President U Thein Sein tips agriculture, livestock breeding for economic growth of Chin State

Nay Pyi Taw, 16 Feb—President U Thein Sein urged a boost in agriculture and livestock breeding despite the fact that the region is not naturally favoured to engage in economic activities in a meet with Tiddim Township authorities.

President U Thein Sein flew to Tiddim of Falam District in Chin State from Kalay of Sagaing Region this morning as he continued his tour of inspection.

He was accompanied by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint, Union ministers, chief ministers of Sagaing Region and Chin State, Lt-Gen Myint Soe of the office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), the commander of North-West Command, deputy ministers, the region minister, MPs and departmental heads.

The President met local authorities at the local battalion in Tongzang in Tiddim Township.

The President also stressed the need to improve the pass rate of matriculation exam. He called on townselders to help their own region pursue social and economic growth.

The President then proceeded to Falam and met the local authorities and townselders, calling for test breeding of cows and growing of maize. He also reiterated his call for uplifting of the education standards.

Chin nationals welcomed him with traditional songs on arrival at Haka in the evening.

MNA

Sim cards at reasonable prices

The year 2010 witnessed an expansion of mobile market in Myanmar with mobile shops popping up in Yangon, Mandalay and major cities of the country. Mobile phones become an essential toy for urban population. The speculations emerged in later 2012 that Sim card prices will be cut, getting ready potential mobile users in the wait for low-cost Sim cards.

The mobile market shows extensions to the outskirts of the cities. The small mobile shops in the outskirts of Yangon offer services similar to their bigger counterparts in downtown areas. The sale of GSM and CDMA handsets is still on the increase. The mobile shops now are selling handsets and Sim cards and providing other mobile services.

Handsets with cutting-edge technologies have showed good sale records. “As now is Android age, buyers do not think of price if the handset meets their demands. They are well-informed before buying a handset,” an official of mobile phone shop said. Android handsets are leading the local market.

Samsung Galaxy series, iPhone and Huawei handsets make the top sellers list. The middle-aged mobile users are now turning their attention to HTC handsets with HTC Butterfly introduced to the local market officially with some localization.

“All walks of life will be able to use mobile phones if Sim card prize are reduced,” the official said.

Byline: Moe Thuzar Soe

MNA
Union Sports Minister meets players of selected football teams

YANGON, 16 Feb — Chairman of Myanmar National Sports Committee Union Minister for Sports U Tin Hsan met with players from Myanmar National Football Team, Myanmar Women’s Team, youth selected teams and Futsal men’s and women’s team that are making preparations for taking part in the XXVII SEA Games, at the hall of Myanmar Football Federation in Yangon on 8 February.

Union Minister U Tin Hsan held discussions with players from the selected teams.

Pakokku District Deput Commissioner’s Cup (Goal Luck) football tournament concludes

PAKOIKKI, 16 Feb — The final match of Pakokku District Deputy Commissioner’s Cup (Goal Luck) football tournament was held in conjunction with prize-giving ceremony in Pakokku of Magway Region on 12 February. The final match between TU-Mech football team and No(7) football team ended 2-0.

Next, the prize presentation ceremony followed. Chairman of organizing committee U Myint Aung, Head of Pakokku Township Police Force Police Major Than Soe, Pakokku Township Administrator U Aung Naing Oo, Factory Manager U Aung Kyaw Oo, Head of Pakokku District Police Force Police Lt-Col Zaw Win and Pakokku District Auditor officer Daw Myint Myint Htay presented prizes to football players. Deputy Commissioner U Tin Maung Win handed over the championship trophy to first-prize-winning TU-Mech team. — Kyemon

New concrete street, bridge opened in Kamayut Township

YANGON, 14 Feb — The opening of concrete street and new bridge was held on Kan street in Kamayut Township on 12 February.

Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe, region Development Affairs Minister Mayor U Hla Myint, region Hluttaw representative U Mya Ngwe, a townelder and wellwisher U Soe Naing formally opened the new concrete road and bridge.

The 365-foot ad 12-foot concrete street was built at the cost of K 5.1 million by Yangon City Development Committee. The 25 feet long and 14 feet wide reinforced concrete bridge was built with the contribution of K 8 million by wellwisher U Soe Naing.

New tarred streets, power line installation in Nay Pyi Taw Lewe Township

NAY PYI TAW, 16 Feb — The opening of new tarred Myothit 1st street and Khayay street was held at the designated place at the corner of Myothit 1st street and Lamnadow street on 14 February, attended by Nay Pyi Taw Council members U Kan Chun and U Myint Swe, Lewe Township Hluttaw representatives U Htay Win and U Hmat Gyi, departmental personnel and townelders.

Officials concerned formally opened the new tarred streets and those present strolled along the street. Next, the ceremony to mark the completion of installation of power lines for 17 streets in Lewe Township followed at the top of Intaingta street.

The newly-opened streets were upgraded by Engineering Department (road/bridge) in accord with the instruction of chairman of Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee.

The construction of the 2360-foot Myothit 1st street cost K 17.7 million and the 1250-foot Khayay street K 13.9 million. Moreover, Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee spent K 21.2 million in installation of power lines for 17 streets in the township. Now, plans are underway to more install power lines at the remaining streets in the township.

Workshop on Social Safety Net in Mandalay

MANDALAY, 16 Feb — Jointly organized by Social Welfare Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and UNICEF (Myanmar), a region-level Workshop on Social Safety Net was held at Swam Hotel in Mandalay. Chairman of the Board of Social Welfare U Yu Lwin Aung gave talks on Social Welfare Law and Social Safety Net. Deputy Director-General U Aung Tun Khaing of Social Welfare Department on the need of social security in Myanmar society. UNICEF Consultant Dr Phone Myint on situation of children in Mandalay Region and the advisor to social policy of UNICEF on requirements, social protection for children. Next, those present held discussions on matters related to social security, objective condition of the aged and children in Mandalay Region, the role of the region government and its implementations in social sector. — Kyemon

Specialists provide local people with free health care

KALAY, 16 Feb — A 15-member specialist team accompanied by 18 surgeons of Kalay Hospital made a field trip to Inndin village in Kalay Township of Sagaing Region on 8 February.

The 15-member specialist team provided medical treatment to 267 patients, including nine who were given surgeries.

Campaign against plastic bags

SAGAING, 16 Feb — Staff led by Assistant Director U Ngan Khar and Staff Officer U Tin Soe of Arid Zone Greening Department in cooperation with local people totaling 150 collectively performed picking up plastic bags for the sake of the environment and keeping the surrounding clean at near around the Sikhongyi Pagoda in Sagaing and along Monywa-Mandalay road to Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) in cooperation with local people totaling 150 on 12 February.

The collected plastic bags were dumped at the designated places by two vehicles of the department.

Local authorities are taking necessary measures and educating the people to be aware of the terrible consequences of a plastic bag. — Kyemon

Car strikes, kills young man crossing road in Aungmyaythazan Township

MANDALAY, 16 Feb — A man was knocked down by a light truck while crossing the road and pronounced dead while receiving medical treatment at the hospital in Mandalay. The light truck driven by Aung Myo Thant, 27, hit Myo Zaw, 22, while the latter was crossing the Mandalay Hill ring road near No(95) Infantry Battalion in Aungmyaythazan Township on 26 January. The victim suffered serious injuries and he was taken to Mandalay General Hospital.

No (1) Aungmyaythazan Township Police Station filed a lawsuit against the reckless driver.

Judges, judicial officers take oath in Bago region

BAGO, 16 Feb — The oath-taking ceremony of the judges and judicial officers was held at Bago Region High Court on 14 February.

Chief Justice of Bago Region High Court spoke on the occasion.

Next, the judges and judicial officers took oath before the Chief Justice. Then, experiences and instructions from the fourth meeting between the Supreme Court of the Union and Region/State High Courts were recounted. — Kyemon

Contract signed to upgrade 365-feet long concrete road

LEWE, 16 Feb — The newly-opened new concrete street was built at the corner of Myothit 1st street and Lanmadaw street on 14 February, attended by Nay Pyi Taw Council members U Kan Chun and U Myint Swe, Lewe Township Hluttaw representatives U Htay Win and U Hmat Gyi, departmental personnel and townelders.

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Canadian minister quits over inappropriate lobbying

OTTAWA, 16 Feb—
Canadian Aboriginal Affairs Minister John Duncan resigned unexpectedly on Friday after admitting he had inappropriately written a letter to a tax court on behalf of a constituent.

