

Healthy Constitution must be amended from time to time to address national, economic, social needs of society



NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan— *The following is the full text of the speech delivered by President U Thein Sein through radio programmes to the entire people on 2 January.*

My fellow citizens,

In this month's radio speech, I will be discussing the current political developments, and my position on these developments.

An important achievement in 2013 was the emergence within our society of a new political culture where different political groups avoided direct confrontation and instead overcame challenges through negotiation and dialogue. The reform process is stronger because we have been able to work collaboratively on various issues.

Over the past 30 months since we embarked on the new political system, the lowering of suspicion and mistrust that was previously present is a clear indication of the new political culture we have worked so hard to create.

An achievement of the reforms was the much-anticipated and grand hosting of the 27th South-East Asian Games in December. The success of the first SEA Games

to be hosted on Myanmar soil in 44 years, was due to the support of the public, and heralded the entry of our country as a respected member of the global community. Regarding these Games, I would like to make two points.

First, I would like to honor all the athletes of all ethnic groups, and from all corners of the country contesting for medals for fulfilling their national duty. I strongly believe that the support from citizens living both inside and outside the country provided a driving force for medals. Additionally, the Games were more than about winning medals but a valuable display of national unity.

Second, I would like to talk about the contribution of young people in making these Games a success. Of great benefit for our country are the experiences these Games provided these youths in self-sacrifice, duty, hard

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Asphalt road commissioned into service in Pakokku



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Modern highway bus terminal under construction in Myeik



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Yangon honours victorious billiards and snooker team

YANGON, 1 Jan — Yangon Region Chief Minister U Myint Swe and the Myanmar Billiard and Snooker Federation honoured the national billiards and

snooker team at Karaweik Hotel in Yangon this morning, calling their one gold, five silver and five bronze medals at the 27th SEA Games a fine achievement.

U Myint Swe called on the team to continue to strive hard for victories in upcoming ASEAN sports competitions and world contests.

U Tin Maung Win, the federation president, recounted the team's medal-winning performances last month before each team member was honoured.— *MNA*

Myanmar Railways, Japan to upgrade Yangon-Mandalay railroad to increase speed

With the help of Japanese technology and assistance to railway transportation, which many people still rely upon in Myanmar, arrangements are being made to upgrade the Yangon-Mandalay railway in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

The Yangon-Mandalay railroad is a major transport route in Myanmar, drawing a lot of rail users. At its peak, the rail trip between Yangon and Mandalay could take around 12 hours, but now it can take 15 to 16 hours due to degradation of the strength and durability of the railway tracks.

Under the National Transport Development Program to ensure speedy transport and safety of passengers, the railroad will be upgraded with the use of US\$500 million in as-

sistance from the Japanese government.

The upgrade program will cover the Yangon-Toungoo, Toungoo-Yamethin and Yamethin-Mandalay railroad sections.

Officials concerned are already carrying out a feasibility study and collecting the opinions of people living on both sides of the railroad.

It is planned to upgrade the railroad in its original state rather than expanding the width of the tracks. Moreover, special attention will be given not to harm the environment and socio-economic status of nearby residents.

Upon completion of the Yangon-Mandalay railroad program, it will help increase the speed limit of trains up to 60 mph. The current speed limit is 45 mph.

Myanma Alinn: 1-1-2014

Trs: YM

Byline: Wai Yan Oo

Photo: Tin Soe (Myanma Alinn)



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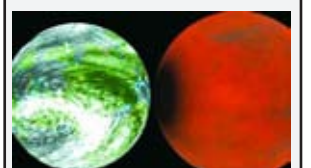
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LOCAL NEWS

Crime

Illegal timber seized in PyinOoLwin Tsp

PyinOoLwin, 1 Jan—Several tons of illegal timber have been seized in the Mandalay region with officials saying they arrested 14 suspects last month. The squad led by PyinOoLwin District Forest Department officials found around 30 tons of hardwood, 74 logs of illegal teak weighing

around 5 tons, as well as 22 tons of sawn timber among other wood in 13 vehicles.

Action is being taken against the suspects under the Forest Law. The raid was part of a mission in December aimed at exposing illegal timber trade and seizing wood and wood products.

MMAL-432

The Myanaung Township Development Affairs Committee of Ayeyawady Region conducted exercises to prevent the outbreak of fire at markets. On 30 December, members of the Auxiliary Fire Brigade practised an emergency with locals at Myoma Naychi Market using four fire trucks of the Township Fire Services Department.—KYEMON



Sports

Mr & Miss University to be crowned in January

Yangon, 1 Jan—The most beautiful young women and best-built men will be crowned in January at colleges and universities in parts of central and in southern Myanmar.

The annual Miss and Mister University Contests for the 2013-14 academic year will be held at respective universities and colleges with Yangon University conducting the contest at

the Diamond Jubilee Hall of the university at 2 p.m. on January 15.

The winners will enter the final to be held in Yangon on January 31.

MMAL-TinSoe(MMAL)



Trees being cut to keep the city neat by workers of the Parks and Playgrounds Department of the Yangon City Development Committee and the Tamway Township Development Affairs Committee.

KYEMON-597

IKBZ Insurance Co Ltd opens branch in Shan State (North)



LASHIO, 1 Jan— IKBZ Insurance Co Ltd has opened a branch in northern Shan State.

The opening ceremony was attended by Dr Maung Maung Thein, Deputy Minis-

ter for Finance and Chairman of the Insurance Supervisory Committee, Managing Director of IKBZ U Nyo Myint, and the Chairman of the northern Shan State Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Ye Sein among other officials.

According to Managing Director U Nyo Myint who explained the reason for opening the new branch in northern Shan State, IKBZ is offering a variety of insurance packages and services to customers.

Kyemon

Stimulant tablets worth K 1.2 million seized

Mandalay, 1 Jan—Police have arrested five people involved in drug dealing and seized almost 400 stimulant tablets in Mandalay on December 29.

Following a tipoff, police officials stopped a motorcycle on 66th street and searched the two riders identified as Htay Hlaing Oo and Teza.

The squad seized five stimulant tablets and several documents from the suspects

before taking them to the police station for further investigation.

Police officer Yan Nang Win and Police Captain Khin Maung Htay of the No. 17 Anti-Drug Squad said the suspects confessed to having bought stimulant tablets worth K 3000 each from a man identified as Myint Htay from Botan Village in Myittha Township.

Following the police questioning, a squad tracked

Anti-Narcotic Drives

down two further suspects identified as Myint Htay and Ma Nyo Nyo San at the corner of 30th and 60th streets and seized 383 tablets worth K 2.4 million.

The men admitted to having bought the imported tablets for K 1500 per tablet from a man called Ah Ti who was later arrested.

Police has filed a lawsuit against the five men.

Kyemon-Thiha Ko Ko (Mandalay)

One Star team wins Mandalay Men's Futsal



Mandalay, 1 Jan—The One Star team triumphed in the Men's Futsal Open Tournament on 29 December in Mandalay, with U Nay Aung, Member of the Mandalay District Football Subcommittee and Chairman of the Fund-raising Subcommittee presenting the cash award and championship trophy.

Aung Thein was named best player of the team, receiving money and an award

from U Naing Lay, member of the District Football Subcommittee.

In the final, One Star defeated Seinle Star (A) 9-8 in a tightly fought match.

The game ended in a 4-4-draw, with an extension giving One Star the time to score five more goals in a penalty shootout while Seinle Star (A) scored four more.

U Soe Kyi, Assistant Director of the Mandalay

District Sports and Physical Education Department awarded the second prize to the Seinle Star (A) team.

In the semifinals, One Star beat YMT 5-4 while Seinle Star (A) won over 35 Youth 2-1.

A total of 46 Futsal teams participated in the tournament that took place from December 25-29 at the Shwemantaung Sports Ground.

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WORLD

Kerry to push for solutions as Israeli-Palestinian peace talks intensify

WASHINGTON, 1 Jan — US Secretary of State John Kerry hopes to narrow differences between Israelis and Palestinians in peace talks this week that are intended to guide the sides toward a deal in April, a senior State Department official said on Tuesday.

Kerry departs for the region on Wednesday in his first trip after a Christmas break. Israel and Palestinians resumed peace talks in July after a three-year break aimed at producing a peace agreement within nine months to end their

decades-old conflict.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Kerry did not expect a breakthrough during his visit but is pushing for the sides to agree on a framework of core principles, such as security, the future of Jerusalem and fate of refugees, as soon as possible.

Such a step would also demonstrate to both Israelis and Palestinians that progress is being made. Israel fulfilled part of the US-brokered package for talks by releasing 26 Palestinian

prisoners on Tuesday, the third of four groups to go free.

“The framework is a basis upon which one could negotiate a final peace treaty because the outlines or the guidelines for what the final deal would look like would be agreed up, and then you would work intensively to fill out the details,” the official said.

The official said the framework would act as a guideline for reaching a full peace treaty between the Israelis and Palestinians in April, in which Israel would

exist peacefully alongside a new Palestinian state.

“We want to have a detailed consultation with them about these ideas that have been generated as a result of the negotiations between the parties themselves, and see whether they can serve as gap bridges which could lead to this agreement on the framework for permanent status negotiations,” the official added.

The official dismissed earlier comments by US officials that an agreement in April would lead to a



US Secretary of State John Kerry (R) meets with Israel's President Shimon Peres in Jerusalem, on 6 Nov, 2013.

REUTERS

year of further talks aimed at a full-blown peace treaty. “It is a two-stage process in our minds, agreement on a framework for

negotiations and then a permanent status agreement or a peace treaty” by April, the official said.

Reuters

Pakistan's ex-military ruler Musharraf goes on trial for treason



Former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf is seen during a pre-recorded video statement played for his supporters and members of the media in Islamabad on 31 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

ISLAMABAD, 1 Jan — Former Pakistani military ruler Pervez Musharraf went on trial for treason on Wednesday, a case that could test the relationship between an increasingly assertive civilian government and the army.

Musharraf, 70, faces the death penalty over his suspension of the constitution and imposition of emergency rule in 2007,

when he was trying to extend his rule as president in the face of growing opposition. Musharraf, who did not appear in court, says the trial is a politically motivated vendetta.

His lawyers argued that Musharraf cannot get a fair trial in Pakistan because of his history of disputes with the judiciary and the involvement of Prime Minister Nawaz

Sharif whom he once overthrew in a coup.

“I am talking of vengeance of a person, my lord,” said defence lawyer Anwar Mansoor. “One individual (Sharif) has a bias against the respondent.”

Musharraf ousted Sharif in a coup in 1999. Sharif was jailed for a period and then forced into exile.

He returned eight years later and won a landslide victory in a May general election.

Musharraf himself stepped down in 2008 to avoid impeachment charges after judges and lawyers led street protests over his attempt to fire the then-chief justice.

It was unclear if Musharraf would eventually appear in court. The trial opened on 24 December but was immediately suspended after a bag of explosives was found on Musharraf's route to the court.

Reuters

Indonesian anti-terror squad kill six militants

JAKARTA, 1 Jan — Indonesia's counter-terrorism police has killed six suspected militants and arrested one near Jakarta since Tuesday evening, local media reported on Wednesday.

Five men were found dead in a bathroom in Jakarta's southwestern outskirts of Ciputat on Wednesday morning after exchanging fire with police for 10 hours, said local on-

line news kompas.com.

The police fatally shot one and arrested another on Tuesday evening as armed police surrounded a house rented by the seven men, according to kompas.

The police has identified one of the militants as Nurul Haq, a suspect on the “Wanted Person List” who was believed to be involved in a series of shootings at police officers months ago.

The anti-terror unit killed a man and arrested two others for their roles in the shooting and bomb-making last October in east Indonesia's South Sulawesi Province.

Indonesia has been battling terrorists since the 2002 bombings on the resort island of Bali that claimed more than 200 lives, mostly foreign tourists.—Xinhua

Abe calls for deeper discussions on revision of Constitution

TOKYO, 1 Jan — Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Wednesday that now is the time for Japanese people to take a major step toward creating a new Japan, noting that debates on revision of the country's Constitution, enhancement of the country's security policies, and revision of educational systems are on the list of key issues for his government.

