The New Light of Myanmar
THE MOST RELIABLE NEWSPAPER AROUND YOU
Volume XXI, Number 319 | 1st Waxing of Tabaung 1375 ME | Saturday, 1 March 2014

President U Thein Sein felicitates Chairman of Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

NAY PYI TAW, 1 March—U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Zeljko Komsic, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Bosnia and Herzegovina, which falls on 1 March 2014.

MNA

President U Thein Sein poses for documentary photo with Oxford Business Group at the Report Myanmar 2014 at Myanmar International Convention Centre (MICC).—MNA

The Report Myanmar-2014 officially launched

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb —Our correspondent in Nay Pyi Taw reported that the Report Myanmar-2014 organized and prepared by Oxford Business Group was officially launched by President U Thein Sein on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, President U Thein Sein expressed his thanks to the Oxford Business Group for publishing the first ever Report on Myanmar which can provide a comprehensive overview of key investment opportunities for both domestic and international investors.

Myanmar needs many reports like the Report Myanmar-2014 for prospective investors in the country as it is trying to take itself on development path, he added.

The report also portrays the strategic directions and drive the country

(See page 9)

FDI set to more than double

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb—Foreign Direct Investment in Myanmar had already reached US$ 3.6 billion from the start of the 2013-2014 FY on April 1 to the end of February, of which about 50 percent flowed into the manufacturing sector while 20 per cent went into the telecommunication sector.

FDI in Myanmar reached US$ 1.4 billion in the 2012-2013 Fiscal Year.

In 2012, over 50 percent of the FDI flowed into the manufacturing sector. There would be more investment in the manufacturing, telecommunication, hotels and tourism and real estate sector of Myanmar, said U Aung Naing Oo, the Director-General of the Directorate of Investment and Companies Administration of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development.

"Myanmar is on the right track to development," he told to reporters at the press conference on launching of" the Report Myanmar 2014" published by the Oxford Business Group.

According to U Aung Naing Oo, there is no short-term foreign direct investment in Myanmar and the Myanmar's FDI law has permitted foreign businessmen to do investment at least 20-year in the country.—*NLM*

President U Thein Sein accepts his portrait from an official.—MNA

Quality paddy plantation harvested on model plot in Pyapon Tsp

PYAPON, 28 Feb—The quality paddy plantation was harvested on 40 acres of farmlands in Pyapon Township recently with the aim of seeking quality paddy strains and minimizing waste and loss in paddy harvesting.

Ayeya Hmway summer paddy was harvested with the use of farming machinery by farmer U Tin Aye in Gyowa-Htalun village in Pyapon Township of Ayeyawady Region.

The paddy plantation produced 105 baskets of paddy per acre.

Farmers who need quality paddy strains may contact Township Agriculture Department.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Commissioner of Pyapon District U Kyaw Soe Win, Head of District Agriculture Department U Naing Lin, Deputy Township Administrator U Nyi Nyi Aung, Head of Township Agriculture Department U Maung Maung Thwin, officials and local people.

This year, there are over 71000 acres of summer paddy in Pyapon Township, over 500 acres more than that of the last year.

The farmers who have larger acres of paddy use agricultural machinery to save time and minimize loss in work.

At present, a total of 13 combine harvesters are being used in Pyapon Township.—*MMAL-Thuza Nwe (Pyapon)*

Disaster Risk Management Capacity Enhancement Course opened

PATHEIN, 28 Feb—Under the supervision of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Ayeyawady Region Government, the Natural Disaster Risk Management Capacity Enhancement Course No 2/2014 was opened at the hall of Karuna Association in Pathein, Ayeyawady Region, recently.

Ayeyawady Region Minister for Social Affairs Daw Khin Saw Mu, Director U Chuan Haye of Relief and Resettlement Department, officials of UN Habitat and trainees totalling 121. The region minister made an opening address. The director of the RRD explained discipline for the course. Capacity Building Adviser Mr Rahul Pandit of UN Habitat explained progress of works. Altogether 34 trainees attended the six-day course.

MMAL-District IPRD

Sugarcane plants harvested in Singu Township

SINGU, 28 Feb—The heavesting of sugarcane was held at Sugarcane Training Farm of Mandalay Region Industrial Crops Development Department at Khatetchin field in Singu Township on 27 February morning.

It was attended by Assistant Director U Zaw Win and staff of Region Industrial Crops Development Depart-ment, officials of Township Agriculture Department, local authorities and farmers of villages.

Assistant Director U Zaw Win of Industrial Crops Development Department of the region explained harvesting of sugarcane and preparations for the remaining parts of sugarcane.

Officials replied to queries raised by local farmers.

Later, the demonstration on harvesting followed.—*Kyemon-Myint Thu (Singu)*

People join tasks to build transformer for more supply of electricity

Local people and electricians clear the site where transformer and power line will be built, in Pakokku Township.

PAKOKKU, 28 Feb—The Managing Director of Ministry of Electric Power and the superintending engineer of Magway Region met local people at the district electrical engineer office in Pakokku on 20 February.

They discussed better power supply system, construction of more transformer, installation of 11 KV power line and 400 volt power lines with new ones, cooperation of local people in reinstallation of transformers.

To implement the discussions of their meeting, electricians and local people joined hands in installation of electrical devices, stockpiling of power sypply facilities, installation of transformers, digging of pits for the towers and cutting of branches of trees as of 21 February.

The district electrical engineer and the township electrician (Kanma-Myitche) made field trips to the villages and conducted survey for installation of power supply equipment.

The ward and village authorities, electrification committees and local people are happy for preparations for installation of power lines and transformers in the township.—*Kyemon-Aung (Mann Tekkatho)*

National Sports

Mawlamyine University Open Football Tournament wraps up

MAWLAMYINE, 28 Feb—The final match of the Mawlamyine University Open Football Tournament took place at the football ground of the university in Mawlamyine, Mon State, on 26 February afternoon.

Shwe Myaing Thar football team emerged champion in the tournament with a 2-0 win over Shwe Kyei Pwint football team.

Rector Dr Htay Aung awarded championship trophy to Shwe Myaing Thar football tournament.

Pro-Rector Dr Aung Myat Kyaw Sein gave cash award to the first prize winning team.

Among the spectators were faculty members and students. The football tournament kicked off on 19 February, and a total of 8 football teams took part in the tournament.

MMAL-La/012

Japan emperor, empress visit typhoon-hit Izu Oshima Island

TOKYO, 28 Feb — Japanese Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko on Friday visited Izu Oshima Island, south of Tokyo, which was hit hard by mudslides triggered by a powerful typhoon last October.

During their one-day trip to the volcanic island by chartered plane, the imperial couple will meet with Oshima Mayor Masafumi Kawashima at the town government office and five representatives of volunteer workers who were involved in the island's restoration operations.

Later in the day, Tokyo Gov Yoichi Masuzoe and the Oshima mayor are scheduled to guide the emperor and empress to the hardest-hit area on the 91-square-kilometre island located 120 kilometres south of Tokyo.

A total of 39 people were killed or went missing after Typhoon Wipha hit the island on 16 October last year, causing mudslides that destroyed many houses there.

The imperial couple will also visit the island's sole temporary housing complex built on the site of a closed primary school, where some 50 residents are living.

This is the couple's first trip to Izu Oshima Island, which is part of Tokyo, since 1980, when they were crown prince and crown princess.

Kyodo News

Japanese Emperor Akihito (R, facing) and Empress Michiko (standing next to him) leave from Tokyo's Haneda airport for Izu Oshima Island, south of Tokyo, on 28 Feb, 2014.—KYODO NEWS

India inks pacts with Israel on legal, security cooperation

NEW DELHI, 28 Feb — India and Israel have inked at least three pacts on legal and security cooperation between the two countries, local media reported on Friday.

The pacts — Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters, Agreement on Protection of Classified Material and Agreement on Cooperation in Homeland and Public Security — were signed by a top Indian Home Ministry official and Israeli Ambassador Alon Ushpiz in the national capital on Thursday, reports said.

In a statement, the Israeli Embassy in the Indian capital has said: "We believe that these agreements are another important platform for the cooperation between our countries and we would like to express our appreciation for the leadership of the Ministry of Home Affairs in this regard."

Israeli Minister of Public Security Yitzhak Aharonovich added: "These agreements that were signed are a fine example of our substantial and equal partnership with India. The various types and forms of threats the two countries face make this cooperation an indispensable one."

The two countries signed the agreements on the day when Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif arrived in India on a two-day visit.—*Xinhua*

Obama launches programme to help young minority men

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — US President Barack Obama launched a programme Thursday to provide economic and educational support to disadvantaged young men and boys of colour in the country. The "My Brother's Keeper" initiative, a partnership between government, private corporations and philanthropic foundations, will commit 200 million US dollars in the next five years and focus on issues ranging from nutrition and health to education and youth violence.

"Yet as the Congress, State and local governments, research institutions, and leading private-sector organizations have all recognized, persistent gaps in employment, educational outcomes, and career skills remain for many boys and young men of colour throughout their lives," the president said in a memorandum featuring creating and expanding ladders of opportunity for minority youth.

"By focusing on the critical challenges, risk factors, and opportunities for boys and young men of colour at key life stages, we can improve their long-term outcomes and ability to contribute to the Nation's competitiveness, economic mobility and growth, and civil society," he said, adding that "unlocking their full potential will benefit not only them, but all Americans."

"Therefore, I am establishing the My Brother's Keeper initiative, an interagency effort to improve measurably the expected educational and life outcomes for and address the persistent opportunity gaps faced by boys and young men of color," he said.

The president also created an interagency task force chaired by the assistant to the president and Cabinet secretary to maintain the initiative across federal agencies, including assessing federal policies and regulations.

Xinhua

US President Barack Obama offers handshakes with students after signing a memorandum at the White House in Washington on 27 Feb, 2014.—XINHUA

Armed men seize two airports in Ukraine's Crimea, Russia denies involvement

Armed men stand guard at the airport in Simferopol, Crimea on 28 Feb, 2014.—REUTERS

SIMFEROPOL, (Ukraine), 28 Feb — Armed men took control of two airports in the Crimea region on Friday in what Ukraine's government described as an invasion and occupation by Russian forces, stoking tension between Moscow and the West.

But Russia's Black Sea fleet, which is based in the region, denied its forces were involved in seizing one of the airports, *Interfax* news agency reported, while a man who said he was helping the armed group at the other site described them as simple people from the "People's Militia of Crimea".

Interior Minister Arsen Avakov said Russian naval forces had taken over the military airport near the port of Sevastopol, where the Russian navy has its base, and other Russian forces had taken over Simferopol international airport.

This met with a Russian denial of involvement in the military airport action. "No Black Sea Fleet units have moved toward (the airport), let alone taking any part in blockading it," *Interfax* quoted a spokesman for the fleet as saying.

Earlier, Avakov said tension was rising on the Black Sea peninsula, the only Ukrainian region that has an ethnic Russian majority and the last major bastion of resistance to the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich as president almost a week go.

"I consider what has happened to be an armed invasion and occupation in violation of all international agreements and norms," Avakov said on his Facebook page, describing it as a "provocation" and calling for talks.

Yanukovich is expected to appear before reporters in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don later on Friday, although President Vladimir Putin has not said whether Moscow will harbor the former leader who is on the run and wanted for mass murder.

Reuters

April summit not deadline for concluding Japan-US TPP talks

TOKYO, 28 Feb — A planned Japan-US summit in April will not necessarily be the deadline for concluding bilateral free trade talks that hold the key to a breakthrough in the ongoing Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations involving 10 other countries, Japan's minister in charge of the TPP signaled on Friday.

Asked whether the TPP talks could take a decisive move forward when US President Barack Obama meets with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Akira Amari said, "That is not going to happen," adding no deadline for concluding the pact has been set after the 12 TPP members ended a recent ministerial meeting in Singapore without an agreement.

Amari said that while "the most favorable situation" would be for the two countries to wrap up the negotiations before the summit, they are not necessarily aiming for a deal when the two leaders meet.

The 12 Pacific Rim countries in the TPP talks held a four-day ministerial gathering in Singapore through Tuesday, but they failed to strike a broad agreement due to huge gaps over thorny issues, including removal of Japanese tariffs to protect the country's sensitive farm products.

