President U Thein Sein receives Executive Vice-President and CEO of International Finance Corporation (IFC) from World Bank

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Feb—President U Thein Sein of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar received a delegation led by Executive Vice-President and Chief Executive Officer Mr. Jin-Yong Cai of International Finance Corporation (IFC) from World Bank at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace here at 11 am today.

Also present at the call together with the President were Union Ministers at the President Office U Soe Thane and U Hla Tun, Union Minister for Finance and Revenue U Win Shein, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Thant Kyaw, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Than Nyein and officials.

At the call, both sides cordially discussed matters related to Myanmar’s agriculture, health, education, electric power sectors and sharing of experience in public finance and rural area development.

Union Level Peace Making Committee holds peace talks with KIO

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Feb—Peace talks between Union Level Peace Making Committee and KIO was held at Shweli today.

It was attended by a six-member team led by Union Ministers U Aung Min and U Ohn Myint from Union Level Peace-Making Committee and a five-member team led by U Sung Lyut Gam and General Gwan Maw from KIO, a two-member team led by Ambassador Mr Luo Zhaohui from Foreign Affairs Ministry of the People’s Republic of China, KNU General Saw Mutu Poe and General Secretary Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win, three led by Brig-Gen Sai Lu of RCSS/SSA, U Han Nyaung Wai and Victor Biak Lian.

Both sides issued a five-point joint statement at the talks. The following is the translation of the joint statement:

**Joint statement**

1. Talks between a delegation led by Vice-Chairman of Union Level Peace-Making Committee Union Minister U Aung Min and KIO negotiation team, was held in Shweli of Yunnan Province of the People’s Republic of China from 9 am to 16:15 pm today.
2. Ambassador Mr Luo Zhaohui of Foreign Affairs Ministry of the PRC, KNU Chairman General Saw Mutu Poe, General Secretary Pado Saw Kwe Htoo Win and one member, Brig-Gen Sai Lu of RCSS/SSA and two members, U Han Nyaung Wai and U Victor Biak Lian, have attended the talks as witnesses.
3. Talks focused on establishing communication channels, reducing military tension, preparing for next talks and the invitation of observers and organizations as witnesses in the next meeting.
4. KIO has agreed to hold the next talks before the end of February after making coordination with UNFC and to continue holding the political talks between the government and KIO.
5. Both sides have agreed to continue to hold talks for emergence of a surveillance system in the conflict-affected areas for achieving ceasefire swiftly between the government and KIO.

4 February, 2013
Shweli

ATR Co hands over ATR 72-600 flight to Air KBZ

**By Soe Nyunt**

ATR Company handed over one of two ATR 72-600 planes to Air KBZ airlines, at ATR manufacturing workshop in Toulouse, France on 29 January. The handing over ceremony was attended by CEO of ATR Company Mr Filippo Bagnato and officials, Chairperson Daw Nan Lai Kham of Air KBZ Airlines and officials. ATR CEO and the Air KBZ Chairman delivered speeches and then met press. “This is the first order placed in the Southeast Asia,” ATR Company’s CEO said.

Currently, Air KBZ is operating flight schedules to Yangon, Mandalay, NyaungU, Heho, Kengtung, Tachileik, Lashio, Myekk, Duwei, Kawhoungh, Kalay, Myitkyina, Thandwe and Sittway with four ATR 72-500 airplanes. Flight schedules will be extended to Nay Pyi Taw, Bhamo, Putao, Kyaukpyu, Monywa and Homa in addition to current schedules when two new flights arrive.

*Myanmar Alinn: 4-2-2013
Trs: MT*
**LOCAL NEWS**

**Rural people in Pathein Township enjoy electricity on self-reliant basis**

Pathein, 4 Feb—A fire broke out at the house of U Tin Tun on Thida Street in Southern part of PyinKhayaying Village Pathein Township. Six villages are being supplied electricity with the use of diesel engines under the arrangement of the region government and 65 villages on a self-reliant basis. At present, 13 villages are trying to supply electricity to local people.

On 31 December 2012, a ceremony to launch supply of electricity was held at the hall of Htinyawgyi Village. The power supply committee tried hard to switch on the lamp posts by the July 2012 and installed electric meters at the houses for supply of electricity round the clock by the end of 2012—Kyemon

**Development undertakings inspected in Pyapon Township**

Nay Py Taw, 4 Feb—Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Daw Myat Myat Ohn Khin inspected medical treatment given by specialists to local people in Thanteinhow Village of Pyapon Township on Zawgyi Township in Ayeyawady Region on 23 January morning.

After that, the Union Minister donated fishing nets, clothes, slippers for the people and rubbers, solar lamps and alms to monasteries.

At Thiri Annawa Hall in Pyapon on 29 January, the Union Minister met members of Non-Governmental Organizations and INGOs, departmental personnel and students.

At the ceremony to distribute loans to the local people for ensuring rural development and poverty alleviation, the Union Minister made a speech.

**Stimulant tablets seized**

Mawlamyine, 4 Feb—According to the information given by a doubtful person, a team comprising IP Khaing Than, SIP Kyaw Ni Tun, Sgt Tin Lin Tun of Mawlamyine District Special Anti-Drug Squad and SIP Sithu Kyaw of Crime Combating Unit and SIP Tun Tun Oo of Zeyathiri Police Station together with witnesses searched the pockets of Kyaw Shwe (a) Rajin, 31 of troubles from No 863 from Thayetwae Street in Ngantay Ward, at Lawun Restaurant in Mawlamyine Township on 3 January.

The authorities seized 180 WY brand stimulant tablets worth over K 900,000 and one motorcycle.

Zeyathiri Police Station opened a file of lawsuit against him. —Kyemon

**Tube-wells sunk in Kyaukpadaung Township**

Kyaukpadaung, 4 Feb—Kyaukpadaung Township of Myingyan District in Mandalay Region received 13 tubes in Manni Pain and another eight packets, 17.142 kilos.

On 1 November, the department sank a tube-well in Kanbaw Village. Moreover, the plans are underway to sink more tube-wells in Paikthi and Nabedan villages for enabling the local people to overcome scarcity of water in the township. —Myanmar Alinn

**AFC (C) Licence Coaching Course 5-18 Feb**

Yangon, 4 Feb—Jointly conducted by Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and Myanmar Football Federation (AFF), the AFC (C) Certificate Coaching Course 2013 will be opened at MFF Head Office from 5 to 18 February.

A total of 26 trainees including former star players see Mu Myin Min Thu and Nay Tun Hlaing enlisted at the training course.

Those wishing to attend the course may contact the technical section of MFF, not later than 4 February.

The federation will open the course for the trainees free of charge. —Kyemon

**Blood Donation**

A campaign for voluntary blood donation is being promoted.
Iran hedges on nuclear talks with six powers or US

MUNICH, 4 Feb—Iran said on Sunday it was open to a US offer of direct talks on its nuclear programme and that six world powers had suggested a new round of nuclear negotiations this month, but without committing itself to either proposal.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve a dispute over Iran’s long-standing political resolution for Syria’s long-standing conflict, was still possible, particularly after the head of the main opposition abroad announced his acceptance for talks with representatives from the Syrian government.

The head of the main opposition coalition, Moaz al-Khatib, has repeated previous surprising statement that he is ready to embark on talks with Assad’s administration while setting release of detainees among others as conditions.

His remarks came during a late-night panel talks on Friday with UN-Arab League envoy Lakhdar Brahimi at the Munich Security Conference on Friday.

He first declared his controversial statement on his Facebook page last Wednesday.

On Saturday, al-Khatib, for the first time, met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov who invited him to come to Moscow for more talks, and met with Iran’s Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi on the sideline of Munich conference.

Al-Khatib reportedly said that his talks with Lavrov have focused on the need to politically end the crisis, as Russia’s Lavrov reportedly said that al-Khatib appeared interested in having more understanding of the Russian stance.

Al-Khatib surprising step has also been welcomed by the United States, whose Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called the opposition leader’s step “not only courageous but smart.”

Iran’s nuclear programme, which Teheran says is peaceful but the West suspects is intended to give Iran the capability to build a nuclear bomb, have been all but deadlocked for years, while Iran has continued to announce advances in the programme.

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said a suggestion on Saturday by US Vice President Joe Biden that Washington was ready for direct talks with Iran if Teheran was serious about negotiations was a “step forward”.

“We take these statements with positive consideration. I think this is a step forward and we will see if each time we have come and negotiated it was the other side unfortunately who did not heed ... its commitment,” Salehi said at the Munich Security Conference where Biden made his keynote speech.

He also complained to Iran’s English-language Press TV of “some contradictory signals”, pointing to the rhetoric of “keeping all options on the table” used by US officials to indicate they are willing to use force to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

“This does not go along with this gesture (of talks) so we will have to wait a little bit longer and see if they are really faithful this time,” Salehi said.

Iran is under tightest web of sanctions. Israel has also hinted it may strike if diplomacy and international sanctions fail to curb Iran’s nuclear drive.

In Washington, Army General Martin Dempsey, the top US military officer, said in an interview broadcast on Sunday that the United States has the capability to stop any Iranian effort to build nuclear weapons, but Iranian ‘intentions have to be influenced through other means.’

Over 100 flights canceled as snow sweeps Beijing

BEIJING, 4 Feb—More than 100 flights were canceled on Sunday by Beijing Capital International Airport (BCIA), the world’s second-busiest airport by passenger volume, as snow hit China’s capital.

Altogether, 115 flights scheduled to depart from or arrive at the airport on Sunday were canceled as of 7 pm, including 14 international flights, according to flight status information on BCIA’s website. Some of the cancellations were due to foul weather in other cities, as many parts of China were influenced by a cold snap.