In a New Year message to the Japanese people, Abe said he thinks it necessary to deepen discussions on the revision of the

Constitution to deal with changes in the times as nearly 68 years have passed since it was established in 1946, coming into force the following year. Over the past few decades, the focus of discussions on the revision of the Constitution was the charter's pacifist Article 9.

The article says, “Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.”

The prime minister touched on the launch of a US-style National Security Council in December to speed up policy decisions on diplomacy and national security issues, saying the new scheme would play an active role in helping achieve global peace and stability.—Kyodo News

Japan sees fewer newborn babies in 2013

TOKYO, 1 Jan — Japan's population is expected to have declined further in 2013, with the estimated number of newborn babies in the country totaling 1,031,000, down about 6,000 from a year earlier, according to health ministry estimates released on Tuesday.

The estimated number of people who died in 2013 totaled 1,275,000, up about 19,000 from the previous year.

As a result, the natural population decline, calculated by deducting the

number of deaths from that of births, came to a record 244,000.

Japan's population totaled 126,393,679 on a resident register basis as of 31 March, down 0.21 percent from a year earlier, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Mirroring the aging society, the natural population decline has continued recently in Japan. An official at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare said the trend will likely continue, with the number of

newborn babies falling below 1 million sometime in the future.

The number of newborn babies dropped below 1.1 million in 2005 and has roughly remained in decline, the health ministry data showed.

On the other hand, the number of deaths topped 1 million for the 11th consecutive year. The top four leading causes of death in the country were cancer, heart disease, pneumonia and cerebrovascular disease.

Kyodo News



Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is pictured after ringing the closing bell during a ceremony at the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo's Nihombashi area on 30 Dec, 2013, the last trading day of the year. Mami Sato, a Paralympian who contributed to Tokyo's successful bid to host the 2020 Summer Olympic Games, is to the right. KYODO NEWS

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Researchers reveal first weather forecast for alien super-Earth

WASHINGTON, 1 Jan — US researchers have definitively characterized the atmosphere of a super-Earth class planet outside our solar system for the first time.

It might seem easy and perhaps boring. Today's forecast: cloudy. Tomorrow: overcast. Extended outlook: more clouds. And temperatures are likely to stay around 232 degrees Celsius, since the planet orbits very close to its parent star.

The scrutinized planet, *GJ 1214b*, is classified as a super-Earth type planet because its mass is intermediate between those of Earth and Neptune.

Previous studies of *GJ 1214b* yielded two possible interpretations of the

planet's atmosphere. Its atmosphere could consist entirely of water vapour or some other type of heavy molecule, or it could contain high-altitude clouds that prevent the observation of what lies underneath.

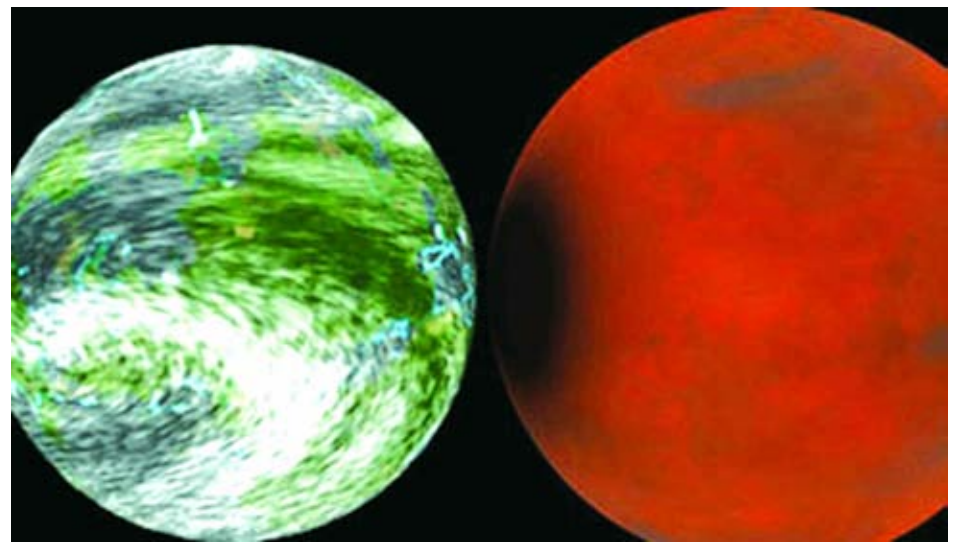
But now a team of astronomers led by Laura Kreidberg and Jacob Bean of the University of Chicago said on Tuesday they have detected clear evidence of clouds in the atmosphere of *GJ 1214b* from data collected with the Hubble Space Telescope. The Hubble observations used 96 hours of telescope time spread over 11 months.

"I think it's very exciting that we can use a telescope like Hubble that was never designed with this

in mind, do these kinds of observations with such exquisite precision, and really nail down some property of a small planet orbiting a distant star," said Bean, an assistant professor and the project's principal investigator.

Kreidberg, a third-year graduate student and first author of the new paper, believed their research "lays the foundation for characterizing other Earths with similar techniques."

GJ 1214b, discovered in 2009, is located just 40 light years from Earth, in the direction of the constellation Ophiuchus. Because of its proximity to our solar system and the small size of its host star, *GJ 1214b* is the most easily observed



super-Earth. It transits, or passes in front of its parent star, every 38 hours, giving scientists an opportunity to study its atmosphere as starlight filters through it.

Kreidberg, Bean and their colleagues used Hubble to precisely measure the spectrum of *GJ 1214b* in near-infrared light, finding

what they consider definitive evidence of high clouds blanketing the planet. These clouds hide any information about the composition and behavior of the lower atmosphere and surface, they said.

The clouds' composition is unknown but computer simulations predict

that they could be made out of potassium chloride or zinc sulfide. "You would expect very different kinds of clouds to form than you would expect, say, on Earth," Kreidberg said.

The results were published in the British journal *Nature*.

Xinhua

Justice Department defends Apple monitor in e-books case



An Apple logo is seen during Black Friday in San Francisco, California on 29 Nov, 2013.—REUTERS

NEW YORK, 1 Jan — A bitter battle between Apple Inc and a lawyer appointed to monitor its compliance with a court antitrust ruling escalated on Monday, as the US government and the monitor both hit back at Apple.

Over the last two months, Apple has launched

a broad legal attack on the monitor, Michael Bromwich, who was appointed by a federal judge after a ruling that the company conspired to fix e-book prices.

Apple has said in court filings that Bromwich overstepped his mandate and that he was causing irreparable harm to the company. Ap-

ple has also argued that Bromwich's personal financial interest in investigating the company violated its right to a disinterested prosecutor under the due process clause of the US Constitution.

Apple also asked US-District Judge Denise Cote to stay her order requiring a monitor pending its appeals of the price-fixing judgment. In a filing on Monday, the Justice Department urged Cote to reject the request, arguing that Apple's legal attacks on Bromwich "only highlight the critical need for his monitorship to continue uninterrupted." Bromwich, the government argued, has acted well within his authority. The government said that

the company was seeking to "shield its highest-level executives and board members from the perceived inconvenience" of having to sit for interviews with Bromwich.

In a separate declaration, accompanied by dozens of exhibits, Bromwich disputed Apple's contention that he had engaged in a "roving" investigation.

"The request for limited preliminary background interviews to learn about corporate structure, process, culture, and tone does not convert monitoring into an investigation of any kind, much less into a 'roving investigation' or a 'broad and amorphous inquisition,'" he wrote.—Reuters

China installs faster education backbone network

BEIJING, 1 Jan — China's first coherent 100G network was officially operational on Tuesday, as the expanded education and research network (CERNET) passed an acceptance check. CERNET, the national academic computer network, can now run 100G signals, while most backbone networks are still restricted to 10G.

The network extends over 21,700 km, linking 34 cities in 29 provinces, and providing a minimum 1G access for more than 2,000

universities and research institutes. About 500 of them will have a minimum of 10G access, according to CERNET sources. All equipment used was developed and made in China.

The network is not only updated with greater capacity but also has better security and management, according to Prof. Wu Jianping, of the Department of Computer Science and Technology, Tsinghua University, head of the CERNET expert panel.

Xinhua

Snapchat, Vine among top smartphone apps of 2013

TORONTO, 1 Jan — Snapchat, Vine, and Candy Crush Saga earned coveted spots on smartphones this year, making them among the most downloaded apps of the year.

There are more than a million apps on Apple Inc's App Store and Google Inc's Play store, the two dominant marketplaces for apps, which see billions of downloads each year.

This year, the most downloaded apps were new takes on communication, gaming, and entertainment, according to mobile app experts.

"2013 was a really interesting year in terms of maturation, milestones and new trends," said Craig Palli, chief strategy officer at Fiksu, a mobile marketing company based in Boston.

"The most downloaded

apps were in familiar categories, but offered new twists," he added.

While old favourites such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter — available for iPhone, Android and other devices — continued to be popular ways of communicating with friends, Snapchat eclipsed them in downloads in 2013, becoming the sixth most downloaded free app of the year on the App Store, according to Apple.

"Snapchat went from being a niche app to achieving much more critical mass, so much so that Facebook was reportedly willing to spend billions of dollars to acquire the company," said Palli.

With Snapchat, users can send photos and videos that disappear shortly after they are viewed.—Reuters

Apple says never worked with NSA on iPhone hacks

SAN FRANCISCO, 1 Jan — Apple Inc has never worked with the US National Security Agency and is unaware of efforts to target its smartphones, the company said in response to reports that the spy agency had developed a system to hack into and monitor iPhones.

Germany's Der Spiegel reported this week that a secretive unit of the NSA, which is under fire for the extent and depth of its spying programmes around the world, makes specialized gear and software to infiltrate and monitor a plethora of computing devices, including mobile phones.

The report included an NSA graphic dated 2008

that outlined a system in development called DROP-OUTJEOP, described as a "software implant" that allows infiltrators to push and pull and retrieve data from iPhones such as contact lists. Der Spiegel referred to it as a "trojan," or malware that helps hackers get into protected systems.

The report, which surfaced on Sunday, did not suggest that Apple had cooperated with the US spying agency on so-called backdoors.

In a statement issued Tuesday, the NSA did not comment on any specific allegations but said that its interest "in any given technology is driven by the use of that technology by foreign intelligence targets."



People check out several versions of the new iPhone 5C after Apple Inc's media event in Cupertino, California on 10 Sept, 2013.—REUTERS

"The United States pursues its intelligence mission with care to ensure that innocent users of those same technologies are not affected," the agency added.

The iPhone was a relatively innovative gadget in 2008. It hit the market in 2007 and proceeded to help revolutionize the mobile phone industry.

Reuters

BUSINESS & HEALTH

Chinese recycling tycoon says he wants to buy New York Times

BEIJING, 1 Jan — An eccentric Chinese recycling magnate said on Tuesday he was preparing to open negotiations to buy the New York Times Co.

Chen Guangbiao, a well-known philanthropist, is something of a celebrity in China. During a particularly murky bout of pollution in January, the ebullient and tireless self-promoter handed out free cans of “fresh air”.

But Chen says he is perfectly serious in his bid to buy *the Times*, something that he said he had been

contemplating for more than two years. He said he expected to discuss the matter on 5 January, when he is due to meet a “leading shareholder” in New York.

“There’s nothing that can’t be bought for the right price,” Chen said.

As one of the most prestigious newspapers in the world, *the Times* is an occasional target among the wealthy — some with unsteady aims.

Donald Trump, the real estate magnate who sells Trump-branded bottled spring water, was trying to



A woman exits the New York Times Building in New York on 14 Aug, 2013.

REUTERS

figure out a way to buy *the Times* earlier this year, according to a report in *New York magazine*, which said that details of Trump’s plans were “scant.”

It is unlikely that *the Times*, which has long been controlled by the

Ochs-Sulzberger family, would sell to Chen.