Speculation has been growing that Obama's visit to Japan on a tour of Asian nations could be the next milestone for accelerating the ambitious trade initiative.

Kyodo News

Thai minister rejects proposal for talks from protest leader

BABGKOK, 28 Feb — A senior Thai minister rejected a proposal for talks from the leader of an anti-government protest movement on Friday as demonstrators rallied at ministries to put pressure on Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra to step down.

Protest leader Suthep Thaugsuban had suggested that he and Yingluck should hold a televised debate.

"Yingluck is the legitimate leader of the country and Suthep is a man with warrants for his arrest who heads an illegal movement. The prime minister should not talk to Suthep," said Labour Minister Chalerm Yoobamrung, who oversees a state of emergency imposed last month.

"Suthep is only proposing negotiations, even though he dismissed them before, because protest numbers are dwindling."

Violence is on the increase, with almost daily gun and grenade attacks around protest sites by unidentified people, and 23 people have been killed since November. Calls for talks between the two sides are growing.

Suthep's offer to debate on Thursday came after weeks of refusing to talk. However, in a speech to supporters later, he showed his more combative side, blaming Yingluck for attacks on protesters at the weekend in which five people were killed, including four children.

"You have murdered four young, innocent children, Yingluck," he said, challenging her supporters in the rural north and northeast of the country to a fight in the capital.

"Come to Bangkok and try to start a civil war," he said. "Let's see who can assemble more people, come on."

Yingluck, speaking from the northern city of Chiang Mai, gave a guarded response to the idea of a debate.

"The talks have to have a framework, though I am not sure what that framework would look like," she said on Thursday. "But many parties have to be involved because I alone cannot answer on behalf of the Thai people." The crisis broadly pits members of Bangkok's middle-class and southern opposition supporters, backed by the royalist establishment, against the largely rural supporters of Yingluck and Thaksin.

After a period of calm following Yingluck's election win in 2011, opposition swelled when her government tried to push through a political amnesty that would have let Thaksin return from self-imposed exile without having to serve a jail sentence for graft. He says the charges were politically motivated.

Reuters

***Government supporters begin to build a wall at the gates of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) office as policemen guard it in Nonthaburi Province, on the outskirts of Bangkok on 27 Feb, 2014.—*REUTERS**

US urges DPRK to exercise restraint after missile launch

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — The United States urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to exercise restraint and improve its relations with neighbors after the East Asian country reportedly fired four short-range missiles, the State Department said on Thursday. The missiles were launched from Gitaeryeong area on the DPRK's southeastern coast on Thursday, toward the northeastern waters, according to South Korea's Defence Ministry.

"We are closely monitoring the situation on the Korean Peninsula," US State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki told a Press briefing. The United States worked very closely with the international community and its partners in the region to address global security and proliferation threat posed by the DPRK, she said.

Xinhua

Japanese woman killed in New Jersey hit-and-run

NEW YORK, 28 Feb — Local authorities are searching for those responsible for a hit-and-run that killed a Japanese woman near New York City on 20 February.

The Hudson County Sheriff's Office believes Ayako Iizuka, 30, was fatally struck around 6:30 pm as she cycled home from work in Jersey City, New Jersey.

According to her relatives and the Japanese Consulate General in New York, Iizuka was a native of Matsudo, Chiba Prefecture and came to the United States to train as a jazz vocalist. She had planned to spend a year taking lessons and was a week away from returning to Japan. Her body was found by a sheriff's officer who had stopped to remove her bicycle from the road.

The sheriff's spokesperson said officers have reviewed a hundred hours of surveillance video from nearby businesses and are now looking for the drivers of four vehicles which could have been involved.

Kyodo News

***British film director Steve McQueen (L) and UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon pose for photos on the occasion of the screening of "12 Years a Slave," directed by McQueen, at the UN headquarters in New York on 26 Feb, 2014. The film has been nominated in nine categories for the 86th Academy Awards.* KYODO NEWS**

Residents of Australian outback town evacuated after flash flooding

BRISBANE, (Australia), 28 Feb — Residents have been evacuated from homes in the small town of Dajarra in Australia's Queensland after heavy rain caused flash flooding overnight, local media reported on Friday.

The town, south of Mount Isa, has been isolated after 150 millimeters of rain fell overnight and local reeks rose quickly, according to the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Mount Isa police Superintendent Russell Miller said three homes were evacuated at Dajarra on Thursday night and another six were inundated by the flash flooding.

"Water came up into some of the homes, most of the homes in Dajarra are only low-set," he said, adding, "Some people stayed at the local hotel and others stayed with friends and family."

He said a Queensland Rail train crew was also stranded in some fairly fast-flowing water for a few hours, but they were brought back to Mount Isa early on Friday morning.—*Xinhua*

Abe to explain view on collective self-defence before Cabinet approval

TOKYO, 28 Feb — Following pressure for more Diet debate, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Friday he will explain the government's views on lifting the ban on exercising the right to collective self-defence before obtaining Cabinet approval for the move.

Abe has faced calls both from within his own ruling bloc and from opposition parties for discussion of the fundamental change to Japan's security posture after initially saying he would explain his views after a decision by the Cabinet.

"If the Diet wants to ask for the government's view (on collective self-defence) before Cabinet approval, I have an obligation to answer," Abe said. "I will explain about the progress if necessary."

Exercising the right to collective self-defence, which will allow the Self-Defence Forces to defend allies under armed attack, is banned under the government's current interpretation of the Constitution.

Abe said last week Cabinet approval will be enough for the change and should precede Diet debate, as he outlined the steps toward changing the constitutional interpretation.

But a senior lawmaker from the New Komeito party, the junior coalition partner of Abe's Liberal Democratic Party, stressed earlier this week the importance of Diet debate to gain public support for the change, a view shared by the largest opposition Democratic Party of Japan.

Kyodo News

***Photo taken on 27 Feb, 2014 shows a damaged vehicle at the blast site in Mogadishu, capital of Somali. At least 10 people were killed and 12 others were injured after a car bomb went off at a restaurant near the Somali Intelligence and Security Agency headquarters in Somali capital Mogadishu on Thursday as a spate of attacks by militants hit the city, police say.—*XINHUA**

China's turbulent Xinjiang weighs anti-terror laws for the first time

SHANGHA, 28 Feb — China's restive far western region of Xinjiang is considering drafting anti-terror laws for the first time, following a string of deadly incidents, a state-run newspaper said on Friday.

Authorities are keen to clamp down on unrest that has killed more than 100 people during the past year in the resource-rich region, where tensions have long simmered between a large Muslim Uighur minority and growing numbers of ethnic Han Chinese. Work on the anti-terror law is planned to start this year, although finalizing a draft may take several years, legislative official Bo Xiao told the *China Daily*.

"The legislation is in the second phase of this year's legislative work plan," said Bo, director of a regional law-drafting body, adding that discussion now centered on the feasibility and impact of the law.

China uses its Criminal Law to tackle what it calls terror-related crimes in Xinjiang, but regional officials consider this inadequate for some cases. Some have said Muslim extremists there receive help from militants in neighbouring countries.

While authorities adopt a tougher stance against dissent in Xinjiang, many Uighurs resent curbs on their culture and religion, though Beijing says it grants them broad freedoms.

In February, Chinese forces killed 11 "terrorists" near the region's border with Kyrgyzstan. Five suspected Islamist militants were arrested in October, after what police called a terrorist attack on Beijing's central Tiananmen square.

Reuters

N Korea launched scud missiles

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — The US Defence Department confirmed on Thursday that North Korea launched short-range scud missiles from the country's east coast but did not say how many and what they were intended for.

"North Korea launched several short-range missiles, they were scud missiles," Col. Steven Warren, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters, adding, the missiles do not appear to have targeted anyone.

The department did not regard the missile launches as provocative, Warren said. "We've seen these types of missile tests fairly regularly, it's a short-range scud missile which they are allowed to test."

The spokesman said the number of missiles North Korea fired was between two to four.

A South Korean Defence Ministry official said North Korea launched four projectiles believed to be short-range missiles from the southeastern coast.

Jen Psaki, a State Department spokeswoman, declined to comment the missile launch, simply saying, I am not in a position to analyze obviously these reports that just came out this morning in terms of what the motivation of it was."—*Kyodo News*

Supporters of Afghan presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah attend an election gathering in Kabul, capital of Afghanistan, on 27 Feb, 2014. An Afghan presidential candidate, Abdullah Abdullah on Thursday again called for holding a transparent election in the war-torn country, warning people of Afghanistan will not accept forgery and fabricated result of the coming presidential polls.—XINHUA

Brazil to earmark large chunk of oil revenue to improve education

RIO DE JANEIRO, 28 Feb — President Dilma Rousseff said on Thursday Brazil will earmark a large part of its oil revenue to improve education.

The government will earmark for education 75 percent of the revenue from oil sales and 50 percent of the revenue from the extraction of crude from its deep-water pre-salt reserves, Rousseff said at a graduation ceremony in the National Programme for Technical Training and Employment in Sao Paulo.

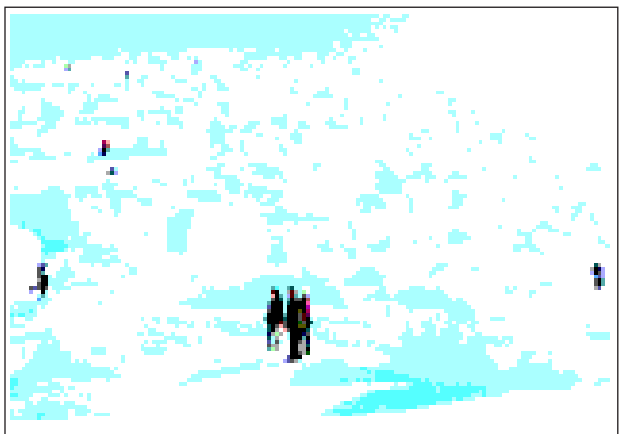
Brazil's two biggest resources are its people and its oil reserves, Rousseff said, adding "this limited wealth has to be transformed into Brazil's endless richness, which is education."

"For Brazil, to grow and develop and to leave behind its tragic history of inequality, we need to pave the way to education, especially technical education, which is very important for any country," the president said. Education improvement requires cooperation of different sectors, Rousseff said, highlighting the importance of student unions, family support and opportunities created by government programmes.

"Such collaboration allows the country to move forward," she said.

Over the past few years, Brazil has discovered billions of barrels of high-quality oil in offshore reserves. Most of these fields lie beneath several kilometers of ocean, bedrock and hot salt beds, making extraction extremely technically difficult.

Xinhua



Tourists walk among "Ice Monsters," or snow-coated trees, at the Zao hot spring and skiing resort in Yamagata Prefecture, northeastern Japan, on 26 Feb, 2014.—KYODO NEWS

Court rules Georgian ex-PM guilty of violently breaking up protesters

TBILISI, 28 Feb — The Tbilisi City Court on Thursday declared Georgia's former prime minister Vano Merabishvili guilty of exceeding official power and of violently breaking up opposition protesters in May of 2011.

The original sentence of six years in prison was reduced to four years and six months in accordance with a December 2012 amnesty. Merabishvili is to stay behind bars for three years and nine months after deducting his pre-trial detention time.

The case on the May 26 of 2011 demonstration was debated for five months and the charges required between eight and 11 years in prison. The defense team said it would appeal against the verdict.

On 17 February, the same court sentenced Merabishvili to five years and a half in prison for embezzlement of public funds to foot the bills of his then ruling party activities prior to the 2012 parliamentary elections. Merabishvili had served as interior minister, prime minister and secretary-general of the former ruling party of Georgia during the presidency of Mikheil Saakashvili.—*Xinhua*

Pakistani group says ending blockade of NATO supplies to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD, 28 Feb — A Pakistani political party in the local coalition government in a northwestern border province announced on Thursday an end to its nearly three-month long blockade of supplies to NATO-led international troops in neighbouring Afghanistan.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party in Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Province said in a press release that a party committee decided to take the action as directed by the Peshawar High Court. The party led the sit-in that started in 23 November to demand the end of drone strikes in tribal areas. Acting on a petition filed by a local lawyer, the high court ruled Tuesday that such a sit-in is illegal.