The airport had mobilized more than 800 workers and 230 automobiles to remove ice and snow from planes, runways and parking aprons of 3 pm on Sunday, a BCIA official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

More than 1,500 planes would have flown around 114,000 passengers from the airport on Sunday as planned originally, the official said.

Light to moderate snow and sleet will fall on northeastern and north China from Sunday to Tuesday while heavy rain will sweep central and east China, the China Meteorological Administration has forecasted. BCIA saw passenger volumes grow 4.2 percent year on year in 2012 to reach 81.8 million people, a number second only to Hong Kong International Airport in the United States.

Bus crashes into Boston overpass, injuring 34 people

BOSTON, 4 Feb—A bus carrying 42 passengers from Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to Pennsylvania crashed into a Boston overpass on Saturday night, injuring 34 people, according to emergency officials.

The crash happened after about 7:30 pm EST on Soldiers Field Road in Boston, according to Boston Emergency Medical Services, a spokeswoman for Jennifer Mehigan. Medical workers transported 34 people to four area hospitals —30 with minor injuries, three serious, and one life-threatening, Mehigan said. Some people had to be removed through the bus roof, strapped onto stretchers, backboards, according to the Boston Fire Department’s Twitter feed.

Mehigan said the injured included teenagers and adults. “A number of patients were trapped at some point during the incident,” Mehigan said. All the victims had been removed from the bus by about 9:30 pm. She said the department was trying to remove part of the roof of the private Calvary Coach charter bus to perform the rescue.—Reuters

Change of int’l climate revives hope for political resolution to Syrian crisis

DAMASCUS, 4 Feb—A sudden change in the international climate revived hope that a political resolution for Syria’s long-standing conflict is still possible, particularly after the head of the main opposition abroad announced his acceptance for talks with representatives from the Syrian government.

The head of the main opposition coalition, Moaz al-Khatib, has repeated previous surprising statement that he is ready to embark on talks with Assad’s administration while setting release of detainees among others as conditions.

His remarks came during a late-night panel talks on Friday with UN-Arab League envoy Lakhdar Brahimi at the Munich Security Conference on Friday.

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Al-Khatib reportedly said that his talks with Lavrov have focused on the need to politically end the crisis, as Russia’s Lavrov reportedly said that al-Khatib appeared interested in having more understanding of the Russian stance.

Al-Khatib surprising step has also been welcomed by the United States, whose Secretary of State Hillary Clinton called the opposition leader’s step “not only courageous but smart.”

First responders assist injured passengers from a charter bus that crashed in Boston, Massachusetts, on 2 Feb, 2013.—Reuters

Attacker kill 33 at police HQ in disputed Iraqi city

KIRKUK, 4 Feb—At least 33 people were killed in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk on Sunday when a suicide bomber detonated a truck packed with explosives outside a police headquarters as gunmen disguised as officers tried to storm the compound.

Iraqi security personnel are seen at the site of a suicide bomb attack in Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad on 3 Feb, 2013.—Director
Central bank issues commemorative coins for navigation system

BEIJING, 4 Feb—China’s central bank has issued a set of two commemorative coins marking the official launch of the BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) last December. The set includes one gold and one silver coin, both of which are fiat money of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), according to the People’s Bank of China (PBOC).

The coins both feature a variety of decorative elements, including the national emblem, images of satellites and binary codes.

The PBOC will issue 30,000 gold coins with a face value of 150 yuan (24.08 US dollars) and 60,000 silver coins with a face value of 10 yuan.

The BDS was developed by the government in order to take a share of the GPS-dominated domestic navigation market. The first BDS satellite was launched in 2000. The system went into official use on 27 Dec, 2012, following a trial period that began in 2003.

Krahua

Google to pay 60 million euros into French media fund

PARIS, 4 Feb—Google is to pay 60 million euros ($82 million) into a special fund to help French media develop their presence on the Internet under a top-level deal signed on Friday, but will not pay them for posting links to their content.

French publishers had been pushing for Google to pay them licensing fees for listing headlines and snippets of articles in its search engine results.

The agreement, signed by President Francois Hollande and Google’s executive chairman Eric Schmidt, follows months of talks between local media companies and the Internet search giant who were brokered by a government-appointed mediator.

Google settled a similar case with Belgian publishers in December by helping them boost online revenue, but still faces a dispute with publishers in Germany.

Schmidt said in a Google blog post on Friday’s deal in France that in addition to paying into the fund Google would help publishers increase their revenue using its advertising technology.

Hollande had threatened to draft legislation to force Google to pay media for posting links to their content if no deal was signed, and during the talks Google was hit with a tax audit over its practice of charging French advertisers via its European headquarters in Ireland.

In November satirical weekly Le Canard Enchaîné had said the government had demanded 1 billion euros ($1.28 billion) in back taxes from the company. ($1=7301 euros).

Reuters

FTC issues guidelines for mobile applications

WASHINGTON, 4 Feb—The Federal Trade Commission has issued a wide-reaching set of new guidelines for makers of mobile platforms and developers of applications for mobile telephones and tablets to safeguard users’ privacy.

The non-binding guidelines, published in a report on Friday, include the recommendation that companies should obtain consumers’ consent before including location tracking in software and applications, consider developing icons to depict the transmission of user data, and consider offering a “Do Not Track” mechanism for smartphone users.

The report also recommends that application developers have an easily accessible privacy policy, obtain consent before collecting and sharing sensitive information and consider participating in self-regulatory programs.

The FTC has been heightening its scrutiny of mobile devices, which are now the primary source of communication and Internet access for many users.

Among the companies who could be affected by the report are firms like Apple Inc, Amazon.com Inc and Microsoft Corp.

Reuters

Chipmaker Intel faces long march to mobile salvation

NEW YORK, 4 Feb—Intel Corp, the world’s biggest chipmaker, faces a new front on Thursday in a long and stuttering campaign to get its processors into mobile phones, although it appears to still have a long way to go.

It joined PC maker Acer Inc in Bangkok to unveil the Liquid C1 smartphone, a $330 device running Google Inc’s Android operating system, which will be launched first in Thailand and then rolled out across Southeast Asia, one of the fastest-growing markets for mobile phones.

“We’ve made a conscious effort to go after these fast-growing markets as our first foray into the business,” Mike Bell, who heads Intel’s mobile division said in a telephone interview.

The company’s ninth such device in nine months, the Liquid C1 represents how far Intel has come in convincing big name manufacturers to take a chance with its mobile chips as the sales of personal computer and laptops plunge. But analysts say it also shows how far it still has to go to get a foothold in a market dominated by the likes of Qualcomm Inc and Nvidia Corp.

“First and foremost they have to prove they can play in this space at all,” said Scott Bicheno, senior analyst at Strategy Analytics. “There’s no obvious technical fault with Intel’s chips. It’s just that the incumbents are very well established.”

Intel has little choice but to get into mobile. It saw revenue fall 3 percent in the last quarter on weak sales of PCs, part of a steady decline in revenue growth since 2009.

It has also watched as devices like Apple Inc’s iPad cannibalize sales of PCs. So, in the past year, the company has launched phones with Intel chips in Europe, Africa, Latin America, Russia, India and China.

Some were effectively designed and built by Intel as what it calls “calling cards”, convincing carriers like Orange to brand and offer the phones on their own networks in France and the United Kingdom. Last year, it persuaded Chinese hardware manufacturers like ZTE Corp and Lenovo Group Ltd to build their own phones with Intel chips.—Reuters

MTN says probe dismisses corruption allegations

JOHANNESBURG, 4 Feb—An external committee appointed by African mobile phone group MTN to investigate claims by rival Turkcell of corrupt dealings in Iran has dismissed the allegations as “a fabric of lies, distortions and inventions”.

The committee, chaired by retired British judge Lord Hoffmann, also found nothing to support claims that MTN had promised to get the South African government to supply Iran with defence equipment in exchange for a licence operating license.

MTN and its local partner won a lucrative licence in 2005 to launch a new Iranian mobile phone carrier, but the deal became embittered in controversy when Turkcell filed a $4.2 billion lawsuit in the United States last year. “Following a critical examination of the evidence, the Hoffmann Committee found that Turkcell’s allegations are “a fabric of lies, distortions and inventions”,” MTN said in a filing to the Johannesburg Stock Exchange on Friday.

Turkcell declined to comment. The Turkish telecommunication company’s allegations come against the backdrop of the Western world’s forceful economic sanctions designed to deter Iran from pursuing its nuclear development programme.

Turkcell claims that MTN won the Iran contract by offering to use its influence in Pretoria to help Turkish to obtain military hardware and sway South Africa’s votes at the International Atomic Energy Agency. Backed by a collection of alleged MTN internal documents including emails, invoices, memos and presentations, Turkcell’s lawsuit accuses the South African company of a “staggeringly brazen orchestration of corruption”.—Reuters
India’s Satyam Computer third-quarter profit before one-off loss tops estimates

BANGALORE, 4 Feb— India’s Satyam Computer Services Ltd hardly beat expectations with a 20.6 percent rise in third-quarter profit before a one-off loss, joining larger rivals like Infosys in signalling a pickup in outsourcing spending.

The company, now called Mahindra Satyam, is in the last lap of a merger with parent Tech Mahindra Ltd. Profits for the December quarter rose to 3.7 billion rupees ($70.3 million) from 3.10 billion rupees a year earlier, the company said on Thursday. That was higher than analysts’ estimate of 2.81 billion rupees, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

Profit after the one-off loss of 2.94 billion rupees was 800 million rupees, Satyam said. Satyam paid $68 million to Aberdeen Global and 22 funds to fully settle claims related to an accounting fraud that led to the sale of the Hyderabad-based company to Tech Mahindra, the company had said on 13 December.