Duncan is the first minister to resign on a point of accountability since the Conservatives of Prime Minister Stephen Harper came to power in early 2006 vowing to clean up Ottawa.

Finance Minister Jim Flaherty was formally reprimanded last month for urging the telecommunications regulator to grant a radio license to a company in his Parliamentary constituency. He kept his job.

Duncan said he had sent a character reference letter to the court in June 2011 on behalf of a constituent who was dealing with the Canada Revenue Agency.

While the letter was written with honourable intentions, I realize that it was not appropriate for me, as a Minister of the Crown, to write to the Tax Court. I have therefore offered my resignation,” Duncan said in a statement.

A government official said there was a big difference between writing to a regulator about a radio license and Duncan’s lobbying of the federal Tax Court.

“Writing a letter to a judge... is a definite no-no,” the official told Reuters, referring to Duncan’s case.

Parliament is not sitting next week so the opposition will not have a chance to raise Duncan’s resignation quickly in elected House of Commons.

Although Harper is in no danger of losing power — the Conservatives have a majority of seats in the House of Commons and the next election is not until late 2015—the resignation follows a series of setbacks.

Earlier this week, a Conservative member of the upper Senate chamber was suspended after being charged with sexual assault. Two other Conservative senators are being probed over whether they claimed excessive expenses.

Last March, the federal ethics commissioner ruled that Industry Minister Christian Paradis had violated ethics rules by telling bureaucrats to set up a meeting with a former Conservative legislator who wanted to do business with Ottawa.

After the same commissioner reaffirmed Flaherty last month, he said he had meant to send the letter in his capacity as a legislator and not as a minister. He blamed staff for the error.

The government official told Reuters that in the Flaherty case, ministers had been told to review their correspondence. Duncan then discovered the tax letter and offered his resignation to Harper.

Reuters

Ecuador prepares for presidential elections

QUito, 16 Feb—
Ecuadoreans were banned from selling all alcoholic beverages on Friday until 12 hours after the general elections are closed at 5 pm local time (2200 GMT) on Sunday.

Anyone found breaking the rule or showing up drunk at a polling station will be slapped with a steep fine of 159 US dollars, which equals half a month’s basic wage.

Elections will be able to cast ballots country-wide for some 11.6 million eligible voters, who will be able to cast ballots starting from 7 am (1200 GMT) on Sunday.

On Friday, 8,963 detainees awaiting sentences participated in an early voting in accordance with the constitution.

The National Electoral Council is expected to carry out a rapid count after the polls are closed and announce the winners later on Sunday. Ecuador’s eight presidential hopefuls and legislative candidates have been campaigning for a month and a half for the general elections with incumbent President Rafael Correa and his ruling PAIS Alliance Movement firmly in lead.

Polls have placed Correa, who enjoys an impressive 80 percent approval rate, comfortably ahead of his rivals, while the PAIS Alliance Movement is projected to win a majority of the 137 contested seats of the National Assembly.

If Correa wins, it will be his third presidential term, following his first election in 2006 with 57 percent of the vote, and second in 2009 with 52 percent.

According to the polls, he is likely to garner 50 to 50 percent of the vote this time. Under Ecuador’s election law, to secure victory in the first round, a candidate must capture either a majority of the vote or a plurality of more than 40 percent with a margin of at least 10 percentage points over the second-place candidate. Failing this, a run-off will be held.

Correa’s immediate rivals, but not threats, include a former banker, an ex-president and a banana magnate who is also Ecuador’s wealthiest man, all trailing considerably behind in the polls.—Xinhua

Honeymoon wears off for Mexico president’s reform push

MEXICO CITY, 16 Feb—
A political pact forged with rivals and a couple of key laws already under his belt, Mexico’s new President Enrique Pena Nieto got off to a strong start, but he faces hurdles to push through deep economic reforms.

Under an election law that mandated a wide-reaching agenda, the 46-year-old former state governor wants to overhaul Mexico’s tax system, stem oil monopoly Pemex, a telecoms sector dominated by the world’s richest man, Carlos Slim, and competition regulations in a bid to modernize the economy and boost growth to 6 percent a year.

Despite lacking an outright majority in Congress, Pena Nieto managed to push the 2013 budget barely a week after taking office on 1 December and passed a landmark education bill after sealing a broad accord dubbed the “Pact for Mexico” with leftist and conservative opponents.

But his plans may be starting to slip. “Some were far too quick to voice optimism during the typical honeymoon of a new government,” said Gabriela Cuevas, a senator for the opposition conservative National Action Party (PAN). “It’s not that simple.”

Mexico’s economy is expected to grow by around 3.5 percent in 2013, slowing from around 4 percent last year. Economists say deep reforms are vital to spur stronger growth. “Other countries have done it, why not Mexico?” Pena Nieto told PRI congressmen last month.—Reuters

UN Security Council warns against arms transfers to Yemen

UNITED NATIONS, 16 Feb—The UN Security Council warned on Friday against attempts to destabilize Yemen with weapons shipments as the country tries to rebuild after two years of upheaval and expressed concern that former president Ali Abdullah Saleh was undermining the process.

The 15-member council said it was ready to consider further measures, including sanctions, “if actions aimed at undermining the Government of National Unity and the political transition continue.”

Yemen said its coast guard seized missiles and rockets on 23 January believed to have been sent by Iran. Iran has denied any connection to the weapons, which were found aboard a vessel off the coast in an operation coordinated with the US Navy.

The Security Council has asked its group of experts that monitors compliance with the Iran sanctions, which includes a ban on arms exports, to investigate the incident after Yemen officially complained.

Britain’s UN Ambassador Mark Lyall Grant told reporters.

“The Security Council expresses concern over reports of money and weapons being sent into Yemen from outside for the purpose of undermining the transition,” the Security Council said in a statement.

The council also expressed concern over reports of interference ‘by individuals in Yemen representing the former regime... including former president Ali Abdullah Saleh and former vice president Ali Salim Al-Baid bi’.

Under the US-backed power transfer deal, President Abdu-Rabbu Mansour Hadi is overseeing reforms for a two-year interim period to ensure a transition to democracy.—Reuters

Clashes rage in vicinity of Syria’s Aleppo Airport, airbase

DAMASCUS, 16 Feb—
Clashes continued on Friday between the rebels and the Syrian troops in the vicinity of a military airfield and the international airport of the country’s northern Province of Aleppo, activists reports said. The rebels have unleashed attacks against the civilian airport of Aleppo and the nearby Al-Nairab airbase since Wednesday, activists said, placing the death toll of the three-day-long clashes at 150, roughly evenly divided between the rebels and the government troops.

The pro-government al-Watan daily said recently that the Syrian army was poised to wrest back control over the Brigade 80 base, of which the rebels have overrun large swathes. It said the army ringed the base to recapture it. The paper said the brigade was used by the government troops to provide protection for Aleppo’s international airport and the adjacent Al-Nairab airbase.

Meanwhile, a leading commander of the rebels in Aleppo was quoted by the Saudi-funded al-Arabyia TV as saying on Friday that the rebels’ attack would continue until the civilian airport and the airbase fall in their hands.

The recent inciendies as the rebels had been taking pains to achieve territorial gains in a bid to empower their position in possible negotiations with the administration of President Bashar al-Assad, local analysts say.—Xinhua
Ahead of hearing, Einhorn reiterates case against Apple

Electronic Arts, Zynga settle competing lawsuits

NASA’s Fermi telescope proves supernova remnants produce cosmic rays

Meteorite explodes over Russia, more than 1,000 injured

Ancient asteroid strike in Australia “changed face of earth”
New virus hits 12 globally with new British case

WINCHESTER, Feb—A fourth person has hit a novel coronavirus (NCoV), which was unknown in humans until a few months ago, but health officials said Sunday the virus to the population remained very low. Confir...
Big powers to offer easing gold sanctions at Iran nuclear talks

WASHINGTON, 16 Feb—Major powers plan to offer to ease sanctions barring trade in gold and other precious metals with Iran in return for Iranian steps to shut down the nation’s newly expanded Fordow uranium enrichment plant, Western officials said on Friday.

The officials said the offer is to be presented to Iran at 26 February talks in Almaty, Kazakhstan, and they acknowledged that it represented a relatively modest update to proposals that the six major powers put forward last year. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the officials said their decision not to make a dramatically new offer in part reflected skepticism that Iran is ready to make real headway ahead of its 14 June presidential election.

