

Government eyes success in rural area development, poverty alleviation

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan — The handling by a designated ministry of the government's programme on rural area development and poverty alleviation, and an annual budget allocated for the projects have raised hopes that success will be achieved.

The drive for rural area development and poverty reduction which began two months after the new government took office have not yet met with success due to the lack of a ministry handling the finances of the projects, said Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham at a meeting of the Rural Area Development and Poverty

Alleviation Work Committee here today.

The programme has been taken up by the Ministry of Livestock Breeding, Fisheries and Rural Area Development and a yearly budget will be allocated for the programme.

The vice-president also stressed the need for cooperation among the ministries concerned to achieve the targets of livestock breeding and fish farming, socio-economic improvement for rural people, production of goods and energy sufficiency in rural areas.

One third of over 60,000 villages have seen

development in terms of power supply, he added.

He also stressed the importance of the private sector to help people living on a low income to earn higher wages to break the cycle of poverty.

During the meeting, Union ministers discussed plans for the development of livestock breeding and fish farming, small-scale production in rural areas, energy supply, education and health sectors.

Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Vice-Senior General Soe Win also reported on the participation of the defence forces in rural area develop-

ment and the poverty alleviation drive.

In his concluding remarks, Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham called on regional governments to build basic infrastructures such as transportation, power and water supply, education, health and loans that can directly benefit rural people.—MNA (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

**Vice-President
Dr Sai Mauk Kham
delivers speech at a
meeting of Rural Area
Development and
Poverty Alleviation
Work Committee.—MNA**



MPT improves network quality

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications under the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology has said it has improved its network facilities and decided to put into service a vendor and a GSM/WCDMA Mobile network.

Customers in the Nay Pyi Taw area and in Yangon Region have complained about bad network connections and quality.

The new devices have been installed in Nay Pyi Taw from November to December and in Yangon in December in order to improve voice quality and network connection.

Optimization works will be carried out until 31 January. The public has been asked to call 1876 to report further problems.

**Myanmar Posts and
Telecommunications
(Edited by Kerstin Winter)**

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Students in Shwebo receive K 60,000 for good conduct



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Hotels in demand as tourist arrival up

Myanmar businessmen are rushing to invest in hotel business as tourist arrivals are up in the Myanmar.

Myanmar has invested K257 billion in the hotels tourism sector in the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year and Myanmar businessmen are gearing up for doing investment in the hotels and tourism sector.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has arranged to establish 11 hotel zones for convenience of tourists at areas which attracted tourists most. The ministry has encouraged for arranging new destinations for tourists as part of efforts for boosting the hotels and tourism sector.

As hotel rooms are not enough to cope with

the increasing in number of tourists, the hotel sector has attracted businessmen.

Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has already given green light to the businessmen to establish new hotel zones in Yangon, Mandalay and Taninthayi regions and new hotels will be mushrooming soon.

*Myanmar Alinn (8-1-2014)
Trans: AMS
(Edited by Kerstin Winter)*

By: WAI YAN OO

PHOTO: TIN SOE (MYANMA ALINN)



Foreign Heads of State/Government send felicitations to President U Thein Sein

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—*The following are messages of felicitations from foreign Heads of State/Government sent to President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein, on the occasion of the 66th Anniversary Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.*

**From Tamin Bin Hamad Al Thani
Amir of the State of Qatar
Your Excellency,**

On the Anniversary of your country's Independence Day, the People of the State of Qatar join me extending to Your Excellency and through you to the people of Myanmar our sincere greetings and felicitations coupled with our best wishes for Your Excellency's personal well-beings and further development and progress of the people of Myanmar.

**From Norodom Sihamoni
King of Cambodia
Excellency,**

It gives me great honour to extend my warmest congratulations to Your Excellency, the Government and the people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Cambodia, on the auspicious occasion of the 66th Independence Day of Myanmar.

I wish Your Excellency happiness and good health, and the people of Myanmar continued peace and prosperity.

The Kingdom of Cambodia and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar enjoy excellent bilateral relations. I am confident that we will continue to cooperate closely to enhance these ties of friendship, solidarity and cooperation for the mutual benefit of our two countries and peoples.

Please accept, Mr President, the assurances of my highest consideration.

**Mr. Choummaly Sayason
President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
Your Excellency,**

On behalf of the People of the Lao People's Democratic Republic as well as on my own behalf, I wish to convey my warmest congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency and through Your Excellency to the entire people of the Republic of Union of Myanmar, on the

auspicious occasion of the 66th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I have a great pleasure to observe that the close cooperation between our two countries over the past decades has been further strengthened and I, and my spouse, hope that my state visit to the Republic of Union of Myanmar and attending the Opening Ceremony of the 27th SEA Games in December 2013 would be an important contribution to the history of relations between the two countries and I strongly believe that such friendly relation and close cooperation between our two countries will continue to further enhance in the years to come for dynamism of the ASEAN family, as well as the peace in the region and the world at large.

On the occasion of the New Year 2014, I would like to take this significant and auspicious opportunity to wish Your Excellency good health, happiness in leading the People of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar continue to step toward the new progress and prosperity.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

**From Mr Joachim Gauck
President of the Federal Republic of Germany
Excellency,**

On the occasion of the 66th anniversary of Myanmar's independence permit me to offer you and the people of Myanmar warmest congratulations on behalf of myself as well as my compatriots.

In Germany, the reforms underway in your country continue to be widely recognised and appreciated. I look forward to my forthcoming visit to Myanmar, marking the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries. Our meeting will provide a good opportunity to discuss not only German support for the process of reform in your country but also ways to broaden and intensify relations between Germany and Myanmar.

I am confident that the amicable relations between our two countries will continue to thrive in future—through mutual commitment and for the benefit of these our countries.

**From Abdullah Bin Nasser Bin Khalifa Al-Thani
Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of the State of Qatar
Excellency,**

It gives me pleasure on the anniversary of your country's Independence Day to express to you my cor-

dial greetings and congratulations coupled with my best wishes of good health and well-being to Your Excellency and continued progress and prosperity of the people of Myanmar.

**From Mr. Thongsing THAMMAVONG
Prime Minister of the Lao People's
Democratic Republic
Your Excellency,**

I have a great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to Your Excellency and people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the occasion of the 66th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

I am very pleased to note that the friendly relations and close cooperation between our two countries and people have continued to be further enhanced and strengthened for mutual benefit of our two countries thus contributing for development in the region and the world at large.

In the delightful and significant occasion, I would like to wish Your Excellency good health, happiness, in leading the People of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar advance towards the new progress and prosperity.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

**From Ms Yingluck Shinawatra
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand
Excellency,**

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government and the Thai people, I have the honour to extend to Your Excellency and the people of Myanmar our warmest congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

As a close friend and neighbour of Myanmar, the government and people of Thailand congratulate Myanmar on the continued success of the historic reform under Your Excellency's leadership as well as on the recent successful hosting of the SEA Games. I also wish to reassure Your Excellency of Thailand's fullest commitment and strong determination to continue to work closely with Myanmar to further strengthen and enhance our ties of friendship and cooperation for the progress and prosperity of our two countries and peoples.

Accept, Excellency, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

Students in Shwebo receive K 60,000 for good conduct



SHWEBO, 8 Jan—Students at the T.W.S Private School in Shwebo who have shown good conduct by returning a lost item to its owner were given a cash prize of K 60,000 on Monday. Three Grade-7 students, named as Mg Thant Han Htet, Mg Pyae Kyaw Win and Mg Htet Wai Aung, found a gold ring at a lake near the

compound of the School on 15 August. They handed the ring over to the school headmaster who found the rightful owner. According to school officials, the owner was so delighted with the ethics and moral of the students that he decided to thank them with money.

Kyemon-U Kyaw Zaw-572 (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

Mandalay Region Chief Justice inspects courts in Myingyan District

MYINGYAN, 8 Jan—Chief Justice of Mandalay Region High Court U Soe Thein together with Mandalay Region Law Officer U Myo Tint made inspection tours of township and district courts in Myingyan District, Central area of Myanmar, on 5 January.

During their tour of Natogyi, Taungtha and Kyaukpadaung townships,

the region chief justice left instructions for high-ranking officers and officials from township and district courts to follow rules and regulations and to be dutiful staff for the public. They also inspected land plots to build staff quarters in Myingyan District Court and Kyaukpadaung Township court.

Kyemon-434 (Edited by Darryl Gibson)

Four men, two women injured in North Okkalapa traffic accident

YANGON, 8 Jan—Four men and two women were injured in a traffic accident that occurred in Tatalinchate Ward, North Okkalapa Township here at about 6 pm yesterday. A car heading for North Okkalapa from Mingaladon driven by an 18-year old man collided with

two bicycles and a trishaw. Six people were rushed to the North Okkalapa General Hospital for medical treatment with the driver under interrogation at the Police Station for his reckless driving.

MMAL-035 (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

431 sets of uniform presented to auxiliary firemen in Dala Tsp

DALA, 8 Jan—A ceremony to present uniforms to servicemen of Auxiliary Fire Brigade was held at the town hall of Dala Township this morning. At the ceremony, Dala Township Administrator U Tun Tun Win presented 431 sets of uniforms to the deputy commanding officer

of the fire brigade on behalf of the firemen from 23 wards and 23 village-tracts of the township. The township administrator urged the firemen to improve their capacity joining hands with the ward/village administrators.

Kyemon-U Than Htay (Edited by Kerstin Winter)



WORLD

Japan, Spain vow to assist firms' expansion into Latin America

MADRID, 8 Jan — Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida and his Spanish counterpart Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo vowed on Tuesday to work together in helping firms from their respective countries expand into the vast Spanish-speaking market in Latin America, Japanese officials said.

At a meeting in Madrid, the two ministers also agreed to seek an early conclusion of current negotiations for a free trade pact between Japan and the European Union.

With regard to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's visit to the war-linked Yasukuni Shrine

in Tokyo late last month that angered Japan's Asian neighbours, Kishida stressed that through the visit, Abe expressed his "condolences" for all the war dead and vowed "never to wage a war," according to the officials. The press representative of Catherine Ashton, the European Union's top representative for foreign affairs and security policy, said in a statement after the visit that Abe's action is "not conducive to lowering tensions in the region or to improving relations with Japan's neighbours," especially China and South Korea.

In the talks, Kishida also explained to



Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida (L) and Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo hold hands before their talks in Madrid on 7 Jan, 2014.—Kyodo News

Garcia-Margallo the Abe government's security policy, including the recently adopted national security strategy, noting that ties with Europe and Spain are important in pursuing the policy, according to the officials.

The Spanish minister responded that he understood Japan's undertakings,

they added.

Kishida is visiting Spain for two days from Tuesday ahead of his visit to France, where he and his defense colleague Itsunori Onodera are to meet with their French counterparts for the first so-called "two-plus-two" security talks between Tokyo and Paris on Thursday.—Kyodo News

India targets American expatriate club as diplomatic row escalates

NEW DELHI, 8 Jan — India has told the United States it cannot permit non-diplomats to visit a club at its Delhi Embassy, escalating a row over the arrest of an Indian diplomat in New York.

Hundreds of expatriate Americans use the American Community Support Association club, which has a bar, swimming pool, restaurant and a beauty parlor within the embassy premises. The club has been in existence for decades.

The embassy must cease all commercial activities benefiting non-diplomatic staff on its premises by 16 January, a government source with direct knowledge of the dispute told *Reuters*. India is furious at the 12 December arrest, handcuffing and strip search of its deputy consul in New York, Devyani Khobragade, who prosecutors accuse of underpaying her nanny and lying on a visa application.

Still festering nearly a month on, the row has started to affect the wider

relationship between the world's two largest democracies, with one high-level visit already postponed and a visit scheduled for next week by US Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz now looking doubtful. India has already taken a number of retaliatory measures and is now stepping up the pressure on Washington ahead of a court appearance by the diplomat due on 13 January.

The latest move is aimed at closing the embassy's social club to non-diplomats. India says the facilities are tax free because they are located in the embassy grounds.

"Basically the thing is that the provision of such facilities to non-diplomats and not paying taxes is clearly not in accordance with the Vienna convention," the government source with knowledge of the dispute told *Reuters*.