Satyam was sold in a government-backed auction in 2009 after its founder and former chairman admitted to one of the country’s biggest accounting frauds. A surprise increase by second-ranked Infosys in revenue forecast for the current fiscal year and strong earnings at top-ranked Tata Consultancy Services earlier this month prompted speculation of a pickup in outsourcing spending in the sector’s biggest market, the United States.— Reuters

US, Mexico reach tomato deal to avert trade war

WASHINGTON, 4 Feb — The US government and Mexico’s tomato growers reached a tentative agreement on Saturday that reduces the threat of a costly trade war stemming from a US decision last year to pull out of a 1996 bilateral tomato trade pact.

“I am pleased that we were able to come to an agreement on fresh tomato imports from Mexico that respects, stabilizes and builds confidence in the US tomato market and meets the requirements of US law,” US Commerce Under Secretary for International Trade Francisco Sanchez said in a statement.

The draft agreement substantially rates the minimum “reference” price at which Mexican plum, cherry and other tomatoes can be sold in the United States and accounts for changes that have occurred in the tomato market since the original agreement, Sanchez said.

For some Mexican tomatoes, the new reference price is more than double the current such price, Sanchez said. The deal is expected to take effect on 4 March, after a public comment period, he said.

Mexican Economy Ministry spokesman Guajardo said the deal guaranteed Mexican farmers access to the US market under conditions that were “fair and competitive.”

“We worked hard in hand-in-hand with Mexican producers on this agreement to avoid damage to the sector,” he said.

The US Commerce Department made a preliminary decision in September to terminate the 1996 tomato agreement after Florida growers complained that the arrangement no longer protected them against Mexican tomatoes sold below the cost of production.

That angered Mexican growers, who argued the pact had reduced US costs and brought stability to the North American market.—— Reuters

Workers assemble cars inside the Hyundai Motor India Ltd plant at Kancheepuram district in Tamil Nadu on 4 Oct, 2012.— Reuters

India’s Satyam Computer third-quarter profit before one-off loss tops estimates

Employees of Satyam Computer Services Ltd. enter their head office in the southern Indian city of Hyderabad on 15 April, 2009.— Reuters

BRAZIL, 4 Feb — Dutch telecoms group KPN is widely expected to announce steps to cut debt when announcing full-year results next week, with some analysts bracing for a share issue.

KPN, which will report 2012 results on 5 February, breached its own debt target of 20.25 billion euro ($33.5 billion) at a mobile frequency auction which finished in December. As a response, the agreement under which Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim’s America Movil took a near 28 percent stake in 2012, cut its dividend for 2013 to 0.03 euros per share from a previous guidance of 0.35 euros. Analysts believe that will not be enough.

“We estimate that KPN might need to strengthen its balance sheet by up to 2 billion euros to remain on the safe side, which means a significant risk of share dilution,” Rabobank analyst Frank Claassen wrote in a note to clients.

Inviting new shares is not an attractive proposition to shareholders given KPN’s share price has plummeted by almost 50 percent over the past year. A large-scale rights issue would also require backing from KPN’s shareholders, including Slim, who controls America Movil. KPN could avoid a rights issue if it follows in the steps of Telekom Austria, also partially owned by Slim’s America Movil, which last week issued a 600 million euro hybrid bond to address its debt.

Companies generally have to pay higher interest on hybrid bonds, but credit rating agencies treat them as partially helping to improve debt ratios.

KPN is currently ranked one notch above the lowest investment grade rating by Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s who also have a negative outlook on KPN’s debt.

Fitch has already cut its credit rating to “BBB-”, the lowest rating at which many pension and investment funds are allowed to invest in the group’s bonds.

Nomura wrote that KPN still had access to debt markets, but not addressing its debt problems could leave it a forced seller of assets in future.— Reuters

The logo of Dutch telecoms group KPN is seen in Haarlem on 31 May, 2012.— Reuters

J&J metal hip failed because of toxic debris — expert at trial

LOS ANGELES, 4 Feb — Toxicity caused by debris from a metal-on-metal hip implant meant that the device had to be removed from a 66-year-old man who was suing manufacturer Johnson & Johnson, according to expert testimony heard at the trial on Friday.

“I concluded that his hip failed because of the toxic exposure,” said Robert Harrison, an occupational medicine specialist at the University of California, San Francisco, who was not involved in treating plaintiff Leon Kranisky but did review the medical records.

The testimony was heard in Los Angeles Superior Court in the first lawsuit to go to trial involving all-metal hips made by J&J’s DePuy unit. More than 10,000 US lawsuits have been filed since the hips were recalled from the market in 2010.

As many as 500,000 Americans are estimated to have received metal-on-metal hip replacements.

Lawyers for Kranisky argue that J&J was aware of the defects in the ASR hip implants, including the risk of poisoning from cobalt and chromium metal debris, even before it started selling the devices in 2004.

Kranisky’s blood tests showed that his levels of cobalt and chromium reached as much as seven times normal after he received the ASR hip.

The Food and Drug Administration last month proposed that companies making all-metal hip replacements provide additional information proving they are safe and effective before being allowed to continue selling them.

The agency said it was not recommending a specific level of metals in the blood as a trigger for revision surgery because there was not enough evidence to demonstrate a correlation between those levels and patient outcomes.

J&J attorney Alex Calfo said the amount of cobalt and chromium included DePuy executives explaining that the ASR hip was tested in the laboratory at a single angle of implantation. Plaintiff’s lawyers contend that they should have tested it using multiple angles.— Reuters

Tonga are displayed at a vegetable stall in La Merced market, downtown Mexico City on 31 Jan, 2013. — Reuters
**New US Secretary of State Kerry speaks out about peace**

WASHINGTON, 4 Feb—US Secretary of State John Kerry stressed his commitment to promoting Israeli-Palestinian peace on Sunday in telephone calls to the leaders of both sides, the State Department said. In separate conversations, Kerry, who took over as the top US diplomat on Friday, spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

"Turning to Middle East peace, the secretary underscored his personal commitment and that of President (Barack) Obama to support Israel's security and to pursue a lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians," State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said of Kerry's conversation with Netanyahu. A spokesperson for the Israeli prime minister confirmed that the call took place but provided no details. Netanyahu assumed the responsibility on Saturday of forming a new Israeli government following the 22 January election in which his rightist Likud-Beitenu lost ground but still emerged as the biggest party, with 31 seats in the 120-seat Israeli parliament.

His new government is expected to include a new centrist party headed by former TV personality Yair Lapid, which with 19 seats is the second-largest party in parliament, and the 12-seat far-right pro-settler Bayit Yehudi. —Reuters

**Deadly Pemex blast tests Mexico's new boss.**

Mexico City, 4 Feb—A deadly blast at Mexican state oil firm Pemex's headquarters is the first key test of new President Pena Nieto's promise that his party has broken with a past of shady cover-ups, and if handled properly, could help him overhaul the lumbering giant.

The disaster on Thursday sucked two months into Pena Nieto's presidency, just as Congress was preparing to discuss his plan to open up the state-run energy industry to more private investment.

The government has said it is still too early to say if the explosion that killed at least 34 people at Pemex's main offices in Mexico City was due to an attack, an accident or negligence.

If it was an accident that points to insufficient investment in Pemex, it could convince more Mexicans that something has to be done to make the monopoly more efficient and safer.

"The opportunity here is to make everybody aware that unless Pemex does something about this, things are only going to get worse," said a recently retired senior Pemex executive, asking not to be named.

"I think these are very savvy politicians and they will look for arguments based on this in favour of opening up the industry." However, if the government fails to deliver a transparent investigation and the Pemex explosion turns into a scandal, Pena Nieto may have a much tougher sell.

In one apparent early misstep, Pena Nieto faced criticism on social media when local media reported he was vacationing on Saturday. He returned to the scene of the blast at night, said he was overseeing rescue efforts and announced that one more body had been found. There were still several more missing.

Leading lawmakers told Reuters on Saturday that they would continue to push for changes to the oil industry while still keeping Pemex under state control.

"We are going to back a reform that strengthens Pemex and helps it secure the capital it needs," said Juan Ramon Torres, a former Pemex executive and a lawyer for the opposition National Action Party (PAN) in the lower house's energy committee. —Reuters

**Seven killed, 28 injured in bus accident in Egypt's South Sinai.**

CAIRO, 4 Feb—At least seven people were killed and another 28 injured on Sunday in a tourist bus accident on the Sharm al-Shaikh international highway in Egypt's South Sinai, security source told Xinhua.

"The bus ran over another car, in which all the people are predicted to be dead as well," the security source told Xinhua.

According to the head of the South Sinai ambulance authority Khadek Abu Hashem, the Ambulance Authority sent a private plane to transfer the injured people to hospital in Cairo.

"The ambulance authority sent a plane to transfer the injured people to Maadi military hospital," Abu Hashem said, adding that most of the injured were in critical condition. —Xinhua

**Pakistan army battles legacy of mistrust in Taleban heartland.**

According to the army narrative, the campaign includes winning over the region's ethnic Pashtun tribes through dialogue, creating commercial opportunities and providing education in new schools and colleges.

During a three-day trip with the army, Reuters got a rare glimpse not just into the scale of the army's state-building project in South Waziristan, but also the challenges that lurk in the inhospitable territory.

Government delegation starts Moscow visit to discuss wine issue.

However well-meaning the new approach, there are problems that won't go away—threats of retaliation by the al-Qaeda-linked militants, a lack of effective civilian administration and endemic corruption.

