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Our Three Main National Causes	* Non-disintegration of the Union	* Non-disintegration of National Solidarity	* Perpetuation of Sovereignty
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River-spanning bridges built in interests of nation and people President U Thein Sein inspects progress in construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku)

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec— President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein inspected progress in construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku) yesterday morning. He was accompanied by Lt-Gen Hla Htay Win of the office of the Commander-in-Chief, Union Ministers, the chief minister of Magway Region, the commander of Central Command, deputy ministers, Mandalay Region ministers and departmental heads.



Union Construction Minister U Khin Maung Myint briefs President U Thein Sein on progress in construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku).—MNA

On arrival at the briefing hall of Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku) project on Latpanchepaw Bank in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region, the President was briefed by Union Minister for Construction U Khin Maung Myint on the project data, progress in con-

struction of the bridge and preparations being made to open the bridge.

In response, the President said river-spanning bridges, including Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku), are being built in the interests of the nation and

the people by spending billions of State funds. So, it is necessary to take measures for prevention of accidents in which watercrafts collide with bridge piers as they cannot control themselves due to their overloads. The Transport Ministry needs to issue

public notices for watercraft drivers and the media also should raise awareness. The President then stressed the need to systematically maintain the bridge for its durability as it has to be built for two years to meet the set standards. In carrying out maintenance

tasks, any weaknesses need to be exposed. Besides, matters for control of water course are to be coordinated with the Ministry of Transport. He also highlighted the importance of security of the bridge.

Ayeyawady Bridge

(Pakokku) was built by special project group (3) of Public Works under the Ministry of Construction.

The bridge lies on India-Myanmar-Thai Tripartite Highway. It was built mainly for the tripartite highway.

(See page 8)



Photo shows Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku) in NyaungU Township to be commissioned into service soon.—MNA

Low pressure formed over SE Bay of Bengal

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec— According to the observations at (18:30) hr MST today, a low pressure area has formed over South-east Bay of Bengal.

Under the influence of low pressure area, squally with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) m.p.h. —MNA

Union Foreign Affairs Minister shows sympathy for demise of Mr Kim Jong Il

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PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 25 December, 2011

Corridors

Having a look at the world atlas, nations lie in their respective continents. There are also various organizations depending on the formation of nations, for example, ASEAN, EU and SAARC. Those organizations are formed for economic, security or political purposes.

Their ultimate aim is to take such measures as adopting frameworks and future work programmes and reaching agreement between member nations so that a prosperous human society can emerge. At the 4th GMS Summit hosted by Myanmar, the member nations discussed endeavours for emergence of economic corridors with the use of transport corridors. This means the emergence of economic corridors by developing transport routes between the nations through which the Mekong River flows.

Likewise, in Myanmar there are corridors between regions and between organizations. For instance, the country has networks of motor roads and railroads forming transport corridors. By using those transport corridors, efforts are to be made to promote economic development of each region.

Similarly, the nation has built a large number of dams and reservoirs which are acting as agricultural corridors. Making best use of the facilities, the nation can strengthen its agricultural might.

Educational institutions like universities, schools, technological universities and universities of computer studies are indeed educational corridors through which human resources and educated youths can be nurtured.

Health facilities such as hospitals and clinics can also be called health corridors. Public health care can be promoted through the health corridors.

All the people are therefore to work harder for building up a modern nation in order to keep abreast of other nations in such a changing world.

Staff officer U Kyaw Hsan Lin of Aungmyethazan Township Cooperative Department inspected sales of goods at Chanmyay Trading Cooperative Ltd at corner of 22nd and 86th streets on 3 December morning.—NLM



Union Foreign Affairs Minister shows sympathy for demise of Mr Kim Jong Il



YANGON, 24 Dec—Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin signed Condolence Book opened at the Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, on Inya Road, here this morning for the demise of Mr Kim Jong Il, General Secretary of the Worker's Party of Korea, Chairman of the National Defence Commission, DPRK and Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army, DPRK on 17 December 2011. MNA

Union Foreign Affairs Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin signs Condolence Book opened at the DPRK Embassy for the demise of DPRK leader Mr Kim Jong Il.—MNA

Sacred Buddha tooth relic re-conveyed to China

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—A ceremony to consecrate the sacred Buddha tooth relic being kept in front of the Buddha image in Maha Atula Waiyan (Atumashi) monastery in Mandalay and convey it back to the People's Republic of China was held at the monastery and Mandalay International Airport this morning.

It was attended by State Ovadaçariya Shwegyin Sangharaja Mandalay Waso Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Dr Bhaddanta Agghiya and members of the Sangha, nuns, Chairman of the Leading Committee for Conveyance of the tooth relic from China Union Minister for Religious Affairs Thura U Myint Maung and wife Daw Aye Aye Tun, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint and wife Daw Myat Ngwe, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Kyaw Zan Myint, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Dr Maung Maung Htay, region ministers, officials, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Li Junhua, students and local people.

First, the Union Minister and wife, the Chief Minister and wife offered water, flowers and joss sticks to the sacred tooth relic.

Members of the Sangha led by the Shwegyin Sangharaja

consecrated the sacred Buddha tooth relic. Next, the Chinese monks consecrated the tooth relic.

The congregation received the Nine Precepts from the Shwegyin Sangharaja, and then members of the Sangha recited Parittas.

After that, the tooth relic was conveyed onto the decorated float. It carried the sacred tooth relic to Mandalay International Airport through Mandalay-Nay Pyi Taw-Yangon Expressway.

On arrival at the airport, the Chinese monks consecrated the sacred tooth relic.

The sacred tooth relic was conveyed onboard the aircraft by high loader. The special aircraft carrying the sacred Buddha tooth relic took off the airport for China at 10.30 am.

The sacred Buddha tooth relic conveyed from the People's Republic of China was kept in the cave of Nay Pyi Taw Uppatasanti Pagoda from 6 to 21 November, in Maha Pasana Cave on Kaba Aye Hill in Yangon from 22 November to 7 December and at Maha Atula Waiyan (Atumashi) monastery in Mandalay from 8 to 23 December for members of the Sangha and public obeisance.

MNA

Local Sports

Gymnastic athletes selected

YANGON, 24 Dec—As part of efforts to make preparations for taking part in the XXVIII SEA Games 2013 to be hosted by Myanmar, a sports trial for gymnastics event was held at Theinbyu Gymnasium on Theinbyu Street in Mingala

Taungnyunt Township on 16 December.

Gymnastic professional Mrs Yang Yun Ying of China explained training for gymnastic athletes, techniques and rules to be outstanding athletes.

The outstanding athletes who had participated in the recently completed inter-basic education school gymnastic competition, organized by No 3 Basic Education Department, competed in the sports trial.

The Chinese gymnastic professional and Myanmar gymnastic coaches will jointly provide training course to the selected players.

MNA

Take Fire Preventive Measures

Kyaukpyu Township emerges champion in Deputy Commissioner's Cup

KYAUKPYU, 24 Dec—The final match of the Kyaukpyu District Deputy Commissioner's Trophy Inter-Township U-25 Football Tournament was held at Myoma Sports Ground in Kyaukpyu on 30 November afternoon.

In the final match, Kyaukpyu Township clinched title with a 4-3 win over An Township.

District and township level officials presented first and second prizes to Kyaukpyu and An township teams and best player awards to the winners in the respective places respectively.

Deputy Commissioner U Yan Lin Aung awarded championship trophy and K 150,000 to Kyaukpyu Township team.—District IPRD

Myaylat Cup Invitational Golf Tournament wimps up

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—The 42nd Myaylat Cup Invitational Golf Tournament took place at Myaylat Golf Club in Myingyan on 17 and 18 December.

About 180 golfers and 17 clubs from Mandalay, Pyin Oolwin, Kyaukse, Meiktila, Yamethin, Mahlaing, Pakokku, Natogyi and Myingyan participated in the tournament.

Mandalay Region level authorities awarded the winners. Best golfer award winner Soe Naing Aung (Myingyan) won one KM COL Maruman Red V 2 Driver. Officials of the golf club presented certificates of honour to sponsors.—Kyemon

Russia successfully test launches two Bulava missiles

Moscow, 24 Dec—Russia successfully test launched two Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles on Friday, the Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Col Igor Konashenkov said.

“The Borey-class Yuri Dolgoruki nuclear-powered strategic submarine performed the last Bulava test launch this year from a submerged position in the White Sea on Friday,” Konashenkov said.

He added that the two missiles were fired

at an interval of several seconds and the missiles’ warheads hit the designated targets at the Kura test range on Kamchatka.

The launch was the troubled Bulava’s 18th test launch and its first salvo launch. Only 10 of its previous 17 launches were officially declared successful.