Kyodo News

Fresh snowstorm to hit US Midwest, Northeast

NEW YORK, 28 Feb — A major snowstorm will pelt some parts of the United States from Sunday evening through Monday and will cause major disruptions in cities such as Chicago and New York City, according to AccuWeather on Thursday.

Early indications are that a long-duration snow event will expand from the northern Rockies and central Plains to portions of the Midwest and Northeast in the days ahead.

The heaviest snow is likely to fall Monday afternoon into evening in the coastal Northeast, said Alex Sosnowski, a meteorologist. And the snowfall rates at the height of the storm may reach 2 inches (about 5.1 centimeters) per hour.

Xinhua

EBay founder rejects Icahn's call for PayPal spinoff

BANGALORE, 28 Feb — EBay Inc founder and Chairman Pierre Omidyar rejected investor Carl Icahn's call to separate the company's fast-growing PayPal payments unit, saying the businesses were better off together.

Omidyar, who is the largest shareholder in eBay with a stake of 8.37 percent, said separating PayPal from eBay was not a new idea and the board had evaluated the option but decided to keep the businesses together.

Icahn, who disclosed a 2.15 percent stake in the e-commerce company last week, had also accused two long-time eBay board members, Marc Andreessen and Scott Cook, of having business interests that directly competed with eBay. "Instead of having an honest discussion about a reasonable question, Mr. Icahn has chosen to attack the integrity of two highly respected and qualified board members, Scott Cook and Marc Andreessen," Omidyar said in a statement.

Venture capitalist Marc Andreessen defended the corporate-governance practices of the technology industry in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* saying, "If I'm on a public board and that public company is looking at buying a company in a certain space and one of my startups is in that space, I will not be part of that conversation."

"This has been established over decades of corporate governance and there's nothing unique to tech about it," Andreessen told the Journal.—*Reuters*

An Ebay logo is displayed on a monitor in this photo illustration in Encinitas, California, on 16 April, 2013. Ebay will report their earnings on Wednesday.—REUTERS

An H-2A rocket moves from the assembly plant to the launchpad (R) at Tanegashima Space Centre, Kagoshima Prefecture, southwestern Japan, on 27 Feb, 2014. The rocket carrying a precipitation monitor satellite is planned to be launched the following day.
KYODO NEWS

Global warming slowdown likely to be brief: US, UK science bodies

OSLO, 28 Feb — A slowdown in the pace of global warming so far this century is likely to be only a pause in a longer-term trend of rising temperatures, the science academies of the United States and Britain said on Thursday. Since an exceptionally warm 1998, there has been "a short-term slowdown in the warming of Earth's surface," Britain's Royal Society and the US National Academy of Sciences said in a report.

But, they said, that "does not invalidate our understanding of long-term changes in global temperature arising from human-induced changes in greenhouse gases."

The warming slowdown has emboldened those who question the evidence about climate change and ask whether a shift in investments towards renewable energies such as wind and solar power, advocated by many experts, is really needed. But the report said that scientists were "very confident" that the planet would warm further this century, causing more extreme heatwaves, droughts and rising seas.

A build-up of greenhouse gases from human activities, mainly the burning of fossil fuels, is warming the atmosphere and the oceans, raising sea levels and melting Arctic ice, the report said, supporting the long-held view of a UN panel of climate scientists.

A stream of water trickles on the bottom of the Almaden Reservoir near San Jose, California on 21 Jan, 2014.—REUTERS

It projected that temperatures would rise by between 2.6 and 4.8 Celsius (4.7-8.6 F) by 2100 unless governments took strong action to limit rising emissions of greenhouse gases, broadly in line with UN estimates.Temperatures have gained about 0.8 C (1.4 F) since the 19th century.

Almost 200 nations have agreed to work out a deal by the end of 2015 to combat climate change. So far there has been little progress in negotiations, partly because weak economic growth has sapped government interest. Policy decisions were only possible if "based on the best possible advice about the science of climate change," Paul Nurse, President of the Royal Society, told a briefing.

Reuters

Japan says any bitcoin regulation should be international

TOKYO, 28 Feb — Any regulation of the bitcoin crypto-currency should involve international cooperation to avoid loopholes, Japanese vice finance minister Jiro Aichi said on Thursday. Commenting on the closure this week of Tokyo-based Mt Gox, once the world's biggest exchange for the bitcoin virtual currency, Aichi said the ministry would respond to the problems "if necessary", after finding out exactly what happened.

"It's not just the Ministry of Finance; many other agencies are related," Aichi told a news conference. "As for its legal position, a currency (under Japan's jurisdiction) would be coins or notes issued by the Bank of Japan. At the very least, we can say bitcoin is not a currency." US Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen, appearing on Thursday before a Senate committee, said the Fed has no jurisdiction over bitcoin but that Congress should consider ways to regulate such virtual currencies.—*Reuters*

A physical bitcoin created by Mike Caldwell is seen in a photo illustration in Sandy, Utah, in this file photo taken on 17 Sept, 2013.—REUTERS

Black holes blow stronger winds than previously thought

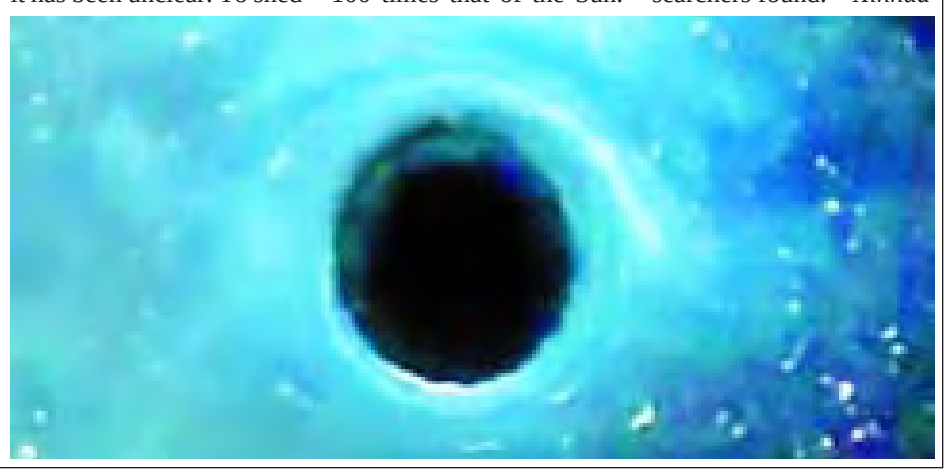
WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — Black holes can release more energy into the galaxies they live in than previously thought, a new study said on Thursday.

The discovery, published in the US journal *Science*, will help astronomers better model the evolution of black holes over time, and it will also help them better understand how these mysterious regions affect their host galaxies. Black holes are places in space where gravity pulls so much that even light cannot get out. Black holes grow when gas in space flows or accretes onto them. The gas inside gets so hot it emits radiation.

According to a theory of physics called the Eddington limit, the amount of radiation flowing outward from a black hole cannot exceed a certain limit or it will blow the inflowing gas away.

The limit is based on the black hole's mass. However, whether a black hole's kinetic energy, in the form of jets and winds, is controlled by the same limit has been unclear. To shed some light on the matter, scientists led by Roberto Soria of Australia's Curtin University used telescopes to study the outflow of a black hole in galaxy M83 for more than a year.

By analyzing the gas flowing into the black hole, they figured out the black hole's weight as less than 100 times that of the Sun. The researchers compared the mass of the black hole with its outgoing kinetic power, which they were able to infer in part by looking at the light around it. The kinetic power flowing out of the black hole was higher than the Eddington limit for a black hole of this mass, the researchers found.—*Xinhua*



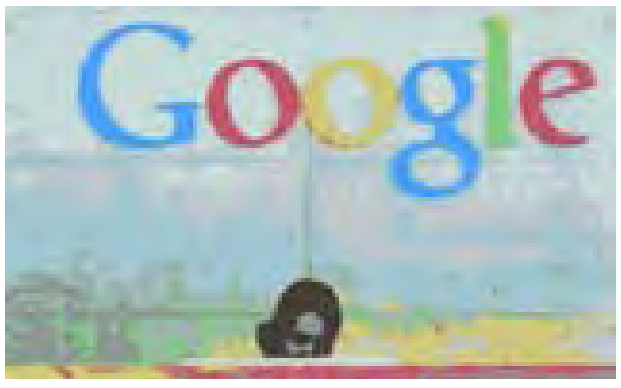
Lawsuit against Google over Gmail faces hurdle, US judge says

San Jose, (California), 28 Feb — A US judge on Thursday said some plaintiffs accusing Google of improperly scanning their email faced a significant hurdle in their attempt to move forward with the lawsuit as a class action.

Litigation brought by nine plaintiffs, some Gmail users, some not, was consolidated before US District Judge Lucy Koh in San Jose, California, last year. The plaintiffs maintain Google violated several laws, including federal anti-wiretapping statutes by systematically crossing the "creepy line" to read private email messages in order to profit, according to court documents.

The case is being closely watched as it could alter how tech companies provide email service.Koh must decide whether the lawsuit can proceed as a class action, which would allow the plaintiffs to sue as a group and give them more leverage to extract a larger settlement.

Reuters



An employee answers phone calls at the switchboard of the Google office in Zurich on 18 Aug, 2009.—Reuters

US proposes major update to food labels in bid to combat obesity

Washington, 28 Feb — Packaged foods sold in the United States would display calorie counts more prominently and include the amount of added sugar under a proposal to significantly update nutritional labels for the first time in 20 years as health officials seek to reduce obesity and combat related diseases such as diabetes.

The Food and Drug Administration said on Thursday its proposal would also ensure that the amount of calories listed per serving reflects the portions that people typically eat. That change may result in per-serving calorie counts doubling for some foods such as ice cream. First lady Michelle Obama, who has used her White House position to launch the "Let's Move" campaign to fight childhood obesity, announced the proposal alongside the FDA. The principle behind the update is "very simple," she said in a statement. "You as a parent and a consumer should be able to walk into your local grocery store, pick up an item off the shelf, and be able to tell whether it's good for your family."

US first lady Michelle Obama applauds as she unveils proposed updates to nutrition facts labels during remarks in the East Room of the White House in Washington, on 27 Feb, 2014. — Reuters

While the FDA already requires companies to list the amount of sugar in a product, under the proposal they would also be required to list the amount of added sugar. Natural sugar is contained in fruits. Added sugar includes corn syrup and concentrated juice as well as white and brown sugar. In addition, the labeling on vitamin content would change, with companies required to list the amount of potassium and vitamin D. Currently, companies are required to list the amounts of vitamin A and vitamin C, but the FDA said deficiencies in vitamin D and potassium are more likely.—*Reuters*

Japan, Turkey scrap talks on tank engine supply deal

Tokyo, 28 Feb — Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (7011.T) has lost a potential deal to supply tank engines to Turkey because of restrictions that remain in place on Japan's military exports, officials in Turkey and Japan said.The development shows the limits of Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's effort to dismantle a near total ban on Japanese weapons exports that has shut the country's defence contractors out of overseas markets since World War Two.

Abe is pushing to ease the terms of Japan's self-imposed weapons export restrictions in part to lower Japan's defense procurement costs as part of a bid to build a more robust military to counter the rising regional power of China. Mitsubishi Heavy had been under consideration to supply engines for the Altay tank being developed by Turkey's Otokar (OTKAR.IS) since last year. But on Thursday Murad Bayar, Turkey's undersecretary for state-run defence industries, told reporters that the potential deal had been quietly dropped in talks with Tokyo.

"We have agreed with Japanese authorities to leave this topic off the agenda and focus on other areas of co-operation," Bayar said.Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan had raised the issue of Japan's co-operation in supplying tank engines when Abe visited Ankara in May. The approach by Erdogan sparked a round of talks between officials from the two countries and a visit to Turkey by Japanese engineers, officials in Japan said. A spokesman for Mitsubishi Heavy said the company had no comment because the discussions were a "government matter."— *Reuters*

Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' logo is pictured outside the company headquarters in Tokyo on 17 Dec, 2012. — Reuters

Finland develops hyperspectral camera for detecting skin cancer in seconds

Helsinki, 27 Feb — The Technical Research Center of Finland VTT has developed a hyperspectral camera, which is capable to detect early stage of skin cancer, the Finnish Daily *Helsingin Sanomat* reported on Thursday.

