**President U Thein Sein, Australian Trade Commission hold talks over investment sector**

NAVPYITAW, 20 March—President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein and Mr Bruce Gosper, CEO of Australian Trade Commission, held talks over investment in Myanmar at the Intercontinental Hotel in Australia yesterday. During the meeting, Mr Bruce Gosper, on behalf of Australian businessmen, expressed his interests in natural resources, infrastructures, agro-based businesses, foodstuff, education and health sectors in Myanmar.

He also offered assistance of Australian for amending the trade rules and regulations of Myanmar. President U Thein Sein clarified the efforts of the government for political stability to attract the investment, rules and regulations for investment and prospects of investment in the economic sector in Myanmar.

After the meeting, the Myanmar delegation attended a dinner hosted by Asia Link and President U Thein Sein clarified the economic reforms in the country in his key-note address over the dinner.

Asia Link, founded by Myer Foundation in 1990, is a non-profit organization and has been helping decision makers from political, economic and education sectors of Asia and Australia to cooperate with each other.—MNA

**Weather Forecast for third 10 days of March 2013**

issued on 18-3-2013

**Bay of Bengal Condition**

A low pressure area may form in the South Bay of Bengal. Weather will be partly cloudy to cloudy in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

**Rainy Day**

Rainy days are expected about (4) to (6) days in Taninthayi Region and Kachin State, about (2) to (4) days in Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Upper Sagaing Regions, Chin, Shan, Mon and Rakhine States, weather will be partly cloudy in Mandalay and Magway Regions, Mon and Kayin States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

**Day Temperature**

Day temperature will be about March average temperature in Kachin, Shan, Kayin, Mon and Kayah States and above March average temperature in the remaining Regions and States.

**Fog Condition**

Foggy days are expected in the morning about (4) to (6) days in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi, Mandalay and Yangon Regions, Kachin, Chin, Shan and Rakhine States and (3) days in the remaining Regions and States.

**Slight earthquake jolts inside Myanmar**

NAVPYITAW, 20 March—A slight earthquake of magnitude of (4.0) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside Myanmar, (about 5 miles east of Thabaikkyin), about 62 miles north of Mandalay seismological observatory was recorded at 11 hrs 38 min 12 sec M.S.T today, announced the Meteorology and Hydrology Department.—MNA
Census-taking course (lower Myanmar) organized

YANGON, 20 March — As a preparation for pilot census-taking task before nationwide census-taking in 2014, the Ministry of Immigration and Population organized a census-taking course (lower Myanmar) at the training school of the ministry in 37th street, here, on 18 March. Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Kyaw Htay delivered an address at the opening ceremony.

In his address, he elaborated pilot census-taking task to be conducted in 20 townships in March 2013 and importance of the role of teachers who will discharge census-taking task. He called on trainees to perform census-taking task as a national duty. A total 60 of trainees from the Ministry of Education are taking the course.

Man standing on the middle line knocked down, killed on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road

YANGON, 20 March — A man with mental illness was hit by a train while he was crossing over the railroad on 17 March.

She was hit by a taxi driving at breakneck speed while she was standing in the middle of the road together with her husband before crossing over the second half of the road. She was pronounced dead on the spot at the scene of the incident. “The fatal accident happened to her while standing and waiting to cross the opposite lane. I have no idea whether the headlights of the car were poor or not. The woman was knocked down. The incident was due to excessive speed. The driver was caught at the scene,” says a nearby witness. It is learnt that the taxi driver was arrested at the scene by officials concerned and the dead body of the woman was taken to Yangon General Hospital.

New transformer satisfies ward dwellers in Hsipaw Township

HSIPAW, 20 March — Under the supervision of Hsipaw Township Electrical Engineer U Kyaw Htay, electricians performed installation of new 11/0.4 KVA transformer at Padaintaung ward of the township on 14 March. Ward dwellers expressed their complete satisfaction with installation of new transformer as they are being provided with adequate supply of electricity.

Dead whale washed ashore on Hmyawiyit beach in Launglon Township

DAWEI, 20 March — A dead whale was washed ashore on Hmyawiyit beach (Kampani) in Launglon Township of Dawei District on 16 March. According to a local fisherman, the dead whale, nearly 42 feet long, is believed to have died one month ago because some of its flesh had rotted away.

In 2005, a 36-foot long whale was washed ashore on Thaboaseik beach near Maungmakan and the whale skeleton is on display at Dawei University.

Another dead whale, which was washed ashore on the beach in 2007, was buried for its skeleton.

Man with mental illness run over by train in Insein Township

YANGON, 20 March — A man with mental illness was hit by a train while he was crossing over the railroad at a place between Aung San station and Danyingon station in Insein Township, here, at about 5.30 am on 11 March.

U Tun Yi, 44 of Aung San ward in Insein Township was run over by the train and he died of severe injuries on the spot. The dead body was taken to Insein Hospital and Insein police station is investigating the death of the man struck by the train whether there are foul plays or other suspicions.

Refresher course for trainers of CICSs

YANGON, 20 March — Under the supervision of Union Civil Services Board, a refresher course for trainers was opened at Kaytumadi Hall of Central Institute of Civil Service (Phaunggyi) on 18 March with the sponsorship of UNDP and International Management Group-IMG.

On behalf of the chairman of UCSB, member U Khin Maung Aye extended greetings. A total of 50 trainers from two CICSs are taking the three-week course conducted by foreign scholars.

Laboratory

LABUTTA, 20 March — According to information that a woman had committed suicide by hanging herself from a tree in her residence in Layinkwin village of (Phaunggyi) on 18 March.

She was pronounced dead at the scene of the incident. “The fatal accident happened to her while standing and waiting at bus-stop at about 8.30 pm on 17 March. She was hit by a taxi on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Insein Township, here, at about 5.30 am on 13 March.

The driver was caught at the scene. It is learnt that the taxi driver was arrested at the scene by officials concerned and the dead body of the woman was taken to Yangon General Hospital.

Woman found dead hanging herself from tree in Labutta Township

LABUTTA, 20 March — A woman was found dead hanging herself from a branch of Padauk tree in her residence. Her death was ruled an apparent suicide.

Seminar on management of climate change and forest conservation

YANGON, 20 March — A seminar for local people to be competent in dealing with the impacts of climate change and forest management took place at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel on 15 March.

First, Managing Director U Win Myo Thu of Green Homeland Development Association extended greetings. Next, Dr Maung Maung Than gave talks on establishment of community forest plantation. Dr Timmi Tillman on from nature to food sufficiency, U Win Maw on conservation of community forest plantation and biodiversity, Dr Oliver on legal timber extraction through sustainable forest management, Dr Rosy Ne Win on reduction in carbon emission through establishment of community forest plantation and U Tun Paw Oo on road map for carbon emission reduction. Then they answered the queries raised by those present.

Next, an official of UNDP explained matters related to small funds for environmental conservation. The seminar came to an end with concluding remarks by U Win Myo Thu.

Child burnt to death in house fire in Einme Township

EINME, 20 March — A child was killed in the fire in Payinsu village of Einme Township in Ayeyawady Region at about 8 pm on 4 March. When a thatched house of Ko Soe Than and Ma Sein Than Kyi in the village caught fire, a family of four members fell asleep. Their daughter was burnt to death in the fire which started from the kitchen.
Obama heads to Israel amid low expectations

JERUSALEM, 20 March —President Barack Obama arrives in Israel on Wednesday without any new peace initiative to offer disillusioned Palestinians and facing deep Israeli doubts over his pledge to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran.

Making his first official visit here as president, Obama hopes to reset his often fraught relations with both the Israelis and Palestinians in a carefully choreographed three-day stay that is high on symbolism but low on expectations.

He will meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, hold separate talks in the occupied West Bank with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and address a skeptical Israeli public with a speech to students.

U.S. officials say he will try to coax the Palestinians and Israelis back to peace talks. He will also seek to reassure Netanyahu he is committed to preventing Iran from getting a nuclear bomb and discuss ways of containing Syria’s civil war.

However, the White House has deliberately minimized hopes of any major breakthroughs, a reversal from Obama’s first four years in office when aides said he would only visit the Jewish state if he had something concrete to accomplish.

Workers have hung hundreds of US and Israeli flags on lampposts across Jerusalem, as well as banners that boast of “an unbreakable alliance,” but the apparent lack of any substantial policy push has bemused many diplomats and analysts.

The US President Giorgio Napolitano starts consultations with political leaders on Wednesday to see if any of them has a chance of forming a government after last month’s election left no party with a majority in parliament.

Italy’s political stalemate and the prospect of months of political uncertainty has created alarm across Europe just as the standoff over bank deposits in Cyprus reawakened fears that the euro zone debt crisis could flare up again.