"You can't have these facilities inside and not pay taxes and allow non-diplomats," the source said.

Reuters



A private security guard stands outside the US Embassy in New Delhi on 18 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

US military helicopter crashes in Britain, munitions across site

LONDON, 8 Jan — British police said on Wednesday they would be working with the US Air Force and others to find out why a US military helicopter crashed on the coast of eastern England, killing all four crew on board. Wreckage included munitions was spread over a wide area of the crash site in difficult terrain.

The helicopter, a Pave Hawk assigned to the 48th Fighter Wing based at RAF Lakenheath air base, was performing a low-level training mission along the Norfolk coast when it went down in marshland on



A road sign is seen for the village of Cley in Norfolk, eastern England on 8 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

Tuesday evening.

The cause of the crash, which occurred in a nature reserve near the village of Cley next the Sea, was not

known. The area is about 130 miles northeast of London. "We will be working with our partners at the Ministry of Defence,

Air Accident Investigation Branch and US Air Force to gather all evidence from the scene and then recover the aircraft," said Chief Superintendent Bob Scully of Norfolk Constabulary, the local police force.

"This is difficult terrain with marshland and tides coupled with wreckage containing munitions covering a large area," he said in a statement.

A 400-metre (quarter mile) area around the crash site remained cordoned off to preserve public safety. No one on the ground was thought to have been hurt, authorities said.—*Reuters*

United States sending more troops and tanks to South Korea

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan — The United States said on Tuesday it will send 800 more soldiers and about 40 Abrams main battle tanks and other armoured vehicles to South Korea next month as part of a military rebalance to East Asia after more than a decade of war in Afghanistan and Iraq. The battalion of troops and M1A2 tanks and about 40 Bradley fighting vehicles from the 1st US Cavalry Division based at Fort Hood, Texas, will begin a nine-month deployment in South Korea on 1 February. A Pentagon spokesman said the personnel would remain for nine months but on departing would leave their equipment behind to be used by follow-



US Army soldiers and its M2A2 Bradley fighting vehicles take part in the US-South Korea joint military exercise against possible attacks by North Korea, at a shooting range near the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas in Paju, about 45 km (28 miles) north of Seoul, on 8 June, 2011.—REUTERS

on rotations of US forces.

"This addition of forces to Korea is part of the rebalance to the Pacific. It's been long planned and is

part of our enduring commitment to security on the Korean peninsula," Army Colonel Steve Warren said.

Reuters

National reconciliation to benefit Palestinians in ongoing peace talks

GAZA, 8 Jan — As Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas 'Fatah Party and Hamas in Gaza recently made positive statements on achieving national reconciliation, analysts say ending the internal split serves the Palestinian interests in the ongoing peace talks with Israel.

In a surprising move, Ismail Haneya, the Prime Minister of the Hamas authority, announced on Monday a series of measures to pave the way for the reconciliation.

Analysts see Haneya's measures as a direct result

of the deep political and financial crisis facing Hamas in the aftermath of the ouster of Egypt's Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July, 2013.

Since Hamas' violent takeover of the Gaza Strip in June 2007, the Palestinians in the coastal enclave have been subjected to a tight Israeli blockade and a closure of the crossing points, which caused a high rate of poverty, unemployment and a severe shortage of fuel and electricity.

"Ending division and achieving national reconciliation would bring Gaza

and the West Bank back to unity, then all the hard living conditions and the restrictions imposed on the movement of goods and individuals will be more likely lifted," said Hani al-Basoo, a Gaza-based political analyst.

Leaders of Fatah and Hamas had signed several reconciliation agreements in 2011 and 2012. However, disagreements on issues like forming a transitional unity government and setting up a date for elections put off the implementation.

Xinhua

S Korea calls for “sincere” actions over regional history issues

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan — The South Korean foreign minister called for “sincere” actions Tuesday to defuse tensions over war-time history in Northeast Asia, in an apparent bid to press Japanese leaders to make efforts for that end.

Yun Byung Se told a joint Press conference with US Secretary of State John

Kerry after their talks in Washington that the two foreign ministers recognized growing uncertainty pervading Northeast Asia in recent times.

Yun did not go into specifics but said, “I pointed out that historical issues stand in the way of reconciliation and cooperation in this region and I

emphasized the need for sincere actions.” The South Korean and US foreign ministers “agreed to strengthen our efforts to alleviate tension and promote peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia,” Yun said.

Yun and Kerry also repeated their call on North Korea to abandon its nuclear programmes. They reaf-

firmed they “will not accept North Korea as a nuclear state nor as a nuclear-armed state, and nor will the international community abide by that,” according to Kerry. Abe said he made the pilgrimage to renew his resolve to create a peaceful world and will make efforts to have Japan’s neighbours understand his act. —Kyodo News



South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung Se (L) and US Secretary of State John Kerry hold a joint Press conference after their talks in Washington on 7 Jan, 2014. — KYODO NEWS

Over 8,000 DRC refugees enter Uganda

KAMPALA, 8 Jan — More than 8,000 Congolese have so far crossed into Uganda following rebel attacks in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), an update report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office said here on Tuesday.

The fleeing of the Congolese is attributed to a 25 December attack by a Ugandan rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in areas of Kamango and Kikingi in the eastern DRC. There was subsequent fighting involving the Congolese army and UN intervention brigade.

The ADF has bases in the eastern DRC and in the recent past it has launched attacks on civilian populations. “Most of the refugees are staying in the community while some 2, 600 are registered at Bubukwanga transit center in Bundibugyo District,” said the report. The transit site was opened in mid-July to accommodate the initial influx from similar fighting in and around Kamango that began on 11 July, 2013.

Xinhua



People walk on a street in Washington, the United States, on 7 Jan, 2014. Blast of polar air gripped the Midwest and pushed toward the East and South on Monday. —XINHUA

Lebanon officially invited to Geneva II conference

BEIRUT, 8 Jan — Lebanon received on Tuesday an invitation to attend the Geneva II peace talks on the Syrian crisis slated for 22 Jan, Lebanon’s official National News Agency reported.

Lebanese caretaker Foreign Minister Adnan Mansour received on Tuesday an invitation from the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to attend the Geneva II peace talks later this month.

After recurrent delays, the peace talks were finally scheduled to take place on 22 January in Switzerland’s Montreux and will be

presided by Ban.

On Monday, Ban began dispatching invitations for the Geneva II peace conference, calling it “a unique opportunity for ending the violence” in Syria.

Lebanon hosts around one million Syrian refugees and has on separate occasions announced its support for a political solution to the Syrian crisis.

The Syrian opposition has not decided whether or not to attend the conference, while the United States and Russia are engaged in negotiations over the attendance of Iran.

Xinhua

US fears grow about Iraq, but response remains limited

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan — The Obama administration is considering expanding its support to Iraqi forces as they fight off a renewed al-Qaeda threat, but Washington’s ability to significantly increase security assistance to Baghdad will remain limited. US officials say they are in discussions with the Iraqi government about training its elite forces in a third country, which would allow the United States to provide one modest measure of new assistance against militants in the absence of a troop deal that allows US soldiers to operate within Iraq.

No further details were immediately available about where that might take place or how many troops it might involve. Reluctance to further empower Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki or

put American boots on the ground constrains US support for Iraq as it battles militants from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, an al-Qaeda affiliate, in Anbar Province, and seeks to reverse a striking surge in violence across the country in the last year.

The United States is sending missiles, surveillance aircraft and other gear that may help Iraqi forces rebuff al-Qaeda in the western province, a Sunni Muslim stronghold. But Washington also wants Maliki, a Shi’ite, to do more to reach out to minority Kurds and Sunnis who accuse him of fanning sectarian tensions.

The conflict in Anbar is the latest in a string of events pitting Maliki against Iraqi Sunnis, many of whom resent the Shi’ite domination that has

followed the US-led ouster of Sunni leader Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Colin Kahl, a former senior Pentagon official specializing in the Middle East, said the US military’s ability to conduct overt activities in Iraq was extremely limited, but that the Obama administration was likely providing the Iraqi government with intelligence to help them target al-Qaeda.

“As we do so, we have to be mindful that we are not empowering Maliki’s bad behavior, and we need to be careful not to do anything that makes it look like we are taking sides in a sectarian fight,” Kahl said.

Beyond such modest support, and despite growing US fears that the war in Syria is fuelling a regional al-Qaeda comeback, US officials say their hands are largely tied in Iraq.

Secretary of State John Kerry made clear last weekend the Obama administration has no appetite for sending US troops back.

“This is a fight that belongs to the Iraqis,” he said. “We’re not contemplating putting boots on the ground. This is their fight, but we’re going to help them in their fight.”

Reuters



Iraqi soldiers stand guard at a checkpoint in Ein Tamarm, a town some 40 km (25 miles) west of Kerbala, on 7 Jan, 2014. — REUTERS

Egypt’s Mursi in court for second time

CAIRO, 8 Jan — Former Egyptian President Mohamed Mursi arrived in court on Wednesday for the second session of his trial on charges of inciting the killing of protesters during his time as head of state, state media reported.

The charges relate to violence outside the presidential palace in December, 2012, during protests ignited by a presidential decree that expanded Mursi’s powers. The army deposed



Mohamed Mursi

the Muslim Brotherhood politician on 3 July following mass protests against his rule.

Mursi was last month

ordered to stand trial in two further cases. The new charges include conspiring with the Palestinian group Hamas, Lebanon’s Hezbollah and the Shi’ite Islamist government of Iran against Egypt, and involvement in a terrorist plot related to his escape from prison in 2011.

Fourteen other Islamist leaders are standing trial with Mursi in the case being heard on Wednesday.

Reuters

No of welfare recipients in Japan hits record high

TOKYO, 8 Jan — The number of recipients of welfare in Japan reached a record 2,164,338 as of last October, up 4,530 from the previous month, with increasing numbers of elderly depending on assistance, the welfare ministry said on Wednesday.

The number of households receiving welfare was also the highest on record at 1,594,729, according to the

Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry.

An increased number of elderly are relying on welfare because they receive little or no pension, a ministry official said.

The rate of increase in recipients has slowed, however, since the rapid jump following the 2008 financial crisis, the official added. Households composed of at least one person aged

65 or older made up 45 percent of the total households on welfare at 719,398, up 2,399 from September.

The government is set to revise down the baseline payment for essentials such as food and utilities by 0.4 percent in April, having judged that the consumption tax hike planned for that month will be offset by lower overall living costs.

Kyodo News

WORLD

Former British foreign secretary “optimistic” about Iran nuclear deal

TEHERAN, 8 Jan — Former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said on Tuesday that he is “optimistic” about the implementation of an interim nuclear deal signed between Iran and six major world powers last November, Press TV reported.

In a meeting with the head of Iran-Britain Parliamentary Friendship Group, Abbas-Ali Mansouri-Arani, in the Iranian capital of Teheran on Tuesday, Straw

said Iran has the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Iran and the P5+1 group — including Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States plus Germany, struck the nuclear agreement in Geneva on 24 November, 2013, under which Iran agreed to freeze part of its controversial nuclear programme in return for the lift of some international and western sanctions.

Straw said despite

the ups and downs in Iran-Britain ties, both sides seek the improvement of relations in line with mutual interests, according to the report. The Iran-Britain Parliamentary Friendship Group has always called for the expansion of bilateral relations and opposed extremist views regarding Iran’s ties with the West, Straw was quoted as saying. Mansouri-Arani, for his part, said “The Islamic Republic of Iran has

always carried out its nuclear activities based on the NPT (Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty) regulations and, like other signatories to the treaty, Teheran calls for its absolute and legal rights,” the Iranian lawmaker added.

Last week, Iran and the P5+1 group held the third round of expert-level meeting in Geneva to prepare the grounds for implementation of the nuclear deal, however, the Iranian side announced



Former British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw

that although most part of the agreement is prepared for the implementation, a few issues still remain for further discussions. Straw, who arrived in Teheran on

Tuesday at the head of a four-member parliamentary delegation, is scheduled to meet Iran’s foreign minister and some influential Iranian lawmakers. —Xinhua



Image provided by Presidency of Chile shows Chilean President Sebastian Pinera (R) talking with Chile’s president-elect Michelle Bachelet during a private meeting at Palacio de la Moneda, in Santiago, capital of Chile, on 7 Jan, 2014.