The group, which includes Britain, China, Germany, Russia and the United States—and is known as the P5+1—wants Iran to do more to prove that its nuclear program is for only non-military purposes and to permit wider UN inspections.

Iran denies it is seeking nuclear weapons but has refused, in recent years, to halt its uranium enrichment, a process that can produce fuel for nuclear reactors, or, ultimately, for bombs.

President Barack Obama on Tuesday repeated a veiled military threat, saying “we will do what is necessary to prevent them from getting a nuclear weapon.”

The core of the new offer revises last year’s demand that Iran stop producing higher-grade uranium, ship any stockpiles out of the country and stop doing its underground enrichment facility at Fordow, near the holy Iranian city of Qom.

“The next proposal is remarkably close to the old one,” said one official who spoke on condition of anonymity, describing it as “a return to the conditions, whether they are serious or not.” According to an IAEA report released in mid-November, Iran has a stockpile of 134.9 kg of 20 percent enriched uranium, bringing it closer to the ability to produce the 90 percent uranium needed to provide fissile material for atomic bombs.—Reuters

US consumer sentiment increases to 3-month high in February

WASHINGTON, 16 Feb—US consumer confidence rose to the highest level in seven months on Friday, the Thomson Reuters/University of Michigan index of consumer sentiment revealed on Friday.

The preliminary reading of the consumer sentiment, which records the figure for the first half of a month, edged up to 76.3 in February from 73.8 in the previous month. It’s the highest level since November 2012, boosted by rising stock prices, increased property values and a revived jobs market.

The index gauging consumer expectations for six months from now, which more closely projects the direction of consumer spending, also climbed to 68.7 in February from 66.6 in January.

The index of current conditions, reflecting Americans’ perceptions of their financial situation and whether they consider it a good time to buy big-ticket items like cars, rose a solid 3 points to 88 from a month ago.

The index averaged 64.2 during the last recession from December 2007 to June 2009, and 89 in the five years leading up to the recession.

After plunging in December for the fears of “fiscal cliff,” US consumer sentiment began to bounce back in January and February, suggesting that consumer spending will improve in the coming months and provide a boost to the US economic recovery.

Although higher payroll taxes started to kick in on 1 January, consumers didn’t largely scale back their spending last month. US retail and food services sales rose 0.1 percent in January over growing 0.5 percent in December 2012, the US Commerce Department said on Wednesday.—Xinhua

Venezuela’s Chavez has difficulty talking

CARACAS, 16 Feb—Venezuela’s ailing President Hugo Chavez is breathing through a tracheal tube and has difficulty talking, top aides said on Friday after releasing images of the recovering head of state for the first time since he was operated on two months ago.

“The respiratory infection that emerged during the post-operative stage was controlled, but a certain degree of (breathing) insufficiency persists,” Communication and Information Minister Ernesto Villegas read a written statement broadcast on national radio and television stations.

“Given the situation, which is being duly treated, Chavez has lost his characteristic voice,” said Arreaza, adding it was only a temporary setback.

For now, “one has to pay attention to be able to make out what Chavez is saying, and often the president must express his ideas in writing.”—Xinhua

Car bomb hits Libya’s Benghazi

Tripoli, 16 Feb—A car bomb exploded on Friday near al-Berka area in downtown Benghazi, Libya’s second largest city, leaving no casualties, local security sources told Xinhua.

The car belonged to a commander of Defence Ministry named Ayman Enq, who had received threats through his cell phone a few days ago, the sources said on condition of anonymity, adding that the explosion was triggered by a homemade bomb which had been placed under the car by an unknown group. Libya will mark on 3 May, 2007.—Xinhua

Car bomb is going to put out a fire at Xinghui District of north China’s Tianjin Municipality, on 15 Feb, 2013. An enterprise there caught fire on Friday. The cause and losses of the accident were not known immediately. Xinhua

Hagel likely to be next US Defence Secretary despite GOP stalling tactics

WASHINGTON, 16 Feb—Former Republican Senator Chuck Hagel is likely to be confirmed as the next US Defence Secretary despite Republicans’ attempts to stall the nomination process with procedural hurdles, experts said.

Hagel’s nomination is not dead, said Brookings Institution senior fellow Darrell West. “I expect him to be confirmed soon.”

Senators have set for Thursday a cloture vote on Hagel’s nomination, demanding the White House provide more information on September’s terrorist attack in Benghazi, Libya that left four Americans dead, including the ambassador.

Republicans charge the White House with not being forthcoming over the incident and with misleading the public about whether the attack was spontaneous or an organized terror operation.

“The Senate will vote again in two weeks and the nominee is likely to get the 60 votes needed to cut off debate and move forward with the nomination,” West said, describing the GOP’s tactics as “nomination theater designed to make Hagel and (President Barack) Obama look bad but not to derail the confirmation.”

The White House on Thursday blasted the GOP move, with spokesman Jay Carney chiding Senate Republicans with putting “political posturing ahead of our nation’s security,” noting that the filibuster of a Defense Secretary nominee is a historical first.—Xinhua

33 punished over Gansu colliery flood coverup

LANZHOU, 16 Feb—A total of 33 colliery staff and civil servants have been punished over a cover-up of a coal mine flood that left four people dead in northwest China’s Gansu Province in January, local authorities announced on Saturday.

Four people from the Jinyuan coal mine in Yugur Autonomous County of Su- nan, Zhangye City, where the accident happened, will be subject to criminal prosecution, a Gansu provincial coal mine safety supervi- sion bureau official said.

Another nine staff from the colliery were giv- en administrative penalties, he added.

Twenty civil servants who were responsible for supervision were either sacked or given Party disciplinary sanctions, accord- ing to the official.

The 33 punished those responsible for the accident were fined 8.8 million yuan (1.4 million US dollars).

The accident occurred on 3 January. Mine own- ers attempted to cover up the accident, but a whistle- blower tipped off workplace safety authorities on 9 Janu- ary, leading to an investiga- tion that confirmed the accident.—Xinhua

A worker holds a gold necklace at a gold workshop in the city of Isfahan, 414 km (259 miles) south of Teheran on 3 May, 2007.—Reuters

WORLD

Reuters
Cameron may fly in to Shell India tax row

PHOENIX, Feb—Prince Norodom Arun Rasmy, the youngest daughter of Cambodia’s late King Father Norodom Sihanouk, will be elected as the President of the royalist political party Funcinpec to contest in July’s general elections, the party’s spokesperson Tum Samobol said on Saturday.

Prince Norodom Arun Rasmy is currently serving as Cambodia ambassador to Malaysia.

“The princess has already agreed to accept the position at the request of the current prime minister and she will be officially elected as the party’s president during the party congress on 21 March,” he told Xinhua.

Daughter of Cambodia’s late King Sihanouk to lead royalist party

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London, 16 Feb—Oil company Royal Dutch/Shell has asked the British government to raise the subject of a tax dispute with India during Prime Minister David Cameron’s visit there next week, according to a source familiar with the request.

The dispute blew up earlier this month when tax authorities revalued by $2.7 billion (1.7 billion pounds) a 2009 transaction by Shell with a wholly-owned subsidiary, and claimed a tax payment was due.

It comes as India faces a potential seeks to balance the need to shore up its finances by raising tax receipts with its desire to encourage foreign investment.

The Anglo-Dutch group’s run-in with tax officials follows a long-running $2 billion Indian tax claim on British mobile telecoms group Vodafone which has dented foreign investor confidence in the country.

Finance phone maker Nokia earlier this week became the latest international company to protest against an Indian tax investigation.

The amount claimed from Shell was not specified, and an Indian tax official told Reuters it would be confined to interest on that amount.

Shell has responded vigorously to the tax claim, which was revealed initially in Press reports.

“Taxing the money received by Shell India is, in effect, a tax on foreign direct investment, which is contrary not only to law but also to the spirit of the recent global economic dialogue to boost cooperation in Africa, other regions and the world,” Shell India Chairman Yasmine Hilton said on 4 February. —Reuters

UK—Britain’s Prime Minister David Cameron waits to greet his Pakistani counterpart, Rajiv Perez Ashraf, at Number 10 Downing Street in London on 12 Feb, 2013. —Reuters

China, AU pledge to enhance friendly cooperation

BEIJING, 16 Feb—China and the African Union (AU) held their fifth strategic dialogue to boost cooperation on Friday.

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and AU Commission Chairman Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma co-chaired the dialogue, the first of which was held in 2008.

Yang said China is willing to expand cooperation with the AU in a variety of fields, including infrastructure, agriculture, human resources and media, in a bid to advance the development of China-Africa ties.