The Bulava, which is expected to become Russia’s main naval strategic missile, is capable of carrying 10 warheads with a range of 8,000 km.—Xinhua



US President Barack Obama delivers a speech after signing the payroll tax bill at the White House in Washington DC, capital of the United States, on 23 Dec, 2011. US President Barack Obama on Friday signed the bipartisan short-term compromise stopgap measure to extend the payroll tax cut and federal jobless benefits into law, and urged lawmakers to negotiate next year and extend the tax cut and benefits for a full year.

XINHUA

A rescuer gestures amid the rubble of a house destroyed by the explosion of a pipeline in Colombia.—INTERNET



BOGOTA, 24 Dec—At least 11 people were killed, more than 80 others were injured on Friday during large fuel pipeline explosions in central Colombia, authorities said. The explosion occurred

Friday morning in the province of Risaralda, about 170 km southwest of the capital Bogota, Luz Ensueno Betancourt, mayor of Dosquebradas, said in Risaralda. The explosion of

Fuel pipeline explosion kills 11 in Colombia

huge magnitude occurred in the oil pipeline, she said, adding that based on the first reports, people tampering with the pipeline have caused an oil leak in Aguazul ravine, which spread further to a rural neighborhood known as Villa Carola before the strong explosion. The pipeline, which carries gasoline and diesel, is operated by Colombia’s state-owned company Ecopetrol.

The mayor said Ecopetrol’s technical personnel and the region’s rescue team arrived immediately at the site, and the fire that broke out after the explosion had been brought under control. According to Risaralda’s Health Secretary

Javier Marulanda, most of the injured have incurred second and third degree burns. Some, including seven children, are in serious conditions and might be taken to specialized hospitals. Mining and Energy Minister Mauricio Cardenas urged people to evacuate from the site before further explosions happened as a result of oil spill. Officials also suspect that thieves have been trying to remove fuel through one of the valves in the pipeline. President Juan Manuel Santos expressed his condolences to the families of the victims through his Twitter account and said Ecopetrol will cover the medical expenses for those injured.—Xinhua

Somali pirates still hold 200 hostages

MOGADISHU, 24 Dec—Somali pirates are holding 200 hostages for ransom, the European Union’s anti-piracy mission says.

The EU anti-piracy mission released a statement noting, “There are currently 199 men and one woman held hostage in Somalia following the pirating of their ships in the Indian Ocean and all are being held against their will to be used by criminal gangs as part of a ransom business.”

The EU report said the fate of kidnapped crew members, unless they are high-profile individuals, “is not often considered or reported.”

During the period January-September of this year, Somali pirates attacked 199 ships, a sharp increase from the same period in 2010, when 126 international vessels were assaulted.

Despite the increase in assaults however, the pirates have been less successful, as they only managed to commandeer 24 vessels that were hijacked by the end of October, compared with 35 for the same period in 2010. Shabelle Media Network news agency reported Friday.

Internet

US GBU-28 bombs have fuse problems

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—The US government and the Kaman Corp announced a settlement in a case related to allegedly defective fuses for the “bunker busting” Guided Bomb Unit-28. The US Department of Justice, in a filing against Kaman Precision Products Inc, of Orlando, Fla, under the False Claims Act, alleged breach of contract, stating that Kaman “knowingly substituted a component in four lots of fuses that made them unsafe for use in military operations.”

The Justice Department said Kaman will pay the US government \$4.75 million in the aftermath of allegations that it had submitted false claims for inadequate FMU-143 fuses sold to the US Army for use in the GBU-28 bombs. Neither party admitted liability in the case. “We are grateful to have arrived at an agreement that avoids continuation of the

legal expenses and diversion of management time and effort that has been experienced for seven years now in connection with these matters,” Kaman chief legal officer Candace Clark said in a release.

The GBU-28 is a 5,000-pound laser-guided “bunker busting” bomb nicknamed “Deep Throat,” was originally produced by the Watervliet Arsenal in New York for use in 1991’s Operation Desert Storm.

The Obama administration this year authorized the transfer of GBU-28s to Israel.

The Obama administration’s decision to sell the GBU-28 bombs reversed a decision by President George W. Bush, who in 2005 had refused Israel’s request for the ordnance “out of concern that Israel was transferring advanced military technology to China.”

Internet



A Palestinian protester throws a tear gas canister back at Israeli soldiers during a weekly demonstration against the construction and expansion of settlements on village lands in a West Bank village. INTERNET

Five killed, 12 injured in suicide attack on paramilitary camp in NW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 24 Dec — At least five people were killed and 12 others injured in a suicide attack on a paramilitary camp in northwest Pakistan early Saturday morning, reported local Urdu TV channel Geo. All the killed and the injured were paramilitary soldiers and the injured people have been shifted to a nearby military hospital, said the report. The attack took place at about 6:00 am Saturday when a suicide bomber rammed his vehicle into a checkpoint at a camp of Frontier Corps in the country’s northwest Bannu district which is located near the insurgents-infested North Waziristan tribal area bordering Afghanistan. Residents were quoted as saying they heard a huge blast in the pre-dawn attack which was followed by heavy firing. The security personnel have blocked all the roads to the attacked checkpoint of the Frontier

Corp camp sit in the outskirts of Bannu District. One local media quoted its correspondent at the scene as saying that most parts of the camp were completely destroyed and death toll could further rise.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack. Some media quoted unidentified sources as saying that the vehicle entered the Bannu district from the nearby North Waziristan tribal region. Saturday’s attack on security forces is the second of its kind reported in the country in two days. Earlier on Friday morning, armed militants attacked a security check post near South Waziristan tribal region and killed one security person and injured four others. The attackers also reportedly kidnapped several soldiers and a Taliban spokesman had threatened to kill the kidnapped security personnel.—Xinhua

16 PKK members killed in southeastern Turkey

ANKARA, 24 Dec—Turkish security forces killed at least 16 members of the outlawed Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) in their latest operation in southeastern Turkey, the state-run TRT TV channel reported late on Friday. Serbest Haruni, alleged leader of the PKK camp in Cudi mountain in Sirnak province, was among the killed PKK members, said the report. Many PKK members were captured by the security forces along with 17 people who were helping them to escape on Friday, TRT said.

Activities of the PKK militants were detected by drones in Cudi mountain and the security forces launched a military operation against them, during which Major Sergeant Mehmet Bostanoglu was killed, according to TRT.

Listed as a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, the PKK took up arms in 1984 to create an ethnic homeland in southeastern Turkey. More than 40,000 people have been killed in conflicts involving the PKK during the past over two decades.—Xinhua



Accompanied by Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping (1st L) visits the Rattanakosin Sompoch Bowonniwet Salaya School, which was hit by Thailand’s worst flooding in 50 years, in Bangkok, capital of Thailand, on 23 Dec, 2011. Xi Jinping is here on a three-day official visit. —XINHUA

Virgin olive oil may help mitigate pancreatitis

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—Compounds found in virgin olive oil and fish may help alleviate symptoms of acute pancreatitis, a new study has revealed.

The researchers at the University of Granada Physiology Department evaluated the role of Mediterranean diet ingredients in the prevention and mitigation of cell damage.

Oleic acid and hydroxytyrosol, present in a particularly high concentration in virgin olive oil and n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids found in fish affect the cellular mechanisms involved in the development of acute pancreatitis, a disease of oxidative-inflammatory etiology.

Therefore, oleic acid and hydroxytyrosol can be considered potential functional ingredients, as they may prevent or mitigate this disease.

These scientists developed an in vitro experimental model that allowed them to evaluate how changes in the membrane fatty acid composition in vivo –



Virgin olive oil

caused by a change in the type of fat ingested— affect the ability of cells to respond to induced oxidative-inflammatory damage with cerulein (acute pancreatitis).

This is the first study to examine how fatty acids and antioxidants affect the cellular mechanisms that respond to local inflammation in the pancreas.

The University of Granada scientists evaluated the role of antioxidants from a preventive approach, that is, by using an experimental model in mice in which cell damage is induced after pretreatment with these nutritional components.

“There is increasing evidence that there are oxidative-inflammatory processes involved in the origin of chronic diseases

and that diet plays an important role in such processes,” the author of this study, Maria Belen Lopez Millan said.

“The antioxidant (phenolic compounds) and anti-inflammatory (omega-3 fatty acids) effects of diet components (nutrients and bioactive compounds) prevent/mitigate the pathological incidence of oxidative-inflammatory processes,” she added.

The study has been published in the journal Proceedings of the Nutrition Society.

Internet

Stem cells could help a damaged heart fix itself?

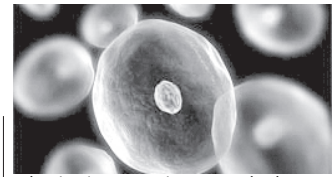
NEW DELHI, 24 Dec—Damaged hearts could mend themselves with the help of a method that coaxes stem cells to develop into cardiac cells, say researchers.