And the campaign to win hearts and minds has an ignoble track record in other conflict zones which serve as a reality check for the most optimistic Pakistani officials.

**One still missing in China mine flood.**

HEFEI, 4 Feb—Rescuers have pulled most of the miners trapped in a flooded coal mine in east China's Anhui Province to safety and are searching for the last missing worker, said a mine manager late on Sunday.

The flooding occurred at 0:20 am on Sunday, when 444 miners were working underground at the Taoyuan Mine in Suizhou City. Of 10 pm, 443 of them have been rescued.

"The 443 people who have been pulled out of the mine have no serious health problems and have returned home for rest," said Xu Hualu, the mine's boss.

The mine's work data showed a total of 444 miners were working underground when the flood occurred, said Zhang Xianyi, another mine official. He added rescuers were searching for the last missing person.

The mine has suspended production.

The Press that the Georgians would be ready to talk with Russia's chief sanitary doctor Genady Onishchenko. Members of the Moscow-bound Georgian delegation also include Davit Grigolia, chief advisor for the Georgian state wine agency, officials from the phyto-sanitary department of the Georgian state food agency, as well as representatives from the country's wine and food industry. —Xinhua

**Georgian delegation starts Moscow visit to discuss wine issue.**

The Georgian delegation left here on Sunday for Moscow to start the country's first official visit to its northern neighbour — the Russian Federation — since August 2008.

Levan Davitadzividze, head of the delegation, told the press at the Tbilisi International Airport that the delegation would present Georgian wines in Moscow.

"We will hold presentations about the (quality) control mechanism of the food and wines in Georgia ... how the product is controlled in Georgia; how the export is certified ... and then it will be discussed what further steps should be taken to return Georgian products to the Russian market," said Davitadzividze.

"Apart from wines, mineral water exports will also be discussed and on the next step — fruits and vegetables," Davitadzividze added.

Tengiz Kalandadze, deputy chief of the Georgian state food agency, told the Georgian delegation, the campaign includes winning over the region's ethnic Pashtun tribes through dialogue, creating commercial opportunities and providing education in new schools and colleges.

During a three-day trip with the army, Reuters got a rare glimpse not just into the scale of the army's state-building project in South Waziristan, but also the challenges that lurk in the inhospitable territory.

**Chagmali, 4 Feb—In a Pakistan army base high in the mountains on the Afghan frontier, a general explains a strategy for fighting the Taliban he calls simply 'WHAM'.**

The name has a distinctly hallucinogenic ring. But the soldiers are learning to fire a new kind of war in a region US President Barack Obama has called the most dangerous on Earth.

"WHAM — winning hearts and minds," explains the straight-talking General Nazir Butt, in charge of converting the army's gains on the battlefield into durable security.

"The plan is to turn militant sanctuaries into safe havens for the people."

The term WHAM has been used before, but the focus this time is South Waziristan, an enclave on the Afghan border once the epicentre of a spreading Pakistani Taliban insurgency that shocked the country and its challenge to the authority of the nuclear-armed state.

**Soldiers drive through a road near Wana, the main town in Pakistan's South Waziristan tribal region bordering Afghanistan on 27 Nov, 2012. REUTERS**
**Egypt takes delivery of US fighter jets**

CAIRO, 4 Feb—The United States has delivered four F-16 fighter jets to Egypt, Egypt’s military and a US military delegation said on Sunday, highlighting military links between the two countries despite Egypt’s political upheaval.

A statement from the Arab News agency in Cairo said a US delegation and Egypt held a joint ceremony on Sunday to mark the arrival of the jets, the latest of 224 F-16s delivered to Egypt. US aid, which has brought criticism in the US Congress, has given the United States leverage over Egypt for decades and given its warships preferential access to the Suez Canal.

The US delegation also discussed preparations for October’s Bright Star joint training exercises, the largest of their kind in the region, an Egyptian military source said. Bright Star was held every two years, was scrapped in 2011 following the political upheaval that saw the ouster of former President Hosni Mubarak and the instalment of the military council as interim leaders until Mohamed Mursi was elected president in June of last year.

**Pakistani girl shot by Taleban has successful skull surgery**

Pakistani schoolgirl Malala Yousufzai (C) waves with nurses as she is discharged from The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham in this handout photograph released on 4 Jan, 2013.—Reuters

**Syrian troops repel rebels’ attack on gunship**

DAMASCUS, 4 Feb—Armed rebels tried on Sunday to attack a Syrian helicopter gunship in the northeastern province of al-Raqa when its crew members responded and killed many of the assailants, a pro-government TV said.

The helicopter had to land 15 km away from the al-Thawra military airport in that area due to a malfunction, al-Ekhbaria TV said, adding that the gunmen tried to attack the gunship but they were repelled by the troops.

The TV also reported clashes between the armed rebels and government troops in the vicinity of the central prison of the eastern province of Deir al-Zour on Sunday, adding that many armed men were killed during the clashes.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a London-based activists’ group, said that the local councilor of the city of Aleppo, Ibrahim Azzone, was killed on Saturday by rebel fighters along with his wife and daughter.

The Observatory on Sunday posted on its Facebook a video footage purporting to show Azzone lying dead in an alley in the Sheikh Saeed District.

It also posted a video showing the rebels executing four young men on charges of having connections with the Syrian security forces and the killing of a rebel fighter.

Another video posted by the Observatory showed bodies being pulled out from a destroyed building in what the network said was a result of a bombardment by the Syrian army on al-Assairi al-Shariqi District in Aleppo.

However, pro-Syrian government online news websites said the building was destroyed when armed rebels tried to target a Syrian war jet with a rocket that missed the target and slammed the building at al-Assairi and killed many of its residents. Yet, no report could be independently verified.

Blasts and attacks have become daily routines in Syria that has been gripped by the civil war since March 2011. Forces that left more than 60,000 people killed amid faltering efforts for peace, according to UN figures.—Xinhua

**UAE minister urges Arab world to “stop blaming others”**

DUBAI, 4 Feb — The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Anwar Gargash, said on Sunday the Arab world shall increase economic integration in order to overcome the fallout of the Arab turmoil. Speaking at the inauguration session of the two-day Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Economic Forum in Sharjah, Gargash said the ongoing turmoil in some Arab countries is triggered by a lack of opportunity felt by the young generation, with no light at the end of the tunnel being visible.

“But the age of colonization has finished many decades ago and we Arabs should stop finger pointing at other countries when looking for the cause of our problems,” said Gargash. The UAE proved that an Arab country, with friendly economic atmosphere, over 30 free zones and the region’s biggest ports and airports, can attract capital and provide political stability at the same time. Gargash pointed out that despite some progress, economic integration in the MENA was still poor. “We lag behind the European Union and behind the North American free trade deal NAFTA. "However, the minister affirmed that oil-importing countries in the MENA region were not able to manage the economic turnaround alone.—Xinhua

**French planes pound Islamist camps in north Mali desert**

PARIS, 4 Feb—French warplanes pounded Islamist rebel camps in the far north of Mali on Sunday, military sources said, a day after French President Francois Hollande was hailed as a savior during a visit to the West African country.

Thierry Burkhard, spokesman for the French army in Paris, said the overnight raids targeted logistics bases and training camps used by the Al-Qaeda-linked rebels near the town of Tassili, close to the Algerian border.

"These were important air strikes," Burkhard told Reuters. Tessaout, some 200 km (125 miles) north of the regional capital Kidal, is one of the main gateways into the Adrar des Ifoghas mountains where the rebels have sought refuge after fleeing major towns.

France says the rebels are also holding hostage in these mountains seven of its citizens, seized in recent years in the Sahara region. Malian military sources said French and Chad soldiers had clashed with members of the Ansar Dine militant group in the region around Kidal on Saturday.

French attack helicopters and transport planes carrying special forces left the city of Gao to reinforce the French and Chadian contingent stationed at the airport in Kidal.

The town of Kidal itself is under the control of the pro-autonomy MNLA Tuareg rebel group, which occupied it after Ansar Dine fighters fled six days ago.

France has deployed 3,500 ground troops, fighter jets and armored vehicles in the three-week-old Operation Serval (Wildcat) which has broken the Islamists’ 10-month grip on the towns of northern Mali, where they violently imposed sharia law.— Reuters

**New Light of Myanmar**

Tuesday, 5 February, 2013

**Boyan PM calls for regional cooperation, talks**

SARAJEVO, 4 Feb—Vje- koslav Bevanda, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), on Sunday called for regional cooperation before he left for Serbia for an of- ficial visit.

Bevanda noted he will talk with his Serbian counter- part to pave the way for future bilateral cooperation, saying good relations with neighboring countries are important to BiH.

“We are neighbours. As in our life, neighbours are very important,” he said, adding that warm ties and cooperation between countries of the Western Balkans will make Bosnia stronger.

He said neighbour- ing countries should solve problems through talks.

“When we talk, we can get rid of some prob- lems...If we do not talk, they will remain unresolved and we will in the next 20 years continue to talk about unresolved issues,” Bevanda is to meet Serbian Prime Minister Ivica Dacic on Monday, with main topics on trade, European integration and refugees.—Xinhua
No mountain too high

Since the very start of human civilization mankind has been overcoming difficult challenges while opening more and more ways for greater progress. So, mankind has the power to handle any kind of issue for its survival and advancement. That is why man is the smartest creature on Earth.

Truly, we in Myanmar too have difficulties and challenges we are dealing with in our democratization process. Some of these difficulties and challenges may linger till in the future as there is not a single problem-free country in this world. At the same time our present prospects and opportunities are brighter than ever before. We should not fail to grasp them.