“As the AU joined in the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, whose fifth ministerial conference launched a train of measures concerning cooperation with the AU, relations between the two sides now have a solid foundation,” Yang said.

China and the AU should further coordination in international and regional affairs, Yang added.

Zuma thanked China for its enduring support on the cause of peace and development in Africa, noting that Africa regards China as a trustworthy partner.

Africa would like to draw on China’s experiences in readjusting its economic structure, thus promoting its continuous development.

Both sides also exchanged views on the situation in Africa and other international and regional issues of common concern.

Zuma is visiting China from 14-17 February as a guest of the government.

Japan PM to visit US next week on tie with US election in sight

Tokyo, 16 Feb—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will visit the United States next week from 21 to 24 February, local media reported on Friday, citing Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga.

The postponed US trip by Abe aims at restoring and enhancing the Japan-US alliance, which the prime minister called as the core of Japan’s foreign policies.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida will accompany Abe to visit it Washington, Kyodo News Agency reported, citing the top spokesman.

Abe will meet with US President Barack Obama on 22 February in Washington, media said Suga, adding the two leaders will also exchange views on regional affairs, especially the nuclear test by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Abe planned to visit the United States in January but the trip was delayed due to Obama’s busy agenda in the month. —Xinhua

Indonesian narcotic police take out some of the marijuana from Aceh which would be smuggled to Java Island by 14 suspects during a burning in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 15 Feb, 2013. —Xinhua

Eurozone registers 81.8 bln euro trade surplus in 2012

BRUSSELS, 16 Feb—The eurozone’s trade in goods recorded a surplus of 81.8 billion euro (109.2 billion US dollars) in 2012, compared with a deficit of 15.7 billion euro in 2011, Eurostat said on Friday.

The Eurostat data also showed that the 27-nation European Union (EU) recorded a surplus of 104.6 billion euro in 2012, which was an improvement on the previous year’s deficit of 162.7 billion euro.

In December 2012, euro area’s trade in goods balance with the rest of the world delivered a 11.7 billion euro surplus, compared with a surplus of eight billion in the same period of 2011.

For the EU, the figure was 700 million euro deficit in the last month of 2012, compared with 200 million in December 2011. —Xinhua

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China and the AU should further coordination in international and regional affairs, Yang added.

Zuma thanked China for its enduring support on the cause of peace and development in Africa, noting that Africa regards China as a trustworthy partner.

Africa would like to draw on China’s experiences in readjusting its economic structure, thus promoting its continuous development.

Both sides also exchanged views on the situation in Africa and other international and regional issues of common concern.

Zuma is visiting China from 14-17 February as a guest of the government.

Japanese PM to visit US next week on tie with US election in sight

Tokyo, 16 Feb—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe will visit the United States next week from 21 to 24 February, local media reported on Friday, citing Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga.

The postponed US trip by Abe aims at restoring and enhancing the Japan-US alliance, which the prime minister called as the core of Japan’s foreign policies.

Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida will accompany Abe to visit it Washington, Kyodo News Agency reported, citing the top spokesman.

Abe will meet with US President Barack Obama on 22 February in Washington, media said Suga, adding the two leaders will also exchange views on regional affairs, especially the nuclear test by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Abe planned to visit the United States in January but the trip was delayed due to Obama’s busy agenda in the month. —Xinhua

Indonesian narcotic police take out some of the marijuana from Aceh which would be smuggled to Java Island by 14 suspects during a burning in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 15 Feb, 2013. —Xinhua

Eurozone registers 81.8 bln euro trade surplus in 2012

BRUSSELS, 16 Feb—The eurozone’s trade in goods recorded a surplus of 81.8 billion euro (109.2 billion US dollars) in 2012, compared with a deficit of 15.7 billion euro in 2011, Eurostat said on Friday.

The Eurostat data also showed that the 27-nation European Union (EU) recorded a deficit of 104.6 billion euro in 2012, which was an improvement on the previous year’s deficit of 162.7 billion euro.

In December 2012, euro area’s trade in goods balance with the rest of the world delivered a 11.7 billion euro surplus, compared with a surplus of eight billion in the same period of 2011.

For the EU, the figure was 700 million euro deficit in the last month of 2012, compared with 200 million in December 2011. —Xinhua
Save our marine resources

Food sufficiency is essential prerequisite for survival of human beings. Ill health, low life expectancy and poor capacity to work and to pursue education are impacts of the evil consequences of poverty caused by food crisis which have a devastating effect not only on our generation but also on the next one.

Myanmar is rich in natural resources—land and water resources. The nation sees adequate production of food thanks to the vast area of arable farmlands and agriculture-oriented policy of the country. As Myanmar is gifted with coastal waters, seeing a large quantity of rivers, creeks and lakes, the nation not only sees domestic food sufficiency in meat and fisheries sector but also exports the surplus.

In fisheries sector, freshwater fishing is being carried out as inland water fisheries apart from offshore and onshore fisheries. The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries allowed national entrepreneurs to fish in river, creek and sea and to run fish farms.

With the advancement in modern fish farming methods at present, quality species of fish are available to develop fish farming business. Breeding of quality fish species through modern methods and extended construction of fish farms will ensure domestic fish consumption sufficient and export of the surplus.

Releasing of fingerlings in ponds and lakes is one of the ways to protect the fish species from extinction threatened by fishing in natural waters. Aiming to ensure sustainability of marine life in rivers, creeks and dams and to be free from extinction of fish species, various kinds of fingerlings are to be released into to substitute the quantity of fish we have had. Moreover, necessary laws are to be enacted and announcements should be issued for sustainability of marine resources.

As Myanmar possesses in abundance water resources, Myanmar marine products are available at any time. The consumers are duty-bound to follow the disciplines for sustainability of water resources and abundance of fish species, thereby contributing to ensuring food sufficiency and sustainability of natural resources.

President U Thien Sein visits Maha Thaka Padima Buddha Image in Kalay

Thaka Padima Buddha Image at Raja Giri Hill near Kyigon Village in Kalay Township today.

Accompanied by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party, the President paid obeisance and offered fruits, flowers and water to the Buddha Image which is made up of teak which was floating upstream the Nerinjara River near Kawleik Kalay Village in the township in January, 2004.

During the visit, the President signed in the visitors’ book and made cash donations.

According to the board of trustees of the pagoda, the teak log is 16 ft long and 10 ft and one inch in circumference and about 120 years old.

Afterwards, the President visited the thriving sunflower plantations and bee keeping near the village.

Local farmers reported to the President on double cropping in the area and bee keeping which provide high income to the farmers.

They viewed producing honey at the bee keeping farm. The President called on officials concerned for organizing and educating the farmers to keep bees while engaging in agriculture as they can also earn high income by keeping bees.

Are we enjoying the motor race?

Hline Ni

Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar Mr Tomas Ojea Quintana gives encouragements to displaced people sheltering at Saint Paul’s Church in Myitkyina.

MNA

With international organizations and INGOs, the rule of law and security measures and dissemination of knowledge on danger of landmines and clearance of landmines.

MNA

**New Light of Myanmar**

**NATIONAL**

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President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein pays homage to Maha Thaka Padima Buddha Image in Kalay. — MNA

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MNA
Stamp duties handed over to YCDC

Yangon, 16 Feb—Yangon Region Internal Revenue Department handed over two percent of stamp duties for 2012-2013 fiscal year to Yangon City Development Committee at its office on 6 February morning.

After making a speech, Head of the region department U Thaung Aye handed over K.1,712,535,840 of stamp duties as two percent to Assistant Head of Department of YCDC U Kyaw Myint.—Myanma Alinn

Free clinic marks first anniversary

Mandalay, 16 Feb—The first anniversary of Hnalolinhl Pnilc free clinic was held at the clinic on Shwemawndaw Myaung Monastery of Aungpinle Monastery on 10th street between 87th and 88th streets in Pyigyiyaulon Ward of Aungmyayhazan Township on 4 February.

Officials presented certificates of honour to wellwishers.

The clinic is kept open from 9 am to 12 noon daily. The clinic is closed one day for every 14 days. Eye care is provided to the patients every Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. The clinic has provided healthcare services to over 18,000 patients during one year period.

Those wishing to donate cash and medicines to the clinic may dial 09-2002500 and 09-2003052. —Myanma Alinn

New building of pre-primary school opened

Sagaing Region Hlutaw representative U Mya Maung and Deputy Commissioner of the district General Administration Department U Tun Tun Naing formally opened the school building.