Scientists in China have unearthed a family of molecules that can transform stem cells into beating heart muscle cells, says a new study.

Scientists believe the discovery of cardiotogen could pave the way to new treatment for heart disease, reported the Daily Mail, citing the study published in the Journal of Chemistry and Biology.

Tao Zhong, of Fudan University in Shanghai, who led the research, said: “Despite advances in medicine, management of myocardial infarction (heart attack) and heart failure remains a major challenge.”

“Developing therapies that can



stimulate heart muscle regeneration in areas of infarction would have enormous medical impact,” he added.

Researchers tested the molecules on zebrafish, whose transparent embryos allow scientists to see cells during development.

They found the treatment enlarged the zebrafish heart by stimulating production of new cardiac muscle cells from stem cells. The same thing happened in tests on mice. The next step is to test cardiotogen on human cells, said Tao.—Internet

Health

Free market may influence obesity rate



High obesity rates and a proliferation of fast-food restaurants may be unintended side-effects of free market policies, a US researcher says.

INTERNET

ANN ARBOR, 24 Dec—High obesity rates and a proliferation of fast-food restaurants may be unintended side-effects of free market policies, a US researcher says.

Lead researcher Roberto De Vogli of the University of Michigan School of Public Health said the study of 26 wealthy nations found those with higher density of fast-food

restaurants per capita had much higher obesity rates than those with a lower density of fast-food restaurants per capita. “It’s not by chance that countries with the highest obesity rates and fast-food restaurants are those in the forefront of market liberalization, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, versus countries like Japan and Norway, with more regulated and restrictive trade policies,” De Vogli said in a statement. The findings remain consistent even after factoring in income, income inequality, urban areas, motor vehicles and Internet use per capita, De Vogli said.

“Since the 1980s, and the advent of trade liberalization policies which indirectly promoted trans-national food companies ... we see (obesity) rates that have tripled or quadrupled. There is no biological, genetic, psychological or community level factor that can explain this. Only a global type of change can explain this,” De Vogli said. “If you look at trends overtime for obesity, it’s shocking.”

Internet

Business

Gold slips, dollar edges up



NEW YORK, 24 Dec—US new home sales data sent gold to a seven-month high Friday but the surge was short-lived, sending

prices to less than \$1,605 per troy ounce.

Gold closed \$4.20 lower at \$1,604.70 on the Comex division of the New York

Mercantile Exchange while silver gained 4.5 cents to close at \$29.046. The dollar index added 0.1 percent to 79.99.

The euro was virtually flat, rising to \$1.3051 compared with Thursday’s \$1.305. Against the yen, the dollar fell to 78.075 yen from Thursday’s 78.17 yen.

The British pound was \$1.5591, up from Thursday’s \$1.5677. Against the Hong Kong dollar, the US standard was 7.7769 from Thursday’s 7.7824 HKD. The dollar was 97.991 cents against the Canadian dollar from \$1.0207 Thursday. The Australian dollar was \$1.0137 from Thursday’s \$1.013.

Internet

Japan approves \$1.16-trillion draft budget

TOKYO, 24 Dec—Japan’s cabinet approved Saturday a 90.334 trillion yen (\$1.16 trillion) budget for the 2012 fiscal year, with a record 49 percent financed by bonds even as the country struggles to rein in its massive public debt. Finance Minister Jun Azumi said Japan had reached its “limit” in relying on debt and said he was aware the global community was watching him in light of the serious debt woes in Europe.

Under the draft budget, to be submitted to parliament next year, the government would issue fresh bonds worth 44.2 trillion yen in the year from April, aggravating Japan’s public debt, which at

nearly double its GDP is the worst among industrialised nations. The proposed budget is technically 2.2 percent smaller than the original budget for the ongoing year to March.

But local media said the budget in reality is the largest ever, worth more than 96 trillion yen, when key items accounted for in separate budgetary steps are included, such as money needed to rebuild the tsunami-hit northeast. The finance minister said a thorough

reform of tax and budget were necessary to ensure provision of public services and to regain confidence of the international community as the nation continues to accumulate debt.

The budget draft shows Japan’s dire fiscal situation with estimated tax revenue of 42.346 trillion yen, which falls short of the planned bond issuance for a third straight year.

Internet



File photo shows Ginza metro station in Tokyo. Japan’s cabinet approved Saturday a 90.334 trillion yen budget for the 2012 fiscal year, with a record 49% financed by bonds even as the country struggles to rein in its massive public debt.—INTERNET

Cuban GDP to grow 2.7 pct in 2011

HAVANA, 24 Dec—Cuba’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will grow 2.7 percent in 2011, falling short of the previous forecast of 3 percent, while a 3.4 percent growth is expected next year, Minister of Economy and

Planning Abdel Yzquierdo said on Friday.

The minister attributed the country’s missing its growth rate target to “the non-fulfillment of construction and investment plans, and the increase of prices for food and raw materials in the world

market.”

Yet the official said the growth is still “favorable” and corresponds with the country’s efforts to overcome the difficulties inflicted by the global crisis, the US economic blockade and domestic obstacles.

Yzquierdo announced the figures at the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Seventh Legislature of the National Assembly of People’s Power (Parliament), which was attended by Cuban leader Raul Castro and 600 parliamentarians to discuss next year’s budget and fiscal plans.—Xinhua



The world's oldest bed, which dates back to 77,000 years ago, has been discovered in a cave in South Africa, a newspaper report said on Friday.—INTERNET

World's oldest bed discovered in

South Africa

CAPE TOWN, 24 Dec—The world's oldest bed, which dates back to 77,000 years ago, has been discovered in a cave in South Africa, a newspaper report said on Friday.

The bed, made of bundles of sedge and wild quince leaves, was found by Professor Lyn Wadley of Wits University, while excavating a site at Sibudu in KwaZulu-Natal Province,

Cape Argus reported on its website.

The site is a rock shelter on a cliff face on the banks of the Thongathi River, 40 kilometers north of Durban, where Wadley has been working as an archaeologist since 1998.

At the site, Wadley made the discovery of the bed (about 1x2m in size) which had been buried more than three meters deep in

sediments.

What was special about the bed was that it was covered with a layer of aromatic leaves from a plant called the river wild quince. No other tree leaves were found on the bedding, so the leaves were not there as a result of random leaf fall, the report said.

The leaves of the river wild quince have insect-repellent properties,

Science

especially against mosquitoes, so these bed makers clearly had a good knowledge of herbal medicine, said the report.

There is also evidence at the site that bedding was occasionally burnt, presumably to get rid of residual bugs.

The bed makers were Middle Stone Age humans, who were skilled in making stone tools, including spearheads, knives and scrapers, as well as perforated-shell jewellery.

They also made bone tools and mixed ochre, which might have been used as an insect repellent or as paint.

Before this extraordinary discovery, the earliest known beds were about 25,000 years old, and the earliest known use of herbal medicine about 5,000 years ago, according to the report.—Internet

Elephants' mysterious extra toe explained

LONDON, 24 Dec—A mysterious bony growth found in elephants' feet that has long puzzled scientists is actually a sixth "toe," British researchers say.

A study by the Royal Veterinary College suggests the odd growth helps support elephants' extreme weight, the BBC reported on Thursday.

RVC Professor John Hutchinson said the growth has been the subject of debate for more than 300

years. "It's a cool mystery that goes back to 1706, when the first elephant was dissected by a Scottish surgeon," he said.

"Anyone who has studied elephants' feet has wondered about it. They've thought: 'Huh, that's weird,' and then moved on."

Close examination showed the bone has an unusual arrangement, similar to one found in the front feet of pandas. The panda's bone is not quite an extra digit but

acts as one, allowing the animal to grip bamboo when feeding. For elephants, the structure serves a different and simple purpose, researchers said: It helps the hefty animals stand up.

An elephant's five conventional toes point forward, but the extra "toe" points backwards into the heel pad, providing extra support and helping the heaviest land animals support their weight, they said.

Internet



Circus elephants on parade in St Louis on 13 Oct, 2010.—INTERNET

\$25 computer nears production

LONDON, 24 Dec—An eagerly awaited \$25 computer is about to go into production in Britain in the hope it will inspire a new generation of technology-savvy kids, its maker said.

The Raspberry Pi home computer is being built around an Arm processor similar to ones found in mobile phones and will run a version of the Linux open source operating system, the BBC reported Friday.

Video game veteran David Braben said he came up with the idea for the Raspberry Pi while thinking of ways to inspire young people to start a career in technology.

Test versions of finished devices are being checked and if all is well, volume production will start in January, Raspberry said.