XINHUA

International drug cartels targeting elderly carriers

WELLINGTON, 8 Jan — International drug smuggling gangs are targeting elderly travellers, New Zealand Customs officers warned on Wednesday after a 72-year-old US citizen was charged with importing millions of dollars of methamphetamine.

The US man appeared in an Auckland court on Wednesday charged with importing 6.2 kg of methamphetamine with a street value of 3 million to 6 million NZ dollars (2.49 million to 4.98 million US dollars) and was remanded in custody until March.

The man arrived in Auckland from Bangkok on 28 December, and was arrested after customs officers searched his baggage and found the drugs concealed in the lining of his suitcase.

The case drew similarities with two separate arrests of US nationals, aged 70 and 55, for importing methamphetamine

into Australia last week, said customs manager investigations Maurice O’Brien.

Criminal syndicates appeared to be targeting older people to carry significant amounts of drugs across borders, O’Brien said in a statement.

“It’s important the public is aware that such criminal operations exist and people who, either knowingly or unknowingly, carry these drugs end up bearing the full brunt of the law,” he said.

A 68-year-old Auckland man was arrested in November last year after he arrived into New Zealand from Papua New Guinea carrying 1.5 kg of methamphetamine concealed inside two bags he had been given.

The maximum penalty for importing class A controlled drugs into New Zealand is life imprisonment.

Xinhua

Bangladesh election unrest squeezes key garment sector

DHAKA, 8 Jan — On the outskirts of Dhaka, Babylon Garments has shortened work shifts to eight hours from the usual 10 and plans to shutter production lines as months of election-related violence disrupts transport and prompts global retailers to curb orders.

The company, which supplies shirts, trousers and other apparel for global retailers including Wal-Mart Inc, is one of the biggest players in Bangladesh’s \$22 billion garment industry that has seen orders cut nearly in half in the last three months — the worst drop in two decades, according to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA).

“December is usually a season when we are packed with orders to a point where we can’t take any more but look at this year — it’s a completely different story,” said Muhammad Saiful Hoque, assistant general manager of Babylon

Garments, as workers sewed checked shirts for British-based Tesco Plc.

Industry officials say the unrest in the run-up to Sunday’s disputed election has been worse for business than the April collapse of Rana Plaza, an illegally built factory in which more than 1,100 workers were killed in a disaster that prompted calls for safer working conditions and more accountability on the part of the global retailers that buy Bangladesh’s clothing exports.

The disruption to Bangladesh’s garment industry, the world’s second biggest after China, as well as a shutdown by striking garment workers in Cambodia, another big supplier, means global retailers face a supply squeeze.

Garment orders are typically placed at least three months in advance.

“The impact won’t be immediately felt but the delay in shipping finished orders will hurt the

global retail market around June,” said Shahidullah Azim, vice president of the BGMEA, which says up to \$1 billion in orders are at risk in the coming weeks if the situation does not improve.

A Wal-Mart spokesman said the country sources from more than 70 countries, which allows it to plan for any potential supply chain interruptions.

He said he was not aware of any issues related to developments in Bangladesh and Cambodia.

Michael J Silverstein, a senior partner with the Boston Consulting Group based in Chicago, said Bangladesh is a critical supplier of clothing for world markets and too large to replace.

“The majority of the customers believe Bangladesh will not go dark, for example stop shipping,” he said. “They do believe there will be delays and a need for alternative supplies.”

Reuters

Ex-health minister Masuzoe mulls running in Tokyo gubernatorial race

TOKYO, 8 Jan — Former health minister Yoichi Masuzoe told reporters on Wednesday that he is considering running in the Tokyo gubernatorial election next month as an independent candidate.

Masuzoe, 65, is expected to hold a Press conference soon to declare his candidacy and campaign pledges.

The former House of Councillors member indicated he will leave the New Renaissance Party, a small opposition party to which

he belongs.

The election will be held on 9 February, to choose the successor to Naoki Inose, who resigned last month over his receipt of 50 million yen from scandal-tainted hospital chain Tokushukai.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party intends to support Masuzoe, and some LDP members representing Tokyo plan to enter talks on policy coordination with him soon.

The Democratic Party of Japan is also interested

in supporting Masuzoe, known as an expert on international affairs.

“We believe Masuzoe is the right candidate to receive our support,” said Jin Matsubara, Diet affairs chief of the main opposition party.

Former Air Self-Defence Force chief Toshio Tamogami and lawyer Kenji Utsunomiya, a former head of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations, are also expected to run in the gubernatorial election.

Kyodo News

Airstrike kills 25 militants in Ramadi

BEIJING, 8 Jan — Clashes continue to rage in Iraq’s Sunni-dominated Anbar Province, as government troops press ahead with their siege of two cities overrun by an al-Qaeda-linked group. The Iraqi Defence Ministry says, an airstrike has killed 25 fighters from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. The Iraqi air force struck the operations centre for the terror network in the city of Ramadi. Security forces backed by tribal fighters have now regained control in the center of Anbar’s provincial capital, and are also battling for control of Fallujah.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki earlier urged Fallujah residents to expel the militants to avoid an all-out battle in the besieged city. The militants — who are also involved in the fighting in neighbouring Syria — have held the two cities since last Wednesday. —Xinhua



Former Japanese health minister Yoichi Masuzoe answers reporters’ questions in Tokyo on 8 Jan, 2014. He said he is considering running in the Tokyo gubernatorial election the following month as an independent candidate.

KYODO NEWS

BUSINESS & HEALTH

Eight million lives saved since US alarm on smoking 50 years ago

NEW YORK, 8 Jan — More than half of American men and over a third of women were smokers on 11 January, 1964, when Dr Luther Terry delivered the first Surgeon General's Report on Smoking and Health outlining the links between tobacco use, lung cancer and death.

Fifty years later, smoking rates have been cut by about half, and a new study estimates that 8 million Americans have been saved from premature smoking-related deaths.

"You look back in history to 1964, and in reality

the world was a very different place when it came to tobacco use and smoking," said Rear Admiral Boris Lushniak, the acting US Surgeon General.

A collection of reports released online on Tuesday in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* highlights how public-health efforts, from cigarette taxes to advertising limits, have helped curtail smoking rates. The reports also identify new trouble spots, including communities whose members have not been able to quit in significant numbers.



A man sends text messages on his mobile phone as he smokes a cigarette outside the court building in San Diego, California in this 9 Dec, 2013 file photo.

REUTERS

Lushniak believes the next step should be a resolve to introduce an end-game within the next 50 years. That concept will be part of an upcoming Surgeon General's report on 16 January celebrating the anniversary of the original, he said. "The next stage really needs to be a resolution to move ahead to this smoke-free generation concept," Lushniak said.

One paper estimates that about 17.7 million deaths from 1964 to 2012 were related to smoking. Without any of the tobacco control measures introduced in that period, an additional 8 million people would have died, according to Theodore Holford of the Yale School of Public Health in New Haven, Connecticut, and colleagues.

Reuters

Asia gets some relief as Wall Street, Europe rally

SYDNEY, 8 Jan — Asian markets got a hand up on Wednesday after strong trade data boosted expectations for US growth while a lessening of sovereign strains in Europe lifted stocks there to the highest since 2008.

Japan's Nikkei led the way with a rise of 1.1 percent, though some other regional markets remain out of favour as funds flock to assets in the western world.

was justified by fundamentals. Minutes of the Fed's December meeting are due later on Wednesday and markets will be hoping for a clear commitment to keeping rates low for a long time to come.

Underlining the brighter mood were reports that the International Monetary Fund will raise its forecast for global growth in about three weeks, breaking a depressingly-long run of



People stand near a monitor displaying Japan's Nikkei average after a ceremony marking the end of trading in 2013 at the Tokyo Stock Exchange (TSE) in Tokyo on 30 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

The dollar climbed against the yen after the US trade deficit shrank to its lowest in four years, thanks mainly to a renaissance in energy production, prompting analysts to revise up forecasts for economic growth.

Barclays, for one, doubled its estimate for last quarter and now predicts growth of 3 percent annualised.

The figures offered investors reassurance that the Federal Reserve's decision to taper its asset buying

downgrades.

All of which helped MSCI's all-country world stock index hit its highest since mid-2008. Both the Dow and the S&P 500 rose 0.6 percent.

That was enough to give most Asian markets a break from recent selling pressure. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan added 0.44 percent.

Stocks in Shanghai, Singapore and Taiwan all made ground.

Reuters

Japan banks eye connecting ATM systems with lenders in Asia

TOKYO, 8 Jan — Major Japanese banks are considering connecting their automated teller machine systems with about 30 financial institutions in South Korea and Thailand from fiscal 2015, industry sources said on Wednesday.

The banks and NTT Data Corp, which manages ATM data for Japanese banks, are also planning to expand the scheme to other Asian economies, the sources said. The move is aimed at extending improved financial services to visitors from Asia, as well

as Japanese visitors to the region, especially in the run-up to the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020.

Integration of the ATM systems would allow foreign visitors to withdraw Japanese yen using cash cards issued by foreign banks, a transaction that will be cheaper than cash withdrawals using credit cards. Similarly, Japanese nationals travelling in other Asian economies would be able to withdraw local currencies using cash cards issued in Japan.

Kyodo News

Lose weight with skin cream? Fat chance, says US govt

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan — Americans putting their faith in miracle cures to shed unwanted pounds are likely to be disappointed, US regulators said on Tuesday in announcing settlements with four firms accused of falsely advertising weight-loss products such as skin creams.

The Federal Trade Commission won agreements from L'Occitane, Inc.; Sensa Products LLC; HCG Diet Direct LLC; and LeanSpa LLC.

The settlements required them to drop unsubstantiated claims from their ads and, in some cases,

return money to consumers.

The FTC also urged media outlets to scrutinize advertisements more carefully to avoid publishing potentially misleading ads, noting that some of the advertisements for the products — from food supplements to skin creams — appeared in mainstream publications. The commission provided guidance for publishers and broadcasters on how to screen weight-loss claims in advertisements.

The FTC's action, codenamed "Operation Failed Resolution," was timed to coincide with the

vows to lose weight so often made, and quickly abandoned, in January.

Jessica Rich, Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, warned that the only slim element of the products is their chance of success.

"Resolutions to lose weight are easy to make but hard to keep. And the chances of being successful just by sprinkling something on your food, rubbing cream on your thighs, or using a supplement are slim to none," Rich said.

One agreement was with Sensa, which said that its powder sprinkled on

food would cause weight loss and peddled it on television infomercials, magazine advertisements and online ads.

The company said the powder "is clinically proven to cause substantial weight loss without dieting or exercise, averaging 30 pounds in six months," the FTC said in a court filing.

In contrast, a study of the product by a Sensa company executive found that users lost an average of 5.6 pounds over six months, the FTC said in its court filing.

Reuters

Goldman, JPMorgan and peers must rethink pay to meet EU cap



People walk inside JP Morgan headquarters in New York, on 25 Oct, 2013.—REUTERS

LONDON, 8 Jan — Investment bankers working in London for many top US and European groups face a major overhaul of their pay structure, as their recent bonuses have far exceeded new EU rules which will curb payouts to be made this time next year.

JPMorgan (JPM.N), Goldman Sachs (GS.N), Bank of America (BAC.N), Barclays (BARC.L) and Credit Suisse (CSGN.VX) paid bonuses to leading staff which ranged from 3.3 to 5.4 times their fixed pay for 2012, according to data disclosed by the banks and

Reuters calculations.

Big changes will therefore have to be made to meet the European Union rules which cap bonuses at the same level as fixed pay, or double if the bank's shareholders approve.

Bankers' bonuses remain a hot topic among politicians and the public. Many blame their high levels for encouraging reckless risk-taking that led to the 2008/09 financial crisis and a series of mis-selling and misconduct scandals. Banks usually pay staff bonuses in January or February based on their performance the previous year. So while the EU curbs came into force this month, they will be applied first to bonuses for 2014 to be handed out early next year.

Major banks continued to reward their top risk-taking staff heavily on performance in bonuses for 2012, their regulatory disclosures have showed in the last few weeks.