The region Hlutaw representative presented certificates of honour to 13 wellwishers.

Construction of the two-storey school building costs K 15.4 million. —Myanma Alinn

Illegal timber seized in Toungoo District

Toungoo, 16 Feb—Assistant Director U Thein Shwe of Toungoo Township Forest Department, Staff Officer U Thaung Naing of Toungoo Township Forest Department and staff seized 1,804 tons of ironwood, 2,872 tons of other wood, two engines for saw mills, two circular saws and one mobile phone from three places in Kyauk Oh Chaunggya protected public forest (XXIIIU) in Sammyaung region of Toungoo Township on 3 and 4 February.

Likewise, staff of Yedashe Township Forest Department seized 56 logs of ironwood weighing 16,384 tons in Block No. 100 of West Swa forest reserve on 3 February.

The departmental officials are exposing the owners of timber. —Myanma Alinn

ALFS donates cash to Shwegondine Nursery, quake victims

Yango, 16 Feb—Asia Pacific Ladies Friendship Society (ALFS) donated K 2.4 million to Shwegondine Nursery of Social Welfare Department on Middle Shwegondine Street in Bahan Township and K 3 million to women and children of earthquake-hit areas of Mandalay and Sagaing Regions at the hall of the nursery in Shwegondine on 5 February afternoon.

Chairperson of the ALFS Japanese Mrs Haruko Komura explained the purpose of donations and presented cash donations.

Deputy Director-General U Aung Tun Khaing of the Social Welfare Department accepted the donations and returned certificates of honour to the donor.

The clarification ceremony was attended by region Hlutaw representatives, directors of Agriculture Department, departmental officials, pesticide and fertilizer entrepreneurs, farms and media, totalling 146. —Myanma Alinn

New school buildings handed over in Nay Pyi Taw

Nay Pyi Taw, 16 Feb—Members of Nay Pyi Taw Council U Myint Swe and Dr Than Aung and Assistant Director U Thein Win formally opened the school building.

Next, the attendees of the ceremony viewed round the wall magazine, photos and books displayed at the hall.

The school building constructed at a cost of K 64.8 million for Basic Education High School No. 6 was handed over by Tatlan Co to Ministry of Education in Thawuthti Village-tract of Lewe Township. Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Than Aung, Assistant Director U Thein Win of Ministry of Education, townselder U Zaw Aung and Chairman of School Board of Trustees U Paw Tun opened the new building.

Member of Nay Pyi Taw Council U Myint Swe pressed the button to open the school. Next, responsible persons from the construction company handed over documents related to the building to officials. —Myanma Alinn

Law and rules on pesticides, fertilizers clarified

Mandalay, 16 Feb—Mandalay Region Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Breeding U Myint Than attended the ceremony to explain law and rules on pesticide and fertilizers.

Officials of the Land Utilization Division of Agriculture Department explained matters related to law and rules on pesticide and fertilizers and replied to queries raised by those present.

The clarification ceremony was attended by region Hlutaw representatives, directors of Agriculture Department, departmental officials, pesticide and fertilizer entrepreneurs, farms and media, totalling 146. —Myanma Alinn
China hopes to deepen pragmatic cooperation with Slovakia

UNITED NATIONS, 16 Feb — The UN Security Council on Friday stressed the importance of inclusiveness during the transition process in Yemen and welcomed the upcoming launch of the National Dialogue Conference on 18 March.

In a presidential statement read by Kim Sook, South Korea’s permanent representative to the United Nations, who holds the rotating presidency of the Security Council for this month, the Security Council reiterated the need to be “a Yemeni-led process, underpinned by a commitment to democracy, good governance, rule of law, national reconciliation and respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people in Yemen.”

The 15-nation UN body urged all parties in Yemen to “adhere to resolving their differences through dialogue and consultation, reject acts of violence to achieve political goals, refrain from provocation,” the statement said.

Highlighting the importance of involving the full participation of all segments of society, the Security Council called upon all parties to honor the timetable and benchmarks set out in the transition agreement and for all sides to “act in good faith, in a peaceful, transparent, constructive and reconciliatory manner,” said the statement. The presidential statement also raised the issue of legislation on transitional justice to support reconciliation, urging the Yemeni Government to pass this legislation without further delay.

The Security Council maintains its expectation that the National Dialogue Conference will lead to a constitutional referendum and elections by February 2014,” the statement said.

Reaffirming its commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Yemen, the Security Council also commended those that have engaged constructively in the preparatory stages of the process. Yemeni President Abed-Rabbu Mansour Hadi announced on last Wednesday the government will hold the national dialogue conference on 18 March to solve disputes among political factions and pave the way for amending the constitution, the official Saba news agency reported.—Xinhua

No horsemeat found in Portugal

LISBON, 16 Feb — The Portuguese government has confirmed that no horsemeat has been found in beef after a nationwide operation carried out in January, local media reported on Friday. Portugal carried out a nationwide operation to check food safety standards on 22-24 January, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Economy and Employment was quoted by The Portugal News as saying.

The operation came after the horsemeat scandal came up to the surface in mid-January when Irish food inspectors detected horsemeat in frozen beef burgers made by firms in Ireland and Britain and sold in supermarket chains including Tesco, Britain’s top retailer. Among them, eight were found to have committed infringements and one had its activity suspended, but “no irregularities similar to the ones announced in Britain and Ireland were found,” the spokesperson said.—Xinhua

FARC sets free kidnapped policemen in Colombia

BOGOTA, 16 Feb — Two Colombian policemen identified as Cristian Yate and Victor Alfonso Gonzalez, were set free by the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) guerrilla group on Friday, former Senator Piedad Cordoba said.

Cordoba said that the freed policemen are healthy and thanked the rebels of the FARC for keeping their promise of freeing the hostages, who were captured in January in the Valle del Cauca Department.

“We want to thank this gesture that undoubtedly is a very important step toward the peace in this country. Also, we want to thank the company of the International Red Cross, as well as the help of the National Government for this event”, Cordoba said.

Former Senator added that the humanitarian mission will travel immediately to another area where they expect the freedom of Josue Alvarez, a soldier who was taken hostage in Nari department on 29 January.—Xinhua

Chinese official says G20’s Moscow meeting to discuss array of financial issues

MOSCOW, 16 Feb — Finance ministers and central bank officials of the Group of Twenty (G20) have been seeking to strengthen financial supervision and avoid currency devaluations in the Moscow meeting, a Chinese official said here on Friday. Financial supervision remains a major issue in the G20 process, Chinese Vice Finance Minister Zhu Guangyao told the Chinese media on the first day of the closed-door meeting scheduled on Friday and Saturday.

Zhu cited the fact that the United States has vowed to implement the global banking regulatory standard Basel III in the coming months while the European Union has submitted the bill for parliament approval.

Though the implementation has been prolonged, the United States and Europe have already recognized the significance of fulfilling their commitments, he said. The Basel III rules on bank capital adequacy were worked out by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision and the Financial Stability Board (FSB) in response to the global financial crisis. They strengthen bank capital requirements and introduce new regulatory requirements on bank liquidity and capital adequacy ratio. The G20 finance ministers and central bankers demanded decisive move- ments from the US and European sides and welcomed the latest promising signal, Zhu said, adding efficient implementation of the Basel rules will enrich the contents of the G20 accord and enhance the group’s credibility.

Meanwhile, the effect of the ultra-loose monetary policies adopted by some developed economies has aroused concerns from developing countries, said the Chinese official.—Xinhua

People gather at a site of a fire accident in a cotton factory in southern Pakistani port city of Karachi, on 15 Feb, 2013. At least two labourers were injured in the accident, local media reported.

Xinhua
**Feature: Printed books still appeal to Bangladeshi readers**

Selim, a leading book publisher, told Xinhua: “A reader doesn’t read electronic books might pose a threat to printed books, but it could never diminish the appeal of the printed materials.”

Selim said the annual book fair plays a significant role in keeping the printed books alive amid the challenges posed by the Internet and online publications. A reader doesn’t read an online book or an e-book just because he/she reads a printed book,” Selim whose publishing house never failed to put up a stall in the fair for the past two decades.

The Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, which literally means “Immortal Twenty First Book Fair,” is being held in Dhaka’s Bangla Academy premises in commemoration of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for protecting the dignity of the mother tongue on 21 February, 1952. 21 February is now being observed throughout the world as the “International Mother Language Day.”