But the question here is how are we going to successfully mount all our challenges and difficulties, and how are we going to make our dreams come true. In fact, we need a force powerful enough to settle all disputes, solve all problems, overcome all challenges and endure all kinds of hardships. This powerful force will make headway in every facet and for our perpetuation.

Yes, we do have this kind of powerful force, and it is not other than the internal strength or in other words the united strength of the whole Union. As a heterogeneous society, our first priority is the unity of all the nationalities of the Union. We may have some disputes or disagreements among our brethren. But this does not mean that we lack unity, as we are finding all possible means, enlisting all available forces and employing all helpful ways in our efforts for national integration because unity is the greatest strength and asset for the Union in braving challenges and advancing with might and main.

So, it is crystal clear how important national unity is. With national unity we have no mountain too high and no country too far.

Union Minister leaves for Cambodia to attend former Cambodian King’s funeral

YANGON, 4Feb—Union Minister at the President Office U Tin Naing Thein left here for Cambodia yesterday.

Fire breaks out in Mohinj

MOHINJ, 4Feb—A fire broke out at private filling station in Hsinbyume Village of Mohinj town due to negligence of candle fire at about 2 pm on 28 January. Due to the fire, a house including fuel containers were blasted. Two fire engines and fifteen fire brigade members, Tatmadawmen and police members participated in fighting the fire. Mohinj police station opened a file against the station owner.

Similarly, a fire broke out at U Kha Maung’s house in AungSan Ward in Hinthada Township on 28 January. The fire started from electric fire wire shock and a two-storey house was destroyed. The fire brigade members and police members controlled the fire with the use of one fire engine.

In a separate incident, a fire broke out at house No 156 in Kyawtaw Ward in Myitkyina Township due to negligence of candle fire at about 11:30 pm on 19 January. The fire rendered 64 homeless people and engulfed six houses and one truck. Myitkyina No (2) police station filed a lawsuit against the house owner.

Regatta and Equestrian Tournament were the two non-religious royal festivals held by Myanmar kings in the month of Tabaung (September) and Pyatho (January) respectively. These two festivals displayed Myanmar kings’ military might and main. Myanmar traditional military organizations followed the model of those of Buddha Jataka stories. Being a major land entity with a long coastal line, Myanmar kept both land and water forces for her security and defence. “Vey’ ac [water] Kyi’ ac [land]” (land and water forces) (march) (march with water and land forces) frequently appeared in Myanmar chronology and history. Water forces included all kinds of water crafts—from simple mobile war canoes to heavy sea galleons and mid and big sized ships with well trained and well armed naval fighters. Yearly display, exercise and recruitment of water forces took place in the water crafts of the country—lakes, rivers and shallow seas with the ceremonial and active participation of the king and all male members of the court in September when the weather was fine and favourable. This Festival was known as “Yey Kin Taw” (Royal Regatta Festival).

Royal equestrian Tournament yearly took place in Pyatho (January) the chilly month of Myanmar’s cold season. Myanmar land forces consisted of four main elements, namely Elephantry, Cavalry, Chariotry and Infantry. Elephantry was an army of well-trained elephant fighters, with at least seven men soldiers on each elephant. Cavalry compared of well-trained horsemen. Chariotry with not more than three soldiers on each chariot trained for speed and lighting attack. Infantry was formed by regiments of foot soldiers—swordsmen, spearmen, lancers, archers, gunners and artillery men including speedy message bearers. This Festival was known as “Myin Kin Taw”. Just as in the case of Royal Regatta Festival, Royal Equestrian Tournament was heldto display, exercise and recruit, in the spacious open ground facing the Palace or the Htutaw (Royal Priey Council) Building, within the palace city.

The month Pyatho is most hefting for this festival. Pyatho is the month of the Zodiac sign of Tavu [tiger] in astrology. The zodiac sign of this month is Makan [a mythical sea monster or dragon] with a prehensile snout]. The northerly cold breeze turns the entire environment misty and chilly. Khwya Nyo (a white lotus flower) or Cremenit, Thazin (orchid) and Gamone (aromatic herbal plant) bloom and send out their fragrances. The entire landscape is sprayed with myriads of consolation.

In such a pleasant season, the equestrian Tournament which required bravery, skill and physical prowess, was held in the courtyard or open ground within the palace city.

Evidences of this festival were found in surviving art works, history and literature. The Kasongs and dances of Pinya Period (1286-1384 A.D) depicted (a) the traditional equestrian tournament of the time.

Broadly speaking traditional equestrian festival had two programmes-display and contest. In display, 37 different styles of horsemanship and 37 different modes of the following lances (spears, swords and other weapons also) were demonstrated by select equestrian soldiers. Besides archers, and single combat on war elephant, horse, chariot or elephant took part in the display.

Court hard and rhyme sters of different history periods transformed these displays in different poetic forms. Maha Dhamma Thinyang, a royal adviser Minister to King Bagiyaw (1819-1837) A.D. composed 37 Loota Verses. 37 music and songs describing 37 modes of horsemanship and 37 ways of playing and performing with lances. For easy memorisation the above also composed them in 37 Thanbaw couplets.

In contest or Tournament programme, 17 ways of horse-riding used in war and on battle ground in Myanmar traditional martial arts were competed such as equestrian combat on horse, elephant and chariot, horse race, elephant race and chariot race, skill in using weapons. In some historical Pyatho, the Tournament was named “Set Thwin Pwe” or “Set Hoo Pwe” because equestrians used an arrow with a small bird to hit the centre of the circular target on poles of different heights placed at different distances. All participants were rewarded with awards of title, gifts, cash and kind by their Majesties. Every participant received a scarf of golden Thread or Khwya Nyo flower.

King Thibaw (1878-1885 A.D) the last Myanmar King

Maha Saddhamma Jotika bhaja
Sithu Dr. Khin Maung Nyunt

Pyatho, the month of royal equestrian tourney

King held the equestrian festival in 1878 which was probably the last festival of this kind. It was described in the chronicle “Knonhung Set Maha Yazawun Tgyi Vol. 3, folio 208”.

In the year 1320 M.E, second winning day of Pyatho to make preparation for equestrian festival and Tournament in accordance with the traditional display of cavalry-elephantry, chariotry, archery, and demonstration of principally martial arts as military training. As for the last Pyatho of the past, five circular target posts were set up in straight line in the courtyard on the left side of Myey Nan Palace Buildings. The heights of five circular target posts ranged from 5 cubits, 20 cubits, 25 cubits, 30 cubits to 50 cubits. To the north side of the Royal Thebada stair-case in royal position was built. It was decorated with royal emblems and was ready for the events.

"On the 3rd winning day of Pyat than, princes, ministers, Ministers of the interior, Commander of Royal Palace Guard, Officers of the Royal Regiment of cavalry, Kings and commanders and all army officers dressed in their respective military uniform rode caparisoned steeds. Each by turn with 10 lances participated in the contest. Riding the horse at high speed, each by turn threw a lance at a time, to hit the circular targets on the high post, until ten had been thrown: Princes dressed in the army uniform of their rank also contested. His Majesty wearing priceless and military uniform and gem studded helmet, and chief Queen, and the entire court appeared in the royal pavilion to view the equestrian tourney. Their Majesties awarded the winners each a scarf woven with gold and silver threads and a bunch of Thazin orchid for every lance that hit the centre of the circular target.

When the tournament was over, officers of the Royal Horse [Manipuri Regimen] and Akhah Horse [Assam Regiment] of cavalry and their equerries gave a display of skill in use of weapon and horsemanship, such as cutting banana stems, hacking lime fruit and water pot in one stoke with sword or lances, while riding at high speed, and different techniques of horse-riding in war and on the battle ground. The winners were awarded with titles from their Majesties and the court entered the Palace…"

One princely game contested at the equestrian Tournament was “Go-Lee”. It was in fact a Polo game. But in Myanmar history and literature it was mentioned as “gpoel”. In the days of Myanmar monarchy this game was one of the favourite games Myanmar royalty, nobility and aristocracy played anytime of the year. It was in an equestrian game requiring skill in horse-riding and so it was included in the programme of Equestrian Tournament. Its origin was claimed by all countries with horse tradition such as Mongolia, China, Persia, Tibet and central Asian countries. They had their version of Gu-Le (Polo) game.

How and when Gu-Lee game came to Myanmar need research. Form what cultural anthropologists and historians say, we may make some surmises. Ethnically they think the Gu-Le (Polo) game was brought by the Chinese and Central Asian,riding horses and driving caravans in guest of new green pasture in Myanmar. (See page 9)
**NATIONAL**

**Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann receives guests from World Bank**

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**Union Minister meets Union Day delegates from regions and states**

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**Pyithu Hluttaw Deputy Speaker receives Allen & Overy team**

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**Pyatho, the month of royal...**

(from page 8)

their Mongoloid tradition and customs including equestrian game like gu-lee were brought into Myanmar. Historians say that Gu-Lee game was mentioned in Myanmar chronicles and literature only in the 15th century. For Tounghoo period (1486–1599 A.D.) to the end of Kamaung period (1572–1885 A.D.) Gu-Lee was the popular game among ruling class.