According to Heikki Saari, inventor of the camera, high-resolution hyper-spectral imaging has been utilized "in unmanned aircraft used in environmental research."

The hand-held and accurate camera can image an large skin area of 12 square centimetres at one time for pre-malignancies in two seconds. It can be used to detect skin cancer and its precursors and enable the early treatment of the decease. The camera can also be used to find out the borders of poorly skin tumors, such as lentigo malignas, which are difficult to detect by naked eyes, in order to avoid the need for re-excisions.

"The preliminary results are promising," says Noora Neittaanmaki-Perttu, a doctor from the Helsinki University Central Hospital, adding that the light-weight and manual tool is suitable for clinical trials.

According to VTT, skin cancer rates have been growing rapidly worldwide, due to population aging and UV damage caused by excessive exposure to sunlight. The innovation of the hyperspectral camera opens up a new prospect for efficiently detecting and curing skin cancers at early stage. — *Xinhua*

Indoor tanning tied to risky behaviours among teens

New York, 28 Feb — US teenagers who use indoor tanning devices are more likely to take part in other risky behaviors, according to a new government study. Researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that using indoor tanning devices was linked to binge drinking, having sex and using unsafe methods to control weight among high school students. "I think it's important to understand the prevalence of indoor tanning and its relation to other risky behaviors," Gery Guy, Jr, the study's lead author from the CDC, told *Reuters Health.*

Understanding the relationship between other behaviors and indoor tanning can help public health advocates to understand the tanners' motivations and better target campaigns to dissuade the practice.

Reuters

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 1 March, 2014

Toward zero discrimination

Everyday, most of us discriminate others or are being discriminated by others for what we are. How discrimination occurs in everyday life is very simple. Just take a look at the workplace as a common example. When you think you are smarter than someone else or someone else thinks he is smarter than you, discrimination begins.

Discrimination can happen anywhere—at home, at work, at school and in the community. Around the world, too many people have been and are still being discriminated on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation or identity, disability, gender or age.

"Equality" or "equal treatment" is easier to talk about than to do whereas discrimination is just the reverse. Even the champions and preachers of equality can't practise it themselves for standing by the wrongs means indirect support of discrimination.

In Myanmar romantic comedies, the supporting actor who acts as the romantic rival of the main actor, are often mocked and knocked out of love triangle because of their defect(s). Discrimination against someone because of his character defect(s) is acceptable, but making fun of someone because of his physical weakness is completely wrong. Still, Myanmar movies feature such scenes which go far beyond the boundaries of a laughing matter.

Unfair treatment of someone because of his disability or birth defect(s) is grave violation of human rights. No one wants to be born incomplete, deformed and disabled. Is it fair to treat them unequally because of what they can't choose for? You may be lucky enough to have been born complete but whether or not you can keep all your body parts intact or you can keep your fit body until you die, nobody knows.

To end discrimination, the very first step we need to take is to accept and love diversity. We must also speak up when something is wrong because when a wrong is not corrected for a long time, it becomes a right thing in the mind of people.

Today marks the very first Zero Discrimination Day which will be celebrated on 1 March from now on.

Let's take this opportunity to celebrate everyone's right to live a full and productive life with dignity. Let's make the world more and more beautiful beginning today.

Microfinance to be typical tool for the poor people

Aung Khing Phyo

Dr. Muhamad Yunus, Microfinance pioneer, Noble prize laureate and stake-driver of Grameen Trust Bank asserted the fact that the poor can pay back. Whenever questioned if the poor can afford to repay credit, he spontaneously responded, "of course they can. Poor people are unlike the rich. They have worries about next cycle of loans. Access to loans is the only opportunity to them." It is generally true, despite being born of the poor parents because of poor fate, the poor try to pay back debts to lenders by any means.

Dr. Yunus, while working for Chittagong University, observed the poor farmers in nearby Jobra village, on the way to his daily work and hit upon the micro-lending strategy by which livelihood of the farmers could be improved. He started his pilot-scale microfinance service with lending 27 US$ of his own pocket money to the bamboo-ware weavers-group. In 1976, he set up Grameen Bank that provided the needy poor access to formal capital source. 1980s saw Grameen expanding its services highly geared up. In 1982, Grameen Bank could be opened, with center in Dhaka, and branch offices in the areas in all directions.

In later 1980s and early 1990s, Grameen Models spread to external countries, i.e. Malaysia, the Philippines, India, Nepal, Vietnam, China, etc. where projects for promotion of poor people's economic life were being implemented. In the Philippines, CARD Bank is a bank emanated from a small credit program for the poor, replicated from Grameen Model. Grameen Model was awarded the chance to migrate also to Myanmar for working as sub-contractor of UNDP Microfinance Project to improve the livelihood of the poor. Its contemporaries were Pact and Gret, two INGOs. Grameen was assigned to implement in Delta Zone, Pact in Dry Zone and Gret in Shan state. It was very rare case INGOs were contracted for implementing projects in those days, and starting only from Nargis cyclone period in Delta, NGOs and INGOs began to mushroom, being engaged with multi-sector development activities.

UNDP Microfinance was ushered in 1997, under Human Development Initiative Program, with the mission of providing small credit to the poor people at grassroots level in villages in Myanmar. Target people were mainly women, who could generate extra income, but had no access to formal financial institutions. Grameen applied 14 Grameen disciplines precisely in Delta, and succeeded in its implementation. Pact and Gret also achieved in their operations, with use of respective methodologies reaching the target of project. [Grameen discontinued its contract at the end of 2002, Gret in 2006. Pact was the sole working partner of the project in last term of Project.] Around 1997, UNDP projects numbered about 15, covering health, forestry, education, agriculture, water and sanitation, etc working in nominal cooperation with line Ministries under UN mandate for Myanmar. Later, most of those phased out gradually and after 2008, two or three of those remained waiting for project termination date. UNDP began to take steps to switch its programs to regular country programs. In 2013, Microfinance Project also came to a grinding halt with much more visionary outcomes compared with other projects, witnessed by International Missions and Donors. Although project curtain was pulled down, from 2014 onwards, Microfinance service delivery will continue with use of efficient provider, in the interest of poor people.

Formerly, Government showed indifference to Microfinance Program and did not accept it as good tool for the poor people. Thanks are due to Ministry of Cooperatives for its patient attending to, and giving full support to the project, without which Microfinance Project will not be sustainable like it is today. Present Government regards Microfinance as one of eight major tasks for Rural Development and Poverty Reduction. Microfinance Law was enacted in November, 2011. Microfinance Supervisory Committee was formed for streamlining the activities, with technical support of Myanma Microfinance Supervision Enterprise. It is quite obvious Microfinance oar is the fastest out of eight oars in rowing Rural Development and Poverty Reduction boat, within these two years.

Unlike before, on operational ground, only pact and other one or two are not service-providing, and number of licensed Microfinance Institutions is rising, monthly. Institutions are in light of NGOs, INGOs, companies (local and foreign), and cooperatives, with different operational modes of operation, management structures, and customers served. 80% of all MFIs accounts for cooperatives and local companies. NGOs, particularly INGOs, employ well-paid staff for providing door-to-door services in the field. Training somewhat similar to academic course is prepared for staff, costing them high administratively. Foreign companies invest huge sum of investment, employing local staff and have tendency to provide loans of big size rather than small credit. Cooperatives usually assigned duties to departmental staff at state, region, township levels, and executive committee members of societies. One advantage of cooperatives is it has operational organs in every niche of the country, causing less cost of operation. Local companies employ bare number of local staff and have no local office, but Head Office used as control office stationed in cities and big towns. They have also less operation expenses, running operation with minimum management cost. Some devote business only to Microfinance. For some, Microfinance is one component of organization. Some take profit from Microfinance service. Some announce they are non profit-taking. Some use interest income only for Microfinance operations. Some, particularly, cooperatives use one portion of income, as contribution to village development fund. Some accept borrowers' saving to be re-used as a source of loan fund as well as cushion for those that fall victim to unexpected natural disasters. Some do not have saving practice at all. Loan repayment is also different from each other, varying with loan natures. Interest rate on loan must not exceed 2.5 kyat per month for 100 kyat loan, according to Microfinance Law. What is more interesting is that there are some MFIs charging the rate lower than that. Of late, cooperatives declared it will reduce the rate down to 1.5 kyat per month for 100 kyat loan. The time has come for licensed MFIs, whatever type they are, they are in no more position to be adamant to a fixed mode of operation, loan product, target borrower, like before. It is a rather complicated scenario to have a look at these MFIs.

Nonetheless, all Microfinance Service providers must not lose sight of nations' immediate mission .i.e. to reduce poverty rate down to 16% in 2015, to focus on rural people 70% of population; to let Microfinance be one working toll for Rural Development and Poverty Reduction. They must not forget the main reason for inviting them to this program is to acquire support technical and financial; to reach the aim. Power of service delivery should be based on true clients and proper mechanism. Licensed MFIs now nearing 200, should gauge impact of their services on national program. We are to sympathize with Myanma Microfinance Supervisory Enterprise which is taking the duty of supervision of above assorted MFIs. The Enterprise itself was foreign to this Microfinance before last 2 years. With emergence of Microfinance Law, duty of MFI supervision fell on its shoulder. It started study of Microfinance subject and building capacity of its staff, intensively. It invited and welcomes local and international resource persons for gaining updated information on MFIs supervision. International agencies' first initiative is to organize a forum or workshop participated by guest speakers, officials from relevant departments and interested NGOs and INGOs, that usually last not more than 2 days. Although this is a good practice and worth-doing if it is done at opportune time, a span of time is required to digest and thresh out the appropriate information shared to be applied practically. Disorganized and inefficient institutions will have to leave the square ring one day, because Microfinance market is of customer's choice. So, MMSE should not be over anxious about playing its role as par international standards laboriously learnt within short period. Both parties from operators' side and regulator's side, are still beginners in Myanmar MF sector, and in such situation, MMSE is to improve capacity steadily while supervising, collecting lessons from experiences, field visits and issuing guidance as required.

Recent daily paper, the New Light of Myanmar of 10-2-2014, gave the

(See page 9)

The Report Myanmar-2014 ...

(from page 1)

is taking towards a diversified economy, President U Thein Sein said. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), GDP growth is estimated at 7.5% for the 2014-2015 FY and projected to reach 7.7%. The Foreign Investment Law of November 2012 was one of the biggest steps for Myanmar in its economic reform process and the country is living up to its reputation as the most exciting place for investors to visit and research for 2014, said Mr Paulius Kuncinas, Regional Editor of the Oxford Business Group.

However, estimates for Myanmar's population range from 55 million to 70 million, growing at around 1-2% per year, with a median age of 27.2, and the country's young labour force is a key asset for the economy, the report said. The Report Myanmar-2014 would help Myanmar to become one of the leading investment destinations and would stimulate private sector capital inflows into strategic projects, said U Soe Thane, Union Minister at the President Office.

NLM

President U Thein Sein meets WWF delegation

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb—A delegation led by Mrs. Guilda Navidi-Walker, Honorary Consul of Britain branch of Switzerland-based World Wild Fund for Nature-WWF paid a call on President U Thein Sein at the Credentials Hall of the Presidential Palace here on Friday.

At the call, both sides discussed the utmost efforts for successful realizing the green economy in Myanmar educated by the UN, conservation of biodiversity, technical and cash requirements in wildlife preservation, WWF's wish to closely cooperate with Myanmar and sign MoU with the Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry.

MNA

President U Thein Sein shaking hands with Mrs. Guilda Navidi-Walker, Honorary Consul of Britain branch of Switzerland-based World Wild Fund for Nature-WWF.

MNA

Government sees no ...

(from page 16)

for renovation of Mauk San monastery in Maukme Township of Shan State (South) with the use of State budget as the monastery was not listed as an ancient religious edifice.

Pyithu Hluttaw approved the Writ Bill with Amyotha Hluttaw's amendments at the today's session.