Centre-left leader Pier Luigi Bersani, who won a majority in the lower house but not in the Senate, commands the largest bloc in parliament but cannot govern unless he has support from one of the others.

However there has been no sign that an accord is possible with either former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s centre-right alliance, the second biggest force in parliament, or the anti-establishment 5-Star Movement led by ex-comic Beppe Grillo which holds the balance of power.

If no agreement can be struck between parties that remain bitterly divided, Italy faces the prospect of a brief period under a caretaker government followed by a return to the polls, possibly as early as June.

Napolitano meets minor parties, including Prime Minister Mario Monti’s centrist bloc on Wednesday before seeing representatives from the 5-Star Movement, Berlusconi’s People of Freedom (PDL) party and Bersani’s Democratic Party (PD) on Thursday.

Obama heads to Israel amid low expectations

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19 rescued from Polish mine after quake-triggered cave-in

WARSAW, 20 March —Some 19 miners were rescued from a Polish copper mine after being trapped underground by a cave-in, a spokesman of the mine operator said on Wednesday.

The miners were trapped 600 metres below ground at the Rudna mine, about 400 km southwest of the Polish capital, when an earthquake triggered a collapse in the mine late Tuesday night, KGHM spokesman Dariusz Wyborski said.

There had been no contact with them for two hours as the tremor cut communication lines, the spokesman said.

The rescuers reached the miners after tunneling through huge rocks, he added.

The mine, which has been in operation since 1974, is in the Silesia region, near Poland’s borders with Germany and the Czech Republic.

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Chemical rocket hits Aleppo, mortars shower Damascus as Syrian opposition names PM for interim gov’t

DAMASCUS, 20 March —A chemical rocket slammed a town in Syria’s northern Province of Aleppo on Tuesday, killing at least 25 people, with around seven mortar shells landing at an upscale district of the capital Damascus at a time the exiled opposition elected a prime minister for a provisional government.

At least 25 people were killed and 130 others wounded on Tuesday when armed men fired a rocket stuffed with chemical material at the Khan al-Asal town in Aleppo, the state-media said, accusing the armed opposition fighters of being behind it. However, the rebels denied the accusations and turned the accusation finger against the government.

Information Minister Omar al-Zoubi slammed the attack as “a dangerous escalation,” adding that such a move mirrors the shift in using the arms that are being sent through neighbouring countries to the opposition fighters.

“In today’s crime, the terrorists have used an internationally-prohibited weapon,” Zoubi said.

According to Mikkad, Syria will send a letter to the UN Security Council, calling for shouldering its responsibilities to put an end to the terrorist crimes.

The incident has been met with condemnation from Russia and Iran, Syria’s main allies, while the United States said there is no proof that the rebels were behind the attack. The unprecedented move came also as Britain and France were pushing the European Union (EU) to lift arms embargo on rebels in the hope of tilting the light in favour of the opposition.

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Al-Qaeda in Africa says it beheads French hostage

NOUAKCHOTT, 20 March —Al-Qaeda’s wing in north Africa said it had beheaded a French hostage in retaliation for France’s intervention in Mali to prevent the north from being used as a launch pad for terror attacks in Africa and in the West.

Verdon, a French geologist, was captured in the northern Mali town of Hombori in November 2011. A French foreign ministry spokesman said he had no information on the report.

In what ANI reported was a telephone call to the agency, which has close links to Islamist militants, the commander said Philippe Verdren had been beheaded on 10 March “in response to the French military intervention in the north of Mali,” ANI reported.

The death, if true, would be a worrying development for Paris, which still has some 14 hostages held in West Africa, including seven in the Sahel by AQIM and its affiliates.

French President Francois Hollande in part justified military action in Mali to prevent the north from being used as a launch pad for terror attacks in Africa and in the West.

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Second computer glitch shuts down NASA Mars rover

NASA’s Mars rover Curiosity was pictured in this 3 Feb 2013 handout self-portrait obtained by Reuters on 9 Feb 2013. —REUTERS

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla., 20 March — NASA chief Charles Bolden has advice on how to handle a large asteroid headed toward New York City. Pray.

That’s about all the United States—or anyone for that matter—could do at this point about unknown asteroids and meteors that may be on a collision course with Earth, Bolden told lawmakers at a US House of Representatives Science Committee hearing on Tuesday.

An asteroid estimated to be have been about 55 feet in diameter exploded on 15 February over Chelyabinsk, Russia, generating shock waves that shattered windows and damaged buildings. More than 1,500 people were injured.

Later that day, a larger, unrelated asteroid discovered last year passed about 17,200 miles from Earth, closer than the network of television and weather satellites that ring the planet.

The events “serve as evidence that we live in an active solar system with potentially hazardous objects passing through our neighbourhood with surprising frequency,” said Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, a Texas Democrat.

“We were fortunate that the events of last month were simply an interesting coincidence rather than a catastrophe,” said Committee Chairman Lamar Smith, a Texas Republican, who called the hearing to learn what is being done and how much money is needed to better protect the planet.

NASA has found and is tracking about 95 percent of the largest objects flying near Earth, those that are 62 miles or larger in diameter. “An asteroid of that size, a kilometre or bigger, could plausibly end civilisation,” White House science advisor John Holdren told legislators at the same hearing.

But only about 10 percent of an estimated 10,000 potential “city-killer” asteroids, those with a diameter of about 165 feet have been found. Holdren added.

On average, objects of that size are estimated to hit Earth about once every 1,000 years. “From the information we have, we don’t know of an asteroid that will threaten the population of the United States,” Bolden said. “But if it’s coming in three weeks, pray.”

In addition to stepping up its monitoring efforts and building international partnerships, NASA is looking at developing technologies to divert an object that may be on a collision course with Earth. —REUTERS

Adobe chief technology officer to join Apple

SAN FRANCISCO, 20 March — Apple Inc has snagged Adobe System’s chief technology officer, Kevin Lynch, who oversees the software maker’s technology research and experience design teams with a focus on cloud and social computing.

Lynch, who joined Adobe in 2005 through its acquisition of Macrovision, will be Apple’s vice president of technology. He will report to Bob Mansfield, Apple’s senior vice president of technology, who leads the California gadget giant’s wireless and semiconducto team, Apple said on Tuesday.

Adobe said earlier that Lynch will leave the company effective on 22 March and that it would not be filling the CTO position. —REUTERS

Telecoms prevail in arguing against cybersecurity recommendations

WASHINGTON, 20 March — Large telecommunications companies and Internet providers succeeded in convincing an advisory panel that the US government should not pursue enforcement of security measures meant to bolster their defences against the growing threat of cyber attacks, according to a report released late on Monday.

Representatives of the communications industry on a panel advising the Federal Communications Commission argued against a recommendation that the FCC press the telecom sector to abide by a list of cybersecurity standards endorsed by national security and defence experts. The panel could not reach an agreement needed to make such a recommendation.

Government officials and the business community have struggled to reach a consensus on the scope and power of cybersecurity standards as industry experts say prescriptive measures would hamper innovation and expose companies to being sued if their networks get hack.

The panel that wrote the advisory report to the FCC includes experts from several state authorities, non-profits and Internet and telecom firms such as AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, Comcast and Microsoft.

In the report, the advisers said there was no consensus on the group on the “extent to which the FCC should encourage the communications industry to follow so-called “20 Controls” endorsed by national security and defence leaders as strengthening protections against cyber attacks.

“The user community within Working Group 11 would prefer for the FCC to encourage industry to use the 20 Controls,” the advisers wrote in recommendation to the FCC. —REUTERS

Samsung Galaxy S4: HTC says the next big thing is not plastic

NEW DELHI, 20 March — It looks like smartphone wars have taken another dimension after the launch of the Samsung Galaxy S4. After Apple’s marketing chief dising the Korean giant’s new offering before its launch and a defensive campaign from the company after the launch, HTC has also entered the fray, with the company’s chief marketing officer, Benjamin Ho, taking a dig at the Galaxy S4. In an interaction with CNET Asia, Ho said, “The next big thing? It’s not plastic.”

He said that with a continuation of a plastic body, and a larger screen being the most obvious physical change, Samsung’s new Galaxy pales in comparison to the all-aluminum unibody HTC One, and that it was just more of the same. HTC president, Jason MacKenzie criticised the launch event. “I went from laughing to actually feeling embarrassed at some of the acting,” he said.

Meanwhile, Samsung’s design chief Denis Miloskies, defended Samsung’s smartphone strategy including Galaxy S4s design at the Engadget Expand conference, and said that the company is focusing on making devices smarter, and that design will improve over time.