"Once we're happy that this test run is fine, we'll be pushing the button immediately on full-scale manufacture in more than one



An eagerly awaited \$25 computer is about to go into production in Britain in the hope it will inspire a new generation of technology-savvy kids, its maker said.—INTERNET

factory," the company said in its blog. Two versions of the computer will be offered, the company said — a Model A for \$25, which lacks a network connector, and a Model B for \$35 which does have an Ethernet socket.—Internet

Yahoo board continues talks on Asian deal

NEW YORK, 24 Dec—Yahoo Inc's board of directors has agreed to keep exploring a plan to split off the Internet company's Asian assets in a complex deal valued at \$17 billion, *The Wall Street Journal* reported on Friday.

The company's board of directors decided to move forward with negotiations related to the deal on Friday, while also not ruling out separate investment proposals by private equity firms, the Journal reported, citing anonymous sources.

Yahoo, which fired Chief Executive Carol Bartz in September, has been undergoing a "strategic review" to revamp growth in

its business. The Internet pioneer has struggled to compete with Google Inc, Facebook and other fast-growing rivals.

The Asian split-off deal would effectively transfer most of Yahoo's 40 percent slice in China's Alibaba Group back to the Hangzhou-based Internet company and all of its stake in Yahoo Japan to Softbank Corps, sources familiar with the matter have told Reuters.

Alibaba and Yahoo Japan would each create separate legal entities where they would put cash and certain, yet-to-be-determined operating assets, and then trade those with Yahoo, making the deal tax-free, the sources said.

Yahoo shareholders have applauded the proposed plan, sending shares of Yahoo up nearly 6 percent earlier this week when news

surfaced that the plan was under consideration. Yahoo shares closed Friday's regular trading session up 1.2 percent at \$16.19.

Private equity firms TPG and Silver Lake have each advanced separate proposals to Yahoo's board that would involve the firms purchasing minority stakes in Yahoo, sources have told Reuters. Those plans have been fiercely opposed by some of Yahoo's largest shareholders, including activist hedge fund manager Dan Loeb of Third Point LLC.

At the end of the contemplated Asian split-off transaction Yahoo would retain a 15 percent stake in Alibaba, the sources said. The final deal size will depend on how the assets are valued, another source said. Yahoo declined to comment.—Reuters

Technology

AT&T wins regulatory approval to buy Qualcomm spectrum

NEW YORK, 24 Dec—AT&T Inc said late on Thursday that it won regulatory approval to buy wireless spectrum from US chipmaker Qualcomm Inc, a move that would boost the company's 4G network.

AT&T is buying 700 megahertz (MHz) airwaves for about \$1.93 billion, with the aim of countering criticism over iPhone service quality and competitive threats from rivals like Verizon Wireless.

"This spectrum will help AT&T continue to deliver a world-class mobile broadband experience to our customers," Bob Quinn, an AT&T senior vice president, said in a statement. The companies expect to close the transaction in the coming days, AT&T said.

Reuters



Reflections are seen in the window of an AT&T store in New York on 21 March, 2011.—INTERNET



A Yahoo! billboard is seen in New York's Time's Square on 25 January, 2010.—REUTERS

US missile shield deal with Romania takes effect

BUCHAREST, 24 Dec—The bilateral agreement on the deployment of the US ballistic missile defence system in Romania has taken effect on Friday, announced the Romanian Foreign Ministry in a press release on Friday.

“Romania and the United States of America are pleased to announce together that the Agreement between Romania and the United States of America on setting up the US ballistic missile defense system in Romania

has taken effect on 23 Dec, 2011,” said the statement.

The US system of defense missile interceptors will be placed at the Air Base at Deveselu in southern Romania, as a component of the Adaptive Phased Approach to the US Defence System against the Ballistic Missiles in Europe by 2015.

This base represents a significant contribution made by the two states to NATO efforts on missile defense, the release added.

Romania and the United

States signed the ballistic missile defense agreement in Washington, DC on 12 Sep, allowing the US to construct, maintain and operate a facility encompassing the land-based SM-3 ballistic missile defence system at the Deveselu Air Base.

The system will provide a defensive capability to protect Europe and the US against ballistic missiles launched from the middle-east, the US State Department said when inking the deal.

Xinhua



Chinese State Councilor Dai Bingguo (C) is welcomed by Pakistani Communication Minister Arbab Alamgir Khan (2nd L, front) upon his arrival at Chaklala Airbase in Rawalpindi, adjacent city of Islamabad, capital of Pakistan, on 23 Dec, 2011. Dai Bingguo, representative of Chinese President Hu Jintao, arrived here Friday for a visit to Pakistan.—XINHUA

France investigates Nazi-themed party

PARIS, 24 Dec—French police say they’re investigating a party attended by a British Member of Parliament during which some guests toasted the Third Reich. Conservative MP Aidan Burley was among a group of men, one of them wearing an SS uniform, filmed at a party where Nazi chants and salutes were made, Radio France Internationale reported Friday.

Wearing Nazi regalia or defending or denying the

holocaust is a criminal offense in France.

Burley has apologized for attending the event at the La Fondue restaurant in the French Alpine resort of Val Thorens, although he said he himself did not take part in Nazi-themed revelry.

“I have not been contacted by the French authorities and I have repeatedly apologized for what was clearly inappropriate behavior which caused offense to

others,” Burley said in a statement.

He has been fired as a junior Parliamentary aide.

The local French state prosecutor’s office said restaurant staff had been interviewed as witnesses.

“Either we could open a prosecution in France or we could make a complaint to British judicial authorities for them to take a decision on whether to open an inquiry there,” an official said.

Internet

UK bookseller sorry for calling Hitler’s ‘Mein Kampf’ a ‘perfect X’mas present

LONDON, 24 Dec—British bookseller Waterstone has apologized for suggesting that Hitler’s ‘Mein Kampf’ would be a fitting stocking stuffer for Christmas.

The Jewish Chronicle

reported Waterstone Booksellers had several branches prominently displaying the book, and one using a sticker urging its purchase as a potential stocking stuffer.

The New York Post and

the Daily Mail said the company issued its mea culpa after a Jewish businessman complained about spotting ‘Mein Kampf’ promotions in four different Waterstone stores, the Chronicle reported.—Internet



Ships are seen on the Persian Gulf near the Qeshm Island in south Iran, on 23 Dec, 2011. Iranian naval maneuvers dubbed Velayat 90 will start on Saturday and will cover an area of 2,000 (1,250-mile) km stretching from the east of the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Aden.—XINHUA

Medicare spending in surprising slowdown

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—US Medicare spending growth has slowed even as enrollment rises, and could remain below targets set by Congress for the next 10 years, experts said.

Medicare recorded a sharp drop in the volume of doctor visits and other outpatient services early in 2010, from an annual growth rate of 4 percent growth to less than 2 percent. “We thought, ‘Wow, what’s happening?’” chief Medicare actuary Rick Foster told *The Washington Post* in an interview. “Part B cost growth has slowed down so much, we’re seeing virtually the lowest rates ever.”

Budget analysts consider the news as a temporary aberration, since an average of 10,000 baby boomers will turn 65 every day for the next 20 years, eventually doubling the program’s enrollment, and annual Medicare spending is projected to reach nearly \$1 trillion by 2021. But the drop does point to an often-overlooked truth, analysts say — Medicare spending per person is rising more slowly than spending in the private health sector.

It’s expected to mirror overall growth in the economy for much of the next decade, staying well below targets set by Congress, they say. “Medicare is not out of control,” said Robert Berenson, vice chairman of the congressionally appointed Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, which studies the program’s finances. “This ‘bloated and inefficient’ program is not bloated and inefficient.”—Internet

Scientists eye Mercury magnetic puzzle

KATLENBURG-LINDAU, 24 Dec—Mercury, the smallest planet and the closest to the sun, has an unexpectedly weak magnetic field, and European researchers have fingered the sun as the culprit.

Planetary magnetic fields are generated by flows in the hot, liquid iron cores of rocky planets. Based on its size and density, Mercury should field strengths similar to those on Earth — yet the planet’s field is 150 times weaker than Earth’s.

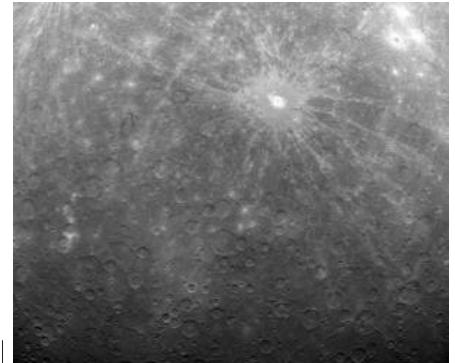
Researchers in Germany say the sun’s solar wind — a constant stream of charged particles — plays a large role in that.

Mercury, at an average distance from the sun of 36 million miles — around one third of the distance from Earth to the sun — is much more exposed to these particles, they said.