Goldman Sachs paid its top 115 UK staff an average of \$4.67 million (2.84 million pounds) each for 2012, an increase of three-quarters from the average for 2011 and the highest of the major banks. The bank's earnings and revenues jumped in 2012 from 2011. About \$350 million of Goldman's total salary bill for these bankers was paid in bonuses, or 5.2 times what it gave in fixed pay — jumping from a ratio of 2.2 times in 2011 — according to Reuters calculations.—Reuters

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

SpaceX Falcon rocket lifts off with Thaicom digital TV satellite

CAPE CANAVERAL, (Florida), 8 Jan — A Space Exploration Technologies' Falcon 9 rocket blasted off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida on Monday to put a commercial communications spacecraft into orbit for Thai satellite operator Thaicom.

The 224-foot-tall rocket lifted off its sea-side launch pad at 5:06 pm (2206 GMT), soaring through overcast skies as it headed toward the satellite's drop-off point more than 55,000 miles above Earth, or about one-quarter of the way to the moon.

From that position, the 6,649-pound (3,016 kg) Thaicom 6 satellite is expected to lower itself to about 22,300 miles above Earth and shift the angle of its orbit so that it can be permanently stationed to beam high-definition and digital television services to customers in Thailand and surrounding areas.

The satellite, built by Virginia-based Orbital Sciences Corp, also is equipped to provide other communications services for customers in Southeast Asia and Africa, including Madagascar, Thaicom's

website shows.

Including launch services and insurance, the Thaicom 6 satellite cost about \$160 million, and so far, about two-thirds of the satellite's capacity has been sold, according to Thaicom.

Monday's launch was the second in just over a month for Space Exploration Technologies, also known as SpaceX. In December, the California-based firm, owned and operated by technology entrepreneur Elon Musk, who is also chief executive of electric car maker Tesla Motors, launched its first com-



A Falcon 9 rocket carrying a small science satellite for Canada is seen as it is launched from a newly refurbished launch pad in Vandenberg Air Force Station on this 29 Sept, 2013 file photo.— REUTERS

mercial communications satellite, staking a claim in a global satellite launch industry. The industry is worth about \$6.5 billion a year, a study by the Satellite Industry Association

trade group shows.

So far, privately owned SpaceX has sold about 50 commercial launches worth about \$4 billion. About 25 percent of the flights are for NASA, which hired

SpaceX, along with Orbital Sciences, to fly cargo to the International Space Station, a \$100 billion research complex that flies about 250 miles above Earth.

Reuters

More than 1 billion Android devices to ship in 2014



An Android smartphone displays the Google website in this picture illustration in Seoul.

REUTERS

LONDON, 8 Jan — The number of smartphones and tablet computers shipped with Google's Android operating system will break the 1 billion barrier this year, research group Gartner said on Tuesday.

Android, which is installed on products made by Samsung, HTC, Sony and

many other manufacturers, is forecast to reach 1.1 billion users in 2014, up 26 percent on last year, with the strongest demand in emerging markets.

Apple's iOS and Mac OS operating systems are expected to be in 344 million new iPhones, iPads and Macs this year, Gartner

added, representing a 28 percent jump on the number of devices shipped in 2013.

"There is no doubt that there is a volume-versus-value equation, with Android users purchasing lower-cost devices compared to Apple users," Gartner analyst Annette Zimmerman said in a statement on Tuesday.

Microsoft's Windows operating system, which dominates the PC and notebook segments, is forecast to be in 360 million new devices, up from 328 million in 2013.

Growth in the PC and notebook segment has been hit by the popularity of tablet computers, sales of which are forecast to increase by 47 percent this year to 263 million, according to Gartner.

Reuters

Nintendo shares surge as China eases gaming console ban

TOKYO, 8 Jan — Shares in Nintendo Co Ltd jumped as much as 7.5 percent to a two and a half-year high on Wednesday after China temporarily lifted a 14-year-old ban on selling video game consoles.

The move could pave the way for Nintendo, Sony Corp and Microsoft Corp to enter the world's third-largest video game market in terms of revenue.

"Nintendo hasn't had a catalyst for a long time, so if it can revive (via) the Chinese consumer market then it would be positive," a Tokyo-based trader said.

Still, console makers are likely to face an uphill battle in a country where a whole generation has grown up without a Wii, PlayStation or Xbox. The most popular video games in China are often free to play with gamers only paying for add-ons such as weapons or extra lives.

Price may also be a problem for console makers looking to expand in China. More than 70 percent of Chinese gamers earn less than 4,000 yuan (\$660) a month, according to Hong Kong-based brokerage CLSA, not much more than



People ride an escalator past Nintendo Co advertisements at an electronics retail store in Tokyo on 23 April, 2013.— REUTERS

the price of a new Xbox One in the United States.

Another possible hurdle is the availability of illegal consoles, which are modified to run pirated games.

A Nintendo spokesman said on Tuesday the company was still unsure

Sony to distribute games for PlayStation 4 via cloud computing

Sony Corp President Kazuo Hirai delivers a keynote address during the International CES, a global consumer electronics and consumer technology tradeshow, in Las Vegas on 7 Jan, 2014.
KYODO NEWS

LAS VEGAS, 8 Jan — Sony Corp will start distributing games for its PlayStation 4 game console via cloud computing technology this year, President Kazuo Hirai said on Tuesday, displaying the electronics company's focus on the entertainment business.

In his speech on the opening day of the 2014 International Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, Hirai said the streaming game service will begin late this month in the United States on a trial basis



and be launched on a full scale this summer.

Sony will initially distribute PlayStation 3 games for its PlayStation 3 console as well the PS4, which was launched in North America, Europe, Latin America and other countries last year.

The service will be offered at a fixed rate, the Tokyo-based company said.

Users of the streaming game service will be able to play games on devices that are connected to the Internet without downloading them.

For example, those who played a game using PS4 in a living room can continue playing the game in their bedroom with the PS3, according to Sony.

In the future, Sony plans to expand the service beyond PlayStation 3 platforms and Sony devices like Bravia television, allowing users to play PlayStation games on other electronics devices provided by other companies.

Kyodo News

Battery Ventures lands Netflix executive Cockcroft

SAN FRANCISCO, 8 Jan — Battery Ventures has lured away Adrian Cockcroft, the engineer who remade Netflix's streaming-entertainment service, to become the venture-capital firm's first technology fellow. Cockcroft will help Battery advise and evaluate companies and formulate investment theses, said Mike Dauber, a principal at Battery, in a blog post on Tuesday. While Cockcroft will play a role in sourcing deals, he won't be a partner.

In his own blog post, Cockcroft said he would counsel large enterprise companies who want to work more in the cloud — using remote computers that work over the Internet rather than proprietary centralized computers. In

Netflix's case, Cockcroft moved its streaming entertainment to Amazon's cloud platform.

Hiring entrepreneurs-in-residence is a common practice in Silicon Valley, where venture capital firms see it as a way to foster the next big start-up. But Cockcroft's role as technology fellow is different because while EIRs typically stay for 6-12 months, Cockcroft will stay with Battery long term, Dauber wrote. Bringing Cockcroft into the fold underscores Battery's commitment to enterprise computing. Its prior investments include Akamai, an Internet delivery network, and Omniture, the online marketing and web analytics business acquired by Adobe.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 9 January, 2014

Humanity shared is humanity multiplied

(Edited by Kerstin Winter)

In some corners of the world, a child who has no food might be crying in the chilling dark. A pregnant woman who has no access to healthcare might be seeking help from a local traditional midwife. A group of people fleeing some kind of conflict might be nearly frozen to death in poorly sheltered camps. A slum dweller might be dying on the road, completely alone. A helpless elderly beggar might be lost in a city searching to take refuge for a night somewhere. An intelligent child who dreams of studying might be washing dishes in a mansion. Who cares?

Yes, we care. At least, we often do. Most of the humanitarian aid goes to refugee camps where basic needs have to be urgently met and many people are in a life-threatening situation, yet other stories are dramatic enough as well. Dramatic stories trigger our sympathy.

They portray one of the very few lovely and beautiful things on this planet and in the hearts of human beings.

It would be the most tangible contribution of the media to humanity to report such stories. Those stories directly touch the hearts of everyone who reads them. They quickly go viral on social networks or in some other ways. Our sympathy lasts as long as the stories are on air. Its depth is questionable.

The fact is that we have sympathy mostly when we hear the stories, rather with the human beings behind these tragedies. Every fellow human being on this planet has stories, that have been shared or not. The terrific waiter at the teashop you used to visit will have a story. The irritated bus conductor will have a story. The office staff member who goes crazy will have a story. Many stories of human beings are untold. We are not supposed to get rid of rage, prejudice or some other bad feeling just because we are human beings. We should rather focus on amplifying sympathy for all of our fellow human beings while keeping the special focus on the needy. The world will become a lovelier place to live in if each of us shares the love for each other.

Registration for firms made easier with new Myanmar Companies Act

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—A new bill to help companies register more easily will come into effect in May.

The Myanmar Companies Act was amended in October 2012 with the assistance of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the new bill will be passed in parliament in May.

The new law will not

only meet international standards to help companies register more easily, but the new law will also consist of provisions that will contribute to the development of SMEs, according to the Private Sector Development Subcommittee.

MNA (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw...

(from page 16)

The Speaker also pledged, on behalf of MPs, that they will work their best in the interests of the people in terms of writing laws that protect the people and can be abide by the people.—MNA

Speaker of

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw

Thura

U Shwe Mann meets

with people.—MNA



Chairman of Leading Committee Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint explains ongoing processes for upcoming Hluttaw meetings.—MNA

Parliaments of Myanmar, Japan discuss bilateral cooperation

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—Government officials from Japan, including MPs from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Democratic Party and Japan Restoration Party led by Mr. Ichiro AISAWA, Chairman of the Standing Committee on Rules and Administration of Japan were welcomed by Amyotha Hluttaw Deputy Speaker U Mya Nyein yesterday.

They discussed pro-

Cooperation in fight against human trafficking discussed

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—Australian and Myanmar officials discussed cooperation in the fight against human trafficking today, with Attorney-General of the Union Dr Tun Shin receiving a delegation of the Australia-Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons (AAPTIP).

At the meeting, the Australian delegation

motion of bilateral relations and cooperation between the two parliaments and sectors of education, social issues, economic and culture. The meeting was attended by chairmen from Amyotha Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw of the Myanmar-Japan Parliamentary Friendship and the economic cooperation committee.

MNA (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

leader Mr. Mark Taylor said that he would like to cooperate in human trafficking activities between Myanmar and AAPTIP, and that AAPTIP wants to work together with law officers from the Union Attorney-General's Office in solving the related problems of human trafficking.

The Attorney-General of the Union also said that

Pyu Ancient Cities Coordinating Committee meets ahead of UNESCO World Heritage site announcement

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—The Pyu Ancient Cities Coordinating Committee held a meeting here yesterday morning, as expert of ICOMOS are going to visit the three Pyu ancient cities which will be included on the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites in late January. At the meeting, reports were given on research work, maintenance, museum works and manage-

Myanmar passed the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law in 2005, and that law officers at different levels participate in the fight against human trafficking operations.

He added that the Legal Affairs and Prosecution Work Group led by the Deputy Attorney-General has been formed in accord with Section 7 of the law.

MNA (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

Preparations for holding ninth regular session ...

(from page 16)

who is also Chairman of the central committee, Deputy Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw, members of the central committee and chairmen of work committees, Union ministers and officials of the Union government office and respective organizations.

MNA (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

ment, with the Patron of the Pyu Ancient Cities Coordinating Committee, Union Minister for Culture U Aye Myint Kyu giving an address.

At a UNESCO meeting in Korea, the Maha Lawkamarazein or Kuthodaw Stone Inscription Shrines, believed to be the world's largest book, was put on the list of UNESCO's "Memory of the World" programme by the director-general of UNESCO.

The caves contain 729 stone inscriptions, with the text from the Tipitaka, the entire Pali Canon of Theravada Buddhism.

The Ministry of Culture is also hoping to include the ancient Hanlin, Vishnu and Sriekstra states on the list of world heritage sites.

MNA (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

LOCAL NEWS

Construction

Rural road maintained to help regional development



MOHNYIN, 8 Jan—Over 100 people led by U Tun Lwin, representative of the local people, helped with road maintenance of the Katkyaw Road linking

Ohnsanhsaing and Nammon villages in Mohnyin Township of Kachin State on 4 and 5 January.