“Actually, the global design process has been raised,” Miloskies said. “We’re making devices thinner and lighter, screens more beautiful. With Samsung, it’s less about that but more about building a meaningful relationship with technology. As these devices become smarter, letting them sense where you are and adjusting to that, it’s known that design will improve over time. But now, we’re thinking about: how do you create a soul for a device.” —PTI
Government changes course on graphic cigarette warnings

WASHINGTON, March 20—The government has dropped its push for cigarette labels to carry images of diseased lungs and other graphic health warnings, and will craft new anti-smoking ads that do not run afoul of free speech rights.

In a letter to Republican House Speaker John Boehner last Friday, Attorney General Eric Holder said that the Food and Drug Administration would go back to the drawing board to develop the ads, as required by legislation passed by Congress in 2009.

Half the space on the front and back of each cigarette pack must be taken up by anti-smoking warnings and a large share of other printed ads should have similar discouraging messages, according to the legislation. Cigarette manufacturers, however, sued to prevent the ads from appearing on the packaging for their products, saying such a move would curtail free speech rights. In August, a federal court struck down the requirement as unconstitutional.

The Justice Department was facing a deadline on whether to ask the Supreme Court to review that ruling. The “Department of Justice in this case has vigorously defended the constitutionality of the graphic warnings,” Holder wrote in the letter notifying Boehner, who is a smoker. Holder said the deadline for an appeal prompted the new approach.

Many other nations have for years used graphic images to try to deter smokers. The FDA has argued that the images of rotting teeth and diseased lungs are accurate and necessary to warn consumers — especially teenagers — about the risks of smoking.

On Tuesday, the FDA used a blog post to say the agency “will undertake research to support a new rulemaking consistent with the (2009) Tobacco Control Act.”

British icon Bentley may build next car abroad

LONDON, March 20—Bentley, bought by Volkswagen last year, is already investigating manufacturing its flagship Mulsanne outside the UK, the first time the British luxury automobile icon would build a complete car on foreign soil.

Fast growth has kept Bentley’s factory in northeast England busy, but shifting production of a new model abroad would be an unwelcome development for Britain’s government as it tries to revive a flagging industrial sector.

Luxury manufacturer Jaguar Land Rover (TAMOJ.L) is already investigating car manufacturing to India to build on growth in emerging markets with the help of Indian parent Tata Motors (TAML.N). Bentley, bought by Germany’s Volkswagen (VOWGp.DE) in 1998, has been making its ultra-luxury vehicles including the flagship Mulsanne at the Crewe factory since 1946.

EU lawmakers to close deal on banker bonus clampdown

BRUSSELS, March 20—European Union lawmakers are expected to agree on Wednesday to bar bankers in Europe from getting bonuses bigger than their salary, introducing the first cap of its kind globally.

One of the most ambitious reforms of the financial crisis, the cap is designed to address public anger at a bonus-driven culture many say has contributed to the financial crisis and the systemic collapse of banks across the continent.

It is set to be introduced from next year despite the objections of Britain. While some top executives have been paid millions in bonuses, a 2009 study by the Institute for Fiscal Studies showed that, adjusted for inflation, median bonus payments in 2011 were about 10% lower than in 2007.

EU lawmakers in the European Parliament and diplomats representing EU countries are to begin finalising the bonus rules at 1730 GMT. Officials expect a deal to be clinched.

The filters, made of metal wires, are recommended based on theories about how they work for patients with a so-called venous thromboembolism who can’t take anti-clotting drugs. But they are sometimes used on other people with blood clots, as well. And the filters may increase the risk of second clots in the legs and other complications — such as when pieces of the filter break off and migrate to the lungs or heart, researchers said. “The logic is that if we put a little basket, some sort of net, in the inferior vena cava and catch these clots before they get to the lungs, we may be able to save lives,” said Dr Vinay Prasad, from the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.

But, he added, “There is no good evidence that it actually does do that.”

Researchers led by Dr Richard White from the University of California, Davis School of Medicine in Sacramento analyzed discharge records from 2002 to 2009 from California hospitals to track use of vena cava filters in 2006 through 2010. They found that more than 130,000 people were hospitalized for blood clots. Surgeons across the state inserted a filter into the blood vessels of one in seven patients with clots, but the frequency of filter use varied widely by hospital—from 0 to almost 40% of patients. For many having a major operation or with serious bleeding were more likely to get a vena cava filter, but hospital factors seemed to affect their use as well. For example, the largest hospitals used filters five times more than the smallest ones, and urban facilities inserted them more than twice as often as rural ones.

“Everyone in this field of dealing with blood clots has always been concerned about whether these filters are effective,” White told Reuters Health. “Everyone’s been wondering, why are these things being used so much? You look nationally, and it just keeps going up and up and up.”

UNESCO’s message on the International Day of Forests and the Tree

21 March 2013

Forests are vital for our well-being. They cover nearly a third of the globe and provide an invaluable variety of social, economic and environmental benefits. Three-fourths of fresh water comes from forested watersheds.

Forests stabilize slopes and prevent landslides; they protect coastal communities against tsunamis and storms. More than 3 billion people use wood for fuel; some 2 billion people depend on forests for sustenance and income, and 750 million live within them.

By proclaiming the International Day of Forests and the Tree, the United Nations has created a new platform to raise awareness about the importance of all types of forest ecosystems to sustainable development.

Forests are often at the frontlines of competing demands. Urbanization and the consumption needs of growing populations are linked to deforestation for large-scale agriculture and the extraction of water, oil and minerals. Often the roads that provide infrastructure for these enterprises ease access for other forest users who can further exacerbate the rate of forest and biodiversity loss.

Forests are also central to combating climate change. They store more carbon than is in the atmosphere. Deforestation and land-use changes account for 17 per cent of human-generated carbon dioxide emissions. As weather patterns alter due to climate change, many forested areas are increasingly vulnerable. This underlines the urgency of a global, inclusive, legally binding climate change agreement that will address greenhouse gas emissions and encourage the protection and sustainable management of forests.

Notwithstanding these immense challenges, there are encouraging signs.

The global rate of deforestation has decreased by almost 20 per cent in the past decade. We need to intensify efforts to protect forests, including by incorporating them into the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals.

On this first International Day of Forests and the Tree, I urge governments, businesses and all sectors of society to commit to reducing deforestation, preventing forest degradation, reducing poverty and promoting sustainable livelihoods for all forest-dependent peoples.

UN/IFPRI
Afghanistan says strengthening national sovereignty central to transition

**United Nations**, 20 March—An Afghan diplomat said here on Tuesday that his country believes strengthening national sovereignty is central to transition in the war-torn country.

The statement came as Zahir Tanin, the Afghan permanent representative to the United Nations, was taking the floor at an open debate of the UN Security Council on the situation in Afghanistan.

“After more than a decade of shared efforts, strengthening of sovereignty entails normalization through security, political and economic transition,” Tanin said. “For the Afghan people, national sovereignty means taking full responsibility for their destiny.”

In early December, the Afghan forces took over the full security charges of six eastern provinces from the NATO-led forces. The transition of security control from foreign troops to Afghan forces started in summer 2011, is due to be completed by the end of 2014.

“With the announcement of the 4th tranche of transition this past December, assumption of full security responsibility by the Afghan forces is more tangible than ever,” he said. “By the end of this stage, 87 percent of the Afghan population will be living in areas where Afghan security forces are in charge of security.”

“The Afghan people are keenly focused on a successful political transition, and all eyes are on the election next spring,” he said.

Xinhua

Uruguay eager to boost Mercosur-SICA economic ties

**Managua**, 20 March—Uruguay is keen to promote business ties between two economic blocs in Latin America, visiting Uruguayan Foreign Minister Luis Almagro said on Tuesday.

At a joint press conference with Jose Adan Aguerri, President of Nicaragua’s Supreme Council for Private Enterprise (Cosеп), Almagro said Uruguay strongly believes in Latin American integration.

Xinhua

Saudi Arabia arrests 18 members in spying cell

**Riyadh**, 20 March—Saudi Arabia announced on Tuesday the arrest of 18 people over the suspicion of spying for another country, Saudi Press Agency reported.

Saudi authorities arrested 16 Saudis, an Iranian and a Lebanese in four areas: Mecca, Medina, Riyadh and Eastern Province, a spokesperson of Saudi Interior Minister said in a statement. The spokesman said the suspects were charged of collecting information about vital establishments in Saudi Arabia for the intelligence of another country, stopping short of revealing the country’s name.

The local Okaz newspaper referred to the group as a terror cell, the members of which had been planning explosions in vital locations.

Xinhua

Photo taken on 20 March, 2013 shows the snow-covered cherry blossoms at the Yuyuantan Park in Beijing, capital of China. Beijing witnessed a snowfall with a depth reaching 10.17 centimeters overnight. —Xinhua

Death toll in Brazil rains climbs to 24

**Rio de Janeiro**, 20 March—The death toll from torrential downpours in southeast Brazil’s Rio de Janeiro state climbed to 24 on Tuesday, authorities said.