Every day, hundreds of bookworms of all ages flock to the month-long book fair with friends and families in search of new books written by their favourite authors. An enthusiastic eight-year-old Zahra Fatima Azim, who came with her parents, was seen browsing through books at the children’s corner of the fair. “I like to read books. I like stories of horror,” Zahra said. “Every year I come to the fair and buy some books, such as fairy tale, adventure story.”

Zahra’s mother Fariel Samhia Azim said that she wants her children to read Bangla books. —Xinhua

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**Four gov’t soldiers injured in landmine attack in N Philippines**

 Mandal, 16 Feb — Four government soldiers got injured in a landmine attack planned by leftist rebel group of New People’s Army (NPA) in the western Philippine Province of Isabela on Friday, local military said on Saturday.

Col Loreto Magundayao, spokesman for the Philippine Army’s 5th Infantry Division, said troops from the 86th Infantry Battalion were on a security operation when the rebels detonated the landmine around 1 am Friday along a road in Bugan village, San Martino, a town in Isabela.

“According to the report (from the field), the troops were engaging in a military operation that re- sponded to the information given by the villagers on the enemy presence and extortion activities in the area,” said Magundayao. After the explosion, he said, the soldiers engaged the undeter- mined number of rebels in a 30-minute firefight. The rebels withdrew, leaving behind a civilian pack, a long magazine for M16 rifle, and used detonating cords.

The troops are currently conducting “hot pursuit operations” against the fleeing rebels, he said, adding the rebels’ use of landmine was against the 1980 Geneva Convention. —Xinhua

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**Roadside bomb, a lethal weapon of Afghan militants**

Kabul, 16 Feb — The roadside bomb used by anti-government militants which are largely used by Afghan government forces and the Taliban is a “quantum leap” for the Australian Defence Force, said the report. This is not the first time an Australian warship was named Canberra. The first Canberra was a county class heavy cruiser which joined the Pacific War and was sunk during the famous Savo island battle by the Japanese navy in 1942. Shortly after that, then US President Franklin Roosevelt named an American Baltimore class heavy cruiser the USS Canberra, in memory of the lost Australian ship for its bravery in combat. This is the only US Navy ship named for a foreign ship or capital.

Customer consult staff at a stand during Indonesia Travel and Holiday Fair in Jakarta, Indonesia on 11 Feb, 2013. Indonesia is expecting a steep growth in foreign tourists visiting the country for medical treatment this year to 2 million from last year’s figure of 300,000, an Indonesian tourist business association official said here on Friday. —Xinhua

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**Indonesia moves to control coal export**

Jakarta, 16 Feb — The Indonesian Government has asked administrations at provincial and district levels nationwide to strengthen control on coal production in order to prevent the export of the commodi- ty from exceeding govern- ment-set quota, an official said here on Friday.

Deputy Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Susilo Siswoutomo said the control, which would include the revision of li- censes for miners, was bud- dly needed as many miners without export license have exported coal illegally. The Southeast Asia’s largest economy plans to restrict coal export in order to maintain the sustainability of supply amid growingdomestic demand, which is now forecast to increase in the future as the government would reduce reliance on domestic fuels and the demand would rise from power plants and smelters. The demand for coal from power generating plants as well as smelters would increase in the near future. The government has banned new power plants from using fossil-fuel since May last year due to power production and reserves.

Besides, Indonesia also has planned to construct 27 new smelters for processing raw mineral products, as the government has re- quired miners to build the processing units and pay a 20 percent export tax since May last year should they continue to export 65 types of raw mining products.

The Indonesia is the world’s second-largest exporter of thermal coal, with 20.8 bil- lion tons of proven coal reserves, data from the Energy and Mineral Resources Ministry showed.

The country’s total coal production was estimated at 332 million metric tons last year, up from 290 million tons in the previous year. —Xinhua

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**Australian navy’s new Landing Helicopter Dock ship named Canberra**

Melbourne, 16 Feb — The Australian Navy’s first of two new Landing Helicopter Dock (LHD) ships was officially named HMAS Canberra on Friday at a ceremony held at Williamstown, Victoria, with the attendance of Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Minister for Defence Stephen Smith.

According to a report released by the office of the ship’s constructor, Illawarra, the construction new ships of Canberra class will be more than 230 metre long, 27.5 metre high and weigh around 27,500 tonnes. The first ship will be accepted into navy service in the first quarter of 2014 and the other one will be in 2016. The new ships have a capability to deliver 2,000 personnel along with their equipments, which is a “quantum leap” for the Australian Defence Force, said the report.

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KOTA RATNA VOY NO (877)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA RATNA VOY NO (877) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-2-2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MATTYS VOY NO (1308)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV MATTYS VOY NO (1308) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 17-2-2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: M/S ECHINA SHIPPING (MALAYSIA) AGENCY SDN BHD
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

S African airlines appoints new CEO

BLUG, 16 Feb — South African Airways has appointed a new acting CEO. The new chief walks into his role with huge expectations on his shoulders. He is the third person to take charge of the unprofitable airline in four months. Vuyisile Kona was appointed executive chairman in September by Public Enterprise Minister Malusi Gigaba. Just before Christmas, the minister made him acting CEO. Less than 2 months later the board suspends him, just a day after the company starts testing the investment market with a R 1.5 bn bond, as a tide over until they get their bail-out package from the SA government. Chief strategist at Investment Solutions, Chris Hart, chief strategist at Investment Solutions, said, “An enormous amount of taxpayer money committed to SAA, and that was committed on the premise that SAA that there would be a turnaround strategy. Now it looks like that this money is really going to be there just to keep the company afloat, and that more money will be required for the actual turnaround strategy that needs to still to be put in place. So when you’ve got managerial instability its unlikely that you’re going to see this turnaround strategy going to be put into place.”

Airline analyst Lin-den Burns suggests that the board had no other choice, and despite, the fact that it was announced as a precautionary measure, we still don’t know what the reason for the suspension was.

Airline analyst Linden Burns said, “The move to suspend the acting CEO is probably a good move, the board obviously want to have a company or an organization that is beyond reproach and where they are not going to be questions asked about corporate governance. They’ve moved very swiftly to address that.”

The new acting CEO is no stranger to the airline industry. In fact, he is no stranger to SAA having worked in their corporate environment for several years.

Burns said, “Mango’s chief executive Nico Bezuidenhout is a well known entity in the low cost market and he’s been running a very tight ship, very efficient, he’s a very astute air-line manager. That’s when we will start seeing more stability, I think Nico will be able to steady the ship.”

It has been made clear, via the minister and the board that both acting CEOs are simply that. Their search continues for a permanent appointment. However Hart says that while Bezuidenhout might have been a logical choice, the right man for the job, he clearly doesn’t fit the profile of the person that the SAA board and the minister are looking for. Minister Gigaba is known for taking action quickly. But he may want to reconsider his pace when appointing somebody to take over the ailing national carrier. Perhaps it’s time to look elsewhere.

UN food agency scales up aid to Syria

UNITED NATIONS, 16 Feb — The World Food Programme (WFP) is expanding its food assistance inside Syria to reach 2.5 million people in the coming months, as the political crisis and violent conflict continue in the Middle East country, a UN spokesman said here on Friday.

“With that expansion, the agency will need nearly 160 million US dollars to cover the cost of its Syria operation up to June this year,” UN spokesman Martin Nesirky said at a daily news briefing.

“This past Wednesday, the World Food Programme dispatched an additional load of 62 tonnes of food — enough for 10,000 people — to Al-Hassakeh city and Al-Shaddadi District in northeast Syria,” Nesirky noted.

“That delivery followed reports of new waves of displacement, which brought hundreds of families to the area after intense fighting,” he added.

As the situation in Syria reached a bloody stalemate, the WFP recently said that about 40,000 people had fled heavy fighting between the armed opposition and the government army in the eastern town of Shadda-deh in Hasaka Province.

Last week, UN human rights chief Navi Pillay esti-mated the overall death toll from the 23-month Syria crisis at nearly 70,000.
**Ben Affleck, Jessica Chastain and Jennifer Lawrence to be Oscar presenters**

**NEW DELHI, 16 Feb**—Nominees Ben Affleck, Jessica Chastain and Jennifer Lawrence will present at the Academy Awards. Ben — who received a producer nod for Argo which is also up for Best Picture — showed he is not upset over his Best Director snub by agreeing to take the stage at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles on 24 February. Jessica and Jennifer will compete in the Best Actress category for their work in Zero Dark Thirty and Silver Linings Playbook respectively.