In his response to the question of Dr Myint Kyi of Yangon Region Constituency No (8) at the today's Amyotha Hluttaw session, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Kyaw Tun acknowledged the role of private security services, saying that they are providing same services for ensuring community peace and tranquility and the rule of law being implemented by Myanmar Police Force. He replied that company registration at the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and application for manpower to the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security are underway in accord with the provisions of 1913 Myanmar Companies Act. Works on enactment of law and bylaws of international standards needed for private security firm are underway with the help of legal experts in accord with rules and regulations, he added. U Tin Yu, member of Amyotha Hluttaw Bill Committee, read out the committee's report on Myanmar National Human Rights Commission. The report commented that Section 22 (d) of the Bill should be approved in accord with Amyotha Hluttaw's approval and stressed the need to seek the approval of Pyidaungsu Hluttaw on 13 points on which Amyotha Hluttaw and Pyithu Hluttaw disagreed. The Speaker of Amyotha Hluttaw announced that the points will be submitted to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw for approval.

Before the end of the today's session, the Speaker called on parliamentarians wanting to discuss the amendments of the Pyithu Hluttaw on the Amyotha Hluttaw-approved Anti-Terrorism Bill to list their names.—*MNA*

Vice-Senior General Soe Win receives US Ambassador

***Vice-Senior General Soe Win poses for documentary photo with US Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Derek Mitchell.*—MYAWADY**

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb—Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win received US Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Derek Mitchell at Zeyathiri Beikman, here, on Friday evening. Both sides discussed matters related to Myanmar defence services' past involvement in the role of national politics, present participation and ongoing task on the track of future democratization, progress of formulation for eternal peace with ethnic armed groups and future prospects and analysis on further strengthening relations between the two armed forces.

Present at the call were Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Hla Htay Win and the senior military officers from the Commander-in-Chief's Office.—*Myawady*

International Conference ...

(from page 16)

Chairman of the National Policy Committee of the National Assembly and the Chairman of the Myanmar-Korea Economic Cooperation Association, and discussed bilateral relations between the two countries and business opportunities and challenges for Korean business community to do business in Myanmar. On Thursday morning, the Union Minister called on Mr. Yun Byung-se, Minister of Foreign Affairs of ROK and exchanged views on the prospects of Myanmar-Korea bilateral relations and possible areas of cooperation between Myanmar and ROK. He visited the ASEAN-Korea Centre based in Seoul and discussed with the Secretary-General and officials from the Centre on the role of the Centre in the ASEAN-ROK dialogue relations and economic and trade, investment and tourism cooperation between the two countries.

The Union Minister met with staffs and family members of the Embassy of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and office of the Military Attaché to ROK.

The Union Minister gave an interview to the Editor of the Chosun Ilbo Newspaper. He also met with Chief Executive Officers and officials from the Daewoo International Corporation, Samsung Corporation and Shinsegae Corporation (e-mart).—*MNA*

Microfinance to be...

(from page 8)

message that, in Cambodia, according to the report of National Bank of Cambodia, the regulator of banking and finance institutions in the country, Microfinance Institutions had lent a total of 1.17 billion US dollars to the customers last year; currently, the micro-lenders have been serving about 2.4 million customers; Cambodia sees Microfinance Institutions as a key player in helping the Government reduce poverty in rural areas; the sector has been well developed in recent year. Likewise, in not so distant future, we are to expect to hear regulator of Myanmar Microfinance Institutions will announce its view and assessment on performance of the micro-credit providers in poverty reduction sector here.

Actually, now is the time for expediting the Microfinance operations to reach the nation's goal of poverty reduction within stipulated time. If one is to learn challenging issues, there are reports of previous Microfinance seminars and forums. If experiences of Microfinance in Myanmar is needed, pact, INGO, the biggest Microfinance service provider in Myanmar, which has been providing MF service in villages in Myanmar for the last 16 years' time can give full package of data. So can do Cooperative Ministry which is now endeavoring to expand its operations to 60,000 villages across the country. Myanma Microfinance Supervision Enterprise is never reluctant to thoroughly explain MF Law and procedures. So let us not sink money in holding frequent seminars and workshops and spend time instead of using those in Microfinance operations. Let's demonstrate Microfinance is good tool for poverty reduction. Let's not pervert Microfinance essence.

Fire Prevention

Fire preventive measures discussed

MANDALAY, 28 Feb—A meeting on fire preventive measures at fuel stations was held at the hall of Mandalay Region office on 25 February afternoon.
The Mandalay Region Minister for Electricity and Industry heard reports and gave instructions to responsible persons of companies and private fuel stations.
The Head of Mandalay Region Fire Services Department explained dos and don'ts for the fuel stations with regard to fire preventive measures.
The region minister and officials replied to queries raised by those present.
It was also attended by the head of Mandalay Region Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise under the Ministry of Energy and responsible persons from over 90 fuel stations in Mandalay Region.
MMAL-Wai Phyo Aung

National Objectives of 69th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

- **To uphold Our Three Main National Causes as national policy**
- **To work on national security by the Tatmadaw joining hands with the government and the entire people**
- **To cooperate with the government in implementing rural development and poverty alleviation scheme, and**
- **To actively participate in restoring eternal peace and building a developed democratic nation based on the Union through peace ad stability**

Teachership diploma course conferred

SAGAING, 28 Feb—Sagaing Education College of Education Planning and Training Department under the Ministry of Education conferred diploma on teachership on trainees at its hall, Sagaing, on 27 February morning.
It was attended by Chairman of Sagaing District Management Committee U Kyaw Min Nyo, departmental officials, Principal of the college Daw Shwe Shwe Toe and faculty members and townselders.
The certificates of diploma were conferred on 176 trainees.
Kyemon-Myo Win

Officials on field trips of boosting paddy production

KYAUKTAN, 28 Feb—Director of Agriculture Department U Aye Ko Ko together with Head of Yangon Region Agriculture Department U Ko Ko Gyi and officials on 25 February met with 14 farmers from Kayinchaung Village-tract in Twantay Township, Yangon South District.
They discussed cultivation of Palethwe paddy strain through 14-point good agriculture pattern, marketing matters, 70 per cent of success in thriving paddy plants, cooperation of local farmers with staff of the department and increased income for the local farmers.
Officials presented cash award to the staff assigned at the region.
Local farmers reponded to the instructions of the officials and kept promises to cooperate with the departmental staff in paddy cultivation.—*MMAL-019*

Transport

Runs of cable car on uphill road to Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda coordinated

MAWLAMYINE, 28 Feb—Yeosu Poma Co Ltd of the Republic of Korea and Asia International Fisheries Co Ltd held a talk on runs of cable car to Kyaikhtiyoe Pagoda along the uphill road in Kyaikto Township, Mon State, on 25 February morning.

The entrepreneurs called on Mon State Ministers for Bamar National Affairs U Thet Win, Pa-O National Affairs U Khun Pe Mya and the State Minister for Finance at the Mon State government office.

Chairman Suri Ha Yoo of the ROK Company and U Khin Maung Win, Director of the Myanmar company explained the advantages of running cable cars for pilgrims and visitors to the pagoda and expressed their pledges not to cause impacts on the environments of the region.

The state minister said that they agreed to the plan in principle. But, the entrepreneurs have to seek the permission from Myanmar Investment Commission and departments concerned they said.—*MMAL-La/012*

Taxi hits traffic barrier

YANGON, 28 Feb—A taxi car hit the traffic barrier due to out of control in Ward 4 of Kamayut Township, Yangon Region, on 26 February afternoon.

A Superroof taxi heading for the north from the south along Bayintnaung Road hit the traffic barrier near Myanmar Marcantile College in Kamayut Township.

The taxi then bumped against a truck on the opposite way. There was no injury but both vehicles were damaged at heads.

Kyemon-Zaw Gyi (Panita)

A forest policeman tries to extinguish fire in a forest in Caiyun Town of Lufeng County in Chuxiong Yi Autonomous Prefecture, southwest China's Yunnan Province, on 27 Feb, 2014. A total of 1,270 people have been mobilized to put out the fire that started on 26 February here. As of the midday of 27 February, all fire has been put out and the local authorities are investigating the cause of the fire.
XINHUA

Ex-Thai Premier Abhisit says only Yingluck's retreat can ease crisis

BANGKOK, 28 Feb — Former Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva on Thursday said the ongoing political conflict has reached a stalemate and it can only be eased if Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra makes a retreat.

In an interview with *Kyodo News*, Abhisit warned that the political turmoil would continue if Yingluck holds on to power without showing any concrete plans for reform.

"The country will get stuck in this stalemate and the country is losing time, losing opportunity. There are more risks of violence. Things are getting out of control," Abhisit said.

Abhisit, who was in office from 2008 to 2011 and is now leader of the opposition Democrat Party, said Yingluck should step back and let the people of Thailand, including antigovernment protesters, undertake reform.

By retreating, Yingluck can help the country move forward and help the government ease the current political temperature, Abhisit said.

"Because the premier is setting preconditions — no, she has to complete (the general) election; no, she has to be a caretaker — you cannot get anywhere," Abhisit said.

To break the political impasse, Yingluck called a general election more than a year early. But the election, which was held 2 February, was boycotted by the Democrat Party. Results of the election have not been announced.

Former Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva is pictured during an interview with Kyodo News in Bangkok on 27 Feb, 2014.—KYODO NEWS

On the connection between the Democrat Party and antigovernment protesters who call themselves the People's Democratic Reform Committee, Abhisit said the Democrat Party and the PDRC share the same objectives on the country's reform but that they have differences in terms of the path to reform.

A large number of government protesters were Democrat supporters, including the top protest leader, former Deputy Prime Minister Suthep Thaugsuban, who was a Democrat lawmaker.

"There is no denial that lots of people who support PDRC would naturally be Democrat supporters," Abhisit said.

"We share the same objective obviously that we would like to see reform," he added.—*Kyodo News*

Indian Navy to probe into all submarine mishaps in past year

NEW DELHI, 28 Feb — The Indian Navy has ordered a high-level probe into all submarine mishaps in the past one year, including Wednesday's fire accident on board Russian-origin Kilo Class submarine *INS Sindhuratna* off Mumbai coast, in which two officers were killed and seven sailors injured.

"A high-level inquiry headed by an officer of Rear Admiral rank has been constituted and has immediately commenced its proceedings to establish the cause of all (submarine) incidents and to recommend steps for continuing safe operations of submarines," the Indian Navy said in a statement.

In fact, Wednesday's submarine incident — in which smoke, triggered by fire, engulfed the vessel on the Arabian Sea, some 50 km off Mumbai coast —was the 10th mishap involving an Indian Navy warship and the third submarine mishap in the past seven months.

In August last year, naval submarine *INS Sindhurakshak* sank at Mumbai port after it caught fire following multiple explosions on board, killing 18 sailors.

Sources say India currently has 13 conventionally powered submarines, out of which at least five have already exceeded their design life. The *INS Sindhughosh, INS Sindhudhaj, INS Sindhuraj, INS Sindhuvir and INS Sindhuratna* — all Russian-origin Kilo Class submarines, were inducted into the Indian Navy between 1986 and 1988. They have exceeded their shelf life.

Xinhua

Mahatma Gandhi's grandson joins anti-graft party to contest coming elections

NEW DELHI, 28 Feb — The grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, Rajmohan Gandhi, has joined anti-corruption Aam Aadmi Party to contest the upcoming general elections on AAP ticket from East Delhi constituency, sources said Friday.

Rajmohan Gandhi will compete with former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit's son Sandeep Dikshit of India's ruling Congress party, said the sources with the anti-graft party.

The 78-year-old Gandhi, the oldest son of Mahatma Gandhi's youngest son Devadas Gandhi, is a leading Indian academic and author. In 1989, he contested elections against former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as a Janata Dal candidate from Amethi, but that bid was not successful.

Mahatma Gandhi, who took the reins of Congress party in 1920, is famous worldwide for using non-violent civil disobedience to lead India to independence from Britain in 1947, and he inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the globe.—*Xinhua*

Few displaced residents returning to Fukushima despite state job aid

TOKYO, 28 Feb — Only 18 people have decided to take up jobs back in Fukushima Prefecture through a government scheme to find employment for those who fled in the wake of the March 2011 nuclear crisis, according to regional labor bureaus. The Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry set up in May a special section to support Fukushima evacuees at seven of the government's "Hello Work" job placement centers in five prefectures. Eighteen people had decided to return as of the end of January.