A spokeswoman for *the Times* said the company did not comment on rumors. The company’s chairman, Arthur Sulzberger, Jr, said recently that *the Times* was not for sale.—Reuters

US consumer mood brightens, but home price gains slow

NEW YORK, 1 Jan — US consumers’ mood improved as 2013 drew to a close, with many optimistic about their future job prospects, while home prices rose again in October, though the pace of gains slowed.

The data releases provided more evidence of strength in the US economy, which appears to have overcome headwinds caused by an autumn

“Despite the many challenges throughout 2013, consumers are in better spirits today than when the year began,” Lynn Franco, director of economic indicators at The Conference Board, said in a statement.

A separate report showed the S&P/Case Shiller composite index of home prices in 20 metropolitan areas increased 13.6 percent in October from a year ago, the strongest gain



A shopper walks down an aisle in a newly opened Walmart Neighbourhood Market in Chicago in this 21 Sept, 2011 file photo.—REUTERS

government shutdown, higher taxes and rising mortgage rates.

“Things still look pretty solid at the end of 2013. We had better GDP growth even though interest rates have gone up with the Fed,” said Gus Faucher, senior economist at PNC Financial Services, adding “2014 will be a better year with less fiscal drag.”

The rise in the Conference Board’s index of consumer attitudes to 78.1 in December brought it to within reach of levels last seen before a standoff in Congress over fiscal policy caused the government to shut down in October.

Consumers were optimistic about the present — the present situation index hit its highest level since April, 2008 — and the future, particularly the job outlook.

since February 2006.

Price gains on a monthly basis, however, slowed to 0.2 percent from 0.7 percent in September, suggesting higher mortgage rates have slowed home-buying activity.

Borrowing costs are expected to rise again next year as the Federal Reserve winds down its monthly asset purchases, which have helped suppress long-term interest rates since the program began 15 months ago.

“From a policy standpoint, the rebound in home prices has been a real win for the Fed,” said Mark Vitner, senior economist at Wells Fargo Securities.

But next year, “the housing market will likely have to stand on its own more. We might see slower price appreciation in 2014,” he said.—Reuters

Cholesterol linked to Alzheimer’s protein, unclear why

NEW YORK, 1 Jan — Patterns of “good” and “bad” cholesterol usually associated with heart risks also predicted the levels of Alzheimer’s-related beta amyloid protein seen in the

brains of study participants.

“One of the important themes emerging from dementia research over the past 15 years is that there are intriguing connections between vascular disease

and Alzheimer’s disease,” Bruce Reed, who led the research, told *Reuters Health* by email. Reed is a professor and associate director of the University of California Davis Alzheimer’s Disease Research Centre.

“It has become increasingly clear that what have been traditionally thought of as vascular risk factors — things like hypertension, diabetes and elevated cholesterol — are also risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease,” Reed said.

In previous work, Reed and his colleagues found a connection between overall vascular risk and levels of brain amyloid. “Amyloid deposition is important because it is widely believed by scientists to be a key event that initiates a chain of events that eventually,

years later, results in the dementia of Alzheimer’s disease,” Reed said.

“There was also previous work in cell cultures and with animals that suggested that cholesterol plays an important role in promoting the deposition of amyloid in the brain,” Reed said. For the new study, published in *JAMA Neurology*, the researchers examined the cholesterol levels of 74 elderly people who had normal to mildly impaired cognitive function. Researchers also measured brain deposits of beta amyloid protein with positron emission tomography (PET scanning).

They found that on average, participants who had higher levels of the “bad” LDL cholesterol and lower levels of “good” HDL cholesterol also had higher levels of amyloid in the brain.

Elevated LDL-cholesterol is associated with cardiovascular disease while high levels of HDL-cholesterol are thought to protect against heart disease.

Reuters



A medical technician draws a blood sample to screen for glucose and cholesterol at a free health screening as part of the National Urban League’s Economic Empowerment Tour in Dallas, Texas on 13 June, 2009.

REUTERS

Antioxidants in diet linked to cataract risk

NEW YORK, 1 Jan — Women who eat foods rich in antioxidants may have a lower risk of cataracts as they age, according to a new Swedish analysis.

“Oxidative damage of the eye lens caused by free radicals has been suggested to be crucial in development of cataract,” said Susanne Rautiainen of the Institute of Environmental Medicine at the Karolinska Institutet, who led the study.

Her team looked at the diets of more than 30,000 middle aged and older women, and found those with the highest total intake of antioxidants had about a 13 percent lower risk of

developing cataracts than women who consumed the least. “Previous studies have focused on individual antioxidants obtained from the diet or supplements and they have reported inconsistent results,” Rautiainen said. “However, in diet much wider ranges of antioxidants are present than those studied previously.”

Instead of looking at single antioxidants, such as vitamins C and E, and plant flavonoids such as lycopene, the researchers used a measure of total antioxidant values in foods, which takes into account how the nutrients work together.

For the study, more

than 30,000 Swedish women over age 49 were observed for about 7 years for signs of developing cataracts, and were given a dietary questionnaire.

Foods high in antioxidants include coffee, tea, oranges, whole grains and red wine. Based on total antioxidant consumption, the researchers divided the women into five groups, ranging from the greatest antioxidant intake to the least. Among those who ate the most antioxidants, 745 cases of cataract were recorded, compared to 953 cases among women with the lowest antioxidant consumption.—Reuters



The winning numbers for the nationwide year-end “jumbo” lottery, with a top prize of 500 million yen and the maximum prize of 700 million yen, are announced in Tokyo on 31 Dec, 2013. KYODO NEWS

Italy president says won't serve entire term

ROME, 1 Jan — Italian President Giorgio Napolitano said on Tuesday that he would stay on the job only as long as he is needed and “not a day more,” eight months after breaking a political deadlock by agreeing to serve an unprecedented second term.

While it was widely believed the 88-year-old head of state would not serve his entire seven-year term, he made it clear in the president's traditional year-end TV address to the nation that he would step down as soon as he deemed it possible.

“I'll stay president until the situation of the country and its institutions make it necessary and possible, and until my strength holds up. Until then and not a day longer; and so certainly not for a very long time,” Napolitano said at the end of a 20-minute speech.

Majority Americans believe economy to be better in 2014

WASHINGTON, 1 Jan — With the recent better-than-expected economic growth rate and jobs report, a majority of US voters believes that the economy will be better off next year, a Fox News poll showed on Tuesday.

The poll revealed that 54 percent of Americans believe the US economy will be better off a year from now, while 35 percent think the economy will be worse next year.

Forty percent of Americans believe the economy would get “a little” better in a year, while 14 percent predict it would get “a lot” better, according to the poll.

The poll, conducted between 14-16 December, surveyed 1,027 registered voters. It was released after the strong November jobs report showing that nation's the unemployment rate edged down to 7 percent, its lowest level in five years.—Xinhua



Italian President Giorgio Napolitano gestures after a news conference at the Quirinale Palace in Rome, on 27 April, 2013.—REUTERS

Napolitano, who some refer to as “King George”, used the powers of his office to help guide Italy through a burgeoning debt crisis in 2011 and a political stalemate earlier this year that led to the formation of broad, and sometimes unstable, governing coalition.

After replacing an

embattled Silvio Berlusconi with Mario Monti in 2011, Napolitano this year hand-picked Prime Minister Enrico Letta to form a government to pass badly needed reforms to overhaul the political system — especially with a new electoral law — and to boost economic growth.

“We will combat with the same energy those who express, with an exclusively destructive spirit, the will to bring the system to collapse without making realistic proposals and reforms,” Letta said in a statement following his speech.

Opposition parties like Beppe Grillo's 5-Star Movement and Berlusconi's Forza Italia have called for elections in the spring, and have directed a barrage of attacks against Napolitano for opposing them and overplaying his role.

But Napolitano has repeatedly warned that a new electoral law, which has yet to be passed, is essential before the next national election or else the country will end up with the same political stalemate that followed February's vote.

Reuters

Dominican Republic destroys 11 tons of drugs in 2013

SANTO DOMINGO, 1 Jan — The Dominican Republic destroyed more than 11.2 tons of illicit drugs in 2013, mainly cocaine intended for shipment to the United States or Europe, the national Public Prosecutor's Office said in a statement on Tuesday.

The agency said the National Institute of Forensic Sciences carried out 52 drug-incineration operations this year, destroying 9,875 kg of cocaine (representing 87.92 percent of the drugs destroyed), 1,282 kg of

marijuana (11.42 percent) and 62.72 kg of heroin (0.56 percent), among a total of 11,232 kg of drugs. The agency added that 867.07 kg of fake drugs were also incinerated. Most drug seizures were made in the capital Santo Domingo, where authorities confiscated 1,923 kg of illicit drugs, followed by the tourist resort of Romana on the eastern end of the island, and Pedernales on the country's southern border with Haiti.

The Dominican Republic is frequently used by

traffickers as a bridge for shipments between South America, Europe and the United States, the agency said. According to the country's National Drug Control Office, the drug cartels operating out of northern Mexico have abandoned the traditional “Central American Corridor” and are instead shipping drugs along the Dominican Atlantic coast, where Colombian and Peruvian drug traffickers have also established operations.

Xinhua

Lebanon awaits army report on airspace violation by Syrian jets

BEIRUT, 1 Jan — Lebanon's caretaker Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour said on Tuesday that his country is waiting for the army to provide details about a Syrian violation of the Lebanese airspace on Monday, describing the Syrian fighter jets as “friendly” and not “hostile.”

In remarks to the *Al Joumhouria* daily, Mansour

said: “We should find out the truth. We are waiting for the army leadership to provide us with the details and the available information so that we could deal with this issue based on the security agreements signed between the two countries away from politics.”

The Lebanese army fired on Syrian aircraft that violated the country's airspace

on Monday, the first time Lebanon has done so since Syria's uprising broke out nearly three years ago.

According to local sources, the military fired anti-aircraft guns at warplanes after the latter fired missiles in a mountainous, barren area close to Lebanon's northeastern border town of Aarsal.

Xinhua

Gov't to choose maintenance sites for Osprey aircraft outside Okinawa

TOKYO, 1 Jan — The Japanese government plans to choose the maintenance sites for MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor transport aircraft which the Self-Defence Forces plan to operate outside of Okinawa during the year starting in April 2015, government sources said on Tuesday.

The government intends to speed up the selection of maintenance sites for Osprey aircraft from April 2014, with candidate sites being airfields with a runway of 1,500 meters or longer, they said.

Among the candidates are the Ground Self-Defence Force's Camp Kisarazu in the city of Kisarazu, Chiba Prefecture, near Tokyo, the Air Self-Defence Force's Tsuiki air base in the town of Chikujo, Fukuoka Prefecture, the Maritime Self-Defence Force's Omura air base in the city of Omura, Nagasaki Prefecture, and Saga Airport in Saga, capital of Saga Prefecture, all on the country's southernmost main island of Kyushu, except for Kisarazu.

The government plans to jointly use the sites with the US forces which have

deployed a fleet of 24 Ospreys at the Futenma base in Okinawa Prefecture.

In October, Japan and the United States agreed to reduce the US Osprey's parking and training hours in Okinawa.

On 25 December, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe promised Okinawa Gov Hirokazu Nakaima to halve flight training for the US Marine Corps' Osprey aircraft in Okinawa and move them outside of the southern island prefecture.

The Defence Ministry put up 2 million yen for a study to select the sites in its fiscal 2014 budget.

The government plans to establish an amphibious unit similar to the US Marines at the Ground Self-Defence Force as early as fiscal 2015 starting on 1 April that year. The amphibious unit's mission is to regain control of remote islands.

The government is also studying plans to stage joint training between the SDF and the US Marines on Guam Island using Osprey aircraft to help reduce training hours in Okinawa.

Kyodo News



File photo taken in July 2013 shows MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft parked at the US military's Iwakuni base in Yamaguchi Prefecture, western Japan. The Japanese government plans to choose the maintenance sites for Ospreys which the Self-Defence Forces plan to operate outside of Okinawa during the year starting in April 2015, government sources said on 31 Dec, 2013.