Previously confirmed presenters include Sandra Bullock, Nicole Kidman, Halle Berry and Reese Witherspoon, who have all won the coveted Best Actress award in the past. Sandra earned her Best Actress award for 2009 drama The Blind Side, while Reese won in 2005 for her role as June Carter Cash in Johnny Cash biopic, Walk the Line. Nicole was crowned Best Actress for playing Virginia Woolf in 2002’s The Hours and Halle earned her Oscar for 2001’s Monster’s Ball.

Other stars confirmed to present at the awards include fellow Best Actress winner, Meryl Streep, who was crowned Best Actress for playing Virginia Woolf in 2002’s The Hours and Halle earned her Oscar for 2001’s Monster’s Ball.

**Shah Rukh-Parineeti, Salman-Anushka: odd couples we’d like to see**

**NEW DELHI, 16 Feb**—While we’re thrilled at talk of Salman reuniting with his leading ladies with care. She, on the other hand, has a Cocktail of big budget films to her credit so. We would just love to see Aamir twirl Deepika out of her comfort zone even if some stand—ing on tiptoe is required. So we have a whole mix and match set of Bollywood’s old school and new school. Mix it up, we say.—PTI

**NARRATIVE MARKS**

**“For Cage, the appeal of “The Croods”, which hits theatres in March and has its premiere at the Berlin film festival on Friday, was that the themes were recognizable today.”**

**NEW DELHI, 16 Feb**—Indian Cricketer Harbhajan Singh is all set to make his big screen acting debut in Bollywood superstars Akshay Kumar’s Punjabi production ‘Ba Ji in Problem’. Singh, who is popularly known as Bhaaji, will appear in a cameo but it is not yet revealed if he will play his cricketing self or a new character.

**Bhopal rolls out red carpet for Begum Kareena Kapoor Khan**

**MUMBAI, 16 Feb**—Kareena Kapoor is in Bhopal to shoot for Prakash Jha’s Satyagraha. Husband Saif Ali Khan’s extended royal family is also settled in the Madhya Pradesh capital.

A source says, “Kareena is staying at the same hotel where Amitabh Bachchanji will be received. The red carpet was rolled out for her with a grand welcome ceremony including aarti, teeka and garland.” A Bhopal-based source tells us, “Kareena prefers to be simple and her taste in food is also similar.”

Joining Bebo in Bhopal will be husband Saif and mother-in-law Sharmila Tagore.

**Cage channels caveman in animated film ‘The Croods’**

**BERLIN, 16 Feb**—DreamWorks Animation’s new 3D adventure “The Croods” brings the prehistoric age to the 21st century in the form of a dysfunctional family of cave dwellers forced to flee the comforts of home and search out a new life in the unknown. “Never not be afraid” and “Fear keeps us alive” are the mantras for Grug, the ape-like father voiced by Nicolas Cage and whose first instinct is always to find a cave, block up the entrance and stay there as long as possible. But while he seeks to protect his brood from giant, hyena-like predators lurking in the shadows, his teenage daughter Eep (Emma Stone) is desperate to spread her wings, and it is her curiosity that leads the Croods to the other main character Guy. Guy introduces the Croods to fire and to a new way of thinking, and when the world literally falls apart around them they flee the collapsing deserts and canyons to find a lush, tropical world full of exotic yet dangerous creatures.

Flying pink piranha birds, devour walking whales in seconds, while tiny monkeys with giant fists use Grug as a punch bag. Much play is made of the first modern family coming up with the first pair of sunglasses (out of stone), the first pet, and the first photographic camera — by smashing a flat rock against the Croods’ faces and leaving indentation marks.

For Cage, the appeal of “The Croods”, which hits theatres in March and has its premiere at the Berlin film festival on Friday, was that the themes were recognizable today.

**Shah Rukh Khan and Parineet Chopra have never appeared together in a film but would make an interesting pair.—PTI**

**“The Iron Lady, Channing Tatum, Jean Dujardin, Octavia Spencer, the cast of The Avengers and the cast of the 2003 Best Picture winner, Chicago.”**

**NEW DELHI, 16 Feb**—While we’re thrilled at talk of Salman reunifying with his leading ladies with care. She, on the other hand, has a Cocktail of big budget films to her credit so. We would just love to see Aamir twirl Deepika out of her comfort zone even if some stand—ing on tiptoe is required. So we have a whole mix and match set of Bollywood’s old school and new school. Mix it up, we say.—PTI
**Roger and out! Federer sent packing by Benneteau**

Rotterdam, 16 Feb — Defending champion Roger Federer suffered a shock 6-3, 7-5 defeat by Frenchman Julien Benneteau, who has yet to lift a tour title during his 13-year career, in the World Indoor Tournament quarter-finals on Friday. The top seed struggled throughout with his first serve and was broken three times in the opening set. Benneteau, 31, broke Federer’s serve twice, backed by a capacity crowd of 10,500, broke back.

Federer had chances to break again in the 11th game but world number 39 Benneteau managed to hold him off before clinching victory on his first match point as a backhand pass from the Swiss went out. “If you lose your serve five times, like I did today, you can’t win indoors,” Federer told reporters. “Julien played great, created more chances than I did and fully deserved to win. I fought back at the end of the second set and had chances to take it into a third but that would have been more luck than I deserved.” Benneteau next meets fellow countryman Gilles Simon who put out Martin Klizan when the Slovakian retired through injury while trailing 6-7, 6-3, 3-0.

“This is a really good win and I am pleased with the way I played today,” said Benneteau. World number seven Juan Martin Del Potro stayed on course for his second successive appearance in the final by sweeping aside Finn Jarkko Nieminen 6-3, 6-4. The Argentine, beaten in last year’s final by Federer, will play Grigor Dimitrov in the last four after the Bulgarian came from behind to defeat Cypriot Marcos Bagdatis 6-7, 7-6, 6-3 in a thriller.

“There are no easy matches here,” said Del Potro. “Nieminnen played some excellent forehands on important points and I had to stick to my game plan and be patient.” The 21-year-old Dimitrov looked down and out when he trailed 6-5 in the second set but he then reeled off 18 straight points to level the match, including taking the tiebreak 7-0, before going on to reach his final indoor semi-final. “I can’t remember ever scoring 18 straight points before and I didn’t even notice it during the match,” said the Bulgarian.

**Frenchman Julien Benneteau**

**Riviera provides feast or famine for Donald**

PACIFIC PALISADES, (Calif.) 16 Feb — It has often been a case of feast or famine for Luke Donald at the Northern Trust Open, but the Briton is not surprised given the unique challenge facing the players at Riviera Country Club. The iconic par-71 layout which winds its way through the Santa Monica Canyon is renowned for its small greens and shrewd bunkering, leaving a very small margin of error for approach shots.

World number three Donald has recorded five top-15 finishes at the event in 11 appearances, including a runner-up spot in 2010, but he has also missed the cut four times on four occasions.

“Tennis is just the nature of this golf course,” the Englishman told reporters after firing a five-under-par 66 in Friday’s second round to sit just two shots off the early pace. “It’s the fine margins that can make the difference.”

**Luke Donald of England tees off on the 16th hole during the second round of the Northern Trust Open golf tournament at Riviera Country Club in Los Angeles on 15 Feb, 2013.**—Reuters

**Santos cool on Moreno talks**

Rio de Janeiro, 16 Feb — Santos coach Muricy Ramalho is considering an offer for Argentine striker Marcelo Moreno from English club Nottingham Forest to be discussed at the weekend and may think about it before going on to join up with the Brazilian national team for the upcoming international matches. "The offer is not a serious one," the former Flamengo star said. "But it is an offer and I will talk to the president of the club about it."

Moreno's high wage demands, along with the glitz of foreign players already at Santos, could stymie a possible deal for the 25-year-old. "He is a great player and he could contribute to our team. He can improve our game," the coach said. "But we have to be realistic and look at the possibility of bringing in another Brazilian player." 

"He is a great player but it will be difficult unless the conditions change," Ramalho said. "The fact he is a foreign player also complicates matters because we already have three. For that reason we are giving preference to a Brazilian centre forward." Under Brazil's Football Confederation (CBF) rules, clubs can only select a maximum of three foreign players in any given match. Santos already have Argentine trio Walter Montillo, Ezequiel Miralles and Patricio Rodriguez in their squad. —Xinhua

**Lee returns to Japan determined to deliver**

Tokyo, 16 Feb — Tadanari Lee returned to Japan on Friday determined to rediscover his scoring touch after joining FC Tokyo from Premier League club Southampton in a short-term loan deal. Injuries and other factors have kept the 27-year-old striker out of the side at Southampton this season and he has returned to the J-League on loan through the end of June.