The 15-mile long inter-village road is being used in

extraction of timber. It was constructed by Myat Noe Thu Timber Company in 2007. Before the maintenance, the local people faced difficulty in transportation due to damaged parts. After building a bridge across the 200-foot long Kyaukpon Creek, the road will be completed for rural use and it will be shorter than the road in Hopin Sub-township, said a local of Ohnsanhsaing Village. Township level officials will inspect progress of the road maintenance.

MMAL-Tun Yi (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—The Institute of Agriculture in Pyinmana held a welcome ceremony for freshman students of the 2013-14 academic year at its hall on 6 January.

Faculty members and other students expressed their well-wishes. The first year students were introduced to the faculty members on the occasion.

The student association of the institute presented cash assistance to outstanding students of the institute who have the opportunity to join the University of Agriculture for further studies. The Myanmar Awba Company and the KRC Company awarded outstanding students of the 2012-13 academic year. The Institute of Agriculture was

Pyinmana Institute of Agriculture welcomes freshman students



established in Mandalay in 1964. An expansion program moved the institute from

Mandalay to Yezin in 1973 with the aim of training more students and providing more

on a self-reliant basis was launched to supply electricity to the local people.

Local people contributed about K 6 million to the development tasks. Meanwhile, the Thukha Myitta Social Association was opened and the Thuta Sweson Library celebrated its anniversary ceremony which was attended by officials.

The sub-township of Pathein District was one of the cyclone-hit areas in Ayeyawady Region in 2008. With the assistance of the regional government and the Union government, the local people have been trying to undertake development tasks on a self-reliant basis. MMAL-Sub-Township IPRD (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

Local people equip sub-township with power generator

SHWETHAUNGYAN, 8 Jan—Several development tasks in rural areas were undertaken in Shwethaungyan Sub-

township of Pathein District of Ayeyawady Region on 4 January.

In Thabawgan Village, a power generator built

125 grams of opium seized in Tachilek Tsp

TACHILEK, 8 Jan—A total of 125 grams of opium was seized near a militia outpost at the entrance to Loisetung Village in Tachilek Township, Shan State (East) in eastern part of the country on 5 January.

A police team from No 30 Anti-Drug Squad (Tachilek) stopped and searched a motorcycle on Tachilek-Pansali Road near

the militia outpost at noon and seized 125 grams of opium worth K 125,000.

Tachilek Myoma police station opened a file against Ah Pyi, son of U Ah Kha, of Panku Village, Monghe Village-tract of Tachilek Township under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.—MMAL-Myint Mo (Tachilek) (Edited by Darryl Gibson)



HRD

Development

Kyunhla Tsp to spend K 100 million on development tasks

KYUNHLA, 8 Jan—Instructions were given by Hluttaw MPs for the allotment of a K 100-million fund to Kyunhla Township on 1 January.

Pyithu Hluttaw MP U Kyaw Nyunt and Amyotha Hluttaw MP Dr Myint Naing, Region Hluttaw MPs U Soe Kyaw Naing and U Myo Myint Tun gave instructions on regional development.

Secretary of Township Development Supporting Committee U Than Tun stressed the need to follow the directives in carrying out regional development tasks.

Kyunhla Township, a township in Sagaing Region in the northwest of

the nation consists of 113 villages and four wards to spend the allotted fund on development tasks such as water supply, road and bridge construction, health, education and so on.

In the 2013-14 financial year, the Parliament or Pyidaungsu Hluttaw allotted K 100 million to each MP to be able to carry out development tasks in their respective constituencies aside from the fund of the Development Affairs Department under the Ministry of Livestock, Fisheries and Rural Development.

MMAL-Myo Win Nyo (Kyunhla) (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

practical experience. MMAL-Soe (Nay Pyi Taw) (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

55 trainees conclude Red Cross first-aid course in Phakant Township

PHAKANT, 8 Jan—A first-aid course concluded on 2 January at the hall of the Basic Education High School in Seikmu Village of Phakant Township, one of the townships in Myitkyina District, Kachin State in northern Myanmar.

The Joint Secretary of the Kachin State Red Cross Supervisory Committee and Staff Officer Grade I of Kachin State Red Cross Brigade U Gennes explained facts about Red Cross affairs, while officials presented

completion certificates to 55 trainees. The one-week course was jointly organized by Seikmu Village and Township Red Cross Brigades.

MMAL-Soe Naing Oo (Phakant) (Edited by Kerstin Winter)



WORLD

US acts to keep minority, disabled students out of jail

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan — The Justice and Education departments unveiled guidelines on Wednesday to prevent schools from violating civil rights laws and keep students out of jail after data found minorities and the disabled were more likely than others to face discipline or arrest. Attorney General Eric Holder said the guidelines were aimed at giving direction to school law enforcement officers, protecting the civil rights of students, and keeping kids in the classroom.

"A routine school disciplinary infraction should land a student in the

principal's office, not in a police precinct," Holder said in a statement. The guidelines came after the Justice Department sued Mississippi state and local officials in 2012 over what it called a "school-to-prison pipeline" that violated the rights of children, especially black and disabled youths.

The lawsuit contended that police in Meridian, Mississippi, routinely arrested suspended students even when they lacked probable cause to believe they had committed a crime. The district agreed in March 2013 to change

how it disciplined students.

The guidelines' principles call for improving school environments by training staff, engaging families and teaching students how to resolve conflicts.

They also urged schools to understand their obligations under civil rights laws, and the package outlines a host of federal resources regarding school discipline.

In an accompanying letter, Education Secretary Arne Duncan wrote that department data show black students were three times more likely than whites to be suspended or expelled.

Although students with disabilities make up 12 percent of US students, they are 19 percent of students who are suspended and almost a quarter of those getting a school-related arrest.

Reuters



US Attorney General Eric Holder speaks on stage during the annual meeting of the American Bar Association in San Francisco, California on 12 Aug, 2013.—REUTERS

Indonesia donates 500,000 USD to Fiji-based Regional Police academy

SUVA, 8 Jan — Indonesia donated 500,000 US dollars on Wednesday to the soon to be established Fiji-based Melanesian Spearhead Group's (MSG) Regional Police Academy, the Fijian government announced.

Fijian Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama received the donation on behalf of the Melanesian Spearhead Group from the Indonesian government's Secretary of Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Lieutenant General Langgeng Sulistiyono, who led a delegation to meet with Bainimarama at his office, according to the Ministry of Information.

While thanking the Indonesian government for the assistance, Bainimarama said it would go towards the establishment of an academy designed to boost the region's police force.

Sulistiyono said the

assistance is a firm commitment of the Indonesian people towards the Melanesian Spearhead Group in the establishment of the regional police academy.

"We are also inviting all the leaders from the MSG countries to visit Indonesia to build closer relations and allow better cooperation between these ministers," Sulistiyono said.

Fiji is taking a lead role in establishing the academy, which will be based in Fiji to train police officers from the five Melanesian Spearhead Group countries, said the Ministry of Information.

As an intergovernmental organization, the Melanesian Spearhead Group consists of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, as well as the Kanak and Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia.—Xinhua

Zhang Dejiang (C), chairman of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress (NPC), attends the inaugural meeting of a seminar studying China's NPC system in Beijing, capital of China, on 7 Jan, 2014.

XINHUA



Top legislator urges improving congress system

BEIJING, 8 Jan — Top Chinese legislator Zhang Dejiang on Tuesday urged the strengthening of theoretical study of China's congress system to help it advance with the times.

Zhang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), the top legislature, made the remarks

while attending the founding ceremony of an institute for NPC system study.

Zhang said the NPC system, the fundamental political system of China, has demonstrated superiority and vitality and has proved to be a system that suits China's national conditions and the times. Lawmakers and researchers must

enhance their confidence in the socialist system with Chinese characteristics and unswervingly adhere to the NPC system, said Zhang.

Zhang also urged constantly developing the NPC system based on China's conditions to make it better serve China's deepening reforms and the rule of law, said Zhang.—Xinhua

Albania's 2014 budget raises police salaries to improve security

TIRANA, 8 Jan — Albania's 2014 budget provides higher salaries for police officers in a bid to improve the country's security and law and order situations.

The 2014 state budget includes a 20-25 percent

pay raise for most of the state police officers starting from 1 January, the official news agency ATA reported on Tuesday.

The budget allocated for state police has increased 14 percent,

according to budget figures from the interior ministry.

Official statistics show that salaries of Albania's state police officers were among the lowest compared with its neighbouring countries such as

Macedonia.

Albanian Interior Minister Saimir Tahiri expressed the wish that the salary increase could translate into greater safety of Albanian citizens.

Xinhua

Syria ships out first batch of chemical weapons materials



People inspect a site hit by what activists said was an airstrike by forces loyal to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in the Duma neighbourhood of Damascus on 7 Jan, 2014.

REUTERS

BEIRUT, 8 Jan — Syria has started moving chemical weapons materials out of the country in a crucial phase of an internationally backed disarmament programme that has been delayed by war and technical problems.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons said on Tuesday that "priority chemical materials" were transported to the port of Latakia and onto a Danish vessel which was now sailing towards inter-

national waters.

Syria agreed to abandon its chemical weapons by June under a deal proposed by Russia and agreed with the United States after an 21 August sarin gas attack that Western nations blamed on President Bashar al-Assad's forces. Damascus blames rebels for the attack.

War, bad weather, bureaucracy and technical issues meant a 31 December deadline for the removal of the most deadly toxins from

Syria was missed.

The OPCW did not disclose what percentage of Syria's toxic arsenal -- which totals 1,300 tons in all -- had been removed but said nine containers of the most dangerous chemical materials were on the Danish cargo vessel.

"The vessel has been accompanied by naval escorts provided by Denmark and Norway, as well as the Syrian Arab Republic," a statement said. "It will remain at sea awaiting the ar-

rival of additional priority chemical materials at the port."

Maritime security was being provided by Chinese, Danish, Norwegian and Russian ships.

Government forces have taken back control of the highway linking Damascus to the coast which is needed to transport the toxins. Rebel were ousted from three towns along the road but activists say convoys moving along it will remain vulnerable to rebel ambushes.

Washington welcomed the removal of chemical materials and said Assad's government appeared to be sticking to the deal.

"Much more needs to be done," State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki told a news briefing, adding: "We have no reason to believe that the regime has gone back on any aspect of their promise."

Reuters

REGIONAL



Visitors wishing for prosperity put coins on tuna offered by a local fishery cooperative at Nishinomiya Shrine, a Shinto shrine dedicated to Ebisu, the god of commerce, in Nishinomiya, Hyogo Prefecture, western Japan, on 8 Jan, 2014.

KYODO NEWS

N Korea to hold parliamentary election in March

BEIJING, 8 Jan — North Korea said on Wednesday it will hold a parliamentary election in March, the first since leader Kim Jong Un inherited power after the death of his father Kim Jong Il in late 2011.

The election is likely to help Kim, who is believed to have turned 31 years old on Wednesday, further consolidate his one-man rule after having his once-powerful uncle executed for treason charges last month.

New members of the Supreme People's Assembly will be elected on

9 March, according to the country's official *Korean Central News Agency*.

North Korea last held a parliamentary election in March 2009.

The election is normally uncontested and the legislature basically gives a rubber stamp to decisions already made by the ruling Workers' Party headed by Kim.

But the election will be closely watched as it will likely provide some hints of any shift in the country's elite structure. It is possible that many members of the assembly

will be replaced following the purge and the execution of Jang Song Thaek, who had been considered the country's second-most powerful figure.

Jang, who had been seen as a guardian of Kim, was described by the leader as "filth" in his New Year's address. Kim also said that the elimination of his uncle bolstered the country's unity "by 100 times."

New assembly members are expected to meet by mid-April to discuss the national budget and other policies.

Kyodo News

LDP eyes bill for faster recovery of WWII remains of Japan soldiers

TOKYO, 8 Jan — The ruling Liberal Democratic Party is planning legislation to designate retrieval of the remains of Japanese who died in World War II as "a state responsibility" and accelerate the work toward the 75th anniversary in 2020 of Japan's surrender, party lawmakers said on Wednesday.