KYODO NEWS

Latvia caps years of austerity with euro zone membership



Latvia's central bank governor Ilmars Rimsevics (L-R), Estonia's Prime Minister Andrus Ansip, Latvia's Prime Minister Valdis Dombrovskis and Latvia's Minister of Finance Andris Vilks, pose with euro banknotes during an official event in Riga on 1 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

RIGA, 1 Jan — Latvia joined the euro zone on Wednesday, banking on its experience of austerity to bring it prosperity in a currency union where other economies have floundered.

The Baltic country of just 2 million people became the bloc's 18th member at midnight (2200 GMT), taking a step further

out of the shadow of neighbouring Russia a decade after joining the European Union and NATO.

Latvia's acting prime minister, Valdis Dombrovskis, who led his country through its worst economic crisis since it left the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s, said euro adoption was an opportunity, but

not a guarantee of wealth, and the country should not relax its fiscal policy.

“It's not an excuse not to pursue a responsible fiscal and macroeconomic policy,” he said after withdrawing the first euro banknote after midnight from a cash machine in Riga.

Reuters

WORLD

Leader of group linked to al-Qaeda held in Lebanon

BEIRUT, 1 Jan — A Saudi militant who allegedly leads a group linked to al-Qaeda which operates throughout the Middle East has been arrested by military authorities in Lebanon, according to US national security sources.

Two US sources said that media reports from Lebanon that Lebanese Armed Forces had recently captured Majid bin Muhammad al-Majid, leader of the Abdullah Azzam Brigades were credible. The sources did not offer further details on the circumstances in which he was captured.

Lebanese media reported on Tuesday that Majid had been arrested two days ago. One report said he had lived for years in a Palestinian refugee camp before leaving for Syria a month ago, where he allegedly pledged allegiance

to the leader of the Nusrah Front, one of the most extreme and violent Islamic militant groups fighting to oust the government of President Bashar Assad.

According to the Long War Journal, a respected counter-terrorism blog, Majid is among 85 individuals identified on a Saudi government list issued in 2009 as most wanted for their alleged involvement with al-Qaeda.

The Long War Journal said that the Abdullah Azzam Brigades, named after a founder of al-Qaeda and associate of the late Osama bin Laden, were formed some time after 2005 as a spinoff of al-Qaeda in Iraq. The blog said the group's mission was to attack targets in Lebanon and elsewhere around the Middle East.

Reuters



Sand artist Sudarshan Pattnaik writes on Puri Beach of the Bay of Bengal, 65 km away from the eastern Indian state Orissa's capital city Bhubaneswar, India, on 30 Dec, 2013. —XINHUA

Over 1,100 killed in S African road accidents this festive season

JOHANNESBURG, 1 Jan — The road accidents have claimed over 1,100 lives in South Africa since the festive season, the traffic system announced on Tuesday.

A total of 987 fatal road accidents have been reported across the country from 1 to 30 December, killing 1,184 people, said the Road Traffic Management Corporation (RTMC) in a statement.

Among all nine provinces across the country, the southeastern province of KwaZulu-Natal recorded the most road accidents at 205, while the eastern province of Gauteng and the southern province of the Eastern Cape followed with

156 and 136 accidents, respectively, according to the RTMC.

The deadliest route for December was the N12 in the northern province of the North West with 14 lives lost, followed by the N11 in the northeastern province of Limpopo that killed 9 people and the N1 in the southwestern province of the Western Cape with seven people having been dead.

The secondary routes across the country have become an important killer for innocent people as many drivers tried to avoid toll fees and traffic patrol on the highways this month, said the statement.

The major contributors

to the fatal road accidents were overtaking, speeding, drunk-driving, fatigue-driving and lack of maintenance of the vehicles.

The road management department has taken a series of measures to ensure the safety of the ground traffic since the start of the festive season. "During December, over 980 people have been arrested nationwide for drunk-driving and inconsiderate or reckless driving," said the RTMC.

In South Africa, people would usually have to drive their own vehicles to go shopping or travelling due to lack of other cheap and developed ground transport systems.—Xinhua



Fireworks light up the sky near Copacabana of Rio de Janeiro ringing in the New Year in Brazil, on 1 Jan, 2014. —XINHUA

Gunmen blast natgas pipeline in Sinai

CAIRO, 1 Jan — Unknown assailants attacked a natural gas pipeline in the Sinai on Tuesday, Egyptian security sources told Reuters, raising concerns of instability as the country pushes through with a roadmap for political transition to democracy.

The blast took place in the central region of Sinai on a pipeline that carried natural gas to an industrial area.

There were so far no reports of casualties and security forces are scanning the area to investigate the cause of the blast, the sources said.

Egypt has been struggling to maintain stability in the country of 85 million people since the army ousted Islamist President Mohamed Mursi, the country's first elected leader, on

3 July following mass protests against his rule.

Supporters of Mursi have called the army move a military coup and staged regular protests demanding his reinstatement. Militant attacks in the Sinai region have intensified since then.

Hundreds were killed in Cairo when security forces stormed two pro-Mursi camps in August and thousands more were arrested, including Mursi, as the government launched a crackdown against his Muslim Brotherhood group, which it accused of violence.

The Muslim Brotherhood denies any link to violence, but last week the government declared them

a terrorist group, accusing them of carrying out a suicide attack that killed 16 people in the Nile Delta.

Sinai-based militant group, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, had claimed responsibility for the Nile Delta attack, as well as several previous attacks, including a failed attempt to assassinate the interior minister with a car bomb in Cairo in September.

Egypt plans to hold a constitution referendum in mid-January, a major milestone in its roadmap to a transition to democracy that could see presidential and parliamentary elections next year.

Reuters

South Sudan government, rebels set for New Year's Day talks

JUBA, 1 Jan — South Sudan's government and rebels are set for New Year's Day peace talks in Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, to thrash out a ceasefire to end weeks of ethnic bloodletting in the world's newest state. Both sides agreed to a ceasefire on Tuesday, mediators said, but fighting between government troops

and militias loyal to former Vice President Riek Machar raged in Bor, the capital of the vast Jonglei state and site of an ethnic massacre in 1991.

"I'm worried that the continued fighting in Bor might scupper the start of these talks," said Ethiopian Foreign Minister Dr Tedros Adhanom, who is chairman

of the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) bloc that is mediating the talks.

"Hopefully both delegations will arrive tomorrow (Wednesday), start the talks and settle this problem once and for all," Adhanom told Reuters by phone from Addis Ababa.

Western and regional powers have pushed both sides to end the fighting that has killed at least 1,000 people, cut South Sudan's oil output and raised fears of a full-blown civil war in the heart of a fragile region. It was not clear who controlled Bor on Tuesday night after a day of heavy fighting that started at dawn in the dusty town, which was held by Machar's rebels for a few days at the start of the conflict. Nearly 200,000 civilians have been displaced.

Reuters



A South Sudan army soldier stands next to a machine gun mounted on a truck in Malakal town, 497km (308 miles) northeast of capital Juba, on 30 Dec, 2013 a few days after retaking the town from rebel fighters.

REUTERS

UN appoints Swiss as top relief official for Somalia

NAIROBI, 1 Jan — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has appointed Philippe Lazzarini of Switzerland as his deputy special representative as well as resident and humanitarian coordinator in Somalia.

In a statement received in Nairobi on Tuesday, Ban said Lazzarini has extensive experience in humanitarian assistance and international coordination in conflict and post-conflict areas, including in Somalia where he has been the resident and humanitarian coordinator and UN Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative since March.

"Prior to this assignment, Lazzarini held a number of senior positions in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, including as Deputy Director of the Coordination and Response Division (2011 to 2013), and in various field positions in Iraq, Angola, Somalia and the Occupied Palestinian Territory," the statement said.

Xinhua

PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 2 January, 2014

Positive thinking should be our policy in 2014

A New Year has rung in. We welcomed it as a special guest and now it itself has quickly become our host. With due optimism, we invited it as our guest a day ago. And now we need to treat our new host with the same measure of optimism as we had when the year turned from the old to new. Simple optimism does not make everything right, but it does give us hope and it makes us open to live and to laugh.

By 'optimism,' we do not mean blindfolded praise. It is not always offering praise and good deeds. But it is seeing things from a positive perspective and finding positive answers. In our world of better technology, increased urbanization, bitter wrangles and so on, we can be easily frustrated. Frustration can now easily enter our room, without even knocking at the door.

There will be many uphill battles ahead in 2014 for sure, but does any year have none? We will have to approach issues, mundane and complex, with different strategies and from different points of view. People with positive attitudes can embrace the difficulties. But if we accept there will be difficulties in our daily life no matter what, already we have resolved roughly half our problem. A New Year does not make us new people, but it does offer us a new chance to embrace it and to make it a happy one.



On behalf of Japanese donor who donated maternity centre and its related items to Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association, Chairperson of the Association Prof Dr Nang Htawn Hla presents flag of honour to Mr Takemoto Ichiro on 30 December 2013.—MNA

Interfaith Friendship Group pray for Meiktila's dwellers

MEIKTILA, 1 Jan—The Interfaith Friendship Group conducted a New Year prayer ceremony on Kanlei Bridge, Meiktila-Kyaukpadaung Road at midnight yesterday.

Under the leadership of the heads of the Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Hindu communities, District Deputy Commissioner U Tin Maung Soe, Township Administrator U Myo Hlaing, township-level offi-



cials, staff and local people all prayed for people living in Meiktila and wished many blessings on all.

Healthy Constitution ...

(from page 1)

work, organizational skills, and interactions with different countries. We should all be proud of the success of the Games. At the same time, we will have to try to improve ourselves by drawing on the experiences acquired in organizing these Games.

If we look back at the political changes in the country, we see that political groups within a short time have been able to participate in a meaningful manner in a political system created by the 2008 Constitution. With these conditions as the basis, we must work towards increasing political vibrancy by improving participation and citizens' political rights.

Related to these efforts, a culture of debate and negotiation is now present in our society. As an example, because we overcame past political issues and challenges with understanding and good intentions, a discussion about constitutional amendment issues and other related issues that would have been impossible before is now openly discussed and debated among the public. We are also seeing political groups organize their constitutional amendment activities. A parliamentary Committee to Study and Amend the Constitution formed with members of parliament representing political parties and Tatmadaw is already canvassing for comments from the public and various organizations. The Tatmadaw has also submitted its proposals and comments to the Committee.

At the same time, the country's main political group, the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and other political parties have also actively organized forums and meetings to discuss constitutional amendments. Just the fact that these activities have been held in a free and open manner shows that the level of political maturity in our country has risen.

Another positive development is the manner in which individuals and leaders from all regions are able to express their opinions freely through news media and social networks. We are now witnessing the emergence of the most important indicator of a modern democratic society—the freedom to openly discuss and debate politics.

I would now like to express my views on the constitutional amendment issue. I believe that a healthy Constitution must be amended from time to time to address the national, economic, and social needs of our society. There are three things to consider concerning the amending of the current Constitution.

First, political dialogue, essential for national reconciliation, and the foundation of the national peace process, may require the amending, or revision of the Constitution.

Second, there are some views that for an open and free society to emerge, the Constitution must be amended to strengthen democratic attitudes and values. These areas must be decided with the perspectives, wisdom, and benevolence of all involved in the political system.

The third concerns amending the provision on the qualification of the political leadership of the country. I would not want restrictions being imposed on the right of any citizen to become the leader of the country. At the

same time, we will need to have all necessary measures in place in order to defend our national interests and sovereignty. In trying to solve the ongoing political differences, we must all choose to do the right things in order not to fall into political impasse.

We will undertake the amending of the Constitution to facilitate national reconciliation, the foundation of the national peace process, through consensus based on mutual understanding, and listening to each other's demands. At the same time, I am honored and delighted that the government, Parliament, political parties, other political forces, ethnic groups, civil society groups, the Tatmadaw, and armed ethnic groups are all acting in a benevolent manner in striving to reach a nationwide ceasefire agreement. Therefore, I expect political dialogue to begin soon once final negotiations are over.