Labour bureau officials said there are jobs in Fukushima but little interest in them. They believe many of the evacuees have resettled in new locations and also worry about returning to Fukushima with no prospect of an end to the nuclear crisis in sight.

A 51-year-old man moved to Kazo, Saitama Prefecture from the Fukushima town of Futaba with his son and wife after he lost his job in the town of Namie following the nuclear accident. He has been taking up a series of short-term positions and looking for a stable job in Saitama.

"If I return to Fukushima, I will probably find a job, but I will be away from my family. It will be a big burden both mentally and financially," he said.

Masashi Kanno, 39, from Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture, is joining his wife and two daughters who moved to Niigata City in August 2011. He said he is taking up a job in Niigata in March. Kanno had hesitations about leaving his home. But he said, "I cannot trust the atmospheric radiation data announced by the government. In order for the whole family to live together, I had no choice but to come to Niigata."

Special job-placement support was offered to evacuees now in Yamagata, Saitama, Tokyo, Niigata and Osaka prefectures. Yamagata is known for the large number of evacuees from Fukushima. As of 16 January, 48,364 people were still living outside the prefecture after evacuating, according to the Fukushima prefectural government.—*Kyodo News*

Citizens in Beijing wear masks as heavy smog continues to envelop the Chinese capital on 26 Feb, 2014.—KYODO NEWS

Invitation for Prequalification

1. The Government of Republic of the Union of Myanmar has received a Loan from Japan International Cooperation Agency toward the cost of the Sub-Project for Expansion of Yangon Port in Thilawa Area (Phase-I) under Infrastructure Development in Thilawa Area (Phase-I). It is intended that part of the proceeds of this Loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract resulting from the bidding for which this prequalification is conducted.
2. The Myanma Port Authority intends to prequalify~ contractors and/or firms for the container terminal construction. Construction item includes followings:
   - Wharf (depth -l0m, length 400m, width 40m. piling foundation, jacket type deck structure) and Trestle (3 locations, length about 62m, width 15m and 20m)
   - Land reclamation (1 million cu.m)
   - Soil improvement by PVD method (17ha)
   - Container yard, buildings, warehouse, and utilities.
3. It is expected that Invitation for Bids will be made in *April.*[3]
4. Prequalification will be conducted through procedures in accordance with the applicable Guidelines for Procurement under Japanese ODA Loans, and is open to all Applicants from eligible source countries, as defined in the Loan Agreement.
5. Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information from and inspect the Prequalification Documents at the office of *[state address at end of this IFP]* from *on February 28 - March 5, 2014 during Office Hour from 9:30 to 16:30.*
6. A complete set of the Prequalification Documents may be purchased by interested Applicant(s) on the submission of a written Application to the address above and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee[4] of USD 500.00.
7. Applications for prequalification should be submitted in sealed envelopes, delivered to the address above by *April 7, 2014*,[5] and be clearly marked "Application to Prequalify for the Package1: Civil Work and Buildings, Sub-Project for Expansion of Yangon Port in Thilawa Area (Phase-I) under Infrastructure Development in Thilawa Area (Phase-I)."

U Kyaw Myint
Managing Direcor, Myanma Port Authority
No. 10, Pansodan St. Kyauktada Township, Yangon, Myanmar
Facsimile number: 95-1-246781, 391355
Electronic mail address:mpa@mptmail.net.mm

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV LIZSTAR GLORY VOY NO ( )

Consignees of cargo carried on MV LIZSTAR GLORY VOY NO ( ) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2.3.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S LIZSTAR SHIPPING LINE
Phone No: 256916/256919/256921

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV ORA BHUM VOY NO (362)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV ORA BHUM VOY NO (362 are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.3.2014 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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

French artist Paul Grangenon poses for photos with his paper panda artworks at an open-air exhibition titled "Pandas World Tour - Taipei" at the Citizens' Square in Taipei, southeast China's Taiwan, on 27 Feb, 2014. A total of 1,600 pandas and Formosan black bears made of environmentally-friendly paper material went on show here on Thursday. The event aims at promoting environmental protection and raising the public's awareness of animal preservation. All of the paper pandas and black bears on display will be open for charity sale after the event concludes on 30 March.—Xinhua

Cambodia, Laos finish 81 pct of joint border demarcation

Phnom Penh, 28 Feb — Cambodia and Laos have finished 81 percent of joint border demarcation so far and vowed to fully complete it as soon as possible, a spokesman said on Friday.

"The two countries have pledged to expedite the process of boundary demarcation and hope that the remaining 19 percent of the demarcation work will be completed as soon as possible," Ek Tha, a spokesman for Cambodia's Council of Ministers, told reporters.

He said Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Sok An met with Lao Deputy Foreign Minister Bounkuet Sangsomsak on Friday to discuss the matter.

Sok An said the peaceful settlement with mutual understanding on border issues between Cambodia and Laos should be a "role model " for countries in resolving their border problems. Bounkuet Sangsomsak said Laos was pleased to build a border of peace, friendship, cooperation and development with Cambodia.

Bounkuet visited Cambodia for a meeting with Cambodia's border chief Var Kimhong to discuss ways to speech up border demarcation between the two neighbours.

Cambodia shares 540 km of border with Laos to the north and northeast.

Xinhua

13 workers exposed to radiation at US nuclear facility

Houston, 28 Feb — At least 13 workers were confirmed to have exposed to radiation at a nuclear waste plant in the US state of New Mexico on Thursday, US media reported.

Officials with the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), located near Carlsbad in southeastern New Mexico, said at a press conference held on Thursday that 13 employees tested positive for radiation, local TV KOB reported.

Farok Sharif, president of the plant operator Nuclear Waste Partnership, told the media the affected workers inhaled particles of radiation while working above ground the night of the leak on 14 February.

It was the first time authorities confirmed human beings have been exposed to the radiation. Earlier officials denied any threat posed by the leak and insisted the environment around the area was safe.

Officials continued to reassure the public the amounts of radiation that have been detected offer no more risk than a dental X-ray or an airline flight. And they said the 13 workers' tests results were "preliminary" and "initial." Additional samples will be collected to determine the extent of the exposure.

The WIPP, the country's first deep underground nuclear repository, was shut down on 14 February after an air sensor detected unusually high levels of radioactive particles on its underground levels.

No workers were reportedly underground at the time. It's not known yet how many people were working above ground then. Normally, between 300 to 500 employees work at the plant every day. Even with the plant being shut down, WIPP said more than 100 workers showed up for work on Thursday.

Officials said they will also test employees who worked the day after the leak to see if they have been exposed.

Initially, officials said radiation was believed to be confined at the underground levels and no contamination was detected on surface levels, but an independent monitor center found radioactive isotopes in an air sensor a half mile (about 600 meters) from the site several days later.

State and federal authorities followed up on the monitoring and confirmed the saying. The US Department of Energy then sent a team to investigate.

The cause of the leak remains unknown. A truck fire was reported at the underground site on 5 February and prompted evacuations, but officials said the fire was in a different part of the site and did not seem related to the leak.

Xinhua

21 killed, 26 injured in Iraq's violence

Baghdad, 28 Feb — Twenty-one people were killed and 26 others wounded in violent attacks across Iraq on Wednesday, police said.

In the northern Province of Nineveh, a suicide car bomb struck an army checkpoint in the provincial capital of Mosul, some 400 km north of Baghdad. The attack killed three soldiers and a civilian, and injured another five soldiers.

Also in Mosul, three roadside bombs killed two policemen and wounded three.

The police in Mosul clashed with gunmen for more than an hour Wednesday near the south of the city, killing three of them.

Police also found two male bodies near the city of Qaiyara, some 40 km south of Mosul. They had bullet holes in their heads and chests.

In Salahudin Province, gunmen attacked a police station in Tal al-Dhahab area, some 80 km south of the provincial capital Tikrit. The station chief and two policemen were killed. Another two policemen were injured.

Salahudin is a Sunni-dominated province. Its capital Tikrit, some 170 km north of Baghdad, is the hometown of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

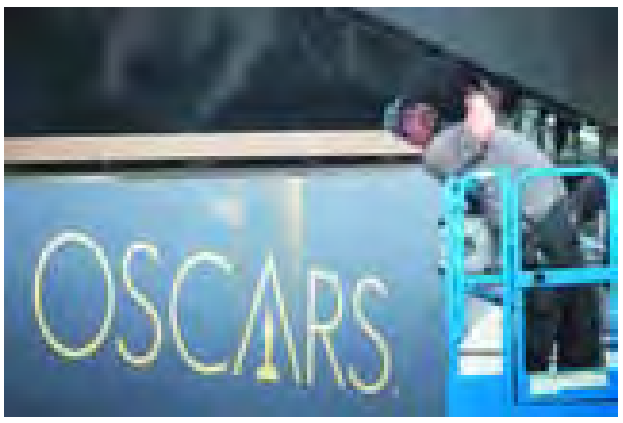
In Iraq's eastern Province of Diyala, a roadside bomb struck a bus near the provincial capital of Baquba, some 65 km northeast of Baghdad. Four people were killed and five others wounded.

Xinhua

Hollywood film production in 'bad spiral' as competition bites

Los Angeles, 28 Feb — Three days before the Oscars, the Los Angeles film czar and a think tank delivered some damning news to Tinseltown: Hollywood's status as the home of American film and television production is threatened because places like New York are offering better financial incentives to studios. The study of employment and production data released on Thursday by the Milken Institute, an economic think tank, says California has lost tens of thousands of entertainment jobs to New York and other US states in the past decade, and film and television productions with them.

While it may be one of the best years for high-quality film in recent memory, with nine strong films nominated for the best picture Oscar, just one of the nine was filmed in California. Ken Ziffren, a veteran California attorney recently appointed as Hollywood's film czar by the mayor of Los Angeles, said the report showed Hollywood was in a "bad spiral," both in terms of jobs and productions leaving California. Ziffren repeated a call for an expanded California film and tax credit, as did the Milken report — an issue that is politically controversial.



A man sets a digital display above the red carpet during preparations for the 86th Academy Awards in Hollywood, California on 26 Feb, 2014.—Reuters

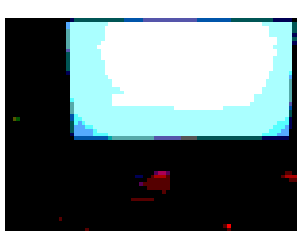
Proponents say it is vital to keep middle-class jobs and film production in the state. Opponents say wealthy Hollywood studios don't need another tax break and question whether further financial incentives will produce a net gain in jobs and revenue.The report by the Milken Institute, headquartered in Santa Monica, California, but with a national and international perspective, said California lost 16,137 film and TV industry jobs between 2004 and 2012, based on US Labour Department statistics.—*Reuters*

Oscar-nominated documentary scrapes at raw wound in Indonesia

Jakarta/ Madiun, (Indonesia), 28 Feb — A chilling documentary about one of the worst massacres since World War Two is up for an Academy Award this weekend. If it does win, don't expect the Indonesian co-director to go on stage to receive an Oscar: he's worried for his life.

The nearly three-hour "Act of Killing" centres on one of the killers in Indonesia's bloody purge of what was then the biggest communist party outside China and the Soviet Union, as he re-enacts for the camera, with no apparent sign of remorse, the way nearly 50 years earlier he had dispatched his victims by strangling them with a loop of wire.

It touches on the darkest period of Indonesia's already violent early years as an independent state and which even after almost half a century is so raw a memory that it remains largely brushed from mainstream debate.—*Reuters*



People watch "The Act of Killing'' movie in Jakarta, on 6 Feb, 2013.—Reuters

Soha Ali Khan, Sharmila Tagore endorse Doordarshan's upcoming show

New Delhi, 28 Feb — Actress Sharmila Tagore and her daughter Soha Ali support Doordarshan's Main Khuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon because they feel that the show, which deals with crime against women, can help bring about a change in society.

In an effort to challenge social issues like child marriage, early pregnancies and sex selection in our society, the mother-daughter duo has come together to support the serial."With the show, I can feel the commitment. It is important to support such initiatives because we know what is happening around the country. The show is based on real issues, so in order to convey it and find a solution, I have lent my support to this," Sharmila told IANS after the launch of the show."I will also ask Saif and Kareena to join the project," she added.