Court bands composed different forms of verse describing this game in association with equestrian festival. The virtuoso ratu-poems composed by Tounghoo Period Vicerey King Nat Shin Naung composed more than 100 ratu-poems about Gu-Lee games he played with his princely mates. In Myanmar traditional performing arts Gu-Lee game was sung, and mimed in dance. Thirty seven songs of propitiation for thirty seven nat-spirits have description of Gu-Lee game. In the dance styles of a female dancer in Minianmar dramaties performance are mimetic movements of horse-riding and playing Gu-Lee game. In Inwa Period of Myanmar history, at the court of King Shoe Nawn Kyaw Shin, there was a high-ranking knight named Shoe Navar alfa who was an excellent Gu-Lee Player. Legend has it that when he became Nat spirit after his violent death, songs were sung in praise of his mastery of Gu-Lee game. His statues have a Gu-Lee stick in one hand and a Gu-Lee ball in the other. These evidences show that Myanmar already had Gu-Lee game long before the British introduced it as polo game to Myanmar.

Royal regalia and equestrian tournay ceased in the colonial period though boat races were held at local pagoda festivals. The British introduced their horse races, building race courses at Yangon and Mandalay for revenue and fundraising many Myanmar wealthy men were ruined due to betting at horse races. New generations of Myanmar people learnt about these festivals only from school textbooks.

Joint efforts of the Government and the public how revived these traditional monthly festivals to maintain Myanmar cultural heritage. In Mandalay such festivals are held occasionally on local scale. On 23rd October 1993, the Equestrian Festival made its debut in Yangon after decades of its disappearance. At the Aung San Sports Stadium, downtown Yangon, a week long display and contest of Equestrian Tournay were held on a state level, providing a golden opportunity for every Myanmar and foreign visitor and resident to view the long forgotten royal pageant and colourful and exciting events.

**Drugs and ammunition seized in Tachileik**

Drugs, rounds of ammunition and sniper were seized in Tachileik Township this morning. The members of local military column, anti-drug squad and Tachileik Township police members seized 9000 WY brand pink stimulants, 150 grams of heroin, 200 grams of brown opium, 150 grams of caffeine worth K27,661,250 and Baht 1,011,000 and 14 ticals of jewellery, five small assorted weapons, 180 bullets, six magazines and one sniper’s telescope at Ahtubakkhan village in Lwetakawthan village-tract of Tachileik Township, according to the Ministry of Defence. — MNA

**Myanmar women to contribute to nation-building endeavours**

The Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation 2012 marked its anniversary at the MWAF office in Ddekkhinahtih Township, here this morning.

President Daw Mya Mya in her remarks said that Myanmar women are to broaden their horizon and are to contribute to nation-building endeavours. The Myanmar women played an important role when preserving tradition and customs of our country. As foreign culture is penetrating deeply into the country now, Myanmar women should be aware of preserving tradition and customs.

The President then looked the booth. The secretary general read out the proposal presented by the federation. The President responded to the reports of the members of states/region women’s affairs organisation.

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Saudi Arabia expects 2000 housekeeping workers from Philippines

Riyadh, 4 Feb—Philippine government has approved the recruitment of more than 2,000 housekeeping workers who will work in Saudi Arabia, according to Saudi Al Eqtisadia newspaper on Sunday.

The workers are expected to arrive soon after the recruitment agencies complete all necessary procedures. Philippine Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ezzedin Tago told the newspaper.

Saudi families have been waiting for the arrival of their housekeepers since October when the Philippine government lifted its ban on housekeeping workers.

The ambassador said earlier that no workers from the Philippines would be allowed to come to Saudi Arabia without approved working contracts with their employers. He said that the new contract protects the rights of both Saudi families and their workers.

Cuba elects new national, local parliaments

Havana, 4 Feb—Over 8.5 million Cubans on Sunday started to cast their votes for the picking of nearly 1,900 members of the country’s new national and provincial legislatures.

They are expected to elect 612 National Assembly members from an equal number of candidates, and select nearly 1,270 delegates to the 15 provincial people’s power assemblies, or the local legislatures, for a five-year term.

A total of 29,942 polling stations were set up across the island nation and are running from 7 am (1200 GMT) to 6 pm (2300 GMT) on Sunday. The elections involve 147,377 electoral commissions of various constituencies and over 225,000 election of voting energy, 500,000 working in the polling stations.

According to Alina Babtina, president of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), voters have received necessary training to ensure a smooth voting process, and the voting system was fully tested in a trial run conducted last Saturday.

Babtina showed that 67 per cent of the new National Assembly’s members are expected to be new faces, and nearly half of its members will be female. Maricela Castro, daughter of Cuban President Raul Castro and Director of the National Centre for Sexual Education (CENESEX), is running for the first time for the national legislature.

According to the Cuban constitution, candidates for the national and provincial legislatures must gain more than 50 per cent of all valid votes to get elected.

Cuba’s Electoral Act also stipulates that within 45 days after the National Assembly election, the new Assembly should hold an inaugural meeting and appoint a 31-member Council of State, including its president, for a term of five years.

Incumbent President Raul Castro is expected to secure a second term at the upcoming meeting. But it would also be his last due to a 10-year limit for anyone to hold government offices introduced in 2011 by the ruling Cuban Communist Party.

Raul Castro, 81, is running for the new National Assembly as a candidate representing the municipality of ‘Second Front’ in the western province of Santiago de Cuba. His elder brother and former president Fidel Castro, now 86 and retired since 2008, represents the district of Santiago de Cuba city.

South Africa, Russia to enhance cooperation

JOHANNESBURG, 4 Feb—South Africa’s International Relations and Cooperation Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane on Sunday met with Russia’s Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Sergey Donskoy in Pretoria to explore ways of enhancing cooperation in various fields.

Donskoy is in South Africa to attend a meeting of South Africa-Russia Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), according to the South African Government Communication and Information System (GCIS).

The ITEC is a bilateral cooperation mechanism between South Africa and Russia that meets annually in order to strengthen mutually beneficial economic, commercial and social relations as well as technical cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting presents an opportunity for the ministers to follow-up on decisions taken during the 11th ITEC meeting held in Moscow in November last year.

The ministers are also expected to finalize priority projects and agreements that will be concluded during President Vladimir Putin’s official visit to South Africa in March.

The agreements under consideration are in the fields of agriculture, education, energy, fishing, justice, minerals resources, science and technology, and transport.

Donskoy’s visit came as Russia is showing growing interest in the continent’s mining industry. Russian mining companies will take part in this year’s Investing in African Mining Indaba (conference) scheduled for February 4 to 7 in Cape Town, organizers said.

US to give PHL 100,000 dollars for coral damaged by grounded Navy ship

MANILA, 4 Feb—The United States committed on Sunday to give 4.1 million pesos (about 0.1 million US dollar) for the coral restoration efforts of the Philippines following the recent grounding of the USS Guardian at the Tubbataha Reef in Sulu Sea. “In view of damage caused by the USS Guardian accident at Tubbataha Reef, the United States has expressed its regrets and is prepared to provide appropriate compensation to the Republic of the Philippines,” a statement released on Sunday by the US Embassy in Manila.

According to the latest assessment at the Tubbataha Reef National Marine Park, over 4,000 square metres of the coral in the park was damaged by the Guardian, which belongs to the Seventh Fleet of US Navy. "Through USAid’s (US Agency for International Development) Coral Triangle Support Partnership (CTSP), 4.1 million pesos (100,000 US dollar) will be granted to a Philippine university to support coral restoration research at Tubbataha Reef,” the embassy said. It is said that the amount will cover a study to develop a technical plan for coral reef rehabilitation. At the same time, the US government also planned to offer to fund a site survey for proposed improvements to the existing ranger station on Tubbataha Reef.

"In addition to compensation, the US government is planning a number of other activities which will underscore its commitment to Tubbataha’s recovery and the protection of the marine resources of the Philippines," it added.

The USS Guardian ran aground at the Tubbataha Reef, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, on 17 January, after a port call at the Subic Bay in northern part of the Philippines.
Sri Lanka accuses international bar of violating visa rules

COLOMBO, 4 Feb — The Sri Lankan government on Sunday accused four members of the International Bar Association (IBA) of attempting to violate the visa rules of the island nation.

A statement by the External Affairs Ministry said that following the detection of inaccurate information contained in the visa applications of the four member delegation representing IBA, which had unilaterally scheduled a visit to Sri Lanka, the government was constrained to withdraw visas for the four applicants.

In a statement issued on Friday, IBA said it was forced to postpone a visit to Sri Lanka after the visas of its members had been revoked.

The visit was to investigate the impeachment and subsequent removal of former Sri Lankan Chief Justice Shirani Bandaranayake.

“It may be noted that the Business Visa category which had been applied for in the case of 3 persons were issued on the basis of the purpose of the visit being reflected as Conferenc es, Workshops and Seminars, while the 4th person had been issued a gratis visa and the purpose of the visit being cited as Private. However it came to light that the stated purpose for the visit in the applications was not in conformity with the actual nature of the visit,” the Sri Lankan External Affairs Ministry said.

Considering the prestigious reputation of the IBA, the External Affairs Ministry said it would be expected that the organization would scrupulously adhere to the rules and regulations governing a country’s visa regime.

The External Affairs Ministry said that in keeping with the Government of Sri Lanka’s interest in transparency, bona-fide applications for visas of this nature are processed with objectivity.

However, it said that in keeping with universal practice, appropriate action would be taken in the event there is a misrepresentation of information by a visa applicant.

India proposes major developing countries be labelled “re-emerging powers”

NEW DELHI, 4 Feb — India has proposed that the India, China and other major developing nations be labelled “re-emerging powers” rather than “emerging powers, taking into consideration of their historical role they played in the past, according to local daily The Hindu on Sunday.

Indian National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon told the Munich Security Conference on Saturday that the Western construct of labeling India, China and other developing countries as “emerging nations” did not do justice to their historical, according to the newspaper.

Speaking at the first-ever special session on “rising powers and global governance” at the Munich conference, Menon felt he was not sure if this label fitted the description of newly rising economic powers like China and India.

