday.

Carter complained of chest pains and nausea when training with his club Defence Force Friday morning. After taking a pain killer, Carter began vomiting and was rushed to hospital and died. Carter had never shown any sign of heart disease before.

Defence Force’s assistant coach Marvin Gordon told local media. As a forward of the Trinidad and Tobago national team, Carter scored five goals in 31 national appearances.

In December, 22-year-old Trinidad and Tobago national defender Akeem Adams died due to heart problems in Hungary.

Xinhua

Japanese sake, shochu promotions planned at soccer World Cup

TOKYO, 2 March — A Japanese company plans a series of events during the upcoming soccer World Cup in Brazil to increase overseas consumption of Japanese “sake” rice wine and “shochu” distilled spirits.

Tokyo-based distributor Hasegawasaken Inc. said it will organize events in Sao Paulo in June to familiarize consumers with sake, shochu and Japanese cuisine. For the promotion, the company plans a series of events during the upcoming soccer World Cup in Brazil to increase overseas consumption of Japanese “sake” rice wine and “shochu” distilled spirits.

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Berlin, 2 March — Arjen Robben donated a hat trick as Bayern continued their relentless run while Dortmund took over the second place by courtesy of Leverkusen’s 1-0 loss to Mainz on the 23rd round of the German Bundesliga on Saturday. Bayern Munich march on as they humiliated Schalke 5-1 to inflict the “Royal Blues” the sixth loss of the season.

The Bavarians staged a faultless performance during the first half, as Schalke had absolutely no chance to thwart Bayern’s defence. The hosts ensured a bright start as David Alaba opened the scoring with a deflected free kick goal at the third minute. The “Royal Blues” were shocked when Bayern doubled their lead at the 15th minute through Robben, who made use of a through ball by Mario Mandzukic to beat custodian Ralf Fährmann with a lob. Schalke porous defence allowed Bayern to score another goal as Mandzukic had all time and space to head home Alaba’s cross inside the box at the 24th minute. Schalke were absolutely helpless against Bayern’s dominance as the front runners made it 4-0 thanks to the brace by Robben, who finished his solo run into the far post corner four minutes later.

However, things changed at the second half since Schalke were able to disrupt Bayern’s build up play. Although no Schalke player scored a consolation goal, it was Bayern’s Rafinha who reduced the arrears for the visitors when he cleared a corner into his own goal at the 64th minute. Nonetheless, things changed from bad to worse when Kryalos Papadopoulos was sent off with a straight red card following a professional foul to cause a penalty, which was converted by Robben who wrapped up his hat trick at the 77th minute. Bayern tightened their top spot with 65 points where as Schalke stuck on fourth place with 41 points. Bayern and celebrated their eighth win on home soil as they cruised to a 3-0 victory over Nuremberg. Thus the “BBB” ousted Leverkusen from the second place in the table. Jeueren Klopp’s men staged a dominant performance as they created 12 attempts during the first half while Nuremberg approached just once BVB’s goal.

Xinhua

Iran says abducted border guards freed in Pakistan

TEHRAN, 2 March — Five Iranian border guards reportedly seized and held captive in Pakistan for three weeks have been freed, an Iranian military official has been quoted as saying, although Pakistan authorities said they had no knowledge of the incident.

Iran’s official news agency IRNA said the Iranians, abducted by Sunni Muslim militants in February 6 in the restive Sistan-Baluchestan province, were among 11 foreign hostages freed in an operation by Pakistan forces.

Its Fars news agency on Saturday also quoted General Massoud Jazayeri as saying: “Five Iranian soldiers who had been kidnapped on our eastern borders and transferred to Pakistan were freed.” He did not elaborate on the circumstances of the release, only saying that “the country’s entire police and security apparatus were involved in this matter”.

However, Pakistani authorities appeared to have no knowledge of the operation. The government-run paramilitary Frontier Corps, which has primary responsibility for security in Baluchistan, said they had freed three Africans kidnapped by drug traffickers in Baluchistan on Saturday but had not recovered the Iranians.

A security official and the foreign office said on Sunday they were unaware of the incident. The impoverished nation by Pakistan is largely leaning towards Sunni Islam and has been battling a Taliban insurgency in the southwest.

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif enjoys warm relations with Saudi Arabia, which sheltered him after an earlier military coup forced him into exile. Sharif’s cash-strapped government is also hoping for financial aid from the Saudis. Saudi Arabia and Iran are rivals for influence in the Muslim world.

Reuters

Bayern, Dortmund victorious in German Bundesliga

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First Oversea Job Fair concluded

Union Minister U Aye Myint views round booths at First Oversea Job Fair.

Union Finance Minister attends meetings in Australia

Prospect of Myanmar's resources discussed

World economic situation, investment and infrastructures, International Monetary Fund's reform, international tax system and financial sector regulations were among the topics of the meeting. After the meeting, the G-20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors released press communiqué that reflects the resolutions of the meeting.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Mr. Borge Brende said that Norway is ready to provide technical assistance for development of energy and electricity sectors in Myanmar. Norway will share her knowledge how to exploit the energy without environmental impact, he added.

Daw Kyi Kyi Hla, a member of Myanmar ISIS, said that Myanmar's sustainable development is depending on environmental conservation. Emphasis should be put on renewable energy sector, preservation of biodiversity and rare animals to achieve harmonious development, she added.

The entrepreneurs are responsible for development of country's economic sector, she said.—MNA