Produced and directed by Feroz Abbas Khan, Main Khuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon has been launched by Population Foundation of India (PFI). Marking the spirit of International Women's Day, it will be premiered on 8 March on Doordarshan.The show revolves around the journey of doctor Sneha and her fight to stop crime against women.Talking about her association with the show, Soha said: "I come from a privileged family and by that I never mean economic privileges, but educational privileges. I was quite stubborn, but I thank my family for supporting, however, sometimes they disagreed too."

PTI

The mother-daughter duo has come together to support the serial which deals with crime against women.—PTI

Ali Zafar also revealed that the film will have a big premiere in Pakistan.—PTI

Yami Gautam, Ali Zafar's "pretty boy" pact filming Total Siyapaa

Mumbai, 28 Feb — There nothing more stressful than meeting the parents but what if you are taking your Pakistani fiancé to meet your Indian parents. Well that's exactly what Yami Gautam has to do in her upcoming film, Total Siyapaa where she plays Indian Asha in love with Pakistani Aman, played by Ali Zafar.

In a candid interview, Ali Zafar revealed that he had an understanding with Yami that she would never call him "cute", "nice" or "pretty" ever. He also says that he had lived with the tag of being a "pretty boy" all his life.

When asked about why he chose to work with a script on such a sensitive issue, he said that though it's a sensitive subject, it was completely well balanced because of the way writer Neeraj Pandey had dealt with the script.

"The effort and the sincerity behind it are the things which made this (film) special," he added. Yami also praised Neeraj: "I had already watched A Wednesday and Special 26 by the time I read the script and it clearly spoke volumes on the kind of people who were going working with you on the project." She also praised Total Siyapaa director E Nivas saying that he had won a National Award back in times when she didn't even know what a National Award was. She felt that just reassured her about the way the project would be handled.

On reactions from Pakistan, Ali said that "Everyone back home is extremely excited about the film. Once they saw the trailer even they were in fits.

The topic is so unique in the film. That is why we plan to have a really big premiere out there and make it historical."About her 'knack' for impressing musical men like Ayushmann Khurrana, Ali and now A R Rahman, Yami said, "I just finished shooting a video with Rahman sir and that was the one thing which I really wanted to do. I really wanted to meet him as I am huge fan of Rahman sir. That experience of working with him was really something else."

PTI

Alia Bhatt is getting engaged. She said so herself

New Delhi, 28 Feb — Actress Alia Bhatt just tweet-invited everyone to her engagement. Her latest Twitter post reads: I'm getting engagedddddddd !!! ;)Oh, and her intended is actor Arjun Kapoor, who she's thus far refused to admit to dating.

Confused? Don't be. The 20-year-old actress, fresh from the success of Highway, posted an invite to the launch of the promo of her news film 2 States which co-stars Arjun. The invite reads: 'As esteemed members of the family, you are invited to the engagement ceremony (or the 2 States movie promo launch) between Krish Malhotra (Arjun Kapoor) & Ananya Swaminathan (Alia Bhatt).

Oh. Yay.Not so long ago, Alia said this about 2 States: "Yes, I am so looking forward to the promo, but not to promoting it." She seems thrilled enough to be doing it now.The promo of 2 States, based on a novel by author Chetan Bhagat, is out on 28 February.—*PTI*

Alia has invited everyone to her engagement.

Russian medal winners rewarded with luxury cars

Moscow, 28 Feb — Russia rewarded the athletes who helped the Winter Olympics hosts top the medals table in Sochi by presenting the 13 gold medal winners and 20 other podium finishers with luxury SUVs on Thursday."If we put it straight, there has been no such event in the contemporary history of our country which would so much consolidate our nation, our people," Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev told athletes at the handover ceremony held near the Kremlin.

Russia's Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and figure skating gold medal winner Evgeni Plushenko (R) attend a ceremony to present automobiles to the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics prize-holders representing Russia, by the Kremlin wall in central Moscow, on 27 Feb, 2014.—Reuters

"You gave us this feeling of pride, you didn't do it on an ordinary day, but rather when the Olympic Games were held in our country."Russia won 13 gold, 11 silver and nine bronze medals at the Games, which ended on Sunday. President Vladimir Putin staked his political reputation to hold a successful Games aimed to show the world the modern face of Russia and boost patriotic sentiment.

Last week the Kremlin chief handed state awards to the athletes in Sochi saying that they have "accomplished the mission" assigned to them.The cars were provided by Russia's Olympic athletes support fund, an entity chaired by Medvedev which has senior officials and billionaires on its supervisory board.

Russian Winter Olympics winners in Turin got Toyota and Lexus cars in 2006 and Audi vehicles after the Games in Vancouver in 2010.The Sochi Games won praise from International Olympic Committee officials and there were no major security incidents, despite fears following suicide bombings in southern Russia in December blamed on insurgents based in the adjacent North Caucasus restive region.—*Reuters*

China to announce Alain Perrin as national coach

Qingyuan, (South China), 28 Feb — Chinese Football Association (CFA) will announce later Friday the appointment of French Alain Perrin as new head coach of the Chinese national soccer team, a CFA official has confirmed. "I can confirm that Perrin is the new coach and he already arrived at Qingyuan last night," said the official who asked not to be named. "He will make his first appearance in the press conference this afternoon."

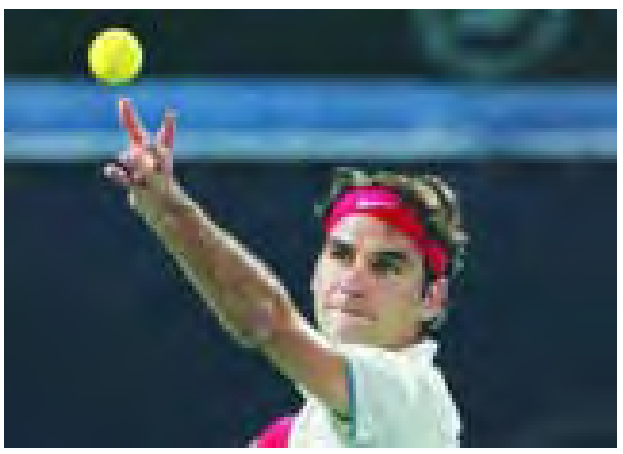
The CFA sent a text message to the *Xinhua* reporter Thursday night, saying "CFA will hold a Press conference in Qingyuan at 3:00PM next afternoon". The message said nothing but the time and place of the meeting.Even national team players did not have any knowledge about the new coach when asked by *Xinhua* on Wednesday evening.

Perrin, 57, helped Lyon take the seventh consecutive Ligue 1 title and had also won the French Cup in 2008. "We hope the new coach could raise the team to a new height," Wei Jixiang, CFA vice president told *Xinhua*.

The Chinese team arrived at the small city in north Guangdong on Wednesday afternoon and began their preparation for the final match against Iraq in the Asian Cup qualifiers next Wednesday in Dubai.

Xinhua

Federer and Djokovic to meet in Dubai semi-finals



Roger Federer of Switzerland serves to Lukas Rosol of the Czech Republic during their men's singles match at the ATP Dubai Tennis Championships, on 27 Feb, 2014.—Reuters

Dubai, 28 Feb — Five-times champion Roger Federer brushed aside Lukas Rosol on Thursday to set up a mouthwatering semi-final clash with Novak Djokovic in the Dubai Championship. Federer eased through 6-2, 6-2 while holder Djokovic enjoyed a walkover when quarter-final opponent Mikhail Youzhny withdrew through illness. Third seed Tomas Berdych, who finished runner-up to Djokovic in 2013, faces seventh seed Philipp Kohlschreiber in the other semi-final.

Berdych overcame fifth seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 6-4, 6-3 while Kohlschreiber beat Tunisian wildcard Malek Jaziri 6-2, 6-3. Federer holds a 16-15 lead in head-to-head matches with Djokovic but the Serb has won their last three meetings, including their most recent match at the ATP World Tour Finals in London in November. "We know each other very well, and we've played each other everywhere and all the surfaces, you name it," Federer told atpworldtour.com.

"I think we always play the match-up actually very good, because we play explosive, aggressive tennis, so there is always some shot-making going on. "I'm looking forward to the match. One match, best of three sets on a court like this, it's a bit of 'let's see what happens', anyway. We both know that." Federer started slowly against Rosol, the man who knocked Rafa Nadal out of the second round at Wimbledon in 2012, losing his opening service game for an early 0-2 deficit.

Reuters

Super Bowl-winning QB Wilson to suit up for Rangers

New York, 28 Feb — The Texas Rangers will add a player with a championship pedigree to their spring training roster on Monday with Super Bowl-champion quarterback Russell Wilson set to join the club in Surprise, Arizona. However, do not expect to see the former minor league second baseman grab a bat and step to the plate in the preseason game against the Cleveland Indians at Surprise Stadium.

Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson holds up the Vince Lombardi Trophy after the Seahawks defeated the Denver Broncos in the NFL Super Bowl XLVIII football game in East Rutherford, New Jersey, on 2 Feb, 2014.—Reuters

"The guy's a Super Bowl champ," Rangers manager Ron Washington said on Thursday, according to ESPN.com when asked whether Seattle Seahawks quarterback Wilson might get an at-bat."You think they want him to come down here and get hurt? The guy hasn't seen a pitch. I'm not running him up there."Wilson, whose Seahawks won Super Bowl 48 earlier this month, is expected to participate in the Rangers' workout on Monday before suiting up for the game at Surprise Stadium.

The NFL title-winning quarterback was selected in the Rule 5 draft by the Rangers in December, but has not played baseball since 2011, when he was in Class A for the Colorado Rockies.Wilson hit .228 with three homers, 15 RBIs, 40 runs scored and 15 stolen bases in 61 games that final season. He then went to the University of Wisconsin for his final collegiate season before being taken by the Seahawks in the NFL Draft.—*Reuters*

McIlroy takes charge at Honda with opening 63

Cary, (NC), 28 Feb — Rory McIlroy produced a barnstorming back nine, charging home with five birdies, to take the first-round lead at the $6 million Honda Classic in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida on Thursday. A year after quitting the tournament mid-round with his game in a shambles, McIlroy cut a contrasting figure on his way to a flawless seven-under-par 63 in relatively benign afternoon conditions at PGA National.

"I made a great par save on nine which kept that bogey-free round alive," the 24-year-old Northern Irishman told Golf Channel after seizing a one-shot lead over American Russell Henley. Buoyed by that 10-foot par putt at the ninth, McIlroy birdied the next three holes and added further birdies on his last two holes, much to the delight of his parents Gerry and Rosie, who were in the gallery.

Rory McIlroy plays his tee shot on the 14th hole during the second round of the World Golf Championships - Accenture Match Play Championship at The Golf Club at Dove Mountain.—Reuters

"It's a good ball-striker's course," said McIlroy, who looked ominously close to regaining the form that made him the world's top-ranked player at the time of his meltdown 12 months ago."If you can keep your ball in play and give yourself plenty of birdie chances, that's the name of the game here."—*Reuters*

Leverkusen sign defender Wendell from Gremio

Berlin, 28 Feb — Bayer Leverkusen reinforce their squad with the signing of Brazilian full back Wendell from Gremio, the club said in an official statement on Thursday.

Wendell, whose full name is Wendell Nascimento Borges, plays currently for Brazilian side Gremio and will join Leverkusen next season. According to the Bundesliga side, the 20-year-old left footer put pen to paper on five-year deal to stay with the "Werkself" until June 2019.

"Wendell is a very big talent who can help us immediately. We are confident that he can continue Leverkusen's great tradition with Brazilian top players," Leverkusen sporting director Rudi Voeller said. Leverkusen clash Mainz at the 23rd round to defend their second place in the Bundesliga table.

Xinhua

Main Israel lobby seeks to regain footing as Netanyahu visits US

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — For years, Israeli leaders visiting Washington have been boosted by America's main pro-Israel lobby, its influence on US Middle East policy long accepted as a matter of conventional wisdom.

But when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses an annual convention of Israel's US supporters next week, he will find the group trying to show it has not lost its touch after the White House blocked its push for Congress to impose new Iran sanctions.