Under the legislation the party is set to propose, Prime Minister Shinzo

Abe's LDP aims to increase the number of specialized staff at Japanese diplomatic missions abroad to beef up information gathering and allocate more funds for the project.

It comes as the lack of close coordination among relevant ministries and insufficient funding have been blamed for hampering efforts to retrieve remains, even as the aging of informants about burial sites has made it more difficult to gather relevant information.

The legislation would call for appointing a state minister in charge of the recovery work, and encourage further involvement by the foreign and defence

ministries in the project to collect remains in hard-fought battlefields such as in the Philippines and Iwoto Island in the Pacific.

The LDP is expected to submit the legislation to the regular Diet session planned from 24 January, and seek support from other political parties, according to the lawmakers who sit on the ruling party's panel on the retrieval.

About 2.4 million Japanese soldiers and civilians died in Japan and abroad during World War II. The remains of around 1.13 million were still unearched at the end of March last year. An estimated 600,000 can be recovered, according to

data by the Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry.

The health ministry has been mainly taking charge of the recovery activities based on Cabinet approval in 1952, but critics have argued that the lack of firm legal ground for the project has led the retrieval to be snarled.

The ministry data show the remains of up to 2,000 war dead were collected each year in fiscal 2011 and 2012.

The LDP initially planned to submit similar legislation in the extraordinary Diet session that ended in December, but postponed it to hammer out details.

Kyodo News



Passengers are seen aboard a train heading for Xi'an at Hangzhou Railway Station in Hangzhou, capital of east China's Zhejiang Province, on 7 Jan, 2014. Immigrants workers in Zhejiang started to leave for home ahead of the upcoming China's Spring Festival travel rush, during when passenger volume in Zhejiang will reach 220 million according to estimation.

XINHUA

Indonesia continues modernization of its air force

JAKARTA, 8 Jan — Indonesia will continue to beef up its air force by purchasing more modern warplanes to replace its ageing *F-5 Tiger E/F* multirole fighter jets that have been serving for more than 30 years. Two planes remain in service from a total of 12 single and double-seat ones that Indonesia procured from the US producer Northrop in early 1980s.

Indonesian Defence Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro disclosed on Tuesday that the fighter jet considered to replace *F-5 Tiger* should be able to carry out tactical tasks, and launch long-range missiles.

"I have advised them to consider on airworthiness and technical capability aspects to pick the most suitable plane to replace the *F-5 Tiger*," the minister said on the sidelines of a meeting with senior military officers. Indonesian air force planned to procure one squadron

of brand new warplanes with delivery expected to take place in the second military's 5-year strategic plan (Renstra) period from 2015 to 2020.

During the first Renstra period from 2010 to 2014, Indonesia allocated a total of 12.4 billion US dollars to finance modernization of its military, including the procurement of new fighter jets for the air force.

Indonesian air force now operates one squadron of *Sukhoi 27/30* fleet whose delivery from Russia was completed late last year.

Deliveries of other planes included Super Tucano from Brazil, *KT-1 Wong Bee* and *T-50 Golden Eagle* from South Korea and *Grob G120* from Germany.

Indonesia is also expecting the delivery of 24 refurbished *F-16* fighter jets granted by the United States. Indonesian military commander General Moeldoko said on Monday

that the military planned to strengthen the air force by purchasing more weaponry.

The commander said that *Sukhoi SU-35* and *F-16* were among the option.

Indonesia has struggled to boost its weaponry to the minimum essential force, which may put its strength at par with other ASEAN countries.

Indonesian air force has received 8 out of 16

T-50 Golden Eagle jet fighters ordered from South Korea, according to the military.

The country has decided to diversify the source of its weaponry as it has witnessed poor experience in purchasing weaponry from the United States in the past. Terrorism, transnational crimes and insurgency are among the main threat being faced by Indonesian military.

Xinhua



A Russian contestant makes an ice sculpture during the 28th China Harbin International Ice Sculpting Contest in Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province, on 7 Jan, 2014. —XINHUA

Thai caretaker PM says coup out of picture

BANGKOK, 8 Jan — Thai caretaker Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said on Tuesday that the military would not stage a coup to end the current political tumult. Commanders of all armed forces have learned lessons from the past and they will consider long-term repercussions of a coup, Yingluck was quoted by *Bangkok Post* as saying. The best solution lies in talks, she added.

Yingluck and the top

military brass still talk regularly and they trust each other, according to PM's Secretary-General Suranand Vejjajiva. Suranand said he believed the military leaders would not consider staging a coup. Army chief Prayuth Chan-ocha on Tuesday pleaded for no violence during the planned operation to shut down Bangkok on 13 January, saying that the government would be held accountable if violence occurs.

Xinhua

Seven killed in fire on train in western India

NEW DELHI, 8 Jan — At least seven people, including one woman, were charred to death in a major fire which broke out on an express train in the western Indian state of Maharashtra in the early hours of Wednesday, a senior police official said.

"The fire broke out in three coaches of Bandra-Dehradun Express near Dahanu in the state's Thane

District. The fire started in one coach and soon spread to two other compartments. The passengers were all sleeping when the fire started," he said, on condition of anonymity.

While seven people died on the spot, several others injured have been admitted to local hospital, the official said. A probe has been ordered into the incident, he added.—Xinhua

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV JUPITER LEADER VOY NO ()

Consignees of cargo carried on MV JUPITER LEADER VOY NO () are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.1.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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Drunk Drivers to face severe punishments in Poland

WARSAW, 8 Jan — The Polish government will tighten punishments on drunk driving by raising fines and bring repeat offenders to jail, local media reported on Tuesday.

The decision was made after two fatal accidents had occurred since Christmas holidays involving drunk drivers, including one repeat offender that had killed six people in drunk driving on the New Year's Day in northwest Poland.

"The plague of drunk-driving in Poland is still a very serious threat," said Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who announced the government's plans aimed at cracking down drunk driving. The proposals include drivers caught in drunk driving for the first time would lose their licences from 3 to 15 years, instead of current one to 10 years, and a fine of at least 5,000 PLN (1,600 US dollars).—Xinhua

Five dead at Beijing construction site

BEIJING, 8 Jan — Five construction workers were killed after they fell from a scaffolding in Beijing on Tuesday, local authorities announced on Wednesday.

The accident happened at about 3 pm at a construction site in Tongzhou District in eastern Beijing as the five workers fell from the six floor when the scaffolding leaned, sources with the district government told Xinhua.

All the workers died after emergency treatment failed by 9 pm Tuesday night. The Beijing Administration of Work Safety has launched an investigation into the cause of the accident. Work at the construction site has been halted for rectification and the local authorities have launched safety checkups targeted all construction sides in the district.—Xinhua

Yang Zenggui, an inheritor of national intangible heritage, presents a well-made row lantern in Huangyuan County of Xining City, northwest China's Qinghai Province, on 7 Jan, 2014. The origin of Huangyuan row lantern, a national intangible heritage, can be traced back to the large and well-lit shop signposts along the street of Huangyuan in the early 18th century in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).—XINHUA



Beijing Zoo Market to be relocated

BEIJING, 8 Jan — In order to improve the city's downtown functions, as well as relieve its overcrowding and traffic jams, Beijing has decided to transfer several of the area's wholesale and distribution venues. The well-known Zoo Market is also on the waiting list.

The Zoo Market, a massive wholesale market located near the Beijing Zoo, will move out of the city's downtown area and its wholesale industry will be transformed into retail business, exhibition and e-commerce venues. Its new

site and exact timetable for the relocation have not been confirmed yet.

The relocation of the Zoo Market is part of the industrial upgrading planning taking place in the downtown area, but does not mean that a transfer plan makes for a one-size-fits-all policy, one official with the local government said during a Press conference on Tuesday.

Key words of the industrial upgrading in this area include "transformation, adjustment, removal and merger."

According to statistics

published in early 2013, there were about 13,000 booths located in the Zoo Market, and more than 30,000 employees, with a daily customer flow of more than 100,000.

The relocation is so complicated that a timetable is not yet available at this moment, said the official, but market research and policy studies are ongoing for the transfer plan.

The low-end warehousing industry of yet another wholesale market in the Dahongmen area will also be moved out of the city centre.—Xinhua

In newly solvent California, Dems propose free preschool



California Senate president pro tempore Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) argues in favour of his bill SB743, which modifies the California Environmental Quality Act, at the State Capitol in Sacramento, California, on 12 Sept, 2013.—REUTERS

SACRAMENTO, 8 Jan — A top California lawmaker unveiled a \$1 billion proposal on Tuesday to fund free public preschool for all children in the most populous US state, the latest challenge by Democratic leaders to fiscal restraints imposed by Governor Jerry Brown.

The plan by Senate Democratic leader Darrell Steinberg to offer pre-kindergarten to California 4-year-olds comes as he

and other Democratic lawmakers try to push Brown to raise spending on social services, including education, in next year's budget.

"The era of cutting education in California is over," Steinberg told a news conference at a Sacramento elementary school. "The issue is, how can we prudently invest?"

He said children who attend high quality preschools do markedly better throughout their

educations, are more likely to attend college and less likely to commit crimes as adults.

The proposal marks the latest effort by Democratic lawmakers to stake out progressive political ground at a time when Brown, also a Democrat, has charted a more centrist path. A similar plan is under consideration in the state assembly backed by Democratic Speaker John Perez, a spokesman said.

The timing is deliberate — the governor is expected to release his proposed budget for California's next fiscal year on Friday. His fiscal restraint is widely credited with helping the state emerge from a historic financial crunch and with persuading voters to approve new taxes.

But some Democrats complain such restraint has led the state to neglect important social programmes despite the party's control of both houses of the legislature and the governorship.

The bill comes at a time when a call for what is known as universal pre-K is gaining traction around the country.

President Barack Obama had called for a broad expansion of public preschool in his State of the Union speech last year, though the move stalled in Congress. More recently, New York's new mayor, Bill de Blasio, made universal pre-K a centerpiece of his campaign and highlighted it as a priority when he was sworn in last week. De Blasio has proposed raising taxes on New York's highest earners to pay for the program, something that would have to be approved by the state.—Reuters

16 Colombian rebels surrender to government

BOGOTA, 8 Jan — Sixteen members of the rebel Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) turned themselves in to the military in the latest group surrender, the navy said on Tuesday.

The insurgents surrendered on the outskirts of the southwestern town of Tumaco, the navy said in a statement, adding that the group decided to lay down their weapons after their leader, known as "Mario Lata," was captured in December.

"At the time of their voluntary surrender, the (rebels) handed over an AK-47 rifle, a 'chongan' (homemade weapon), two revolvers, 365 cartridges of different calibers, and a boat with two engines," the statement said.

The navy added that among the 16 was a man going by the alias "El Burro," who claimed to be in charge of recruiting young people for FARC's Daniel Aldana faction.

The group "was also responsible for gathering information on the activities of the security forces in Tumaco," the navy said.

According to Colombian authorities, around 1,200 guerrillas surrendered last year, as President Juan Manuel Santos urged insurgent groups to demobilize and rejoin civilian life.

The Colombian government and FARC began peace talks in November 2012 in the Cuban capital of Havana, seeking an agreement that will end the half-century-old armed conflict.—Xinhua

ENTERTAINMENT

Shakira to Debut New Duet With Rihanna



Shakira

NEW YORK, 8 Jan—The two singers announced the release date of their new collaboration, “Can’t Remember to Forget You,” via their social media accounts.

Rihanna posted a promotional photo on Instagram with the caption “One. Week. Countdown.” Shakira took to Twitter with the graphic and announced the song’s release date in two languages.

“Can’t Remember to Forget You” will be available on 13 January as the first single off of Shakira’s inaugural album with Sony label RCA, which is also her first since 2010’s *Sale el Sol*. She has said in an interview that the still-unnamed project is dedicated to Spanish soccer player Gerard Piqué, her partner and the father of her son Milan, reports *Billboard*.

Shakira tweeted on 8 December that the music video for the then-mysterious single was directed by Joseph Kahn, who also helmed Mariah Carey and Miguel’s “#Beautiful,” as

well as “Love the Way You Lie” by Eminem and Rihanna. The singer’s track release also comes just before she returns to *The Voice*, which is back for a sixth season on 24 February.—PTI



Rihanna



Sholay 3D and Mr Joe B Carvalho released on 3 Jan, 2014.