“We must keep in mind that Mercury strongly interacts with the surrounding solar wind,” researcher Daniel Heyner, lead author of the study published in *Science*, said in a release from the Max Planck Institute for Solar System Research.

This interaction drives strong electrical currents in the magnetosphere of the planet, creating magnetic fields that counteract and cancel the internal dynamo effect of the flowing iron core, scientists said.

“The dynamo process in Mercury’s interior is almost



At 5:20 am EDT on 29 March, 2011, the NASA spacecraft Messenger captured this image of Mercury, the first ever obtained from a spacecraft in orbit about the solar system’s innermost planet.—INTERNET

nipped in the bud by the interaction,” researcher Karl-Heinz Glassmeier at the Technische Universitat Braunschweig said.—Internet



A baby rests on a pile of donated used clothes at an evacuation centre in Iligan, southern Philippines, where floods caused by a storm left more than 1,000 people missing.—INTERNET

Death toll, missing in Philippine tropical storm both top 1,000

MANILA, 24 Dec—The death toll from tropical storm Washi (local name Sendong) climbed to 1,100 on Saturday, and the number of people reported missing soared from a dozen to 1,079, according to Philippine official statistics.

The total number of population affected by Washi reached 695,195 persons in 108,798 families in the country’s 13 provinces, said a report released by the Philippine National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council in its 6 am report.

The estimated cost of damages to infrastructure, agriculture and school buildings topped 1 billion pesos (22.94 million US dollars), the report said.

Search and retrieval operations are continuing in heavily devastated areas through the concerted efforts of the Philippines armed forces, police and coast guards.—Xinhua

World's biggest wireless semiconductor producer establishes branch in NW China city

Xi'an, 24 Dec—Qualcomm, the world's largest wireless semiconductor company, has announced it will set up a branch in Xi'an, capital of northwest Shaanxi province, according to the management committee of the city's high-tech area on Friday.

In the past years, the US-based global leader in 3G and next generation wireless telecommunication technologies has established cooperative relationships with Chinese counterparts such as Huawei, ZTE, Yulong Coolpad and Wingtech.

Qualcomm's branch in Xi'an is a strategic option and also a good beginning, said Zhao Hongzhan, director of the Xi'an

high-tech area management committee, adding that the area will provide "big support and quality service" to Qualcomm, and said he hopes the company will expand its investment in Xi'an.

China has already become one of the fastest growing markets for Qualcomm, said Wang Xiang, president of Qualcomm greater China. "Qualcomm decided to set up its branch in Xi'an because of the city's complete industrial chain, strong technical strengths and rich talent," Wang said.

Qualcomm entered the Chinese market in the late 1990s and already has branches in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen. *Xinhua*



People make bubbles at the central park in New York, the United States, on 22 Dec, 2011.—XINHUA

MegaFon offers BlackBerry services in Russia

Moscow, 24 Dec—MegaFon, one of the "big three" mobile phone operators in Russia, has started offering BlackBerry services to customers in the country.

BlackBerry smartphones will initially be available only to Moscow buyers, but in 2012 MegaFon will begin selling the gadget in its regional locations.

Two other Russian leading mobile operators — MTS and Beeline — are already selling BlackBerry services.

BlackBerry is a popular wireless solution enabling its users to easily access e-mail, phone, text messaging, internet, organiser and corporate data applications from a single, integrated device, according to its Canadian producer Research In Motion (RIM).

It is now available on wireless networks around the world with over 2.5 million subscribers using such services today.

Internet



Civil Defence Rescue workers walk through fresh liquefaction after a swarm of earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 23 Dec, 2011. New Zealand's earthquake-battered second city of Christchurch was shaken by a series of tremors Friday with four measuring at least magnitude 5 on the Richter scale. *Xinhua*

Aftershocks continue to rattle in S New Zealand

WELLINGTON, 24 Dec—Aftershocks continued to rattle in New Zealand South Island city of Christchurch following a series of shakes on Friday.

There were 15 shakes from 11 pm Friday to 6:37 am Saturday, with many over 4.0-magnitude and the latest was 5.1-magnitude, with the depth of 9 km, centered 10 km east of Akaroa, the government geological agency GNS Sciences reported.

Two 5.8-magnitude and 6.0-magnitude earthquakes in a swarm of large aftershocks

on Friday wreaked more damage and fear across Christchurch, panicking Christmas shoppers, cutting power and covering parts of the eastern suburbs in silt.

Hundreds of travellers had their Christmas plans disrupted after Christchurch Airport was closed following the first quake Friday.

The airport reopened at 5:30 pm Friday after the runways and terminal were cleared, but the backlog is not expected to be cleared until Saturday. *Xinhua*

US jobless claims continue to fall

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—The number of people filing initial applications for unemployment benefits dropped by 4,000 last week to 364,000, the lowest level since April 2008, the US labor department said Thursday. The rolling four-week average of new claims, viewed as a better gauge of underlying trends, fell 8,000 to 380,250, the best reading in nearly 3 1/2 years.

Around 3.55 million people were receiving state unemployment benefits during the week that ended 10 Dec. The total number of recipients of state or federal jobless aid declined by 300,000 to 7.15 million. State benefits generally run out after 26 weeks, but the worst economic slump since the Great Depression prompted lawmakers to approve federal emergency programmes that provide jobless benefits for up to 99 weeks.

The US economy lost 8.4 million jobs between December 2007 and June 2009, when the recession officially ended. The labour department's November jobs report, released 9 Dec, showed the unemployment rate dropping from 9 percent to 8.6 percent as the economy added 120,000 net new jobs. The rate now stands at its lowest level in 2 1/2 years. *Internet*

British troops in Afghanistan to get new equipment

LONDON, 24 Dec—Britain has announced an equipment package worth 400 million pounds (around USD627 million) for its troops in Afghanistan. The equipment include protected vehicles and technology to counter improvised explosive devices.

The announcement was made Thursday by defence secretary Philip Hammond, *Xinhua* reported.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were the "single greatest threat" to British forces in Afghanistan,

Hammond said.

He said improving the protection of British troops on the frontline was the military's number-one priority.

The package includes around 100 Foxhound protected vehicles, which employs cutting-edge technology and are expected to provide unprecedented levels of protection, said a statement from the ministry of defence. A total of 391 British military personnel have died in Afghanistan since 2001.—*Xinhua*

About 79,000 foreigners working in Vietnam

HANOI, 24 Dec—As many as 78,440 foreigners are working in Vietnam, of whom 41,529 were granted work permits, reported *Vietnam News Agency* on Thursday quoting a report from the Employment Department under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs as saying.

The report said that the number of unlicensed employees, who work in Vietnam within three months, is 5,581. Most of them are unskilled workers and are working for foreign contractors in the country. Meanwhile, the number of workers who are awaiting work permits accounts for nearly 30 percent of the total.—*Xinhua*



A man gives an acrobatic show with some lighting balls during the 22nd Winter Solstice Festival held in Toronto, Canada, on 21 Dec, 2011.—XINHUA

5.9-magnitude quake hits south of Africa — USGS

NAIROBI, 24 Dec—An earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale jolted south of Africa at 19:12 GMT on Friday, the US Geological Survey said. The epicenter, with a depth of 9.8 km, was initially determined to be at 52.12 degrees south latitude and 28.01 degrees east longitude.

The epicenter was 2,483 km south of Durban, South Africa, and 2,530 km south of Maseru, Lesotho. There was no immediate report of tsunami though the quake hit in the sea. *Xinhua*



An artist paints a porcelain adobe for firing at a porcelain workshop in "Porcelain Capital" Jingdezhen City, east China's Jiangxi Province, on 21 Dec, 2011. Jingdezhen's porcelain has been famous not only in China but in time it became known internationally for being "as thin as paper, as white as jade, as bright as a mirror, and as sound as a bell."

XINHUA



President U Thein Sein inspects construction of bailey bridge across Shwe Creek and site chosen for construction of new Shwe Creek Bridge.—MNA

River-spanning bridges built ...

(from page 1)

The project started on 15-12-2009 and completed on 14-12-2011. The bridge was built in accord with the set standards within two years. Now, plans are under way to inaugurate the bridge soon. It is a rail-cum-road river-crossing bridge. Public Works undertook the construction of the main bridge, approach roads and railroads while Myanma Railways built embankments for the approach railroads and laying of rail tracks.

The bridge is situated between the eastern bank of the Ayeyawady River in NyaungU of NyaungU District, Mandalay Region, and the western bank of the Ayeyawady River in Pakokku of Pakokku District, Magway Region. The main bridge is 11431 feet or 2.16 miles long. The road on the bridge is 13537 feet or 2.56 miles long and the railroad on the bridge 20597 feet or 3.90 miles long.