Rescuers workers in the state’s mountain resort of Petropolis found several more bodies on Tuesday, including those of three children, while 10 to 15 people remain unaccounted for.

Another 18 people were injured by mudslides and almost 1,500 people who were left homeless have been taken to 18 shelters around town.

The tourist town used to serve as the summer getaway of Brazil’s imperial family in the 19th century, but along with other towns in the area is frequently battered by downpours that cause mudslides and flooding.

Two years ago, several of Rio’s mountain towns, including Petropolis, were the site of the country’s worst natural disaster ever, after several days of torrential rains led to more than 900 deaths. Some 400,000 area residents were left homeless and the towns are still recovering from the disaster.

Brazil’s President Dilma Rousseff, who is in Rome on an official visit to the Vatican, said earlier in the day that local authorities should prevent people from building in high-risk areas.

Xinhua

Greece safeguarded against Cyprus crisis

**Athens**, 20 March—Greece is fully safeguarded against the Cyprus crisis, Greek coalition government partners assured on Tuesday evening, criticizing Eurogroup’s decision to impose a levy on deposits at the Cypriot banking system in exchange for bailout aid as a “historic mistake.”

Alarmed by developments in Nicosia and the potential impact on Greece’s efforts to overcome its debt crisis, Greek Prime Minister Antonis Samaras held a meeting with the leaders of the parties supporting the government over the Cyprus crisis and the progress in negotiations with international lenders over the release of the next bailout tranche to Athens.

“Greece is fully safeguarded. Cyprus will not go bankrupt,” Finance Minister Yannis Stournaras said categorically upon his exit from the Premier’s office, after briefing political leaders on developments.

“Euro group made a historic mistake. It must be corrected as soon as possible to safeguard Cyprus and the eurozone and avoid possible repercussions elsewhere,” socialist PASOK party leader Evangelos Venizelos told reporters after the meeting, as the Cypriot parliament was voting down the terms of the bailout package for Nicosia.

Xinhua

Employees work at the construction site of a new lock for the Panama Canal’s widening project in Colon on 19 March, 2013. The new lock is expected to be completed and operated in April 2015, the project’s Director General Bernardo Gonzalez said.—Xinhua

UN mission in DRC hails surrender of wanted Congolese rebel leader

**United Nations**, 20 March—The United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on Tuesday welcomed the surrender of rebel leader Bosco Ntaganda, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Ntaganda walked into the United States Embassy in Rwanda on Monday and turned himself in and asked to be transferred to the ICC in The Hague, the Netherlands, reports said.

“The UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) has welcomed the surrender of the Congolese rebel leader Jean Bosco Ntaganda and the decision by the United States to transfer him to The Hague where he is wanted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Ituri between 2001 and 2003,” UN spokesman Martin Nesirky told reporters here. “The special representative of the (UN) secretary-general in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Roger Meece, said that the surrender of Mr Ntaganda and his early transfer to the International Criminal Court will help advance the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo,” Nesirky said.

Meece also noted that the move would send a strong signal to human rights offenders anywhere that they are not beyond justice. The ICC is the first permanent international court set up to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

Xinhua

Israel’s President Shimon Peres (C, seated) and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (L, seated) pose for a group photo together with the ministers of the new Israeli government, in Jerusalem, on 18 March, 2013. Israel’s 33rd government was inaugurated at the Knesset (parliament) on Monday evening after its members were earlier introduced by the prime minister to lawmakers.—Xinhua

Uruguay eager to boost Mercosur-SICA economic ties, especially for business cooperation.

Aguerri said Nicaragua’s private sector is willing to promote trade ties between the two economic blocs, the Common Market of the South (Mercosur) and the Central American Integration System (SICA).

Aguerri also said he hopes that by mid-2013, SICA and Mercosur member countries will be able to have direct contact to strengthen their commercial ties.

Uruguay is interested in seeking new markets for its pharmaceutical and agriculture products, said Almagro, who has also visited Guatemala and El Salvador during his ongoing foreign tour.

Uruguay is also interested in purchasing Nicaraguan products as coffee, rum and tobacco among others.

Xinhua

Xinhua

Xinhua

Photo taken on 20 March, 2013 shows the snow-covered cherry blossoms at the Yuyuantan Park in Beijing, capital of China. Beijing witnessed a snowfall with a depth reaching 10.17 centimeters overnight.—Xinhua

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**Objectives of the 68th Anniversary Armed Forces Day 2013**

1. To uphold the national policy namely non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, and perpetuation of sovereignty
2. To play the leading role in the national policies by the Tatmadaw joining hands with all national races with Union Spirit and the true patriotism in line with the Constitution
3. To crush all destructive elements at home and abroad through the strength of State, People and Tatmadaw
4. To build up a strong, competent, modern, patriotic Tatmadaw to safeguard the security and sovereignty of the nation

**First private football academy opened in Mandalay**

**Mandalay**, 20 March—With the aim of turning out new generation youth footballers to become professionals, the first private football academy was opened at Chanyahza private football academy on 5 March.

The football academy admits the youths between 16 and 20 years old course and between 10 and 15 years old course, totalling 52. The trainees are under supervision of Chairman of Upper Myanmar former selected footballers association U Zaw Win and former selected player U Khin Maung Lay. With the assistance of the Brazilian technical officer, trainees from Super Star Professional Football Training Centre former selected players U Khin Maung Lay, U Paik Si, U Han Tun, U Zaw Zaw Myo and U Soe Myat Min are providing training to the youths. Thanks to brilliant training of the coaches, one of trainees was chosen as a tentatively selected player for U-16 team and one outstanding football squad emerged.

The academy plans to polish the excellent skills of trainees. Those wishing to attend the course may dial 09-428194129 and 09-01046361 of Mandalay and 09-4077004015 of Yangon.

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**Car turnover hurts 10 passengers**

**Taungdwingyi**, 20 March—A Faw car driven by Myo Thant Zaw, 25 of Chaungyin Village leaving Kyangyar Village for Taungdwingyi, carrying bags of brown slab sugar, caused turnover near mile post 61/7 on Nay Pyi Taw-Chauknet-Taungdwingyi Road in the area of Hsatthwa police station in Taungdwingyi at 8.30 am on 13 March after dodging the opposite way. A total of 10 passengers from the Faw car were injured in the incident.

**Draught cattle and milch cow contest in Mandalay 22-24 March**

**Mandalay**, 20 March—Deputy Director-General Dr Aung Gyi of Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department under the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries met officials and entrepreneurs of Mandalay Region Milch Cow Breeding and Dairy Product Supervisory Committee at the office of Mandalay Region LBVD on 7 March. The deputy director-general stressed the need to extend breeding of milch cows. He pledged that the ministry would disburse loans to breeders who must seek endorsement of the respective LBVDs.

The deputy director-general said that the ministry imported 1000 milch cows worth K 1.5 to K 2 million each from Australia. As regions and states had enlisted to buy 700 to 1000 milch cows, entrepreneurs from Mandalay may enrol to buy the remaining 300 milch cows, he said.

The draught cattle and milch cow show and contest will be held at Natyaygan fisheries camp in Amarapura of Mandalay from 22 to 24 March. Participants from townships in Mandalay Region and those of Kachin State will take part in the contest.

Winners will secure K 300,000 for the first prize, K 200,000 for the second and K 100,000 for the third prize and K 50,000 each for consolation prizes in the contest.

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**Myanmar traditional chess event 24-29 March**

**Yangon**, 20 March—Jointly organized by Sports and Physical Education Department under the Ministry of Sports and Myanmar Chess Federation, the Myanmar Traditional Chess women’s singles tournament will be held at the hall of the federation in Aung San Stadium, here, from 24 to 29 March.

Those wishing to take part in the tournament may register at the office of the federation, not later than 23 March.

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**Renovated documentary photo showroom opened**

**Yangon**, 20 March—The opening ceremony of renovated Shwedagon Pagoda documentary photo showroom was opened at the northwest corner of the platform of the pagoda.

An official of Fuji Film Co explained opening of the showroom. Member of the pagoda board of trustees Dr Tin Thwin Lwin spoke words of thank you. Next, wellwishers and officials formally opened the showroom and visited there.

Fuji Film donated a photo developer machine to the pagoda.

Over 300 documentary photos depicting works of successive eras are put on display at the showroom that is kept open from 7 am to 7 pm daily.

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**Culture course wraps up in Singaing**

**Singaing**, 20 March—The second culture course for new generation children was conducted by Pyilon Chantha Association of Myanmar Ward in Singaing of Kyaukse District in Mandalay Region at 12 noon on 10 March.

Region Hluttaw Representative U Nye Nyei gave a speech.

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**About 33000 rubber plants destroyed in fire**

**Mawlamyine**, 20 March—A rubber farm comprising 33000 plants was blazing at the entrance of Mawlamyine firewood plantation, seven miles southwest of Kyakmaraw Township at 10.30 am on 9 March.