Lee’s 2011 Asian Cup hero, speaking to reporters at Haneda airport before going on to join up with Tokyo at their pre-season training in Miyazaki, said, “I am looking to score a goal as the most important thing.”

**Tadanari Lee meets the press at Haneda airport in Tokyo after arriving from Britain on 15 Feb, 2013.**—Kyodo News

**Yao Ming named Houston Goodwill Ambassador**

Houston, 16 Feb — Former NBA star Yao Ming was officially named Goodwill Ambassador of the US city of Houston on Friday by the city’s mayor at a ceremony here. Yao, the former Rockets centre who lived in Houston for ten years, was also given key to the city by Mayor Annise Parker at the ceremony in downtown Houston.

Yao was appointed as Houston’s Goodwill Ambassador because of “the outstanding success” he has had as a professional basketball player for the Rockets since 2003 and the eight years he has participated in the All-Star Games, as well as the international connections he has fostered and the cultural enhancement he brought to the Houston community, read an proclamation from Parker. The title is also a recognition of the contributions Yao has made and is making “through unselfish public service for the benefit and welfare of humanity,” the proclamation said. “Houston has been enriched by your presence and is grateful for your dedication to improving the cultural fabric of our city,” it said.

Yao, who retired in 2011 after having played with the Rockets for nine seasons, was back in Houston from China for the NBA All-Star game as a judge of the Slam Dunk Contest.—Xinhua

**Former NBA star Yao Ming**

**Talks end without deal to allow NHL players for Sochi**

Toronto, 16 Feb — The National Hockey League (NHL) and Olympic officials ended two days of talks on Friday without an agreement that would free players to take part in the 2014 Sochi Winter Games. With the countdown to the Sochi Olympics now less than a year away, NHL commissioner Gary Bettman, NHL Players Association (NHLPA) chief Donald Fehr, International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) president Rene Fasel and representatives from the International Olympic Committee (IOC) met on Thurs- day and again for nearly three hours on Friday at the league’s New York headquarters to try and hammer out a deal. The NHL and NHLPA had no comment on the progress of negotiations and there was no announcement about plans for future talks, though Fasel warned the clock was ticking.

**Santos coach Muricy Ramalho**

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**Tadanari Lee meets the press at Haneda airport in Tokyo after arriving from Britain on 15 Feb, 2013.**—Kyodo News
Serena becomes oldest woman player at number one

Doha, 16 Feb—Serena Williams showed tennis was not just the domain of teenagers as she climbed back to the top of the world rankings on Friday, becoming the oldest female to hold the coveted position at the age of 31. The American is world number one for the sixth time in her storied career after finishing off former Wimbledon storied career after finishing at the age of 31. The

Williams will meet

Maria Sharapova of Russia reacts after defeating Samantha Stosur of Australia during the quarter-finals of the Qatar Open. Reuters

Payton, Heinson and Hardaway named Hall of Fame finalists

Houston, 16 Feb—Nine-time NBA All-Star guard Gary Payton, two-time NBA-winning coach Tom Heinsohn and smooth shooting point guard Tim Hardaway were named on Friday among the 12 finalists for induction into the Basketball Hall of Fame. Among those also named as first-time finalists were three-time National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Coach of the Year Sylvia Hatchell, WNBA All-Star guard Dawn Staley and six-time NBA All-Star Mitch Richmond.

Payton, a point guard and defensive specialist for 18 NBA seasons, ranks in the top 10 all time in assists and steals. “A guy coming from Oakland, California, I never dreamed of this,” said Payton, who played 13 seasons with the Seattle SuperSonics and five with the Miami Heat before retiring after the 2006-07 campaign. “The things I did at the NBA, I never dreamed of that. I would be honored to be a first ballot.”

Previous finalists again being considered for induction into the Hall are former NBA All-Stars Maurice Cheeks, Spencer Haywood, and Bernard King, and college coaches Guy Lewis, Rick Pitino and Jerry Tarkanian. The Class of 2013 will be unveiled at the NCAA Final Four on 8 April and the enshrinement will take place on 8 September.

Packers release record-setting defensive back Woodson

Green Bay Packers cornerback Charles Woodson (L) intercepts the ball against Chicago Bears wide receiver Earl Bennett (80) in the second half during their NFL football game in Green Bay, Wisconsin on 13 Sept., 2012. REUTERS

Woodson started in all 100 games he played for Green Bay since signing with the team as an unrestricted free agent in 2006 and holds franchise records for defensive touchdowns with 10 and the most interception returns for touchdowns with nine.

He was named to the Pro Bowl eight times during his career and was a key member of the Packers team that won the Super Bowl for the 2010 campaign, establishing career highs in tackles (105) and forced fumbles (five). “He has been an integral part of the Packers success and our Super Bowl title in 2010 would not have been possible without his contributions,” Packers General Manager Ted Thompson said in a statement.

“A once-in-a-generation talent ... we look forward to his eventual induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.” The 1997 Heisman Trophy winner as US college football’s top player, Woodson was selected by Oakland with the fourth pick in the 1998 draft and spent eight seasons with the Raiders before signing with the Packers. Woodson won NFL defensive rookie of the year honours and became one of the league’s premier defensive backs with 55 career interceptions.

He is the first NFL player to return an interception for a touchdown in five straight seasons and is tied for second in league history with 11 career interception returns for touchdowns. Former Packers wide receiver Donald Driver announced his retirement earlier this year but the 36-year-old Woodson is expected to land with another NFL team, saying he wants to play for a Super Bowl contender.
President U Thein Sein urges different echelons of administrative mechanism to change mindset and behaviors

Notice to matriculation exam identity card

February 16, 2013

Myanmar Examinations Board announced today that the students from regions and states except Yangon who will sit for the matriculation exam to be held from 13 to 22 March, 2013, are to take out their identity cards as of 25 February, 2013 and the students from Yangon Municipal Area, as of 25 February, 2013. In so doing, the students from Basic Education High Schools and BEHSs (Branch and Affiliated) may take out their identity cards from their respective school centers. The students may make direct contacts with respective examiners and township education officers if there is something inconvenient. MNA

MRTV invites companies to broadcast live 27th SEA Games

Local and foreign companies have been invited to carry out broadcasting services such as live broadcast of the opening and concluding ceremonies of the 27th SEA Games, working for IBC (International Broadcasting Centre) and broadcast of seven sports events.

Those interested companies at home and abroad may submit their proposals to the director-general of Myanmar Radio and Television (Tatkon) not later than 28th February, 2013, and the day on which the officials of companies would meet will be announced. MNA

High-yield maize seeds provide high income to farmers in Tatkon Tsp

Agriculture Department has distributed hybrid maize seeds which can produce over 100 baskets in average per acre to the farmers in Nay Pyi Taw Tatkon township this winter.

The local farmers have shifted to U008 strain of maize seeds today from 888 strains of maize.

“We have distributed U008 strain of maize seeds free of charge to 350 farmers for 456 acres in 38 villages," said U Chit Swe Oo, Staff Officer of Tatkon Township Agriculture Department.

To distribute the seeds to farmers again in the next growing season, U008 strain of maize seeds are being hybridized at the 60-acre Agriculture Research Farm in Tatkon.

“We have planned to distribute the seeds again in the coming winter, but it might not be free this time,” he added.

Without turning a blind eye to the needs of the farmers after giving the hybrid seeds to the farmers, employees of the Myanmar Agriculture Department have made field trips to the farmland and providing technical assistance to them. If farmers follow the new method of maize cultivation, they can put one acre under 2300 plants. A new hybrid strain of plan can yield two maize buds per plant, produce 30,000 maize buds per acre. Therefore, one acre can produce 100 to 120 baskets of maize grains. The price for maize grains has reached K 6500 per basket currently. The maize grains, having marketability to make feedstuff for chickens, are exported to China through Muse.

A maize can be harvested four months after planting while a corn lasts just two and half months to be harvested. Incomes of the farmers are rising as the per acre yield of the U008 strain has reached over 100 baskets.

There are 2433 acres of maize plantations in Tatkon Township in the rainy season for the 2012-13 growing season while 600 acres in the winter.

The Myanmar Agriculture Department has encouraged the farmers to expand the maize acres in the upcoming rainy season. MNA

MNA