The approach road is 1378 feet long on the Pakokku bank and 728 feet long on the Latpanchepaw bank. The approach railroad is

Myanma Railways of the Ministry of Rail Transportation is undertaking 13 railroad projects, including Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku) approach railroad project, which will link already-built Taungdwingyi-Bagan-Myangyan railroad on the eastern bank and Kyangin-Pakokku railroad on the western bank under construction.

Upon completion of the bridge approach railroads and other related railroads, there will be links between Patheingyi, Kyangin, Pakokku, Kalay, Minbu, An and Sittway on the western bank of the Ayeyawady and other regions across the nation such as Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay, Myittha, Taunggyi, Yangon, Mawlamyine and Dawei.

The embankment of the approach railroad on Pakokku bank is 1.71 miles long, that on Latpanchepaw bank 2.30 miles long. The length of the total railroad, including the main bridge and approach railroads is 7.91 miles, and the length of rail tracks is 9.28 miles. Upon completion of the project, Pakokku-Bagan

အိန္ဒိယ-မြန်မာ-ထိုင်း သုံးနိုင်ငံပူးပေါင်းဆောင်ရွက်မည့် (Tripartite Highway) လမ်းမကြီး



A map shows Tripartite Highway to be built by India, Myanmar and Thailand.—MNA



Photo shows progress in construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku).—MNA

5420 feet long on the Pakokku bank and 3746 feet long on the Latpanchepaw bank. The bridge has 28-foot-wide two-lane motor road, 14-foot-wide railroad and 3-foot-and-3-inches-wide pedestrian lane each on both sides. The clearance is 262 feet wide and 52 feet high. The foundation is of RC type bored piles and the upper frame is of steel type. The bridge can bear 75 tons of loads.

Afterwards, Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation Thura U Thau Lwin reported on progress in implementing the Ayeyawady Bridge (Pakokku) approach railroad project.

For his part, the President said construction of the bridge is aimed at developing the western regions of the Ayeyawady River, including Pakokku District. On completion, Pakokku and Bagan-NyaungU railway schedules will be launched, added the President.

railway schedule will be launched and it will take about an hour.

President U Thein Sein then viewed construction progress of the bridge. Then, he proceeded to Pakokku, where he was welcomed by Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Soe Lwin and townsenders.

The Union Construction Minister reported on construction of 340 feet long temporary bailey in place of the Shwe Creek Bridge that was damaged due to natural disaster and the site chosen for construction of new Shwe Creek Bridge.

Later, the President inspected the site chosen for construction of Shwe Creek Bridge No.2 on the 4 miles and 3 furlongs long bypass and resettlements for the flood victims in Aungchantha Ward.

He then viewed development of Pakokku by car.—MNA

58 lots of pearl sold at Mid-year Myanmar Gems Emporium

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—The Mid-year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2011, organized by Myanmar Gems Emporium Organizing Central Committee, commenced at Mani Yadana Jade Hall near Myanmar Gems Museum, here, this morning.

Local and foreign gem merchants viewed the jade, gem and pearl lots and bought pearl lots.

A total of 267 lots of pearl—224 lots through open tender and 43 lots through competitive bidding system—will be sold on 24 and 25 December. A total of 230 lots of gems—1676 lots through open tender and 54 lots through competitive bidding system—will be sold on 26 and 27 December. A total of

11821 jade lots—11592 lots through open tender and 229 lots through competitive bidding system—will be sold from 27 December 2011 to 3 January 2012.

Up to now, 3710 local gem merchants and 1591 foreign gem merchants from six countries, totalling 5310 arrived here to attend the emporium.

Secretary of the Central Committee U Thein Swe and members supervised the smooth process of sales.

Today, a total of 58 lots of pearl were sold. There will be arrival of more local and foreign gem merchants in coming days to attend the emporium. The emporium will take a break on 25 December, the X'mas Day.—MNA

President U Thein Sein inspects...

(from page 16)

whole construction works 67.5 per cent. The approach roads have completed by 75 per cent.

On completion, local people will have easy access to Mandalay-Madaya-Bhamo-Myitkyina Road via Singu of Mandalay Region and then to Mogok of Mandalay Region, Momeik and Mabein of Shan State, SiU, Mantha and Mansi of Kachin State. Moreover, they can enjoy smoother transport along Mandalay-Shwebo-Myitkyina Road, Shwebo-KhinU-YeU-Kalewa Road, Shwebo-Ayadaw-Monywa-Yagyi-Kalewa-Kalay Road and Thekkeikyin-Phaungpyin-Homalin-Htamanthi-Khamti Road via Nwentyein-Kyaukmyaung-Shwebo Road on west bank of Ayeyawady River.

After viewing the sub-structure of the bridge, the President gave necessary instructions to the Union minister and officials.

In the afternoon, the President and party arrived back here by air.

MNA



President U Thein Sein hears reports on progress of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanatheinga) construction project presented by Union Minister for Construction U Khin Maung Myint and Sagaing Region Chief Minister U Tha Aye.—MNA



Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham formally opens Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2011. MNA

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham...

(from page 16)

jade lots will be sold through tender system at Mani Yadana Jade Hall from 24 December 2011 to 3 January 2012.

It is reported that 1591 foreigner gems merchants from six countries and 3710 local gems merchants will attend the special sales and the gems sales is the fifth of its kind in Nay Pyi Taw.—MNA

Union Minister for Information and for Culture U Kyaw Hsan, Union Minister at President Office Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Nay Pyi Taw Mayor U Thein Nyunt and Union Minister for Mines U Thein Htaik open Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2011.—MNA



Union Minister U Wunna Maung Lwin accepts commission from newly-accredited FAO Resident Representative Ms Bui Thi Lan. MNA

Union Foreign Affairs Minister receives guest

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin received newly-accredited United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Resident Representative Ms

Bui Thi Lan and accepted her commission at the ministry yesterday morning.

They discussed matters related to future cooperation between FAO and Myanmar.

MNA

Workers to directly register at labour exchange offices for foreign jobs

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Foreign Jobs Supervisory Committee is reported to arrange the entire job application process in Yangon for Myanmar workers wishing to work in Thailand. Previously, to complete the job application process from registration to receiving work permit, Myanmar workers had to go to Tachilek, Kawthoung and Myawady and wait there for 20-45 days.

Labour Exchange Offices of the

Ministry of Labour will directly register workers for foreign jobs. Job offers from Thailand will be advertised at notice boards of the township Labour Exchange Offices in regions and states and the Labour Exchange Offices will arrange the entire job application process from registration, arranging physical examination, interview, signing employment deal and sending to Thailand.

MNA

Floating ice freeze the Yellow River in Huhhot, capital of north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, on 22 Dec, 2011. About 600 kilometers of the Yellow River in Inner Mongolia were jammed by floating ice by 3:00 pm Wednesday. The local government was monitoring the river for possible ice runs.—XINHUA



Scientists genetically alter mosquito to fight malaria

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—Scientists have genetically engineered innate immune system of Anopheles mosquito to block the transmission of malaria-causing parasites to humans. Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Malaria Research Institute revealed that the genetic modification had limited impact on the mosquito's fitness under laboratory conditions.

In this study, Dimopoulos and his team genetically engineered Anopheles mosquitoes to produce higher than normal levels of an immune system protein Rel2 when they feed on blood. Rel2 acts against the malaria parasite in the mosquito by launching an immune attack involving a variety of anti-parasitic molecules. Through this approach, instead of introducing a new gene into the

mosquito DNA, the researchers used one of the insect's own genes to strengthen its parasite-fighting capabilities. According to the researchers, this type of genetically modified mosquito could be further developed and used to convert malaria-transmitting to Plasmodium-resistant mosquito populations.

One possible obstacle for this approach is the fitness of the genetically modified malaria resistant mosquitoes, since they would have to compete with the natural malaria-transmitting mosquitoes.

The researchers showed with their study that the Rel2 genetically modified mosquito strain lived as long, and laid as many eggs, as the non-modified wild type mosquitoes, thereby suggesting that their fitness had not become significantly impaired.—Internet

91-year-old becomes 'world's oldest yoga teacher'

MELBOURNE, 24 Dec—A US woman has recently been awarded the title of Oldest Yoga Teacher by Guinness World Records. The 91-year-old lady, Bernice Bates, first began practising yoga 50 years ago after she saw it on a television programme.

These days the great-grandmother teaches once a week at the community centre of her Florida retirement village. Bates believes in gentle yoga no sweaty, strenuous or competitive stretching in her classes.

"You may not do it perfect, but there's no perfect person," the News.com.au quoted her as saying. Bates credits yoga for her good health — she doesn't take medication or

have any health problems — and says it gives her the ability to enjoy the things she loves like flower gardening and worshipping at her Methodist church. She also lifts weights, walks, swims and does tai chi. She starts stretching the moment she wakes up, with a series of poses to get her blood flowing.

"It gives you a good outlook. It involves your mind. Your mind, your body and your spirit. They all work together and they're all coordinated," Bates stated.