The fire started from negligent act of cheroot fire of U Takyoe, son of U Khin Zaw Htoo from Mudon. A total of 33000 rubber plants on 100 acres of land were destroyed in the fire, losing K 330 million. A total of 73 workers of rubber farms and owners collectively participated in the fight against.
PERSPECTIVES

Racism and Sport

Today, many people have excessively idealized sport. For them sport is more than entertainment. The love for sports events has been extensively grown. It also serves as a social tool to communicate with new people. Thanks to cable TV networks, it now has wider audience and louder voice.

Sport has become a focal point for the global community and also is seen as a catalyst for peace, reconciliation and development.

Nelson Mandela who led South Africa in 1990s employed rugby as a weapon to combat apartheid. Madiba’s “One team, One country” campaign united the apartheid-prone African nation, securing 1995 World Cup victory on the home soil. He could united the apartheid-prone African nation, securing 1995 World Cup victory on the home soil. He could inspire the entire people, both black and white, to celebrate one victory.

Our country will host SEA Games, the most famous regional sports event, in coming December. We should try to make the most of it by seeking means to shape the soughtafter national smarter style to root out the evil legacy of this racist offences.

We need to be well aware that sport can both eliminate and disseminate racism. We need more awareness-raising measures at sports events in smarter style to root out the evil legacy of this planet.

Our country will host SEA Games, the most famous regional sports event, in coming December. We should try to make the most of it by seeking means to shape the soughtafter national reconciliation of our country which is a home to colourful races.

Being born black or white or to any particular race is not our own choice. Then, what’s the use of arguing about this.

Books, publications donated to village library

The 12th month of Myanmar lunar calendar, which is the last month is Tabaung, is mucat period. Gayaan games. In anticipation of upcoming monsoon, sparrows and other winged creatures repair or renovate their nests. Swarms of wasps and butterflies buzz around wild blooms and flutters away with the nectars they have gathered early.

As the Sun declines, appear behind the veil of haze are dark blue mountains. The smell of farm fire burning somewhere is wafted by the fresh breeze. At dusk sweet fragrance of seasonal flora is wafted by light cool breeze. As the waxing Tabaung moon gradually climbs above the tops, nature’s nocturnal life unfolds. Capricorn of cicada insects creates an eerie atmosphere. Their incessant sounds of its thrilling rhythms makes the air in the Himalayan valley to be gloomy.

It is about poetic Tabaung that Saint Ashin Kaludawy composed his famous epic poem in 64 Pali stanzas [gathas] to request Lord Gotama Buddha to maintain a long foot journey through the glades of Himalayan mountains to his father’s kingdom Kapilavatthu. Tabaung is the favourite month of Myanmar nature writers. Myanmar poets of Tabaung is the favourite month of Myanmar nature writers. Myanmar poets of Tabaung Monk poems of Inwa Period vied each other in their descriptions of Tabaung Beauty.

The month Tabaung is the favourite month for describing the unsurpassing beauties of nature because it is in Tabaung that natural scapes burst forth all its glory. Luminous clouds explode on the sky and clouds change their designs and colours, woodlands put on all hues, foliage bears a variety of green. The withering leaves of trees are carried away by the wind’s currents. Dried leaves of copper and gold colour are carried away by brooks. Lakes and ponds assume emerald green or sapphire blue. Cuckoos’ melodies herald summer. Non-stopped cooings of doves and myriad of songs buzz around the wild blooms and flutter away with the nectars they have gathered early.

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**NATIONAL**

**Coordinating meeting on development of international airport held**

**NAY PYI TAW, 20 March**—A coordination meeting on running Nay Pyi Taw international airport was held at the Ministry of Transport, here, yesterday with an opening speech by Union Minister for Transport U Nyan Tun Aung.

At the meeting, those present held discussion on the operation of Nay Pyi Taw Airport which will start handling international flights for the first time in April. They also discussed on arrival visa, tourist visa and other airport functions plus airport transfer and sight-seeing services to be provided to travelers during promotion period.

The meeting was attended by Union Minister at the President Office U Soe Maung, Union Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung, Deputy Minister for Transport U Han Sein, Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Kyaw Kyaw Win, members of Nay Pyi Taw Council U Kan Chun and officials.—**MNA**

**Myanmar hosts McKinsey Mekong Business Challenge for first time**

**YANGON, 20 March**—Myanmar hosted for the first time the 2013 Mekong Business Challenge, 2013, the annual event used to be held in Phnom Penh of Cambodia at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel here yesterday after the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) was granted to co-host the competition.

The challenge was mainly sponsored by McKinsey & Co with Google, Standard Chartered Bank, Ksisenergy, PWC, IWC, Fusion Partners, Emergent, Victoria Park Foundation acted as co-sponsors and partners. A total of ten teams from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam took part in the competition in which Moringa Tea team from Lao American College of Laos won the first prize. Two Myanmar teams Magic Bag and My Slipper won a special prize to visit Google in Singapore.

Ahead of the challenge, Business Networking Reception was held at the same venue on 15 March, attended by local and foreign businessmen. **MNA**

**China provides sports equipment**

**NAY PYI TAW, 20 March**—A ceremony to provide sports equipment for the Ministry of Sports was held at the ministry, here this morning.

Myanmar which will host XXVII SEA Games in 2013 was provided with sports equipment under the agreement between Myanmar and China. U Thaung Htaik, Deputy Minister for Sports spoke words of thanks. Sports and Physical Education Department Director-General U Myo Hlaing and Group Leader Mr Fang Pinguin of China Sports International Co., Ltd (CSIC) exchanged notes. The Chinese group leader presented related documents to the Director-General of SPED. The first batch of sports equipment donation is worth US$ 652,881.—**MNA**

**Pyithu Hluttaw Committee Chairman receives South Korean guests**

**Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo receives Mr JEON HAE CHEOL of Legislation and Judiciary Committee of National Assembly of the Republic of Korea and party.**

**NAY PYI TAW, 20 March**—Chairman of Pyithu Hluttaw International Relations Committee U Hla Myint Oo received a delegation led by Mr JEON HAE CHEOL of Legislation and Judiciary Committee of National Assembly of the Republic of Korea at the meeting hall No.4 of Hluttaw Building, here, yesterday morning.

They frankly discussed matters related to legal affairs and judiciary cooperation between Myanmar and ROK. Also present at the call were Chairman of Bill Committee U Khun Myat Soe settled at seventh place. Myo Win Aung of Myanmar, and Somprat Rattanasuwon and Tawan Phongphun of Thailand kept the leader under pressure with 144 strokes each, sharing the second place. **MNA**

**Danthai Boonma leading Tiger Championship continues second round**

**YANGON, 20 March**—Thailand’s Danthai Boonma led Tiger Myanmar Amateur Open Golf Championship-2013 Day 2 with 141 strokes after second round while defending champion Myanmar’s Thein Naing kept the leader under pressure with 144 strokes each, sharing the second place.

They circumbulate the Sand Pagoda clockwise three times. Invited monks perform consecration rite to Sand Pagoda. After formal prayers and libation ceremony, monks leave, and all laymen turn to merriments.

Sand pagodas last till the nextmoonsoon. But some sand pagodas were encased by brick and cement to last long. In some water front towns we may find sand pagodas of permanent type. Another explanation for the worship of the Sand Pagoda is that as countless as grains of sand in the Sacred River Ganges, Buddhas had revealed and similar countless Buddhas are up-coming Sand Pagoda represents countless revealed Buddhas and up-coming Buddhas in future.

Now-a-days Sand Pagoda festival is no longer held on national level. Only few towns and villages along rivers hold it annually as their local event.
Kenya’s PM seeks forensic audit of IT system for electoral body

NAIROBI, 20 March—Kenya’s Prime Minister Raila Odinga on Tues- day moved to court under fresh application seeking to compel the electoral body to allow forensic au- dit of its Information and Technology (IT) systems before the formal hearing of his petition.

Odinga through his lawyer, George Oraro said the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission (IEBC) which oversaw the 4 March general elections has given conflicting rea- sons for failure of the Electr- onic Voter Identification (EVI), Biometric Voter Registration (BVR), Re- sults Transmission System (RTS) and Results Presen- tation System (RPS) and other electronic systems and thus the urgent need for parties to place empirical forensic evidence to assist the Supreme Court in mak- ing a decision.

“Prior to the elections, the IEBC assured all stake- holders that the system will be transparent, free from manipulation and that not only would there be no un- authorized persons voting but that the transmission of results would be simple, fair and insulated from ma- nipulation by any person,” Oraro said in the application.

He said the crucial information Odinga is seeking from their agents, service providers and con- tractors will facilitate a fo- rensic audit of the IEBC IT systems prior to the hearing of the presidential petition which was filed last Satur- day.