In 2014, our country will take over the important responsibility of chairing the regional grouping ASEAN. Our chairmanship of ASEAN comes at an important time since regional issues are becoming more interrelated, and South East Asian countries are playing an increasingly important role on the global scene. Just as the hosting of the 27th SEA Games succeeded because of the contributions of our citizens, we will ensure success of our chairmanship of ASEAN through the joint efforts of our people. As chair, we will represent the entire region, and also elevate the image of our country on the global stage.

I have also tried to achieve national harmony by consolidating current political reforms and by ensuring political stability and smooth transition for the younger generation. I have met with the representatives of all organizations that have requested to see me. I have tried to accommodate different demands and political positions of diverse political groups as much as I could. I also understand that not everybody will be happy with what we have tried to do. Some political groups might think that we have not acted sufficiently in response to their demands or requests. I would like to urge all of you to understand the political reality of the country in order to avoid unnecessary misunderstanding among us.

Since the beginning of my administration, I have not done anything in an unaccountable manner. I have tried to promote harmony. I have tried to do everything I can to meet the needs and wishes of the people. However, I would like to emphasize that if the political demands made by the public are larger than what the current political system can accommodate, we can all end up in a political deadlock. If this happens, we could lose all the political freedom we have achieved so far. I would therefore like to urge all of you to handle such situation with care and wisdom.

I would also like to inform all of you that with the aim of national reconciliation together with the hard work of the Political Prisoner Review Committee, and in keeping with my promise, all political prisoners have been freed by the end of last year.

In conclusion, I urge all citizens to work together constructively, even more so than the previous year, in 2014.

May all the people be spiritual and mental wellbeings.

Inter-village bridges to improve development of the Kalay Region

KALAY, 1 Jan—Kalay District Management Committee Chairman U Maung Htoo inspected the construction of Chanthagyi and Myaukchawta inter-village bridges yesterday.

The RCC bridges, 20 feet long and 14 feet high each, are being constructed under the supervision of Royal Great Co.

The Border Region Development Department contributed K 200 each to the bridge.

The project is expected to cost K 4 million in total.

Kyemon-Ju Nine



LOCAL NEWS

Dredging of Chaungchawk Creek under inspection



Township officials discuss dredging of Chaungchawk Creek in Pinhe Village of Mohnyin Township.

MOHNYIN, 1 Jan—Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Sai Tin Aung of Mohnyin Township had submitted a proposal for dredging Chaungchawk Creek in Pinhe Village to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw.

Chaungchawk Creek erodes banks in rainy season and overflows nearby farmlands of the village.

This year, the creek overflowed 700 acres of farmlands.

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw allotted K 90 million to dredge the creek to be 40 feet wide and 10000 feet long creek.

On 30 December, Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Sai Tin Aung, Head of District

Irrigation U Khin Maung Lwin and village administrator U Tun Oo inspected preparations for dredging works.

At the monastery in Pinhe Village, they met local people and discussed regional development affairs.

Kyemon-Hnget Kha (Mohnyin)

Detour for dwellers of Kalay

KALAY, 1 Jan—Kalay, one of townships in northwest of the nation, is constituted with 19 wards and 41 villages. The urban area of the town is home to over 77900 people and rural areas, 207,740. Most of the people are using only Bogyoke Road in the local area.

Due to growing population, traffic congestion occurs along Bogyoke Road.

The local people submitted reports on construction of a detour from Aungthitsa to Myohla wards to the President on his inspection tour of Kalay at Aungzeya Yeiktha. In accord with the guidance of the President, the Rural Development Department will spend fund on

construction of the detour.

Accompanied by township management committee chairman and the township development supportive committee chairman and departmental officials, Chairman of District Management

Committee U Maung Htoo inspected the axis for the detour on 30 December afternoon.

The detour will be 6141 feet long in Aungthitsa Ward and 4742 feet long in Myohla Ward.

Kyemon-Ju Nine



Departmental officials concentrate on construction of detour in Kalay.

Modern highway bus terminal under construction in Myeik



MYEIK, 1 Jan—Construction of a modern highway bus terminal is being constructed by Myeik Public Corporation Ltd in Myeik, the city of Taninthayi Region.

The terminal is located beside the road to industrial zone in Myeiktaung Village-tract.

Land preparations for the terminal was carried

out on 46.40 acres of land plot. The construction tasks create job opportunity for local people.

On completion, the terminal will contribute much to smooth transport of local people and globetrotters for the tourism industry and swift flow of commodities.

The modern bus terminal will be a key location for Mawtaung border trade camp.

Kyemon-Myeik District IPRD

66th Anniversary Independence Day, 2014

Thatta Thattaha Maha Bawdi Pagoda, Nay Pyi Taw

Photo: Ko Ko Khaing (IPRD)

Four objectives of 66th Anniversary Independence Day

- All the national people to live together in the Union forever in weal or woe;
- All the national people to strive together for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty;
- All the national people to participate in efforts for ceasing armed conflicts and gaining genuine peace;
- All the national people to work hard in building a developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation

Asphalt road commissioned into service in Pakokku

PAKOKKU, 1 Jan—As a gesture of hailing the 66th

Anniversary Independence Day, the 4th Street repaved with asphalt was inaugurated in Ward 6 of Pakokku in Magway Region yesterday morning.

Amyotha Hluttaw representative U Thaw Zin Oo, Pyithu Hluttaw representative U Paik Ko, Region Hluttaw representative U Zaw Moe Thein, Pakokku District Deputy Commissioner U Tin Maung Win, Commander of District Police Force Police Lt-Col Aung Zaw Min, departmental officials, Township Administrator U Aung Naing Oo, departmental personnel, Chairman of Township Development

Supportive Committee U Ye Htut and members joined the opening ceremony of the road together with local people.

The 4th Street links Wards 5, 6, 7, and 11 of the township. Repaved road was completed on 16 November 2013. It is 1320 feet long and 15 feet wide facility. The construction costs K 17 million. Deputy Commissioner U Tin Maung Win, Chairman of Township DAC U Tin Win and Assistant Director U Aung Min Kyaing of Township DAC formally opened the newly-opened road and strolled along there.

Kyemon-MMAL-102



WORLD

Egypt security forces arrest Brotherhood leader's son

CAIRO, 1 Jan — Egyptian security forces have arrested the son of a Muslim Brotherhood leader on charges of inciting violence, the Interior Ministry said on Tuesday, the latest move in a crackdown against the group now branded a terrorist organization.

Anas Beltagi was arrested with two others in an apartment in Nasr City, the same district where security forces in August broke

up protests calling for the reinstatement of President Mohamed Mursi, a Muslim Brotherhood leader who was ousted by the army in July.

They were found in possession of a shotgun and ammunition, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. Beltagi's father, Mohamed Beltagi, is in jail facing trial for inciting violence along with other Muslim Brotherhood leaders.

Security forces launched

a crackdown against the Brotherhood in August, arresting many of their leaders including Mursi and putting them on trial for inciting terrorism and violence. Hundreds have been killed.

Since Mursi's overthrow, security forces have been struggling with some of the worst violence Egypt has seen in decades but the Muslim Brotherhood has denied any links to violence or terrorism.—Reuters



Students supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and deposed President Mohamed Mursi shout slogans at the university's campus in Cairo on 29 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

Bombs across Baghdad kill at least 15, clashes continue in Anbar

BAGHDAD, 1 Jan — Bombs exploded across the Iraqi capital on Tuesday, killing at least 15 people, police and medical sources said, a day after police broke up a Sunni Muslim protest camp in a western province.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for any of Tuesday's attacks but al-Qaeda's Iraqi affiliate, which was forced underground in 2006-07, has reemerged this year, invigorated by civil war in Syria and Sunni resentment at home.

In the deadliest attack in Baghdad, seven people were

killed when two car bombs hit the Shi'ite neighbourhood of Zafaraniya.

In southeastern Baghdad, three mortar rounds landed near a housing complex, killing four people, medics and police sources said.

A bomb attached to a truck killed the driver and one passenger in the mainly Shi'ite district of Basateen in northern Baghdad and gunmen shot dead one policeman and wounded another in southern part of the capital, police said.

Police and local officials in western Ramadi in Anbar

said clashes between gunmen and security forces are still continuing inside the city on Tuesday.

Sunni outrage and the violence across Iraq is likely to deepen already severe sectarian rifts. More than 8,000 people have been killed in such violence this year.

After years of reduced bloodshed, the intensity of attacks has dramatically risen since the start of 2013. Bombings have often targeted cafes and other places where families gather, as well as the usual military facilities and checkpoints.

Reuters

Putin vows to fight terrorists until "all are destroyed"

MOSCOW, 1 Jan — Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Tuesday the anti-terror war will continue until all terrorists are eliminated in the country.

In his New Year address to residents of the Russian eastern city of Khabarovsk, Putin said Russia "will continue the fight against terrorists certainly, fiercely and consistently until they are all destroyed."

"Dear friends, we bow our heads to the victims of violent terrorist attacks," the president said, referring to the twin terror attacks in the Russian city of Volgograd on Sunday and Monday which had killed a total of 34 people and injured scores of others.

"We will support the injured and will do everything that we have planned and will restore and build everything that has been planned to be restored and built," the president said.

Putin paid a surprise visit to residents of Khabarovsk who lost their homes in the summer floods.

During his address, the president mentioned "problems and serious challenges" Russians faced in 2013, including the devastating floods and the recent bombing attacks. "Russia has always become united and consolidated" in the times of trouble, Putin noted, adding the country had also achieved much in the year of 2013.

"Our country has become better, richer, more comfortable, it persistently advocates its interests in the international affairs," he noted.

Xinhua



People gather at the scene of a car bomb attack on a police compound in the southern Yemeni city of Aden on 31 Dec, 2013.

REUTERS

Armed men attack Yemen police headquarters, wounding seven

ADEN, 1 Jan — Armed men including a suicide bomber tried to storm police headquarters in southern Yemen's main city on Tuesday, wounding seven policemen, state media reported.

The men tried to force their way into the compound in Aden in several cars, with the bomber blowing himself up in one of the vehicles which was packed with explosives, news agency SABA said.

They exchanged gunfire with police, who prevented the attackers from entering the building, SABA quoted Najeeb Maghlaas, deputy general director of security in Aden, as saying.

Security sources earlier told Reuters police averted another suicide bombing attempt on the same building, and they had arrested two people who admitted links to al-Qaeda.

Another explosion struck a police training camp in another part of the city, causing no casualties, the Reuters sources also said.

Hundreds of police, soldiers and other security officials have died in

explosions and shootings over the past two years in southern Yemen, where the government and allied tribal militias are fighting against Islamist militants allied to al-Qaeda.

Security in Yemen is a concern for the United States and Gulf Arab countries, given its location next to the biggest oil exporter Saudi Arabia and major shipping routes for crude through the Red Sea.

This month al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the Yemeni branch of the movement, said it was behind an assault on a Defence Ministry complex in the capital Sanaa in which more than 50 people were killed. The main Islamist militant group, Ansar al-Sharia, took advantage of political chaos during protests in 2011 inspired by the Arab Spring to seize control of several cities in southern areas. The group was repulsed by government forces backed by US drones the following year. But the insurgents have since regrouped and mounted attacks on government officials and installations.—Reuters

Thousands block Central African Republic flights in plea for help

BANGUI, 1 Jan — Thousands of people caught up in fighting in Central African Republic blocked the runway of its international airport on Tuesday, demanding more aid and the resignation of the president.

Families and other refugees chanted anti-government slogans near a makeshift camp where they have taken shelter since clashes erupted between mostly Muslim Seleka fighters and Christian militias early in December.

Many had arrived in the morning, still loaded with luggage, fleeing a second night of heavy shelling in the capital Bangui.

"We are going to stop the takeoff and landing of planes to draw more attention from the international community," said camp resident Rene Kaimba.

An Air France flight was cancelled on Tuesday while aid and UN flights were also affected, said aid workers. French troops, sent in to try and control the violence in their former colony,



An elderly man sits in his temporary shop shelter at Ecole Liberte (Freedom School) in Bossangoa, north of the capital Bangui in the Central African Republic, on 30 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

surrounded the crowd.