"Whereas when you're on a treadmill, that's all you're doing, and you're tired when you're done. We build energy in our body, we don't take it out," she added.—Internet

Mysterious 'space ball' falls from the sky in Namibia

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—A mysterious metal ball apparently fell from the sky near a village in the north of Namibia, 480 miles from the capital Windhoek, recently.

Authorities in Namibia were alerted around mid-November, about the crash of this hollow sphere but they disclosed about the finding only after conducting some tests.

Eyewitnesses claimed to have heard a series of explosions few days before the extraterrestrial find. Police forensics director Paul Ludik told a foreign news agency that the mystery sphere has a diameter of 35 centimetres (14 inches), a rough surface and appears to consist of 'two halves welded together'.

Ludik also described the object as being made of a 'metal alloy known to man,' weighing in at six kilograms (13 pounds).

"It is not an explosive device, but rather hollow, but we had to investigate all this first," *Discovery News* quoted him as saying.—Internet

UK's Prince Philip, 90, has heart surgery

LONDON, 24 Dec—Britain's Prince Philip, the 90-year-old husband of Queen Elizabeth, had heart surgery to ease a blocked artery on Friday after being rushed to hospital with chest pains as he prepared to celebrate Christmas with the royal family.

Britain's longest-serving royal consort, known for his outspoken and sometimes brusque manner, needed an operation to fit a small tube known as a stent that keeps the blood vessel open.

Philip had been preparing to spend Christmas with other members of the royal family, reportedly including Prince William and his wife Catherine, at the Sandringham royal estate in eastern England.

He was taken to the Papworth Hospital, one of Britain's main heart and chest centres, about 60 miles (100 kilometres) away in Cambridge, a palace spokeswoman said.

"The Duke of Edinburgh was found to have a blocked coronary artery which caused his chest pains," the palace said in a statement.

"This was treated successfully by the minimally invasive procedure of coronary stenting."

He will stay in hospital "for a short period" under observation, it added. The hospital declined to

comment.

Philip had attended a lunch for staff a week ago and had been on "very good form", the BBC reported.

"He has had these chest pains before and I don't think it's anything untoward, but given his age they are being safe rather than sorry," former royal Press spokesman Dickie Arbiter told the BBC.

MNA/Reuters



Photo shows the statue of Steve Jobs in Budapest, Hungary on 21 Dec. The statue of Steve Jobs was unveiled in Budapest to honour the Apple founder who died on 5 Oct, 2011. It is located outside the headquarters of Hungarian software company Graphisoft, whose founder, Gabor Bojar, commissioned the statue. XINHUA

Man arrested for illegally leaking new Madonna song

LONDON, 24 Dec—Spanish police have arrested a man and charged him with illegally leaking an early version of a new Madonna song, from her latest album.

The 31-year-old had allegedly put a demo of "Gimme All Your Luvin" on the internet in November.

The investigation began after lawyers traced the recording to Spain.

The man, who is yet to be named and described by police as a big fan of the singer, was arrested in Zaragoza, the BBC reported.

Police have not named the man arrested, but confirmed his initials as JMR.

Madonna's first studio album in five years is due for release in late March, with the

first single out next month.

Officers in the northern Spanish city said they found recordings of the song in a search of the suspect's belongings.

The 53-year-old singer, was said to have been "very upset" when the song first surfaced on the internet last month.

Her manager, Guy Oseary, had tweeted about the incident and urged fans to help police stop any further leaks.

The singer's upcoming album, her first since 2008's *Hard Candy*, has already been completed and will be released as part of a new three album deal with Interscope Records.

Internet



A visitor looks at a wooden miniature of an ancient Chinese building created by Ding Wuming, a local peasant, in Yuzhong County, Lanzhou, capital of northwest China's Gansu Province, on 21 Dec, 2011. An amateur in the art of ancient Chinese architecture, Mr. Ding has finished over 30 handmade wooden models of ancient Chinese buildings.—XINHUA

Indonesia orders three submarines from S Korea

JAKARTA, 24 Dec—Indonesia has ordered three brand new submarines from a South Korean shipbuilder firm, adding to the country's navy fleet which is now served by two submarines.

The order contract was signed by the defence ministry and the Daewoo Shipbuilding Marine Engineering (DSME) here on Tuesday, worth 1.07 billion US dollars, making it the largest single defence contract awarded to a South Korean firm.

Construction on those submarines is scheduled to commence in January next year under transfer of technology scheme between Indonesia and South Korea.

Two of the submarines would be built in South Korea, to constitute workers from Indonesia's state-run shipbuilder firm, PT PAL. Meanwhile the remaining one would be built in PT PAL's base in Surabaya, East Java.

Indonesian defence ministry spokesman Hartin Asrind said that deliveries on those new subs are expected to take place in 2015 and 2016.

Reports said that the 61.3 metre-long submarine weighs 1,400 tons, requires up to 40 crews to operate it. It is equipped with eight silos to launch missiles or torpedoes.

An analyst said that the order on those three submarines was not aimed at improving the navy's military might. It was merely to catch up with the latest submarine's technology development.

Xinhua



Performers play with flame throwers during the 18th Annual Winter Solstice Lantern Festival held in Vancouver, Canada, on 21 Dec, 2011. Honoring many cultural traditions, the annual festival illuminates the longest night of the year with lanterns, fire, music, and dancing.—XINHUA

Woman wins \$100,000 from abandoned \$1

SYDNEY, 24 Dec—An Australian woman has won the right to pocket the A\$100,000 (US\$101,000) she won on a slot machine, after a casino agreed to pay her the money she won with another gambler's abandoned dollar.

Cecilia Cubillo used a \$1 credit someone else had left in a poker machine to hit the jackpot 18 months ago.

But joy turned to disappointment when Adelaide Casino said it was unable to honour the prize because it was against regulations set by the gambling watchdog to pay wins on abandoned money.



File illustration photo shows a woman at a slot machine.—INTERNET

The regulation is aimed at encouraging gamblers to take breaks without losing their seat at their machine of choice.

But the approach by the Office of the Liquor and Gambling Commissioner appears to have softened since then and the casino Thursday handed Cubillo a cheque, Adelaide's *The Advertiser* reported. "We are sorry for any stress and embarrassment caused to Ms Cubillo by this situation," the casino's general manager David Christian told the paper. Christian said that at the time of the win withholding the money was correct. But he added: "Clarity is needed to determine when a gaming machine is considered abandoned and the appropriate action relating to any remaining credits."

Internet

Heavy snow blankets northern Greece

ATHENS, 24 Dec—A pre-Christmas snowstorm paralyzed parts of northern Greece, with hundreds of motorists stranded on a blocked highway in Macedonia early Friday.

The storm began late Thursday, *Ekathimerini* reported. The Egnatia Odos highway came to a standstill after a tractor-trailer skidded and overturned.

About 500 people were stuck on the highway, officials said. A school became a temporary shelter.

An official with the company managing the road said it was cleared by late morning.

High winds left about 150 villages in northern Greece without electrical power. Even in the Athens region, drivers were warned to use chains if they ventured into mountainous areas.

Forecasters said temperatures were expected to be higher late Friday and Saturday, with overnight lows around 30. F in the north.—Internet

Girl, dad reunite after boat capsizes

SIDOARJO, 24 Dec—A 10-year-old Iranian girl was reunited with her father on Friday, after the two were separated when their Australia-bound migrants' boat capsized in Indonesian waters.

Athena Hardani broke down in tears after hugging her father Mohammad at a hotel near the city of

Surabaya, where some of the survivors from last Saturday's capsized are being housed by Indonesian immigration authorities.

The Hardanis were among 250-odd asylum seekers on board a heavily overloaded people-smuggling boat that was heading for Australia's Christmas Island when it sank

at the weekend. Only 47 people are known to have survived.

Hardani's wife and eight-year-old daughter Mobina have not been found, and the father said he believed they were dead.

"I got renewed hope to live when I saw my daughter," Hardani told *AFP*.

"God willing, I will also be able to give her the hope to live," added the 36-year-old welder from the Iranian city of Ahvaz. "She asked about her mother and sister and I tried to console her," he said.—Internet

Iranian survivors Mohammad (L), is reunited with his daughter Athena Hardani, at a hotel in the town of Juanda in Indonesia's East Java province.—INTERNET



Shoppers walk past sales posters on a shopping street in central London, Britain, on 23 Dec, 2011. London saw its busiest shopping day on Friday, the last shopping day before Christmas Eve, with shoppers swarming to high streets to grab the last bargains.

XINHUA



VW addresses after-hours e-mails

BERLIN, 24 Dec—German car maker Volkswagen says it has stopped bugging its employees with after-hours e-mails, a growing complaint in the workplace.