Odinga is also seek- ing to be given all simcards used in each of the hand held devices used for elek- tronic voter identification, each of the laptops or PCs, each of the GSM/GPRS/ Edge/Satellite mobile tele- phone handsets used for re- sults transmission system at each of the 33,440 polling stations in the just conclud- ed elections.

Xinhua

US Senate bill drops assault weapons ban

WASHINGTON, 20 March — US Senate Ma- jority Leader Harry Reid said on Tuesday he would not include a renewal of the federal assault weapons ban in a package of gun refor- m legislation to be introduced in the Senate, which sig- nals the measure still lacks enough support in Con- gress.

Reid told reporters that the proposed renewal of the assault weapons ban, spon- sored by Democratic Sena- tor Dianne Feinstein, could not win even 40 votes in the Democrats-controlled Senate. “I have to get some- thing on the floor so we can have votes on that issue and the other issues we talked about,” said Reid, adding that he would offer Fein- stein’s proposal separately as an amendment. Feinstein’s proposal will revive a decade-long ban on the sale of more than 150 types of military-style semi-au- tomatic weapons, which ex- pired in 2004.—Xinhua

UN chief slams series of deadly bombing attacks in Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, 20 March — UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday strongly con- demned series of deadly car bombing attacks in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad and voiced his full support for the efforts of his special representative to work un- der “exceptionally difficult circumstances.”

The secretary-general made the statement when he was meeting with his spe- cial representative for Iraq, Martin Kobler, at the UN Headquarters in New York City, said Ban’s spokesman, Martin Nesirky in a note to the Press here.

“The secretary-general condemned in the stronges- t terms the bomb attacks today in Baghdad, and ex- pressed his deepest condo- lences to the families of the victims,” Nesirky said.

Earlier, Kobler, who also heads the UN As- sistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), condemned the waves of deadly bombing attacks in the Iraqi capital.

At least 17 people were killed and 64 others injured in a series of car bombs in Baghdad, according to re- ports.

Violence and sporadic high-profile bomb attacks remain common in Iraq cities despite the dramatic decrease in violence since its peak in 2006 and 2007, when the country was en- gulfed in sectarian killings after the US-led Iraqi war.

During the meeting, Kobler briefed Ban about the Iraqi government’s de- cision to postpone elections in some provinces of Iraq.

The Iraqi cabinet on Tuesday decided to postpon- e the country’s provin- cial elections for a maxi- mum period of six months due to deteriorated security across the nation, reports said.

Kobler also briefed the secretary-general on the latest situation with regard to the former residents of Camp Ashraf, a former US military base near Baghdad which accommodates Ira- nian exiles.

“The secretary-general expects and hopes that the residents of Camp Hurriya would respond positively to the generous offer by the government of Albania to accept over 200 of them, and to cooperate with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to relocate in the coming weeks,” Nesirky said. “He urges other Mem- ber States to follow suit with similar offers.”

Camp Hurriya, which now has more than 3,000 residents, is located near the Baghdad airport in the southwest of the Iraqi capi- tal.

The Iranian exiles, nationalised the People’s Muja- hideen Organization of Iran (PMOI) and also known as Mujahideen Khalq Or- ganization, are relocated last year un- der the supervision of the UNAMI from their for- mer base Camp Ashraf to Camp Hurriya. The PMOI, a self-claimed Marxist and Islamic movement, was set up in 1965 in opposition to the shah of Iran and subse- quently fought to oust the Islamic regime that took power in the 1979 revolu- tion.—Xinhua

Algiers to adopt supplementary budget law for 2013

ALGERIA, 20 March — The Algerian government will adopt a supplementary budget law for 2013, said Algerian Finance Minister Karim Djouadi on Tuesday.

The law will compr- ise the budgetary costs of the cultural event dubbed “Constantine: The Capital of the Arab Culture” due in 2015 and other public expenditures, including the support programmes of em- ployment and investment in the southern regions, the minister told the National Radio, without specifying when this law will be sub- mitted to the parliament for adoption.

The supplementary budget law has become a “tradition” in Algeria’s fis- cal policy in recent years. The finance minister, how- ever, said that such a law does not highlight govern- ment’s “lack of foresight, but rather, the fact that “the government is forced some- times to adopt a supple- mentary budget law to take in charge new emergency projects.”

The North African na- tion has recently planned to undertake some new de- velopment projects to meet the claims of inhabitants in desert areas to boost em- ployment and improve the living conditions there.

The initial Budget Law for 2013 predicts a 10 per- cent increase in revenues and 11 percent drop in ex- penses compared to 2012. However, it forecasts a budget deficit of around 19 percent of the GDP.

148 schools attacked in Bahrain since last year

M ANAMA, 20 March — A total of 148 Bahrain public schools out of 206 were attacked by rioters since last year, costing the government around 3.9 million US dollars, Bahrain News Agency reported on Tuesday.

Most of the attacks oc- curred in northern and cen- tral Bahrain, among which 11 schools were attacked and vandalized on 14 Feb- ruary, as the opposition marked the second anni- versary of the beginning of anti-government protests, according to the report.

Fawaz al-Shoroq, public relations director of the Education Ministry, said his ministry has co- ordinated with the Interior Ministry to install surveil- lance cameras in schools and to train guards to deal with such attacks. He re- vealed that 5,200 students have received psychologi- cal help after witnessing the attacks.—Xinhua

Photo shows the ruins of Karnak Temple, a tourist spot in Luxor, southern Egypt, on 3 March, 2013. Local tourism has suffered a decline since a fatal hot air bal- loon accident in Luxor in February.—Kyodo News

Blust hits near Turkish Justice Ministry

ANKARA, 20 March — A blast occurred near the building of Turkish Justice Ministry in the capital of Ankara on Tuesday, injur- ing several people, local media reported.

The explosion took place in front of the addi- tional building of the mini- stry, seriously injuring two people, the report said.

The police and ambu- lances rushed to the site, and sealed off the area to conduct an investigation.

So far, there have been no official comments about the incident. Earlier Tuesday, an- other explosion occurred at the headquarters of Turk- ish Telecommunications Workers’ Union in Ankara, injuring four people.—Xinhua

Japanese felt painter Kimie Yagi poses for photos in Na- goya, central Japan, in February 2013. Yagi has achieved international fame by creating pictures using woolen yarn—to-called “felt paintings.” —Kyodo News

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Photo shows the ruins of Karnak Temple, a tourist spot in Luxor, southern Egypt, on 3 March, 2013. Local tourism has suffered a decline since a fatal hot air balloon accident in Luxor in February.—Kyodo News
British woman escapes rape bid by jumping from window in India

NEW DELHI, 20 March — A British woman on Tuesday sustained serious injuries after she jumped out of a window from the second floor of a hotel in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh’s tourist town of Agra to escape an alleged rape bid by a senior police official.

“The woman is battling for her life at a local hospital where she was rushed to by some passers-by who saw her taking the plunge. We have arrested the hotel owner after the woman tourist narrated her ordeal to us,” he said, on condition of anonymity. Agra is just 250 km from the Indian capital and is home to the iconic monument of Taj Mahal.

The latest incident of attempted sexual assault came just days after a Swiss woman was gang-raped by seven men in front of her husband while the duo were touring on cycle the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh’s Datia District. Five people have so far been arrested in the case, according to police.

 Barely three months back, the brutal gangrape of a 23-year-old medical student on a moving bus by six men shocked India and sparked massive public outcry, compelling the government to consider stricter laws against sexual assaults on women. The victim later died of her injuries at a Singapore hospital and four of the accused are on trial facing rape and murder charges which carry a maximum sentence of death. The main accused committed suicide inside his cell at a high-profile jail in the Indian capital while the sixth accused is being tried as a minor.—Xinhua

Singapore sees customer satisfaction record new high in 2012

SINGAPORE, 20 March—Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore, an index measured annually by Institute of Service Excellence at the Singapore Management University, revealed on Tuesday that people feel more satisfied with the level of service in 2012.

The index increased to 69.9 points last year, up 0.88 point, or 1.3 percent from 69.1 in 2011. The figure represents the most positive results since its inception in 2007. Among all the nine measured industry sectors, three sectors, including the healthcare, finance and insurance and info-communications sectors, performed best improvements on year.

On the other hand, customer satisfaction fell in five industry sectors, namely private education, tourism, public education, transport and logistics and retail in order of severity. Among some 110 measured companies, Standard Chartered, Citibank, Marina Bay Sands, Shangri-La, Sentosa and Starbucks had significantly outperformed the national average.