Sholay 3D, Mr Joe B Carvalho get lukewarm response at box office

MUMBAI, 8 Jan —This year’s new releases — 3D version of 1975 epic movie *Sholay* and Arshad Warsi-starrer comedy *Mr Joe B Carvalho* — received a lukewarm response from the audience.

“The response to *Sholay 3D* was alright. The occupancy was between 60 percent and 70 percent. There were people who turned up with their families and got nostalgic. They were happy to see it in 3D format,” Gautam Dutta, COO, PVR Cinemas, told IANS.

Produced by Sascha Sippy, grandson of GP

Sippy, who had financed the original, *Sholay 3D* hit 1000 screens.

The new version has been made on a budget of about Rs 22 crore, which includes restoration and conversion cost.

“It has collected around Rs 4.25 crore in India,” said Rajesh Thadani of Multi-media Combines.

Mr Joe B Carvalho, produced by Bhola Ram Malviya and Shital Malviya, didn’t do great business either.

The film, which also stars Soha Ali Khan and Jaaved Jaffrey, was made at a budget of Rs 10 crore

and was released on 1,100 screens in the country.

“It must have not earned more than Rs 2 crore in the country. Maybe, the fact that it wasn’t released in South India its business was affected,” said Thadani.

Dutta says the occupancy was between 65 percent and 70 percent for the Samir Tiwari directed fun film. “Big movies like *Dhoom:3* had around 90 percent occupancy on most of the days. *Mr Joe B Carvalho* had between 65 percent and 70 percent, so it did fine,” added Dutta.

PTI

Director Campion to head Cannes film jury

PARIS, 8 Jan — Oscar-winning New Zealand director Jane Campion will head the jury for the 67th Cannes film festival in May, the festival announced on Tuesday.

Campion, who won an Oscar for best screenplay for her 1993 film “*The Piano*” and is the only woman ever to win the top Cannes prize, the *Palme d’or*, for that same film, succeeds US director Steven Spielberg, who headed the jury last year.

“I am truly honoured to join with the Cannes Film Festival as president of the in-competition features for 2014,” Campion said in a statement issued by the festival. “In fact I can’t wait.”

“Since I first went to Cannes with my short films in 1986 I have had the

opportunity to see the festival from many sides and my admiration for this queen of film festivals has only grown larger,” she said.

Campion lauded Cannes’ ability to celebrate the glamour of the film industry with its stars and parties while “rigorously maintaining the festival’s seriousness about the art and excellence of new world cinema”.

In addition to “*The Piano*” winning the *Palme d’or* in 1993, the festival that year named Holly Hunter, who played opposite Harvey Keitel in the movie, best actress.

Campion, who was born in Wellington and originally studied to be an anthropologist, started making short films in the 1980s and

won the top Cannes prize for a short feature in 1986. Her first feature film was “*Sweetie*” (1989) followed by “*An Angel at My Table*” (1990) and “*The Piano*”.

Reuters



Director Jane Campion (R) and her daughter, actress Alice Englert, arrive on the red carpet for the screening of the film “*Sleeping Beauty*”, in competition at the 64th Cannes Film Festival, on 12 May, 2011.—REUTERS

Lily Tomlin marries longtime partner, collaborator Jane Wagner

LOS ANGELES, 8 Jan — Actress Lily Tomlin has married her longtime partner and comedy collaborator Jane Wagner, Tomlin’s publicist said on Tuesday.

Tomlin, 74, married Wagner, 78, on New Year’s Eve at a private ceremony in Los Angeles after 42 years of being together, Jennifer Allen said.

Same-sex marriage



became legal again in California last June, after a US Supreme Court ruling that

allowed an appellate court’s order striking down the state’s ban to stand. Tomlin

Cast member Lily Tomlin poses at the premiere of “*Admission*” in New York, on 5 March, 2013.

REUTERS

and Wagner shared Emmy awards in 1974, 1976 and 1981 for their work on writing comedy variety TV programmes starring Tomlin, who rose to fame in the 1970s with her characters on the sketch comedy show “*Laugh-In*.” Tomlin earned an Oscar nomination for best supporting actress in Robert Altman’s 1975 musical drama “*Nashville*.”—Reuters

Warner Bros in talks with Dutch production firm Eyeworks

AMSTERDAM, 8 Jan — Time Warner’s (TWX.N) Warner Bros division is in talks to buy Dutch television production company Eyeworks, Dutch media reported on Tuesday, giving no details of the value of the deal or sources.

Eyeworks produces and distributes entertainment programmes in 16 countries for more than 100 television channels, its website says, and has 1,500

staff. The bulk of its operations are in Europe but it is also active in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, the United States, New Zealand and Australia.

Its most successful international titles include *Test The Nation*, *Who Wants to Marry my Son?*, *Beat The Blondes*, *Reality Queens of the Jungle* and *I Know What You Did Last Friday*.

Reuters



Security guards stand at the entrance of the Warner Bros beach during the annual MIPCOM television programme market in Cannes, southeastern France, in this 4 Oct, 2010 file photo.—REUTERS

SPORTS

Advantage Sunderland as Man United lose again

LONDON, 8 Jan — Sunderland gained the upper hand on Manchester United by deservedly winning their League Cup semi-final, first leg 2-1 on Tuesday to intensify the pressure on visiting manager David Moyes after a testing week.

Italian Fabio Borini scored a second-half penalty to give the Premier League's bottom club a one-goal lead ahead of the return at Old Trafford after a 52nd minute Nemanja Vidic header cancelled out Ryan Giggs's own goal in first-half stoppage time.

It was United's third straight defeat after they were beaten at home in the FA Cup third round by Swansea City on Sunday

and by Tottenham Hotspur in the league the previous week, heaping pressure on Moyes in his first season in charge.

The second leg will be on 22 January to decide who will face either favourites Manchester City or West Ham United, who play at the Etihad Stadium on Wednesday, in the final on 2 March.

For beleaguered United manager Moyes, the League Cup has developed added significance with the club already out of the FA Cup, looking unlikely to retain their Premier League title and long odds to win the Champions League.

For the fans who booed them off the pitch

following the loss to Swansea, there was little to perk up the spirits.

This was the first time since 1932 that United had lost their opening three games of the year and the first time since 1992 that they had lost three times in a week.

Moyes blamed the officials, who he criticised for awarding Sunderland the free kick that led to the first goal, rather than his players who he described as being "unbelievable".

"It looks as though we are having to play them (the officials) as well as the opposition at the moment," he said.

"I thought the players, our crowd were unbeliev-



Manchester United's Danny Welbeck jumps over Sunderland's Phil Bardsley during their English League Cup semi-final first leg soccer match at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland, northern England on 7 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

able, the players deserved to get a result. It's a two-legged game and I am really looking forward to the second leg."

Sunderland have only reached the League Cup

final once, in 1985 when they lost to Norwich City, and their fans do not need reminding they were relegated from the top flight that season. The knockout competitions have again

provided Sunderland with their only moments of relief in a miserable campaign, having won all five home ties in the League and FA Cups.

Reuters

Devastated Vonn out of Sochi Games with injury

NEW YORK, 8 Jan — Olympic downhill champion Lindsey Vonn, one of the biggest attractions in winter sport, will miss next month's Sochi Games because she requires surgery on her injured knee.

The 29-year-old American broke the news on her Facebook page on Tuesday.

"I am devastated to announce I will not be able to compete in Sochi," said Vonn, the girlfriend of world number one golfer Tiger Woods.

"I did everything I possibly could to somehow get strong enough to overcome having no ACL (anterior cruciate ligament) but the reality has sunk in that my knee is just too unstable to compete at this level."

Vonn, a four-times

overall World Cup champion and the standout name in women's Alpine skiing, badly injured her right knee in a world championship super-G in February.

She hurt her knee again while training for the season-opening World Cup downhill at Beaver Creek, Colorado but appeared to be back on track after racing at Lake Louise, Alberta.

Vonn then travelled with the US team to Europe and, with Woods watching her for the first time at a World Cup race, injured her knee once more in Val d'Isere, France.

"It was Tiger's first time at a World Cup race and I was really hoping to win my 60th as a present for him," said Vonn who

with 59 victories in the



Lindsey Vonn of the US skis during the Women's World Cup Downhill skiing race in Val d'Isere, French Alps, on 21 Dec, 2013.—REUTERS

competition is three short of the women's record held by Austrian Annemarie Moser-Proell.

Vonn still believed she could recover in time for Sochi, aiming to compete at her fourth straight Olympics, but faced the grim reality on Tuesday.

"After the incident in Val d'Isere an MRI showed an MCL (medial collateral ligament) sprain which,

coupled with the torn ACL, has made it impossible to stabilise her knee and be ready to safely ski again next month," Vonn's public relations team said in a statement.

"She will have surgery shortly and is expected to make a full recovery in time for the 2014-15 World Cup season and the 2015 world championship."

Reuters

Tomic's father in Sydney despite ban



Marcel Granollers

SYDNEY, 8 Jan — The presence of his banned father watching from court-side boosted Bernard Tomic's game as he opened the defence of his Sydney International title with a 6-3,

6-0 demolition of eighth seed Marcel Granollers on Tuesday.

"Having my dad there is a very good feeling," Tomic told reporters after the victory over his Spanish

opponent.

"Obviously winning my first title here gives a lot of memories to me. I'm happy the way I played today. Having my dad there for the first time in a while, it's good.

"I know his ban will finish very soon, in a few months, and back to helping me. I'm happy. I played very good. Felt very good. I'm happy to be back playing like this."

Former taxi driver John Tomic has not watched his son play since he was banned last May from all ATP events, which includes next week's Australian Open,

after he was charged with head-butting his son's former training partner Frenchman Thomas Drouet and breaking his nose.

He was convicted and sentenced to eight month's imprisonment by a Spanish court for assault last September though was not required to serve jail time because his sentence was under two years in length.

While he is banned from receiving accreditation, which entitles him into official areas, he was allowed to buy a ticket as a member of the public at the discretion of the tournament director.

Reuters

Simpson says trainer to blame for positive test

KINGSTON, 8 Jan — Jamaican sprinter Sherone Simpson, who tested positive for a banned substance last year, told a disciplinary panel on Tuesday that she saw no "red flags" before taking a supplement supplied by her trainer.

Simpson, who faces a two-year ban if found guilty of a doping

violation, testified in front of a three-member panel for over three hours and said a supplement provided by her Canadian trainer was responsible for her positive test.

Simpson was one of five Jamaicans to test positive at last June's national championships. Both she and former world 100 record holder Asafa Powell returned adverse findings for the banned substance oxilofrine.



(L-R) Jamaica's Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, Sherone Simpson, Veronica Campbell-Brown and Kerron Stewart pose with their silver medals in the women's 4 x 100m relay at the London 2012 Olympic Games in London at the Olympic Stadium on 10 Aug, 2012.—REUTERS

violation, testified in front of a three-member panel for over three hours and said a supplement provided by her Canadian trainer was responsible for her positive test.

Simpson was one of five Jamaicans to test positive at last June's national championships. Both she and former world 100 record holder Asafa Powell returned adverse findings for the banned substance oxilofrine.

The Olympic 4x100 relay silver medallist said she was not familiar with one of

oxilofrine is contained in Epiphany D1 and that Simpson was negligent not to have consulted a doctor.

The lawyer also said Simpson did not disclose that she was using Epiphany D1 along with three of the other four supplements provided to her by her trainer.

But Simpson, who said they were new additions to her regimen and that she could not recall their names at the times, insisted she was "not a cheat."

The hearing resumes on Wednesday.—Reuters

GENERAL

Thank you

We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all family and friends, in both the UK and Myanmar, for their kind and sincere love and support during this most difficult time.

Our beloved father and husband, Allan W. Sail (aged 74) Former Columbo Plan Advisor, Education and Research Bureau, died peacefully in the early hours of 29 December 2013. He was cremated at the 'Ye Way' Cemetery on 2 January 2014, blessed on 4 January 2014 in Buddhist tradition, and the remaining bones buried at the All Christian Cemetery at 'Ye Way' on 6 January 2014.

A memorial service will take place at the All Saints Church in Stisted, Braintree, Essex, UK.