Some called for the country's interim President Michel Djotodia to step down. He seized power in March alongside Seleka, a loose coalition of rebel forces.

Central African Republic remains one of Africa's poorest states for all its mineral resources. It has seen five coups and several rebellions since independence from France in 1960.

"The Central Africans have suffered too much and

been here almost a month without a solution," said M. Igor Kamdom, another displaced person at the camp.

"That's why we invaded the runway, so that the President Djotodia resigns."

French and African troops have struggled to stop the violence that has killed more than 1,000 people this month after Christians, who have long complained of abuses by Seleka forces, launched reprisal attacks.

Reuters

REGIONAL

N Korea completes construction of 1st ski resort

BEIJING, 1 Jan — North Korea has completed the construction of its first public ski resort, a megaproject started about a year ago under the initiative of leader Kim Jong Un as a symbol of the country's modernization drive, official media said on Tuesday.

Kim, who was partly educated in Switzerland, has taken a strong personal interest in building the "world's leading" ski resort on Masik Pass, Kangwon Province, located about a

two-and-a-half hour drive from the country's capital Pyongyang. During a recent inspection visit to the resort, Kim "instructed officials to hold an opening ceremony as early as possible so that people can fully enjoy skiing," according to the state-run *Korean Central News Agency*.

Kim checked facilities of the ski resort, including a hotel and a restaurant, and went up to the top of the hill by a lift, *KCNA* said.

It is unknown how

North Korea, which has been subject to sanctions by the UN Security Council for several years, managed to set up lifts and other ski facilities. In August, North Korea denounced unnamed countries for blocking its efforts to import cableway equipment for the ski resort.

The Swiss federal government had barred a local company from exporting ski lifts and cable cars to North Korea, according to Swiss media reports.

Kyodo News



Artists from West Bengal perform Chhau Dance during the Sacred Grove Festival in Bhopal, India, on 31 Dec, 2013.—XINHUA

Vietnamese PM stresses democracy, institutional improvements in New Year's message

HANOI, 1 Jan — Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung attached great importance to democracy, ownership of the people and institutional improvements in his New Year's message issued in Vietnam's capital Hanoi on Wednesday.

Under the theme of improving institutions, promoting ownership of the people, successfully implementing tasks in 2014 and creating foundation for fast and sustainable development, the Vietnamese Prime Minister's New Year

message stated that quality of institutions has decisive impacts on business environment, competitiveness of the whole economy as well as of each company.

The country can enjoy high competitiveness only when a high-quality institution and modern governance are ensured, said the Prime Minister.

Vietnamese *Vnexpress* online newspaper quoted Dung as emphasizing the importance of opening democracy, applying market mechanism in economic activities in Vietnam in

the past 30 years. Dung highlighted in the message that democracy is a big idea emphasized by late President Ho Chi Minh, adding that once applied, the amended constitution that was approved by Vietnamese National Assembly in 2013 will open a new constitutional era to implement President Ho Chi Minh's idea.

The deeper and the more practical direct democracy is, the more effectiveness representative democracy will be, said the Prime Minister.—Xinhua

S Korean ship catches fire in Mumbai, no casualty

NEW DELHI, 1 Jan—A fire broke out on a South Korean cargo ship anchored at the Mumbai Port Trust (MPT) on Tuesday night, without causing any casualty, said local media.

The *Press Trust of India* quoted naval sources as saying according to initial information available, nobody has been injured in the mishap.

The report quoted naval sources as saying the blaze started at around 21:00 but was put out within 30 minutes by six fire engines that were rushed to the spot, which comes under Yellow Gate police station limits.

The area where the ship Soorong Song was docked at was not defense area but near a navy dock.

The report said the fire started in the transformer of the ship, although the cause of blaze cannot be known immediately while the nature of goods on the ship is not known.

Earlier, a report by *Times of India* online said a Chinese cargo ship caught fire. Indian media always get confused about East Asian nations.—Xinhua



People queue for tickets at a railway station in Yin-chuan, northwest China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on 30 Dec, 2013. Railway tickets for the first day of the 40-day spring travel peak, which will begin on 16 Jan, have been sold Monday. More than 257 million trips will be made on the railways during the period, an increase of 19 million from last year.

XINHUA

Six killed, six wounded in New Year's explosion in S Philippines

ZAMBOANGA CITY, (Philippines), 1 Jan — Six people were killed while six others were wounded when an improvised bomb exploded in a New Year attack on Tuesday night in a remote village of Basilan Province, local security official said on Wednesday.

The improvised explosive device exploded at 9 pm near a parish church at Tumahubong village in Sumisip town of the southern province, said Jefferson Somera, public information officer of the 1st Army Division.

The identities of five of the civilian fatalities have been confirmed while another minor remained unidentified.

The wounded were immediately brought to the 64th Infantry Battalion headquarters for first aid treatment before they were

airlifted to the military hospital in Zamboanga. They have also been identified by their relatives, Somera said.

At the time of the explosion, the victims were having their New Year's party outside the residence of government militia volunteer Manuel Cisneros, he added.

Xinhua



Indian police try to disperse the activists of India's main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party by water canon during a protest outside the residence of the Congress Vice President Rahul Gandhi in New Delhi, India, on 31 Dec, 2013. XINHUA

Cambodian garment workers to receive \$100 per month from February

PHNOM PENH, 1 Jan — In response to continued protests by thousands of workers, the Cambodian government has decided to increase their current minimum monthly wage from \$80 to \$100 starting in February next year, according to a statement released on Tuesday. In the statement, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training said

workers at garment and footwear sectors will receive a minimum monthly wage of \$100 starting on 1 February, 2014.

The \$20 pay hike comes after thousands of workers joined protests and rallies with the main opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party demanding that the minimum wage be doubled to \$160 per

month. Despite Tuesday's announcement, some garment workers' unions say they remain unsatisfied and will continue their protests. The garment sector is one of the country's major sources of income. There are currently 925 garment and footwear factories operating in Cambodia with some 700,000 workers.—*Kyodo News*

Road fatalities in Cambodia rise to 1,901 in 2013

PHNOM PENH, 1 Jan—The number of road fatalities in Cambodia has risen to 1,901 people last year, up 0.3 percent from the 1,894 deaths in a year earlier, the report of the Interior Ministry's Public Order Department said on Wednesday.

Some 4,300 road accidents happened last year, down 2 percent year-on-year, the report said. Besides the

deaths, the accidents injured more than 7,000 people last year. Preap Chan Vibol, director of the Transport Department at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, said nearly 50 percent of the accidents were caused by over-the-speed limit driving, 13 percent by alcohol driving, and the rest by neglect driving and law violation.

Xinhua

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Dated 2 January 2014

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At least 10 people were killed and another five were seriously injured on Monday in Bolivia when a minibus collided with a trailer, media reported.

XINHUA

Syria gov't evacuates 5,000 civilians in conflict town

GENEVA, 1 Jan — Syria authorities evacuated 5,000 civilians from the besieged town in north-east of Damascus, the international Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said in a statement on Tuesday.

According to the statement, the Syrian authorities have facilitated approximately 5,000 civilians to leave Adra, where the

al-Qaeda-linked groups killed state servants and people from different minority groups which largely support the administration of President Bashar al-Assad.

With the help of ICRC and Syrian Arab Crescent, the evacuated civilians have received emergency relief, including food and water. "All parties must

ensure that the civilians remaining in Adra and in other towns and villages where fighting is taking place are protected from the dangers of hostilities," said Robert Zimmerman, deputy head of the ICRC delegation in Syria, adding proper medical treatment for the sick and the wounded should be emphasized.

Xinhua

Ministry of Construction Public Works (Invitation for Open Tender)

1. Open Tender is invited by Public Works, Ministry of Construction, Nay Pyi Taw, The Republic of the Union of Myanmar for upgrading projects in Yangon Region with the part of proceeds of the Regional Development Project for Poverty Reduction under JICA ODA LOAN, Japan.

Sr.	Name of Work	Type of Work
1	MaKyeKan — NhatAwwSan — KyeikHtaw Road	Concrete Road
2	KawHmu — WarPaLoutThout — ThaYetTaw Road	Bituminous Road

2. Start Selling Date of Tender Application Form - 3.1.2014
3. Close filling Date of Tender Application Form - 14.1.2014
4. Last Submission Date of Company's Qualification Form - 21-1.2014
5. Last Submission Date of Tender - 12.00 hours on 28.1.2014
6. Opening Date of Tender - 13:00 hours on 28.1.2014
7. Tender application forms can be purchased with five thousand kyats at the following address and for the detail information, please contact the office within office hours.

Tender Selection Committee Ministry of Construction, Public Works
Road Department office No-(11), Nay Pyi Taw
Tel: 067-407578, 407603, 407583, 407380

Marriage Announcement

Nyunt Shwe and Nang Thu Zar are so happy to announce their marriage registration presided by Deputy Director of the Yangon Region Justice Department, and Judge Daw Khin Khin Taw and by the presence of witness and relatives on the auspicious day of December 9, 2013, at High Court, Yangon.

Former first lady Barbara Bush hospitalized in Houston

HOUSTON, 1 Jan — Former first lady Barbara Bush has been hospitalized in Houston with a "respiratory-related issue," her husband's office said on Tuesday night.

Mrs Bush, 88, was sent to Houston Methodist Hospital on Monday for treatment of early signs of a respiratory-related issue, the statement from the office of former President George HW Bush said. "She is in great spirits, has already received visits from her husband and family, and is receiving fantastic care," the statement said. "Updates will be issued when warranted."

Bush had been admitted to the same hospital in 2008 for treatment of a perforated

ulcer, returning in 2010 for routine testing, according to US media reports.

Mrs Bush is the wife of George HW Bush, the 41st US president, and mother of George W Bush, the 43rd. She is one of only two women to be both the wife and mother of US presidents. The other is Abigail Adams, wife of John Adams, the second US president, and mother of John Quincy Adams, the sixth president.

Bush supported the cause of universal literacy and founded the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy as the first lady. Since leaving the White House, she has continued to advance this cause.—Xinhua



US average gas prices drop to three-year low in 2013, AAA says

WASHINGTON, 1 Jan — US gas prices were the lowest on average in three years in 2013 and would decline further next year, a leading automotive and travel service provider said on Tuesday.

US drivers paid an average of 3.49 US dollars per gallon for gas in 2013, the lowest level since 2010, according to American Automobile Association (AAA). That was significantly lower than last year's average of 3.60 dollars per gallon, which was the most expensive ever.

"It was a relief to see gas prices decline in 2013 following record-breaking pain at the pump in recent years," Jenny Robinson, Manager of Public and Government Affairs for AAA Mid-Atlantic, said in a statement.

AAA said 30 states in the US had an annual

Citizens present flowers to victims at a railway station in Volgograd, Russia, on 31 Dec, 2013.

On Sunday, a suicide bomber ripped a railway station in Volgograd, killing 17 people and injuring 45 others. Another bomb went off Monday morning in a trolley bus on the same city, leaving at least 15 dead and 28 others wounded.—XINHUA

average price below 3.50 dollars per gallon in 2013, with the cheapest price in the State of South Carolina at 3.24 dollars a gallon. The highest average price was 4.24 dollars per gallon in the State of Hawaii.

Gas prices would decline further in 2014 as domestic refineries continued to expand production capacity to take advantage of booming crude oil production, AAA said.

"Gas prices should average slightly less in 2014 if everything goes as expected, but most drivers may not even notice because the difference could be relatively small," Robinson added.

Today's national average price of gas is 3.32 dollars per gallon, marking the fourth consecutive year of record-breaking prices heading into the New Year, AAA said.—Xinhua

Kenyan authorities arrest serial poacher, recover elephant tusks

NAROK, (Kenya), 1 Jan — Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) authorities said on Tuesday they have a notorious suspected poacher in the world-famous Maasai Mara Game Reserve and recovered elephant tusks worth 2 million shillings (23,175 US dollars).

Trans Mara KWS Warden William Kiptoo said

his officers were carrying out an operation when they sighted three poachers who were armed with guns with two of them managing to escape at the Kawai area in Narok County.