While no one doubts the American Israel Public Affairs Committee remains a potent political force, AIPAC - and the Israeli government it seeks to bolster in Washington - can ill afford any perceptions of weakness in advancing its agenda at such a critical juncture in US-Israeli relations.

The largest pro-Israel lobbying group will gather at a time when its conservative leadership - not unlike the right-wing Israeli premier - are at odds with President Barack Obama over his diplomatic strategy for resolving the West's nuclear standoff with Iran, Israel's arch-foe.

AIPAC also faces questions about how it can move past its biggest legislative setback in years. The stakes are especially high on the Iran issue, the top security priority for both Netanyahu's government and America's pro-Israel community.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attends the weekly cabinet meeting in Jerusalem on 26 Jan, 2014. REUTERS

Scoffing at the notion that the group is on the ropes, an AIPAC source insisted its critics have "lost all perspective" and that differences with the administration are being managed.

AIPAC, which amassed about 100,000 members in its 60-year history, is widely credited with helping to ensure Israel remains a top recipient of US foreign aid, this year exceeding $3 billion, mostly military-related.

After AIPAC lobbyists helped enlist 59 US senators from both major parties to co-sponsor legislation that would impose new sanctions on Iran if negotiations failed, the bill - which had Netanyahu's blessing - stalled earlier this month.

"They came up against realities on Capitol Hill," a former administration official said, suggesting that going toe-to-toe on Iran with a Democratic president in a Democratic-led Senate was always a losing proposition. "The question now is whether this will affect AIPAC's ability to get things done that relate specifically to Israel."

AIPAC typically works behind the scenes and picks its battles well. Most measures it favors pass Congress with little opposition. But this time it found itself mocked on cable television by popular talk-show comedian Jon Stewart, who accused US lawmakers of behaving like senators "from the great state of Israel."

The White House cast the sanctions effort as a "march toward war" and Obama threatened a veto, spurring some fellow Democrats behind the bill to peel off. AIPAC still believes if it bides its time, it will have a chance to revive the sanctions drive, a senior AIPAC official said.

It was the second blow to AIPAC in recent months. In September, when Obama sought congressional authorization to strike Syria over chemical weapons use, the group lobbied lawmakers at the White House's behest. But then Obama backtracked from military action.

While AIPAC's legislative stumbles have been rare, it has tripped up before. It failed to block President Ronald Reagan's sale of planes with advanced radar to Saudi Arabia in 1981, and, a decade later, President George HW Bush delayed $10 billion in loan guarantees to Israel in a dispute over settlement-building in occupied territories.

AIPAC is predicting a record turnout of 14,000 members and attendance by "more than two-thirds of Congress" at its three-day annual bash.

Reuters

MYANMAR TV

(1-3-2014, Saturday)

6:00 am
1. Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw

7:20 am
2. Business News

8:00 am
3. News/ International News

9:30 am
4. Documentary

10:15 am
5. T V Drama Series

11:15 am
6. Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competition

12:00 pm
7. News / International News / Weather Report

12:25 pm
8. Round Up of The Week's TV Local News

3:00 pm
9. News

4:15 pm
10. 2014 University Entrance Examination (Geography)

4:50 pm
11. Documentary

5:00 pm
12. News

6:20 pm
13. MRTV Youth Programme

8:00 pm
14. News/Intarnational News/Weather Report

8:35 pm
15. Business News

9:00 pm
16. News

9:30 pm
17. Myanmar Series
18. Gitadagale Phwintbaohn

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

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

* Local News
* Great Shwedagon "The Historic Bells on the Platform of Shwedagon Pagoda"
* World News
* Will you feed the pigeons
* Local News
* Mawtinsoon Pagoda Festival
* World News
* Cosplayer
* Local News
* A Short Trip With Steve (South Korea) (Ep-1)
* World News
* Photographer: Kyaw Win Hlaing (YUC)
* Local News
* Enchanting Rakhine Land
* World News
* Myanmar Masterclass: Portraiture
* Local News
* Unique Pattern Of Myanma… A Trend Of Chin Traditional Dress
* World News
* Scented Buddha Images
* Local News
* Dawei - Tavoy, Travel To The Southern Part Of Myanmar
* World News
* TECH School
* Local News
* Mon Traditional Wedding Ceremony
* World News
* "Myanmar Movie Review" Mar Gyi Shay
* Local News
* Yathe Taung Township In A Nut-Shell
* World News
* Distinguished Myanmar Lady "Kyin Po"

`Woods starts Honda Classic in slow lane with 71

CARY, (N.C.) , 28 Feb — Tiger Woods lamented inconsistent putting but it was his long game as much as his short stick that led to a mediocre one-over-par 71 in the first round of the Honda Classic in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, on Thursday. Woods, in just his third tournament of the year, said he had trouble adapting to the slow greens on a day when he was left trailing in the wake of leader Rory McIlroy, who shot a bogey-free 63. "I hit it probably good enough to shoot at least three or four lower than I did," the 14-times major champion told reporters after playing in relatively benign morning conditions at PGA National in Palm Beach Gardens.

"First four holes, I had good looks (at birdie putts) and didn't make any of them. I hit it good starting out, scrappy in the middle and good at the end." World number one Woods, who is playing the Honda Classic for only the third time as a professional, said he had misread several putts after being "fooled" by the speed and grain of the greens. But the reality is he did not give himself many realistic birdie opportunities. He hit 12 greens in regulation, certainly nothing to be ashamed of, but had only four birdie chances inside 10 feet, three of which he converted.

Woods, who is tied for 81st in a field of 144, will probably need to break par in the second round on Friday to make the halfway cut. He began his round on the back nine and negotiated that without too many problems, a nine-foot birdie putt at the par-five 18th putting him at one under by the turn. It was not until the par-four second, his 11th hole of the day, that he finally had a blemish on his card.

After a poor drive, he barely advanced his second shot, found a bunker with his third and was unable to get up and down from there en route to an ugly six. He then offset two birdies with two bogeys to end the day

at one over.The Honda Classic signals the start of Woods' serious preparation for the Apr. 10-13 Masters, and the greens at PGA National are vastly different to the slick, heavily contoured surfaces at Augusta National.—*Reuters*

1st Waxing of Tabaung 1375 ME

The New Light of Myanmar

Saturday, 1 March, 2014

Government sees no need to modify currently-used Myanmar Calendar

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb — Regarding the two questions on cultural matters at the 19th day Pyithu Hluttaw session on Friday, Deputy Minister for Culture Daw Sandar Khin replied the first question that Myanmar Calendar should not be modified as it is still used by Myanmar people in connection with their social matters. She claimed that Myanmar Calendar is right but there may be slight differences in hours, minutes and seconds at the midnight on the Fullmoon Day as the lunisolar Myanmar Calendar consists of 365 days, six hours, 12 minutes and 36 seconds.

It is required to release an announcement in order to redefine the new date of Kason Fullmoon Day if Myanmar wants to change the Fullmoon Day of Kason that falls one day earlier than the Buddha Day which is annually celebrated in other nations, she added.

Responding to the second question, it is impossible

(See page 9)

President U Thein Sein's radio message on air

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb—A radio message to be delivered by U Thein Sein, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, will be broadcast through radio programmes from 1 to 3 March. Myanma Radio, Mandalay FM, Pyinsawady FM, Shwe FM, Cherry FM, Padamya FM, FM Bagan and Thazin Radio will broadcast the message at 7 am, 11 am, 6 pm and 8 pm.—*MNA*

Announcement on 2014 nation-wide census-taking process

1. Under the supervision of Central Census Commission, preparations for the 2014 nation-wide census taking have been carried out since 2-5-2011.
2. The preparation process includes disseminating the knowledge on census-taking across the country and holding several talks with those from political parties, social organizations, armed ethnic groups, religious organizations, literature, music, and dance troupes, film, media and national race correspondents. In addition, it covers knowledge sharing through mass media.
3. Regarding it, one-day talks with those from ten national races groups was held at Mount Pleasant Hotel on 26-2-2014. Plans are under way to continue holding similar talks.
4. The following points are the results that come out from the talks with them.
   (a) As a preliminary step, a total of 135 national races are based on the census-taking processes in 1931, 1937 and 1983. It cannot be said dogmatically that this figures are correct.
   (b)They have suggested that there are spelling errors and the disappearance of some national races and the emergence of new national races among 135 national races. According to their suggestions, this census-taking process would help the scrutiny of preliminary replies by the households of their own volition.
   (c)After the census-taking process, collected the facts and figures will be sent to National Races Affairs, Public Administration and Services Committee in order to continue scrutinizing it. At the time, the process will go on in accord with the procedures after seeking the suggestions and helps from the tribal groups.
5. For more information, may visit Census Question-Answer session website: dop.gov.mm and facebook page: 2014 Myanmar Population and Housing Census and dial ph-067- 431062, 431067, 431339 and 431336.

Central Census Committee

28 February 2014

17 President's Excellent Awards nominated for second time

***Union Minister U Tin Naing Thein addresses 2nd coordination meeting of the President's Excellent Award Scrutiny Committee.*—MNA**

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb— The 2nd coordination meeting of the President's Excellent Award Scrutiny Committee took place at the President Office here on 28 February.

The meeting intends to present the President's excellent awards to outstanding organizations and persons who made extraordinary efforts in the State's economic development and comprehensive socioeconomic development for the people. During the meeting, Chairman of the President's Excellent Award Scrutiny Committee Union Minister at the President Office U Tin Naing Thein sought for agreement of the Union ministries on the minutes of the 1st coordination meeting. A total of 17 excellent awards would be rewarded for this year. The Union minister called for holding excellent award presenting ceremonies under the supervision of the Union ministries and Region/State governments.

Award Scrutiny Committee/Sub-committees were urged to continue using a standardized marking schemes to select excellent award winners.

Deputy ministers and officials concerned from the selection committees for rural development, agriculture and breeding awards, for public affairs award and for economic development award respectively reported to the Union minister.—*MNA*

Japan's grant aid for school buildings in Myanmar

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb— Officials from Japanese Embassy in Myanmar and responsible persons from Chin State and Ayeyawady Region inked a USD 413,236 agreement for building schools in Myanmar on 27 February.

The amount of financial aid from the Government of Japan will be spent on building new schools for Ywale Monastic Education post-primary school in Nyaungdon Township, Ayeyawady Region and for BEMS (Branch) in Haka Township, Chin State. Japan has granted financial aid for 667 projects in Myanmar under its Grant Assistance for Grassroot Human Security Projects (GGP) since 1993. So far 229 education projects have been implemented. Japanese government is hoping for deepening Japan-Myanmar friendship that marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in this year through these assistance.— *NLM*

Japanese Minister-Counsellor Mr Ichiro Maruyama and officials of Haka BEMS Branch seen at cash donation ceremony.

Correction

Please read Hlawgar Reservoir instead of instead of Pugyi Reservoir at the heading and 17th line of 3rd column on page 16 and 7th line of 6th column on page 9 of byline under the heading "110-year old Pugyi Reservoir alerts conservation due to increasing in urbanized population" in this daily issued on 28-2-2014. Error is regretted.—*NLM*

International Conference on Prospects of ASEAN-Korea Relations concludes

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Feb—Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin arrived back in Yangon recently after attending the International Conference on the Prospects of ASEAN-Korea Relations held at Lotte Hotel, in Seoul, Republic of Korea on Wednesday.

The Union Minister delivered a ministerial speech at the special session of the international conference under the theme: ASEAN in the World Community. He also met Mr. Jung Hoon Kim,

(See page 9)

Announcement of Central Census Committee

The second phase of making field trip for nation-wide census taking process 2014 will start as of 30 March to 10 April for 12 days.

According to the request of national people and the agreement of local authorities, census will be taken as of the first week of March in Putao District of Kachin State, Shan State (North) Special Region (2) and Shan State (East) Special Region (4) under section 3 of the Population and Housing Census Law as it needs to take more time due to various situations such as climatic conditions, transport and language difficulties.

Central Census Committee

28 February 2014

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The New Light of Myanmar

R/489 Printed and published by the New Light of Myanmar press in Nay Pyi Taw, the News and Periodicals Enterprise, Ministry of Information.