Daw Ni Ni Myaing
Jane Sail

Libya autonomy groups vows to sell oil from seized ports, challenges Tripoli



A view of the Melliah Oil and Gas blocked by members of the Berber minority demanding more rights complex, 100 km (60 miles) west of Tripoli on 7 Nov, 2013.—REUTERS

TRIPOLI/LONDON, 8 Jan — A heavily armed autonomy group in eastern Libya said on Tuesday it would invite foreign companies to buy oil from seized ports and protect arriving tankers, challenging Tripoli which has promised to use force to stop them.

The announcement came just hours after Libya's defense ministry said it would destroy any tankers loading oil from eastern ports in the Cyrenaica region which are under control of the armed protesters.

The escalation adds to chaos as the weak Tripoli government struggles to rein in armed groups that helped oust Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 but kept their guns to demand power and a bigger share of the country's oil wealth. The conflict is hurting oil revenues, which fund the OPEC nation's government and the import of wheat and other crucial food. The government has warned it will be unable to pay public salaries if the standoff continues, risking more turmoil.

On Monday, Libya's navy said it had shot at a tanker trying to load oil at the eastern Es-Sider port which was seized with two

other terminals by the autonomy group in August. The three harbors accounted previously for 600,000 barrels a day. But the group, led by tribal leader and 2011 civil war hero Ibrahim Jathran, shrugged off Tripoli's warning by inviting foreign companies to buy eastern oil.

"We welcome global oil companies ... The oil security guards will guarantee the safety of tankers," said Abd-Rabbo al-Barassi, prime minister of Jathran's self-declared eastern government. Workers at the seized ports had returned to work, he said, without giving details on when they had left. He added that a newly founded oil company called Libya Oil and Gas Corp would be dealing with potential buyers. A new army and coast guard, made up of Jathran's battle-hardened fighters, would secure the ports.

Barassi said his group had nothing to do with the tanker shot at by a Libyan navy vessel on Sunday on its way to Es-Sider. Tripoli has said the tanker had been bound to load oil at the seized port, but Barassi called this statement a "lie."

Reuters

UN chief welcomes progress in effort to eliminate chemical weapons in Syria

UNITED NATIONS, 8 Jan — UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Tuesday welcomed the progress made in the process of removing Syria's most critical chemical weapons material outside of the country. Ban's spokesperson issued a statement after the UN chief was informed by the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations that further progress has been made towards the removal and eliminations of Syrian chemical weapons programme.

Earlier on Tuesday, OPCW-UN Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag announced that a first shipment of chemical materials has been moved from Syria, which initiated the process of transferring chemical weapons from the country to locations outside its territory for destruction.

Ban commended in the statement the special coordinator and her team for their steadfast work in challenging circumstances.

Xinhua

Valencia strike late to hold Atletico in Cup

MADRID, 8 Jan — Valencia forward Helder Postiga headed an equaliser in the final minute of added time to snatch a 1-1 draw at home to King's Cup holders Atletico Madrid in an intense and entertaining last 16, first leg tie on Tuesday.



Valencia's Helder Postiga celebrates after he scored against Atletico Madrid during their Spanish King's Cup soccer match at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia, on 7 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

6:00 am

1. Paritta By Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

6:30 am

2. Physical Exercise

6:45 am

3. Songs of Yester Years

6:50 am

4. Documentary

7:00 am

5. News/Weather Report

7:30 am

6. People Talks

7:45 am

7. Documentary (Health)

8:00 am

8. News/ International News

8:30 am

9. India Drama Series

9:00 am

10. News/ International News

9:30 am

11. Shwe Yin Chone Than

10:00 am

12. News

10:20 am

13. Kyaew Pwint Myaye Yin Khone Than

10:40 am

14. Documentary

10:55 am

15. Sing & Enjoy

11:45 am

16. Documentary

12:00 am

17. News/ International News/ Weather Report

2:35 pm

18. Fine Arts-Bosom of Dramatic Performance (Part-1)

3:00 pm

19. News

3:30 pm

20. India Drama Series

4:00 pm

21. News

4:15 pm

22. India Drama Series

4:45 pm

23. University of Distance Education (TV Lectures) -Third Year (Physics)

5:00 pm

24. News

5:20 pm

25. India Drama Series

6:00 pm

26. News/Weather Report

6:20 pm

27. Approching Science Discovery World

6:40 pm

28. Documentary

7:00 pm

29. News

7:20 pm

30. Teleplay

8:00 pm

31. News/ International News/ Weather Report

8:35 pm

32. Pyi Thu Ni Ti

8:50 pm

33. Hit Song of Stars

9:00 pm

34. News

35. Clever

36. India Drama Series

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

9-1-14 07:00 am ~
10-1-14 07:00 am) MST

- * Local News
- * The Treasures in a Small Village (Part-2)
- * World News
- * In the Studio "Na Di Hike"
- * Local News
- * A Visit to Mandalay
- * World News
- * Trishaw Man
- * Local News
- * A Tea Business: Pankwan (Part-1)
- * World News
- * The Photographer (Portiature) "Aung Kyaw Moe"
- * Local News
- * The Untouched Footprint of Buddha
- * World News
- * Myanmar Harpist
- * Local News
- * Bagan: The Land of Pagoda
- * World News
- * School for the Blind
- * Local News
- * Welcome to the Southern most part of Myanmar
- * World News
- * Myanmar Movie Review "Superb"
- * Local News
- * A Day in the life of the Pa-O Family
- * World News
- * Wholesale Fish
- * Local News
- * Unique Pattern of Myanma... A Trend of Chin Traditional Dress
- * World News
- * Myanmar Masterclass: Still Life (Glass)

Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Speaker calls for far-sighted review on constitution

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—Thura U Shwe Mann, Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw, met with the people from Pyapon, Bogalay, Kyaiklat and Dedaye townships in Pyapon District and from Maubin, Nyaungdon, Danubyu and Pantanaw townships in Maubin District, today.

During the separate meetings, Speaker Thura U Shwe Mann said the Joint Committee for Reviewing the Constitution has been

formed and aims to amend the constitution should bring better situation than current situation without harming the development and stability of the country and should encourage the unity of the national peoples, national reconciliation, internal peace and implementing the market oriented economic system.

He stressed the importance of far-sightedness to review the constitution, saying that there would be mistake if things that should

be changed are not changed and if things that should not be changed are changed hurriedly.

The MPs and members of the supporting committees development of respective townships are working together to build and establish basic infrastructures for development of the townships, he added.

He also urged the people to cooperate with them as part of efforts for reducing poverty.

(See page 8)

Preparations for holding ninth regular session of Hluttaw discussed

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—As the Myanmar parliament convenes for its ninth regular session this month, a coordination meeting was held on 8 January to discuss the successful organization of the session.

Chairman of the Leading Committee Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw U Khin Aung Myint explained the ongoing processes for the upcoming Hluttaw meetings.

The secretary of the

central committee presented a report on plans to set up the work committees, with Union Ministers Lt-Gen Ko Ko, U Aung Kyi, U Nyan Tun Aung, U Than Htay, Dr Pe Thet Khin, U Htay Aung and U Kyaw Lwin and departmental

heads reported on preparations for organizing the Hluttaw sessions.

The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Speaker of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw U Nanda Kyaw Swa, (See page 8)

Third day of gems sale in Nay Pyi Taw attracts more merchants



Merchants check uncut jade.

PHOTO BY KHIN ZAW (MINGALAR)

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—The third day of Myanmar Gems Emporium which will last till 10 January at Mani Yadana Jade Hall continued here today as jade lots are being auctioned off.

Of the 157 gem lots on offer, 104 could sell through an open bidding system. Bidding for the utility jade lots has started and the winners will be announced on 9 January.

Bids for a total of 2,839 utility jade lots were registered from 6-9 January and the winners will be announced on 10 January.

Patron of the Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entre-

preneurs Association Union Minister for Mines Dr Myint Aung and Deputy Minister U Than Tun Aung inspected the utility jade and gem lots and offered their support for the auction.

MNA (Edited by Kerstin Winter)

Correction

Please read “Kabaw” instead of “Bamaw” on third line of last paragraph in 6th column on page 16 under the title of “Myanmar, India to solve demarcation issue amicably” in this daily issued on 8-1-2014. Error is regretted.—NLM

Tickets for 7th ASEAN Para Games available soon

NAY PYI TAW, 8 Jan—Tickets for opening and closing ceremonies of the 7th ASEAN Para Games will be available at Accreditation Center of Wun-

na Theikdi Stadium here. The tickets for opening ceremony will be sold starting 1st January and closing ceremony, as of 15 January. The citizenship scrutiny card is

required to purchase tickets and a person can buy two tickets.

Under five year old children are allowed to enjoy the ceremonies free of charge. Opening and closing ceremony tickets are also valid for games.

Accreditation cards

for audience for respective sports events will be sold starting 8 January at Accreditation Center of Wunna Theikdi Stadium. AU Cards will be sold as of 15 January at Gate No.2, 4 and 5 of Accreditation Center of Wunna Theikdi Stadium.—MNA

Passengers rely on waterway transport from Homalin to Monywa

Although everybody has easy access to Homalin, which is located in the upper area of Sagaing Region in the northwest of the nation through aviation and waterway transport, most of the people reply

on their travels to the town by boat along the Chindwin River.

The local producers transport rice, betel leaves, tomatoes, construction materials, personal goods, cosmetics, textile, and other

goods to their customers from Monywa and Mandalay via the waterway. Likewise, their trade partners resend mats and baskets made of bamboo to these regions.

Several ships run daily along the waterway of the Chindwin River from Homalin to Monywa. Transport charges for ordinary classes range from K 6,000 to K 9,000 per passenger from Monywa to Kalewa, Mawlaik, Phaungpyin and Homalin and for the upper class, a ticket costs K 13,000 and K 15,000 to Phaungpyin and Homalin, respectively.

Byline: Linlet Kyei Sinn

“It can be said that the water level at Chindwin River declines speedier this year than last year. We take care of steering the watercrafts near Chindwin Bridge along the water course. Now, the ships cannot anchor at Mingin of Sagaing Region due to the emergence of sandbanks in the river. Only skilled coxswain can navigate the ship safely,” said a coxswain from NgwesinOo Ship.

Kyemon: 7-1-2014

Trs: TTA (Edited by Kerstin Winter)



Statement No. 1/2014 of Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on Presidential Order of Pardon

1. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission wholeheartedly welcomes the issuance of Presidential Pardon under order No. 51/ 2013 dated 30 December 2013 of the President Office.
2. The Committee for Scrutinizing the Remaining Political Prisoners comprising 19 Members from government organizations, civil society organizations and political parties issued its work progress report by Press Release (1/2013) dated 31 December 2013 and the Commission recognizes the efforts of the Committee.
3. The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar mentioned, in his speech delivered to the people over the radio on 2 January 2014, that he acted in keeping with his promise to release all political prisoners by the end of 2013. The implementation by the President of his promise conforms with the notion

that there should be no such people as political prisoners in democratization process.

4. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission had submitted open letters to the President two times to seriously consider the granting of amnesty to those who had been imprisoned in various prisons in Myanmar and to release them from those prisons. Those open letters were issued on 10 October and 12 November 2011 respectively. After the submission of appeals by the Commission, the President, through a Presidential amnesty order, reduced the prisons terms of some prisoners and released the prisoners from various prisons. The Myanmar National Human Rights Commission, in its Statement issued on 14 January 2012, welcomed the release of prisoners and strongly urged those who had been released from respective prisons to take part in building national unity and a democratic state peacefully

and in whatever way they can in view of the President's magnanimity.

5. Since the President granted the pardon in order to contribute to the stability of the state and the lasting peace, to build national reconsolidation, to ensure all-inclusiveness in the political process and on humanitarian grounds, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission wishes to strongly urge those who have been released from various prisons to contribute to the process in conformity with the objectives of the President.
6. As the Government is making efforts to build a democratic state, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission would like to recommend that among the existing laws and provisions, the amending, revoking, strengthening and redrafting as necessary of the laws and provisions which may impede the democratization should be given serious consideration without endangering the stability of the State and the public peace and tranquility.

Myanmar National Human Rights Commission
Date- 3 January 2014