He said some people feel these countries are in the process of restoring the historical norm in the international power structure.

“Re-emerging powers would be less condescending,” he suggested.

He said the notion was largely inspired by Western history that the re-emergence of these countries on the global stage would lead to conflict and dissonance in the global order.

Such concepts were a result of the European experience since Treaty of Westphalia, as four out of five instances of reordering of the balance of power had involved conflicts of massive proportions. This led to the assumption that the rest of the world will follow a similar course, he said.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen (R) meets with French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault (L) at the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia, on 4 Feb, 2013. Ayrault arrived here on Sunday morning to attend the royal cremation ceremony of the late Cambodian former King Norodom Sihanouk, which will be held on Monday. —Xinhua

Cambodian Prime Minister Han Sen (R) meets with French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault in Phnom Penh. The joint forces also found weapons, the statement added.

The Taleban insurgent group, which has been waging an insurgency of more than one decade, has yet to make comments.

Afghan forces and some 100,000 NATO-led coalition troops have intensified cleanup operations against Taleban and other militant groups recently but the insurgents responded by carrying out armed attacks and roadside bombings.

On Saturday, four members of a family and a driver were killed when a vehicle touched off a roadside plant bomb in southern Helmand Province. —Xinhua

Four Taleban insurgents killed in Afghan raids

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New Light of Myanmar

Regional

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China to accelerate modernization, boost developmental vitality in rural areas

Beijing, 4 Feb—China will focus on accelerating agricultural modernization and boosting developmental vitality of rural areas, China’s first policy docu-

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Year of the Snake may smile on Psy, but health woes could bite

South Korean rapper Psy performs during a concert in Bangkok on 28 Nov. 2012.—Reuters

TAIPEI, 4 Feb—The coming lunar Year of the Snake is likely to smile on South Korean rapper Psy with increased prosperity, but he will need to leave Korea to make money and could risk exhaustion. As Chinese communities around the globe prepare for the lunar New Year on 1 February, which falls in the Year of the Snake, a Taiwanese fortune teller predicted a mixed bag of luck for famous “snake” people around the world. Psy, who shot to global fame last year with “Gangnam Style” and was born in 1977, is likely to make even more money this year if he continues to travel around the world, though he also faces a few challenges, said fortune teller Chan Wei-chung. “First, he must take care of his health. Second, he must make good judgments. Third, his career will be helped by people of prominence—but most importantly, he will need to leave Korea and run around the world,” Chan told Reuters.

He will work and receive rewards, but he must be careful not to exhaust himself and become ill, because it could bring disaster to his year of the snake.” — Reuters

Pitt, Jolie learning Mandarin

LONDON, 4 Feb—Hollywood couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie have developed an interest in China and are planning to learn Mandarin.

The language could come in handy as friends of the 65th annual Directors Guild of America Awards in Los Angeles, on 2 Feb, 2013.—Reuters

Ben Affleck poses for photographs with the Feature Film Award at the 65th annual Directors Guild of America Awards in Los Angeles, on 2 Feb, 2013.—Reuters

Los Angeles, 4 Feb—Actor-turned-filmmaker Ben Affleck won the top honour from his peers at the Directors Guild of America on Saturday for the movie “Argo”, cementing the Iran hostage drama as a major player in this year’s Oscars. Since 1948, there have been only six occasions when the Directors Guild of America (DGA) winner has not gone on to win the Oscar for Best Director. “I have nothing but respect for the Academy,” Affleck said after collecting his first DGA award. The Hollywood star, a producer of “Argo”, said he was thrilled the film was nominated for the Oscars’ Best Picture award. “You are not entitled to win anything,” he said.

“Argo” has picked up the three top awards from the industry’s guild, whose members are also members of the Academy. Last weekend, the film was the victor at both the Producers Guild and the Screen Actors Guild awards, leaving Steven Spielberg’s Civil War-era epic “Lincoln” in its wake. Affleck also won Best Director at the Golden Globes while “Argo” won Best Drama. The Oscars will be held on 24 February.

On Saturday, Affleck hosted four directors who had all previously won the top DGA honour and gone on to win the Best Director Oscar. It has been a particularly tough awards season for Spielberg, nominated by the DGA for the 11th time with “Lincoln” and a two-time winner for “Schindler’s List” in 1994 and “Saving Private Ryan” in 1999. “What an incredible year for movies,” said Spielberg. “Maybe I’ve had moments when I wished it wasn’t such an incredible year.” — Reuters

Demi Moore’s dinner date with Lindsay Lohan’s ex-boyfriend

NEW DELHI, 4 Feb — Demi Moore enjoyed a late dinner date with her rumoured new love interest on Friday (01.02.13). The 50-year-old actress—who has three daughters Rumor, Scout, 24, and Tallulah, 18, with her ex-husband Bruce Willis—was spotted dining in West Hollywood with Lindsay Lohan’s ex-boyfriend Harry Morton, 31, despite recently insisting they are just friends.

A source told USMagazine.com: “She looked really very happy,” as she enjoyed a romantic meal with the restaurant owner—who dated Lindsay in 2008—in the back of the restaurant. Demi reportedly looked flawless in a skin-tight dress and high heels, and seemed relaxed as she greeted other people in the club before leaving with Harry at around 10 pm.

PTI

Beyonce sings, reunites Destiny’s Child at Super Bowl half-time show

NEW ORLEANS, 4 Feb—Beyonce strutted and shimmered her way through football’s Super Bowl half-time show and thrilled fans by reuniting with her former Destiny’s Child bandmates on Sunday in New Orleans.

Beyonce, wearing a revealing black leather jacket and mini-skirt combination, was surrounded by bursts of fire, smoke and silhouette as she performed at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. More than 100 million television viewers were tuned in to the NFL championship game between the San Francisco 49ers and Baltimore Ravens.

The singer called out to the crowd several times during her first songs, “Love on Top,” “Crazy in Love,” “End of Time” and “Baby Boy,” to emphasize that she was singing live. On Thursday, Beyonce admitted she sang along with a pre-recorded track of the national anthem at President Barack Obama’s inauguration last month.

The lip-synching controversy threatened to derail the pop singer’s crafted comeback after giving birth to her first child with rapper and husband Jay-Z in January 2012. Beyonce will also premiere her self-directed documentary, “Life Is But A Dream,” on HBO on 16 February.

During Sunday’s half-time show, the 31-year-old singer strapped and shook her hips and torso while video of Beyonce dancing was projected alongside her to give the appearance of a choreographed routine.

PTI

Demi Moore reportedly fell down the stairs of a small, new boyfriend Vito Schnabel. The 26-year-old art dealer broke off their relationship last month after he became concerned that the attention surrounding their relationship ship would distract from his career. Harry was also previously linked to Jennifer Aniston, whom he reportedly dated briefly in 2010.—PTI

Demi Moore’s dinner date with Lindsay Lohan’s ex-boyfriend
Ski jumping: Takanashi 5th in Sapporo World Cup jump

Japan's Sara Takanashi has climbed to fifth spot in the Ski Jumping World Cup standings after finishing 5th in the final leg of the season, which was held in Sapporo, Japan on Saturday.

Spain crash out, Czechs through in Davis Cup

Spain lost to the Czech Republic in the Davis Cup quarter-finals on Sunday, ending their hopes of reaching the semi-finals. The Czechs won the match 3-1, with Michael Kor and Jan Vesely each winning their singles matches and the doubles pair of Karel Klaholz and Filip Polasek earning a victory.

New Orleans in party mode in lead up to Super Bowl

The city of New Orleans was transformed into one massive party on Sunday as the city prepared to host the 47th Super Bowl between the San Francisco 49ers and Baltimore Ravens. The city's French Quarter was packed with visiting fans soaking up the atmosphere before the biggest game in American professional sports was due to start at 6:30 ET. Across the country, millions of people were having their own Super Bowl parties in preparation for a game that has all the ingredients of a classic.

The two teams left their hotels in the early afternoon and took a short bus ride through the crowded streets to the Superdome, which will be packed with more than 70,000 spectators. For the first time in the 47 years of the Super Bowl, two brothers will go head-to-head for the National Football League championship.

Mickelson wins Phoenix Open by four shots

Phil Mickelson held off a last-day charge by fellow American and playing partner Brandt Snedeker to end a week of scintillating golf with a four-shot triumph at the Phoenix Open in Scottsdale, Arizona on Sunday. Left-hander Mickelson birdied three of the last six holes to close with a four-under-par 67 at the TPC Scottsdale, completing a wire-to-wire victory with a record-tying 28-under total of 256 to clinch his 41st PGA Tour title.

Jeew slips on final day, finishes 10th in Dubai Classic

Jeew Milika Singh slipped on the final day as he flitted away a good start to manage only an even par 72 that saw him finish tied 10th after being in a position to challenge for the Dubai Classic title here yesterday.

Spain crash out, Czechs through in Davis Cup

Tomas Berdych (L) of the Czech Republic and his team mate Lukas Rosol (2nd L) shake hands with Stanislas Wawrinka (2R) and Marco Chiudinelli (R) of Switzerland after winning their Davis Cup world group round 1 tennis doubles match at Palexpo in Geneva on 2 Feb, 2013. With a duration of seven hours and one minute, the match was the longest in Davis Cup history.