Kiptoo said his officers arrested William Kinyamar at around 2 am local time on Tuesday after which they took him with the 10

kg elephant tusks in his possession to the Kilgoris police station.

"The arrest of the suspect is an achievement to us since he belongs to a dangerous cartel that is involved in poaching of wildlife in the Maasai Mara and we have launched a manhunt for his two accomplices," Kiptoo said.—Xinhua

ENTERTAINMENT

World usher in 2014 with fireworks, festivities



Fireworks explode in the skies above Kayawait palace hotel as people usher in the new year during a 2014 new year's count down party in Yangon, on 1 Jan, 2014.

REUTERS

NEW YORK, 1 Jan—From Sydney to Dubai, revellers welcomed 2014 with extravagant fireworks displays, while London prepared to celebrate by spraying clouds of fruit-flavoured mist and Chicago and San Francisco planned massive outdoor festivities.

In New York, crowds gathered in Times Square for the annual New Year's Eve street party. By midnight, some one million people were expected to be on hand for Miley Cyrus, Melissa Etheridge and hip-hop artists Macklemore & Ryan Lewis and the dropping of the 11,875-pound, crystal-encrusted ball marking the start of the new year.

"We've been living on granola bars and little bottles of water because if you move, you lose your spot," said Sheila Harshbarger, who travelled to New York from Indiana with her daughter and staked out ground next to a row of police barricades in the freezing cold more than 14 hours before midnight.

In outer space, NASA astronauts will help ring in the new year by sending greetings to the Times Square crowd.

Astronaut Mike Massimino will bring a message from crew members on board the *International Space Station* orbiting the globe in a video display from space visible to those waiting for the ball drop.

There will be no crystal ball for Brass-town, in the mountains of North Carolina. At midnight it will hold its 20th New Year's Eve "possum drop" — in which a caged opossum is displayed in a Plexiglas container for spectators.



Fireworks explode across a London skyline near the London Eye during New Year celebrations in London on 1 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

"If New York can drop a ball... then we can lower the opossum," organizers explained on their website.

The event got a last-minute go-ahead after a judge refused a plea by animal-rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals to stop the event.

Across the northern United States, partygoers braced for snow and freezing temperatures. Chicago, which could see a significant snowstorm amid its flurry of festivities, was offering free rides on trains and buses from 10 pm to 4 am to ensure revellers make it home safely.

In San Francisco, one of the last places in the world to see the clock strike midnight, some 200,000 people were expected to gather on the waterfront for a fireworks display



Fireworks explode over Sydney Harbor at midnight to usher in the new year in Sydney, on 1 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

illuminating the city's world-famous Golden Gate Bridge.

In other parts of the world, festivities were well under way.

At midnight in Sydney, Australia, a massive fireworks display lit up the sky around the city's famed Harbor Bridge and Opera House. New Year's organizers in Dubai were attempting to break the Guinness World Record for largest fireworks display.

In London, edible banana confetti and strawberry mist was set to rain from the sky as a fireworks display along the River Thames lights up Big Ben and other

landmarks.

Across the United States, 2014 will also usher in political changes and the official start of a slate of new laws. At midnight, New York City's next mayor, Bill de



A reveller (unseen) writes "2014" with sparklers ahead of New Year's Eve in front of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, on 30 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

Blasio, will be sworn in at a private ceremony at his home in Brooklyn, succeeding Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who is leaving office after 12 years.

Former President Bill Clinton will deliver the oath of office for de Blasio at a formal inauguration ceremony on Wednesday at City Hall.

Americans who have signed up for new health-care coverage under President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act are expected to begin receiving benefits on 1 January.

In Colorado, a new law will allow state residents to buy an ounce of marijuana at a time from specially regulated retailers. Possession, cultivation and private personal consumption of marijuana by adults has already been legal in Colorado for more than a year.

"It will be like people waiting in line for tickets to a Pink Floyd concert," said Justin Jones, 39, owner of Dank Colorado in Denver, who has run a medical marijuana shop for four years and now has a recreational pot license.

Reuters

Emma Watson to focus on university exams



Emma has been working on many projects.

NEW YORK, 1 Jan— film roles to focus on her Harry Potter star Emma Watson has turned down University where she will

be sitting her finals.

The 23-year-old actress is studying English at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, US, where she will be sitting her finals and needs to concentrate on her academic success.

"Emma is in demand with Hollywood directors but has so much to focus on with her studies, that she has had to pass for a few things — she simply can't do everything," a source said.

"It's tough but she believes it was the right thing." Watson was catapulted to the spotlight as school girl Hermione Granger in the film adaptations of Harry Potter where she starred alongside Daniel Radcliffe (Harry Potter) and Rupert Grint (Ron Weasley).

She and the other teenage stars were tutored on set for up to five hours a day,

and despite having to balance her filming schedule with academics the blonde beauty managed to achieve eight A plus and two A grades during her GCSE school examinations — which are taken by students aged 14-16 in secondary education across the United Kingdom.

Following her success as a young star she was cast in a number of other films. Last year she starred in the film adaptation of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, more recently she appeared in Sofia Coppola's *The Bling Ring* which is based on the true story of a gang of teenagers who burgled a number of homes in the Hollywood Hills.

Watson has also been working on 2014 release *Noah* alongside Russell Crowe and Anthony Hopkins.—PTI

Julia Roberts was asked to remove freckles

LONDON, 1 Jan —The 46-year old actress Julia Roberts says once a fussy director had asked her to remove her freckles for a movie role.

"One director wanted me to have two freckles taken off because he said it made my face look dirty," dailymail.co.uk quoted the August: Osage County star as saying.

However, the actress doesn't believe in fake beauty.

"I definitely think some of my older female peer group are deeply beautiful women. They have this thing that radiates from them. It's coming from this deep place of understanding who they are and what their purpose is. It creates a light," said Julia Roberts, who has three children - 9-year old Hazel and



Julia says she doesn't believe in fake beauty.

Phinnaeus and 6-year old Henry with husband Danny Moder.

The *Mirror, Mirror* star also said she looks at 'looking good' as an issue which is 'a cultural obsession'.

"I don't spend a lot of time in front of the mirror. I'm pretty efficient in terms of looking at myself and, to be honest, I don't think what you're talking about is a business demand — it's a cultural obsession," she added.—PTI

SPORTS

Rooney faces late test, Van Persie out for United

LONDON, 1 Jan — Manchester United will give a late fitness test to striker Wayne Rooney ahead of Wednesday's Premier League match against Tottenham Hotspur, manager David Moyes said.

Rooney missed the 1-0 win at Norwich City on Saturday due to a groin injury.

"We need to wait and see," Moyes told a news

conference on Tuesday. "He didn't train today so we'll assess him tomorrow and see how he is."

Striker Robin van Persie will miss the Spurs game as he continues his recovery from a thigh problem.

"Van Persie is not quite ready yet, but hopefully he's not too far away," Moyes said.

Champions United have won six matches in

a row in all competitions, climbing to sixth in the table at the halfway point of the season.

Moyes is expecting a tough game against Tottenham who are just one place below them and enjoyed their first win since Tim Sherwood was appointed manager against Stoke City on Sunday.

"Tottenham have always been difficult opponents no matter who the manager has been," Moyes said.

"They have a really good side, spend well and always try to reward the manager with the players required. Tottenham have either been in the Champions League or pushing for it and have always been a good, strong team."

The sides drew 2-2 at White Hart Lane at the start of December and Spurs won 3-2 at Old Trafford last season, their first win at United since 1989.—Reuters



Manchester United's Wayne Rooney celebrates scoring a goal against Cardiff City during their English Premier League soccer match at Cardiff City Stadium in Cardiff, Wales, on 24 Nov, 2013.—Reuters

Ozil, Ramsey, Giroud and Gibbs out for Arsenal

LONDON, 1 Jan — Arsenal will be without midfielders Mesut Ozil and Aaron Ramsey, defender Kieran Gibbs and striker Olivier Giroud for the home game with Cardiff City on Wednesday and have doubts over five other players.

Manager Arsene Wenger told reporters on Tuesday the Premier League leaders had yet to receive a specialist's report on Ozil's shoulder injury and that Ramsey would be out for three more weeks with a thigh strain.

The pair both missed the 1-0 league win at Newcastle United on Sunday.

Giroud, who scored the only goal at Newcastle, will miss out against Cardiff because of an ankle injury and left back Gibbs has a calf problem.

Wenger also said he was uncertain about the fitness of defenders Nacho Monreal and Thomas



Arsenal's Mesut Ozil (L) celebrates scoring his second goal against Norwich City with team-mate Aaron Ramsey during their English Premier League soccer match at the Emirates Stadium in London, on 19 Oct, 2013.

REUTERS

Vermaelen, midfielders Tomas Rosicky and Jack Wilshere and striker Theo Walcott. Arsenal go into the match with a one-point lead over Manchester City and Wenger said he was proud of the fact his side accumulated more points in 2013 than any other team in the league.

"It's not a trophy but it shows the consistency and

the trend for the team," he said. "If you can manage from 1 January to 31 December to have that trend it means we are going upwards. "We want to transfer that trend into 2014 and to have a great race for the Premier League title. In 2013 we have been relatively consistent and that makes the belief stronger."

Reuters

Ronaldinho voted South America's best

MONTEVIDEO, 1 Jan — Ronaldinho, who had a disappointing Club World Cup this month, has been elected South American footballer of the year in the annual poll conducted by the Uruguayan daily *El Pais*.

Ronaldinho, who helped Atletico Mineiro win the Libertadores Cup for the first time in July, finished ahead of fellow Brazilian Neymar, winner the previous two years who left Santos for Barcelona, with Argentina's Maxi Rodriguez of Newell's Old Boys third.

A World Cup winner with Brazil in 2002 but



Atletico Mineiro's Ronaldinho celebrates and dances after his goal against Raja Casablanca during their FIFA Club World Cup semi-final soccer match at Marrakech stadium on 18 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

unlikely to win a place in the team hosting next year's finals, Ronaldinho also won Europe's Ballon d'Or in 2005 and FIFA's World Player of the Year award in 2004 and 2005 when he was at Barcelona.

The top three coaches were all Argentine with Jose Pekerman winning the award for the second year in a row after steering Colombia to their first World Cup finals since 1998.

Chile coach Jorge Sampaoli was second and Gerardo Martino, who left Newell's for Barcelona in July, third.

Reuters



Tottenham Hotspur's Aaron Lennon (2nd L) celebrates his goal against Stoke City with Zeki Fryers (2nd R), Roberto Soldado (R) and Emmanuel Adebayor (L) during their English Premier League soccer match at White Hart Lane in London, on 29 Dec, 2013.—Reuters

Tottenham complain to FA about Stoke midfielder Adam

LONDON, 1 Jan — Tottenham Hotspur have written to the FA and asked them to take action against Stoke City's Charlie Adam, whose heavy challenge on Paulinho is likely to sideline the Brazil midfielder for at least a month, the club said on Tuesday.

The incident in Sunday's Premier League match was the fifth time that Scotland midfielder Adam had injured a Spurs player after two incidents involving Gareth Bale, and others involving Scott Parker and Jan Vertonghen.

He has also been sent off twice against Spurs, playing for both Liverpool and Stoke.

"We are not happy and we have contacted the FA,"

a Tottenham spokesman told Reuters.

Adam was booed by Spurs fans when he came on as a 50th-minute substitute for Stephen Ireland.

Twelve minutes later the Brazil international midfielder, who was playing a vital part in Spurs 3-0 victory, hobbled off after a crunching tackle from Adam near the halfway line. The incident went unpunished by the referee.

Spurs confirmed on their website (www.tottenhamhotspur.com) that Paulinho had an MRI scan on Monday and is likely to be out for at least four weeks with "significant ligament damage" to his right ankle.

Reuters

McIlroy rings in the New Year with Wozniacki engagement

SYDNEY, 1 Jan — Rory McIlroy and his tennis-playing girlfriend Caroline Wozniacki started the New Year with a bang on Wednesday by announcing their engagement on Twitter.