According to the institute, the scores are generated based on the econometric modeling of survey data collected from end-users after the consumption of products and services.—Xinhua

Japan to ease Okinawa’s burden for hosting US bases

 TOKYO, 20 March—Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Tuesday that his government will seek to relieve the burden of Okinawa Prefecture for hosting the bulk of US bases in Japan, local media reported. Speaking at the first council meeting on Okinawa affairs, Abe said the government will make “all-out” efforts to ease the southernmost prefecture’s burdens, while maintaining a US military deterrence in the region by station in the prefecture, according to Japan’s Kyodo News Agency.

Abe also vowed to promote local development, saying the prefecture has potentials that could become a “driving force in revitalizing the Japanese economy.” Kyodo cited Abe as saying.

Relations between Okinawa prefectural government and Japan’s central government chille due to the relocation issue of the US Futenma Air Base. Despite strong opposition from local residents and government, Japan and the United States agreed during Abe’s meeting with US President Barack Obama last month that to proceed with the plan that to move the air base within the prefecture.—Xinhua

Parliamentary, state elections in Malaysia to be held simultaneously

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 March — The upcoming parliamentary and state assembly elections in Malaysia will be held simultaneously, a senior electoral official said on Tuesday, despite different opinion of several state governments heading the elections.

The Election Commission made the final decision after considering related issues like cost, said its deputy chairman.

“The Election Commission will hold state and parliamentary election simultaneously, as holding separate elections will involve a huge amount of money and a waste of the people’s time,” he was quoted as saying by the state news agency, Bernama.

If the state and parliament elections are progress separately, it would involve a much higher travelling cost and a cumbersome election process.

Several states governed by the opposition had expressed desire not to hold their state election together with the parliamentary election simultaneouly, as holding separate elections will involve a huge amount of money and a waste of the people’s time,” he was quoted as saying by the state news agency, Bernama.

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Constitutionally, the Election Commission is responsible for the arrangement of elections, including setting the polling date.

The parliamentary election and the state elections of 12 of Malaysia’s 13 states were held simultaneously in the last general election in 2008, during which the ruling coalition lost its two-third majority in parliament and the control of five state governments.—Xinhua

Sri Lanka’s national airline cuts flights to south India

COLOMBO, 20 March—Sri Lanka’s national airline announced on Tuesday that it was halving the number of flights to south India following a number of incidents in that part of the country.

SriLankan Airlines said it has observed a drop in traffic between Chennai and Colombo due to recent developments in Tamil Nadu, hence it was decided to reduce its frequency of flights to Chennai from 28 to 14 per week from Thursday.

“The revised schedule involves two daily flights, departing Colombo in the morning and evening, to facilitate the passengers who board their flights to the Middle East and far eastern destinations from Chennai. Flights to other Indian destinations will be operated uninterrupted.” the airline said.

The announcement came after the Sri Lankan External Affairs Ministry urged Sri Lankans travelling to Tamil Nadu to be cautious as a result of recent incidents targeting Sri Lankans in the area. “In the event such visits were to take place to Tamil Nadu due to compelling reasons, Sri Lankan nationals are requested to keep the Sri Lanka’s Deputy High Commission in Chennai informed well in advance,” the Sri Lankan External Affairs Ministry said.

Xinhua

Malaysia defers new minimum wages for foreign workers in SMEs

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 March—The Malaysian government has approved the delayed implementation by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) of new minimum wage standard for their foreign workers, local media reported on Wednesday.

The National Wages Consultative Council, which is responsible for the implementation of the standard, said in a statement that the employers in SMEs are permitted to defer the implementation until 31 December.

The employers who have already embraced the new standard would be provided with blanket approval for deductions of levy and cost of accommodation. Employers in other sectors are also allowed to apply for deferment from the council.

The new minimum wage standard, which came into effect this year, requires employers in the Malay peninsula to pay a minimum wage of 900 ringgit (288 US dollar) to their workers.

Many foreign workers have staged strikes recently to protest against the “double standard” by their employers who only apply the minimum wages to local workers.

More than 100 Nepali workers were briefly detained on Sunday for illegally planning a protest in the southern industrial town of Muar.—Xinhua

New Light of Myanmar
Regional
Thursday, 21 March, 2013
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Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra (R) shakes hands with Singapore’s Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee H Chew at the Government House in Bangkok, Thailand, on 19 March, 2013.—Xinhua
KBZ BANK LTD. is pleased to inform all that we have successfully opened Tachileik (2), Mae Kong Branch Eastern Shan State, Tachileik as 100th branch to date-effective 21.3.2013 All honored persons are kindly requested to come and enjoy our cordial banking services at our newest branch.

KBZ Bank: The Strength of Myanmar

Contact Address:

Tachileik (2), Mae Kong Branch
No.(3), Bogoyoke Aung San Road, Mae Kong Quarter
Near No.(2) Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge, Tachileik.
Phone:  (084) 53505, 53506, 53507
Fax:  (084) 53508, 53509, 53510
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George Clooney happier than ever with Stacy Keibler

LOS ANGELES, 20 March—Hollywood star George Clooney is happier than ever with former wrestler Stacy Keibler, according to friends.

Although the couple, who have been dating for almost two years, have been the subject of split reports recently, friends insist they are more together than ever because Stacy Keibler knows exactly how to handle him, reported National Enquirer.

“At first I wouldn’t have given them two months. While Stacy is certainly gorgeous, she’s this D-List celebrity on the arm of one of the most powerful men in Hollywood. But George only seems more drawn to her as time goes by,” a close friend said.

Friends also said that George Clooney, 51, is impressed by the 31-year-old former wrestler’s independence as many of his former girlfriends were too clingy.

“She goes off and does her own thing whenever George is spending time with his pals or is deep into a film project—she doesn’t even call him. But eventually, he starts missing her and he’s the one who calls. She lets George come to her. This is the most comfortable I’ve ever seen George in a relationship.—PTI

Sandra Bullock invited to ex-husband’s wedding

LOS ANGELES, 20 March—Sandra Bullock’s ex-husband Jesse James has reportedly invited the actress to his upcoming wedding with race car driver Alexis DeJoria.

Although Bullock split from James in 2010 after it was revealed that Jesse cheated on Sandra. The last person on earth who would do with him,” said a source. James and DeJoria are reportedly planning to marry at the end of this month in Malibu.

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Sandra Bullock and Jesse James separated in 2010, after it was revealed that Jesse cheated on Sandra. PTI

George Clooney has been dating former wrestler Stacy Keibler since the last two years. PTI

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For sale

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MV Falshoeft Voy No (706)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV FALSHOEFT VOY NO (706) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21.3.2013 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of S.P.W (5) 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.

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SThirty, 21 March—Celebrity couple Brad Pitt and fiancee Angelina Jolie are reportedly planning to have similar tattoos as part of their soon-to-happen wedding.

The couple, who raises six children — Maddox, 11, Pax, nine, Zahara, eight, Shiloh, six, and Knox and Vivienne, four — will ink the name of their children and wedding date, reports contactmusic.com.

“They plan to have their tattoos done by a local French artist. They’ve designed a special motif that includes some of their vows and their children’s names intertwined in leaves, which will be in their own handwriting,” a source said.

The marriage is expected to take place here before May, as Pitt will soon get a marriage license.—PTI

Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie’s wedding plans may include matching tattoos

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie, who are soon to get married, will have matching wedding vow tattoos.

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Murray can be world No1 this year, says Del Potro

LONDON, 20 March— Indian Wells runner-up Juan Martin del Potro believes Britain’s Andy Murray can become world tennis number one this year.

The towering Argentine beat Murray in the quarter-finals last week on the California hard courts and is looking forward to locking horns with him on grass after confirming he will play at the Aegon Championships at London’s Queen’s Club two weeks before Wimbledon.

“Murray is a big champion, he already won a grand slam, he made the finals in Australia and he has everything he needs to be at the top in the future,” Del Potro said in a statement.

“He will be fighting for the world number-one place this year and he can take a big opportunity in the grass season.”

This year’s Queen’s Club field promises to be strong, with Wimbledon runner-up Murray joined by former US Open champion del Potro and Tomas Berdych at the event starting on 10 June.

Del Potro, who has taken a while to get used to playing on the low-bouncing grass courts, was a bronze medallist at the Olympics staged at Wimbledon last year, and believes he could challenge for the Wimbledon title.

“I have a fantastic memory from last year when I won the bronze medal at the Olympics,” he said. “It was a magnificent experience for me. I had never played at an Olympics before so it was a big moment for me and my country. To win on grass at Wimbledon as well made it an even bigger moment.—Reuters

Burger advert poking fun at Torres not to council’s taste

LONDON, 20 March—The blushes of Chelsea’s misfiring striker Fernando Torres have been spared after a local council ordered the removal of an advertising hoarding that mocked his performances for the European champions.

The advert for bookmakers Paddy Power was erected on a building next to Stamford Bridge but Spanish international Torres, signed from Liverpool for a 50 million pounds ($75.58 million) fee in January 2011, has had the last laugh.