Jeew stays where he was after three days, at 14-under par, while Stephen Gallacher ended his nine-year wait for a second European Tour title in stunning fashion. — PTI

New Light of Myanmar
Use of farming machinery demonstrated in Taikkyi Township

YANGON, 4 Feb—A demonstration on use of machinery equipment was held at 18-acre farmland of U Myint Swe in Thitusa Village in Taikkyi Township on 31 January. Head of Yangon Region Agricultural Mechanization Department U Ko Ko, Head of Yangon North District U Naing Min Thu and Head of Township AMD U Tun Tun Oo gave talks on advantage of using farming equipment and demonstrated use of machinery.—Kyimon

ITALY'S ALITALIA SUSPENDS CARPATAIR FLIGHTS AFTER ACCIDENT

ROME, 4 Feb—Italy's Alitalia suspended its flights operated by Romanian airline Carpatair after 16 people were injured at Rome's international Fiumicino airport on Saturday night when a turboprop plane went off the runway during landing in strong winds.

Alitalia immediately launched an investigation and at the same time suspended all flights operated by Carpatair on behalf of it from Pisa and Bologna to Rome, "the airline company said in a statement.

On Saturday night, an ATR 72 aircraft operated by Carpatair from the Tuscan city of Pisa failed its attempt to land, rolled off and tilted to the right wing with 46 passengers and four crew members onboard. According to Corriere della Sera national newspaper, the airport was hit by strong winds late on Saturday, with only one runway operational, but the precise cause of the accident was unclear. Two of the injured, including one 30-year-old Romanian hostess, were reportedly in serious conditions though not in danger of life.—Xinhua

OBITUARY

AL-HAJ EBRAHIM ISMAIL ARIFF

(75 years)

Al-Haj Ebrahim Ismail Ariff (Paduaik Myaing Cafe) only son of Late Al-Haj Ebrahim Ariff & Hajiyani Sara Bi B.E. Esmaill of No. 234 Shwebontha Street, Pabedan township, Yangon; elder brother of late Hajiyani Amina Bi (a) Majaan Bi; beloved husband of Hajiyani Farida Bi Azam Esmail; father of late Hajiyani Amina Bi, beloved husband of Hajiyani Farida Bi Azam Esmail; father of late Hajiyani Amina Bi (a) Majaan Bi; beloved husband of Hajiyani Fatima Bi Ariff; Hajiyani Sara Bi Ariff; Hajiyani Hafiz Ismail Bham; Hajiyani Hafiza Hajra Bi Ariff; Hajiyani Hafiz Qazi Mohammad Ariff (ASADDI) (Shwe Padawk Printing); Hajji Hafiz Ariff Ismail Ariff; grandfather of Amina Bi & Mohamed Ebrahimin; expired on Thursday the 3rd January 2013 at 9:10 PM at his residence and buried on Friday 1st February 2013 after Jumma Prayers at Yayway Sunni Garden Cemetery, Yangon.

Bereaved family

JUVE MOVE THREE POINTS CLEAR AT TOP OF SERIE A

Rome, 4 Feb—Juventus beat Chievo 2-1 to move three points clear at the top of the Serie A table on Sunday. Alessandro Matri put the visitors ahead in the 18th minute, followed by a second just before the break from Stephan Lichtsteiner. Cyril Thereau reduced the arrears for Chievo early in the second half. Thereau had a chance to level the scores shortly after, but in truth it was a victory for the league leaders deserved with Antonio Conte’s side missing Napoli at the top of the Serie A table.—Xinhua

SEEDORF DEDICATES HAT-TRICK TO LATE GRANDFATHER

RIO DE JANEIRO, 4 Jan—Veteran Dutch midfield-er Clarence Seedorf scored a hat-trick on Sunday as Botafogo defeated Macae 3-1 in Brazil’s Campeonato Carioca. The 36-year-old canceled out Jones’ opener by sliding in from close range at the Morazcazo Stadium in Macae before adding two second half penalties. After the match the former AC Milan and Real Madrid star dedicated the performance to his late grandfather, who died last month. “I want to dedicate this victory to him and to my whole family,” a tearful Seedorf said.

“I am happy because we maintained our compo- sition and have managed to get a very important win for this club.” The result lifted Botafogo above Vasco da Gama to the top of Group A with 11 points from five games.—Xinhua

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Ravens survive 49ers rally, power outage to win Super Bowl XLVII

NEW ORLEANS, 4 Feb—The Baltimore Ravens survived a furious second-half rally by San Franci- sco and a momentum-sapping power outage at the Superdome to defeat the scrappy 49ers 34-31 in the Super Bowl on Sunday. A Super Bowl-record 108-yard kickoff return for a touchdown by Jaco- by Jones gave the Ravens a 28-6 lead early in the third quarter but the 49ers scored 17 straight points after a 35-minute power outage and nearly pulled off a stunning comeback.

Trailing 34-29, the 49ers marched down to the Ravens’ seven but failed to score on four tries, surrendering the ball on downs at the five with less than two minutes remain- ing. Baltimore used up the clock and on fourth down, punter Sam Koch ran out of bounds in the end zone for a safety with four seconds left.—Reuters

San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Michael Crabtree (15) can’t reach a pass while being covered by Balti- more Ravens cornerback Jimmy Smith (22) and Ed Reed during the fourth quarter in the NFL Super Bowl XLVII football game in New Orleans, Louisiana, on 3 Feb, 2013.—Reuters
Pyithu Hluttaw approves Disaster Management Bill

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Feb—The Disaster Management Bill which had been sent back from Amyotha Hluttaw was approved by Pyithu Hluttaw today at its 13th day Session.

Before the bill was approved, amended paragraphs and sub-par-agraphs of the bill were discussed by Pyithu Hluttaw Bill Committee, two representatives, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement U Phone Soe.

The bill has approved to set up a national committee and regional organizations to mobilize the entire people to actively participate in cooperation with INGOs and NGOs at home and abroad in disaster preparedness tasks, rescue and rehabilitation, environmental conservation tasks in the aftermath of disasters.

U Soe Paing of Wuntho constituency asked three questions: if there were any gold or precious mineral mining by fraud though application for the mining are mentioned to extract low-tax minerals, if there any plan, inspection or directives to be able to avoid such kinds of frauds, and if there any plan to allow manageable-level gold panning.

Union Minister for Mines Dr Myint Aung replied that Geological Survey and Minerals Exploration Department of the ministry carried out laboratory tests for the minerals exploration and the ministry granted permission for mining according to the report on the exploration and possibility.

The ministry held joint-management committee meeting every four month and supervised the mining companies and those who closely supervised the mines had to report on the inspection of the mines to do away with the frauds.

The ministry could allow manageable-level gold panning in accordance with the Section 10 of the Myanmar Mining Law, he said.

However, the ministry had banned the manageable-level gold panning as small and medium machinery were used in the manageable-level gold panning, destroying the environment and without supplying gold to the State, he added.

There were a total of 2539 blocks of manageable-level gold panning across the country.

The ministry decided to ban the manageable-level gold mining on 15 February, 2012, in order to carry out gold mining in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Myanmar Mining Law, to encourage the environmental conservation and to save the river system, to get correct figures for gold extraction, to reduce hazardous impacts from gold mining, to control use of machinery in gold mining and to control the labour problems.

Still, the ministry has not yet allowed the manageable-level gold mining in the country.

During today’s meeting, six questions were answered and one bill was approved.

Proposal on urging the Union government to cultivate democratic practices in Youth-centered BEHSs approved

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Feb—Six regular session of first Amyotha Hluttaw continued for 13th day today. With regard to the question of Dr Myint Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency No.8 on if there are policies and laws for migrant workers, Union Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security U Maung Maung replied that the existing Overseas Employment Law (1999) is being amended for Myanmar migrant workers so as to have equal rights as domestic workers.

Plans are under way to approve Migrant Working Policy (draft). Five-year National Level Migrant Working Policy Plan (draft) is being formulated. Skill development of Myanmar workers are being carried out for protecting the interests of workers.

Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann chairs 13th-day meeting of Pyithu Hluttaw.— MNA

YANGON, 4 Feb—The inauguration ceremony of the Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills (30/2013) conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held at Wunzimmaynazar Hall of the Ministry at 10:00 am today, with an opening address delivered by Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Winna Maung Lwin.

Also present on the occasion were Directors-General and responsible officials from every level of administrative bodies abide by law, taking stern actions against law breakers and expulsion of staff without any complaint are very important basic factors”.

Five representatives held discussions on the proposal urging the Union government to nurture democratic practices in Education U Aye Kyu also discussed that proposal and Hluttaw approved it. The meeting continues tomorrow.

Certificate Course in Basic Diplomatic Skills opened

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Feb—Dagon University in Yangon and Pukyong National University (PKNU) in Busan of the Republic of Korea signed an MoU on cooperation in education between the two universities at the meeting hall of Dagon University this morning.

Deputy Minister for Education Dr Ba Shwe delivered a speech and Chairman of PKNU Dr Yong Seup Kim extended greetings. Rector of Dagon University Dr Hla Htay and Chairman of PKNU Dr Yong Seup Kim signed the MoU.

The MoU covers cooperation in teaching and research works, exchanging scholars and researchers, cooperation in some areas in which both universities are interested, exchanging students, academic information and publication, making field trip which will benefit both universities.

Slight earthquake hits Andaman Islands

NAY PYI TAW, 4 Feb—A slight earthquake of magnitude 4.8 Richter Scale with its epicenter outside Myanmar (Andaman Islands, India Region), about 420 miles southwest of Kaba Aye seismological observatory was recorded at 7 hrs 49 min 24 sec M.S.T today, announced by Meteorology and Hydrology Department.

A Yawngyi, 4 Feb—The union government to cultivate democratic practices in Youth-centered Basic Education High Schools submitted by U Saw Tun Mya Aung of Kayin State Constituency No.5. Deputy Minister for Education U Aye Kyu also discussed that proposal and Hluttaw approved it. The meeting continues tomorrow.