"Happy New Year everyone! I have a feeling it's going to be a great year!! My first victory of 2014 #shesaidyes!!," golfer McIlroy, who rang in the New Year with Wozniacki in Sydney, wrote.

The two former world number ones in their respective sports have been dating for more than two years and erroneous reports

their relationship was over last year was proposed by some as an explanation for McIlroy's drop in form.

Northern Irishman McIlroy, 24, had to wait until December to claim his first title of the season when he dramatically edged Adam Scott on the final hole to win the Australian Open.

Wozniacki, 23, pulled out of this week's Brisbane International with an injured right shoulder but is confident she will be able to play in this week's Sydney International in preparation for the 13-26 January Australian Open.—Reuters



Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland



WBC super featherweight champion Takashi Miura (R) attacks challenger Dante Jardon of Mexico during the ninth round of a title match at Ota Gymnasium in Tokyo on 31 Dec, 2013. Miura scored a ninth-round technical knockout in his second successful title defence.—KYODO NEWS

GENERAL



Female workers pose on 31 Dec, 2013, at a McDonald's restaurant in Banqiao, New Taipei City, where they served customers in cosplay outfits the same day. The restaurant is one of the fast food chain's 400 or so branches in Taipei participating in the cosplay promotion to count down to the New Year.—KYODO NEWS

China eyes more professional farmers amid rural reform

JINAN, 1 Jan — In fur coat and boots, Wang Cuifen is hardly your stereotypical Chinese farmer.

The 46-year-old grows wheat and corn like her rural peers, only her farm covers 133 hectares, having acquired land-use rights from other villagers in Gaomi, east China's Shandong Province.

"Unlike my parents, I view farming as a profession and a career," Wang said. She constantly travels to attend agricultural training courses.

Wang is one of a rising number of professional farmers who are more technologically astute and often rent land from other farmers.

A central rural work conference in December said China would train more such professional farmers as part of rural reform and agricultural modernization.

The initiative came as China struggled to improve agricultural efficiency amid a decrease of rural labours.

China introduced a household contract responsibility system in rural areas in the late 1970s, greatly emancipating productive forces in the countryside, but the farming pattern of the small-scale peasant economy and the meager income from croplands could hardly attract the younger generation of farmers.

As about 260 million former residents of the countryside have become migrant workers in cities, farmland is left unattended or in the care of the elderly. A survey shows that 32.5 percent of Chinese farmers are over 50 in 2006, while only 7.7 percent of youngsters from the countryside are willing to take up farming.

The ageing agricultural population has also slowed the uptake of new technology and equipment. The transfer rate of agricultural technological achievement during the 11th five-year period only stood at 40 percent, far lower than developed countries.—Xinhua

MYANMAR TV

(2-1-2014, Thursday)

6:00 am	2:40 pm
1. Paritta By Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw	17. Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance (Part-1)
6:25 am	3:00 pm
2. Physical Exercises	18. News
6:35 am	3:15 pm
3. Songs of Yester Years	19. Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance (Part-2)
6:40 am	4:00 pm
4. Documentary	20. News
7:00 am	4:15 pm
5. News/Weather Report	21. India Drama Series
7:25 am	5:00 pm
6. Documentary	22. News
7:45 am	5:15 pm
7. People Talks	23. 66 th Anniversary Independence Day Programme
8:00 am	5:30 pm
8. News/ International News	24. India Drama Series
8:25 am	6:00 pm
9. India Drama Series	25. News/Weather Report
9:00 am	6:20 pm
10. News/ International News	26. Documentary
9:25 am	6:40 pm
11. Documentary (World Heritage (Poland, Warsaw))	27. Approaching Science Discovery World
10:00 am	7:00 pm
12. News	28. News
10:15 am	7:20 pm
13. Documentary (ASEAN)	29. Teleplay
11:00 am	8:00 pm
14. Sing & Enjoy	30. News/ International News/ Weather Report
12:00 pm	8:35 pm
15. News/International News/Weather Report	31. Hit Songs of Stars
12:25 pm	9:00 pm
16. Myanmar Movies	32. News
	33. Clever
	34. India Drama Series

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

2-1-14 07:00 am ~ 3-1-14 07:00 am) MST

- * Local News
- * The Treasures in a Small Village
- * World News
- * Myanmar Masterclass "Contemporary Art"
- * Local News
- * Youth of The Future (Episode-4)
- * World News
- * Talented Musicians
- * Local News
- * "Myanmar Traditions and Culture" Tea
- * World News
- * Beach Souvenir Sea Shell Decorations
- * Local News
- * Monastery: Summer School
- * World News
- * Creative Costume of Kayah Nationals
- * Local News
- * A Visti To San-Taw-Shin Kyike-Hit-Yoe Pagoda
- * World News
- * Mogok: The Colourful Land of Rubies
- * Local News
- * A Visti to Htam Hsan Cave: A Miraculous Place
- * World News
- * Procelain and Glass
- * Local News
- * A Lucky Boy
- * World News
- * A Monk's Robe
- * Local News
- * Trend of Kachin Dress
- * World News
- * Maha Muni Pagoda

Rusty Serena wins tough opener in Brisbane

BRISBANE, 1 Jan — World number one Serena Williams looked rusty in her first competitive match of the season ahead of the Australian Open but battled through to beat Andrea Petkovic 6-4, 6-4 at the Brisbane International on Tuesday.

The number one seed won in 98 minutes to reach the quarter-finals but her 36 unforced errors and 55 percent serving accuracy showed how much Williams has to work on with the first grand slam of 2014 less than a fortnight away.

German Petkovic was exactly what the defending champion needed at this point in the season. Ranked 43rd in the world, but a top-10 player before injuries hampered her 2012

campaign, she ensured the five-times Australian Open winner had to fight for every point.

"It was an intense match, which was really good for me," Williams told reporters. "She's a good player. She's been in the top 10 before and she was on her way to being even better."

In their only previous match Petkovic took the American to three sets, on clay in Rome in 2010, and looked capable of doing so again after nullifying an early break and taking a 4-3 lead in the first set.

Williams held her serve to love and an easy missed volley into the net gifted the 17-times grand slam winner a break in the next, leading to Petkovic slamming her



Serena Williams of the US reacts during her WTA tennis championships final match against Li Na of China at Sinan Erdem Dome in Istanbul, on 27 Oct, 2013.—REUTERS

racket into thigh, floor and bag in turn.

In her first tourna-

ment match since the 2013 WTA Championships in October, Williams showed

frustration throughout at the extent of her erratic play.

There were serves fired in at over 190 kilometres and 35 crunching winners, but even more mistakes.

After errant serves she would often practice her ball toss or technique, reinforcing the sessions spent with her father, Richard, in Florida during the off-season.

"I'm a renowned perfectionist — I think I wrote the book on being perfect," Williams said. "I think it definitely helps me in a way."

"Also, it definitely holds me back at some moments. It's just important for me to let the part that helps me kind of fill up and then the part that holds me back, just to let that go."

Her most glaring error came in the sixth game of the second set when a looping backhand from Petkovic landed just over the net to set up an easy winner but Williams was fooled by prodigious backspin and wildly missed the ball with a forehand.

The crowd at Pat Rafter Arena roared with laughter and even Williams smiled, briefly.

Petkovic surrendered a 40-0 lead on serve in the fifth game of the second set, which the world number one ended up taking.

The German saved the first match point on her serve, but a forehand into the net in the following game gave Williams victory.

Reuters

Kayin nationals celebrate New Year Festival in Toungoo



Local Kayin nationals salute Kayin national flag at New Year Festival at ground of Toungoo BEHS No 5.

TOUNGGOO, 1 Jan—To mark the Kayin New Year Festival, Kayin traditional banners and the Kayin national flag were hoisted at a football ground of No. (5) Basic Education High School in Toungoo today. A total 4,000 people rang-

ing from Festival Organizing Committee members to Kachin ethnics from Toungoo attended the ceremony.

The chairman of the organizing committee and four Kayin nationals hoisted the flag at 6:30 a.m. and the attendees sang the flag song.

Among activities were a Kayin Literary talk, a paying respect to older people ceremony, awards outstanding students and contest for those wearing Kayin traditional costume. The Southern Command Commander, departmental officials, political parties and representatives from all religions attended a Kayin New Year commemorative dinner.—Kyemon-Kyawswa-Toungoo

Victorious Myanmar shooting team honoured in Yangon

YANGON, 1 Jan—A ceremony to honour victorious Myanmar shooters in the XXVII SEA Games took place at North Dagon International Shooting Range, here, yesterday evening with an address by U Htet Nyi, President of Myanmar Shooting Federation.

The president, Joint-Secretary U Than Soe of

MSF, Daw Yin Yin Myint, Director of Myanmar Bestin Co., Ltd and sub-committees' members presented certificates of honour and cash awards to the volunteer officers, liaison officers, referees, members of jury, coaches, managers and victorious Myanmar athletes who participated in the Shooting Event of the 27th SEA Games.—MNA

New Year celebrations held at Institute of Education (Sagaing)

SAGAING, 1 Jan—The education family of the Institute of Education (Sagaing) under the Education and Training Department of the Ministry of Education took part in a Happy New Year singing contest in the compound of the In-

stitute yesterday.

People packed in to mark the occasion and district health staff enjoyed New Year celebrations at a 200-bed hospital on the same day.

Kyemon: Myo Win-Sagaing District IPRD

First-phase completion of Kaladan River Project in Rakhine, Chin States expected in June

The first phase of the Kaladan River Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project being jointly implemented by Myanmar and India is expected to be completed in June 2014, according to the Essar Company, the project contractor.

India's Business Line news agency reported an official from Essar said the port-cum-inland waterway, construction of Sittway Port and dredging the Kaladan River course as a first phase are 70 per cent complete.

Essar has planned three phases for the project. In the first, the company

will construct the Sittway Deep Sea Port and Paletwa jetty and dredge a 158 kilometre-long section of water course from Sittway to Paletwa.

For the second phase, a design is being created for construction of a 109.2 kilometre road from Paletwa to the Myanmar-India border.

In the third phase, a 60 kilometre highway has been built between Laungtalai in Mizoram State in India and Chin State in Myanmar, according to a statement from the Mizoram State government.

Upon completion, the waterway and highway that will pass through Rakhine and Chin States in Myanmar will contribute not only to improvement of transport and trade in the nation but towards cementing relations with regional countries, Myanmar President U Thein Sein said at the 11th ASEAN-India Summit in New Delhi.

After implementing the entire project, India side will hand the completed facilities to Myanmar.

The governments of Myanmar and India



signed the agreement for implementation of Kaladan River Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project in 2008,

and the project is expected to complete in 2015. It is estimated the cost for the whole project may reach to

US\$214 million.

Trs: TTA

Myanma Alinn: 19-12-2013

Thai PM returns to Bangkok as protest showdown looms

BANGKOK, 1 Jan —Embattled Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra returned to the capital, Bangkok, on Wednesday for traditional New Year celebrations in a display of unity alongside military chiefs before a looming showdown with anti-government protesters.

Demonstrators who accuse Yingluck of being the puppet of her self-exiled brother, former premier Thaksin Shinawatra, have vowed to occupy government ministries and other key sites in Bangkok in their bid to scuttle a

snap February 2 election.

The protests since late November have pitted the brother and sister's political machine with its base among the rural poor in the north against Bangkok's conservative elite.

It has flared into sporadic violence, and army chief General Prayuth Chan-Ocha refused to rule out a coup after wild clashes outside an election registration center a week ago. Three people have been killed since Thursday.

Yingluck, who is caretaker leader after calling the snap poll in a bid to defuse

the crisis, had spent more than a week outside Bangkok shoring up support in the north but returned to the capital early on Wednesday.

She joined Prayuth and other senior military leaders in paying their respects to retired general Prem Tinsulanonda, the president of King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Privy Council. Prayuth's warning last week was a sobering reminder that the military has staged or attempted 18 coups in 81 years.

Reuters



Thai police officers gather at the Royal Plaza near the Government House in Bangkok on 30 December, 2013.—REUTERS