The sign’s slogan ‘Fernando—we’ve got an onion bag you can actually find. It’s in the burger van mate. Get your hair net on’ was emblazoned next to a picture of a burger being flipped.

Hammersmith and Fulham council were made aware of the illegal hoarding and ordered its removal.

“Poking fun at beleaguered Premier League footballers is not necessarily a problem as long as the advertising hoardings are legal,” the council’s deputy leader Greg Smith said in a news release.

“Residents don’t expect hoardings to pop up everywhere willy-nilly.”

Torres has been unable to recapture the scintillating form he showed at Liverpool during his time with Chelsea and has been left out of Spain’s squad for the World Cup qualifiers against Finland on Friday and France four days later.

Katidis banned for rest of Greek season for Nazi salute

ATHENS, 20 March— AEK Athens have suspended Giorgos Katidis for the rest of the season after the 20-year-old midfielder made a Nazi salute to fans during a game at the weekend.

The former captain of his country’s under-19 side had already been banned from all international teams for life by the Greek Football Federation (EPO) for making the gesture after scoring the winning goal in a 2-1 Super League victory over Veria on Saturday.

“AEK have decided to leave the player out of the squad until the end of the 2012-13 season ... thus imposing the worst possible punishment (we can),” the club said in a statement on Tuesday.

“Whether the player will remain at the club beyond this season will be judged in the summer after which time he will firstly have been given the opportunity to demonstrate in practice his behaviour was the result of immaturity and secondly whether or not his possible restate-ment to the squad does not cause any negative effects within the club.”

On Monday, Katidis asked to be dropped from AEK’s first team and called his actions “totally unacceptable”.

“I feel terrible for those I upset with the stupidity of my act,” he said.

“I also understand fully the reasons for the de-cision made by the Greek Football Federation to which I owe a huge apology as it has helped me to get where I am in the professional game.”

Hulkenberg to have new chassis in Malaysia

MELBOURNE, 20 March—Nico Hulkenberg will have a new car for Sunday’s Malaysian Grand Prix after a fuel system problem prevented the German from starting last weekend’s sea-son-opener in Australia.

Sauber said in a pre-view for the race at Sepang that the car Hulkenberg qualified with in Melbourne had been sent back to the factory in Switzerland for a full examination and he would start with a new chassis for the second round.

Hulkenberg finished ninth in Malaysia last year with Force India and took the first points of his For-mula One career at the track in 2010 when he finished 10th for Williams.

Sauber Formula One driver Nico Hulkenberg of Germany drives during the qualifying session of the Australian F1 Grand Prix at the Albert Park circuit in Melbourne on 17 March, 2013.—REUTERS
Pakistan to allow foreign poll observers

ISLAMABAD, 20 March—Pakistan on Tuesday told the Islamabad-based diplomats that foreign election observers will be allowed to monitor the upcoming parliamentary polls, the Foreign Ministry said.

Senior officials told the diplomats at the Foreign Ministry that the government of Pakistan would welcome foreign election observers who wish to observe the transparent conduct of elections, after completion of due formalities.

A large number of international and local observers have approached the Election Commission to observe the elections, scheduled to take place in May. The Commission has also issued a Code of Conduct for the observers. The Commission says that special passes will be issued to observers and that the observers will follow the rules and will not interfere in the polling process.

The diplomats were assured that the government will take all steps within its means to facilitate the visiting foreign election observers during their stay in Pakistan,” a Foreign Ministry statement said.

The briefing was organized at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to inform all diplomatic missions in Islamabad regarding the policy and procedure of the government of Pakistan concerning foreign election observers.

The briefing was given by the senior representatives of the Election Commission of Pakistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

The foreign diplomats were also informed that the government of Pakistan was committed to facilitating free, fair and transparent elections, the statement said.—Xinhua

Central China tornado kills three, injures 30

CHANGSHA, 20 March—Three people have been confirmed dead and about 30 others injured by a tornado that struck central China’s Hunan Province before dawn on Wednesday.

The tornado passed through Daotian County of Hunan’s Yongzhou City at about 3 am, causing many casualties in the inland region, said the Yongzhou city government’s press office.

The exact number of casualties and other losses are still under further investigation. Rescuers have rushed to the scene.

China to assist Cuba in adopting digital TV

HAVANA, 20 March—China will assist Cuba in a digital TV project to switch from analog to digital TV, an expert from China’s Ministry of Communications said on Tuesday.

The Chinese standard is the latest to be developed based on previous technologies, containing the newest advances, Director of the Telecommunications Development and Research Institute (Lacetel) Glauco Guillon said.

Lacetel and Chinese specialists will showcase their technology Wednesday at the XV International Convention and Fair “Informatics 2013,” Guillon, also professor of the Cuban Academy of Sciences, added.

At least 1 dead in central China residential building blast

WUHAN, 20 March—One body has been retrieved after an explosion ripped through a residential building in Wuhan, capital of central China’s Hubei Province, on Tuesday night, the local fire department said. Over ten people have been injured in the blast, the firefighters said.

The blast that broke out at around 10 pm in Huangpi Street in the city’s Jiuhe District has affected about 100 square metres of the area at the scene, the sources said.

Half of the 7- or 8-story building collapsed in the blast, the firefighters said.

The fire has been put out and rescue work is underway.—Xinhua

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Pyidaungsu Hluttaw to discuss amending constitution at its seventh regular session

NAY PYI TAW, 20 March—Union Minister for Finance and Revenue U Win Shein clarified the message from the President seeking the parliament’s approval for terminating FEC used as medium in the country’s economic system at the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw session today. The Hluttaw approved the abolishment of FEC.

The Pyithu Hluttaw Speaker sent a message to the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, asking to proceed with the proposal to form a parliamentary committee or commission on assessment of the 2008 constitution. The parliament will discuss the proposal at its seventh regular session.

U Tun Kyaw of Shan State Constitution (10) said: “The constitution can’t be formulated once and for all and it needs amending and rewriting to meet the demands of age as the time passes by. And its ultimate objective is to serve the interests of the national people. It is a welcoming move to assess the constitution.”

Union Minister for Finance and Revenue U Win Shein discussed the 2013 Union Budget bill in response to the debate. He believes “the financial status of the country would improve year by year” thanks to transparent cooperation between the legislature and the government and joint monitoring of international organizations including IMF. He called the increased earnings and systematic spending precondition for meeting the annual targets.

U Kyaw Naing Htay of Indaw Constituency said “the budget is better off now”. He had proposed to reduce the budget on construction of township and district education officer offices whose amount he said is equal to construction of 194 basic education schools measuring 90x30 feet. The Education Ministry has agreed with his proposal. He added he would rather have more schools to educate the children in large numbers. The 23rd day session continues tomorrow.

Overbilled electricity subscribers to file complaints at township office, says deputy minister

NAY PYI TAW, 20 March—Overbilled electricity users could lodge complaints at respective township electrical inspector’s office. Deputy Electric Power Minister U Aung Than Oo said at the Amyotha Hluttaw session today.

He made the comment in his answer to the question of U Khin Maung Yi of Ayeyawady Region Constituency (6) on whether the electricity bill of knocks could be charged at the ordinary rate. The use of electricity at these small shops is defined as the use for economic purpose, the lawmaker said.

The use of electricity by stores, game centres, beauty parlours and copier shops will continue to be defined as commercial use, the deputy minister insisted.

He stressed the need to apply for business meters for commercial use.

“The policy laid down from on high might be correct. But staff bridging the government and people are still charging 75 Kyats per unit,” commented U Steven Tha Beik of Chin State Constituency (4).

The parliament will discuss the proposal at its seventh regular session.

U Khin Maung Yi of Ayeyawady Region Constituency (6) makes question.—MNA

Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Aung Than Oo replies to question.—MNA

Mandalay Mayor Thingyan pandal starts

Bangladesh President Zillur Rahman dies of illness in Singapore hospital

DHAKA, 20 March—Bangladesh President Zillur Rahman died Wednesday at a Singapore hospital.

Mohammad Shafif Alam, a secretary with the presidential office, confirmed the news to Xinhua, saying “the ailing president breathed his last at 4:47 p.m. (Bangladeshi time) at the Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore.”

Rahman was flown to Singapore on March 10 night by an air ambulance and admitted to the Mount Elizabeth Hospital the following morning.

He was earlier admitted to Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka cantonment as he complained of respiratory complications.

The 84-year-old veteran politician was installed as the ceremonial head of the state in 2009 after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s Bangladesh Awami League party was elected in the landmark December 2008 general elections.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition in the parliament Begum Khaleda Zia and Speaker Abdul Hamid expressed deep shock at the death of Rahman, the 19th president of the South Asian country.—Xinhua