Volkswagen says it took steps to have its Blackberry servers stop sending e-mails to some of its off-duty employees who had complained. The company stops sending messages 30 minutes after the end of employees' shifts and resumes 30 minutes before the next shift starts, the *BBC* reported.

"We confirm that this agreement between VW and the company's work council exists," a VW spokesman said without further comment.

"The agreement was received very positively," Heinz-Joachim Thues of the VW workers council told the German newspaper *Wolfsburger Allgemeine*.

Volkswagen is not alone in hearing from employees who feel their employer is infringing on their personal time with after-hours e-mails, the *BBC* said.

"It's bad for the individual worker's performance being online and available 24-7," said Will Hutton, chairman of the Big Innovation Centre at The Work Foundation. "You do need downtime, you do need periods in which you can actually reflect on something without needing instantaneously to give a reaction."

"Secondly, it has a poor impact on an individual's well-being. I think that one has to patrol quite carefully the borderline between work and non-work."

"So I can see why some firms are taking this action, the problem is that a universal response is impossible ... but certainly we should have the capacity to be opted out of it rather than be opted in."

Internet

2 dead after ATV falls from 500-foot cliff

LOS ANGELES, 24 Dec—The bodies of two men who fell over a 500-foot cliff while riding an all-terrain vehicle in California were found after a five-day search, officials said.

The bodies of Chris Rice and Daniel Carbonaro, who were reported missing Sunday, were discovered at the bottom of the cliff in the Mojave Desert Thursday, Kern County sheriff's officials said.

The two men died on impact, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. Rice and Carbonaro, both of Santa Barbara, departed

from a motel in Randsburg before dawn Sunday, riding their 2011 Polaris Razor ATV toward the Cuddeback Dry Lake Bed. A search covering 11,000 square miles began Sunday morning, ultimately leading to the ATV's tracks and the crash site. "Daniel Carbonaro and Christopher Rice will forever be remembered as wonderful individuals who touched everyone who crossed their paths," a statement posted on the Friends of the Chris Rice and Dan Carbonaro search Facebook page said.—Internet

Picture of floods sent in by a Channel NewsAsia viewer. INTERNET



SINGAPORE, 24 Dec—Prolonged heavy rain over the southern and central parts of Singapore on Friday afternoon led to flash floods

Flash floods hit several areas in Singapore

in several areas. National water agency PUB said that from 2.20pm to 5.20pm,

Road. Instead, water ponded at the open area of Liat Towers, the underpass between Lucky Plaza and Ngee Ann City, and the basement of Lucky Plaza due to the sustained heavy downpour.

This activated the flood barricades at Liat Towers. But it wasn't enough to stop the water from entering. Seng Woon Fa, marketing and brand manager at Wendy's Restaurant, said: "The water started coming in at 5pm. By 5.20pm, we started to evacuate all our customers."

"The barricade at the outer level and inner level does not work because the water came in too suddenly and probably there is something wrong with the

system... Our daily business will be affected about 60 per cent."

Mr Seng said he will try to resume business as soon as possible once all equipment in the restaurant has been checked after cleaning up and it is safe to switch the power back on.

Elsewhere, flash floods occurred at Casuden Road, Newton Circus, Kampong Java, Lincoln Road, Wee Nam Road, Cambridge Road, the junction of Moulmein Road and Thomson Road in front of United Square, and the junction of Bukit Timah and Sixth Avenue.

PUB had sent out alerts to advise motorists to avoid these areas.

Internet

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA MACHAN VOY NO (331)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA MACHAN VOY NO (331) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2011 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (423)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA TAMPAN VOY NO (423) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25.12.2011 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
LINES**

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Manhattan post office overrun by rats as rodents devour parcels

NEW YORK, 24 Dec—With 16.5 billion letters, packages and cards expected through the US Postal Service this holiday season, the last obstacle senders might expect their packages to face, are thieving rats. A post office in Manhattan is fighting a rat infestation leaving chewed boxes and envelopes that carries any item found edible, by both human and rodent taste. Packages found deliverable despite their outside damage of visible gnawing and gaping holes are showing up in the hands of their recipients as mere shells.



Packages delivered in New York City are arriving with holes in them and their contents eaten due to an expanding rat infestation at at least one local post office.—INTERNET

and goodies,' Maureen Marion, a USPS spokeswoman for the North East told the New York Times, whose office has found the most reported damaged packages.'At Midtown they've been very good at putting things in cabinets to keep them away from nibbles, but this time of year they just have more packages than they do have space to accommodate them,' Ms Marion said. One New York Times employee expecting a treat from The Vermont Brownie Company says they opened a gnawed box to find only a card inside.—Internet

The little animals can smell the chocolate



The number of brown rats or Norway rats in the city are unknown but are believed to have expanded in recent years in part because of food wastefulness.—INTERNET

Wife of 60 minutes journalist quits exclusive tennis club because her playing partner is 'too slow'

MANHATTAN, 24 Dec — The well-to-do wife of a 60 Minutes correspondent has walked out of her tennis club after complaining that one of her partners was 'too slow'. Steve Kroft's spouse Jennet Conant apparently became irritated while playing a social doubles match at Columbia University's Dick Savitt Tennis Center, in Manhattan. Finding the level of competition below her expected standard, the author suddenly gave notice of her intention to quit. An email sent to the fixture organiser was printed today in the New York Post's gossip column.



Frustrating: Jennet Conant (pictured with her husband, 60 Minutes correspondent Steve Kroft, in 2009) has quit her tennis club because the play was slow and boring.—INTERNET

It read: 'I am sorry about today but I am far too busy at work to play that kind of tennis anymore, it's just too frustrating and not even enough exercise. 'So I've decided it's best if I drop out. Please sell my spots for the New Year and have them

send me a check.' The Post quoted another source arrived for her first match with a new group, but was dismayed to find the other players were 'women who have slowed down and don't play all that well,' adding that she found the game 'boring.' Internet

Calling all Miss Universe China applicants

BEIJING, 24 Dec—The 2012 Miss Universe China Pageant application period started on Dec 14 and casting calls will be made in February.

The contest will be held on July 17 in Shanghai, after 30 contestants complete their month-long training. With the theme "celebrating Chinese women", the pageant will be directed by Yue-Sai Kan. The winner of the competition will go on to represent China in the 2012 Miss Universe Pageant.

In 2011, Luo Zilin, China's Miss Universe entrant, was fifth runner-up in the final segment that took place in San Paolo, Brazil. This year, Kan says, she is confident the pageant will be a great success.—Xinhua

Soft Sky and Warm Earth

For scared husband and wife
For my lovingly mom and dad
Because both of you, I have strength and might
And thx for being me for what both of you get.

Without both of you, i'll be withered and dry
Cold and lonely in darkest mist
Because both of you, i'm now like flying in the sky
Like i'm on a heaven's trip

Mon you're like the sky for me
And aslo dad you'er like an earth
Thx for mom for teaching me to get on my own feet
And thx dad for always showing me right path

Be healthy and strong like both of you said
When in my childhood you always taught me
Now I wish that thing to you mom and dad
Love peace and forever be.

Happy Anniversary Mom & Dad,
I'll always be your son as you love me always.

Pho Ther (Guardians)

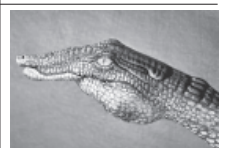
Spain El Gordo: Lottery joy for badlands village

MADRID, 24 Dec—The top prize in the world's biggest Christmas lottery has gone to people who bought tickets in a town in the badlands of the Spanish north-east. Each ticket with the winning number 58268 was worth 400,000 euros (£334,000; \$524,000), the state lottery agency said after the El Gordo

draw. All 1,800 winning tickets were sold in Granen, population 2,100, in the arid Los Monegros area of Huesca province.

Celebrating residents danced, sang, embraced and sprayed sparkling wine. "It's brilliant!" Pilar Azagra, who runs the town's lottery store, told Spanish TV, looking slightly dazed. "I haven't had time to react, the number came out and then people started flocking to the shop," she said, adding that many in her family had bought El Gordo tickets. El Gordo, which in English means The Fat One, is worth 2.5bn euros this year.

Several companies in Granen have closed because of Spain's economic crisis, forcing residents to seek employment further afield. Two housewives' associations in Granen and the neighbouring village of Sodeto were among the winners. "This is the reward for a very bad year, full of sacrifices and hard effort," Susana Perez, who owns an insurance agency with her husband, told Spanish media in Granen. "We've worked like mules."—Internet



Vivid animal portraits on hands.—XINHUA

Miracle survival of girl swept away in Indonesian tsunami reunited with parents after seven years

JAKARTA, 24 Dec — A little girl believed to have been killed in the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami is reportedly alive and has been reunited with her parents. The girl identified as Wati, now 15, was just eight-years-old when she was separated from her family as a massive wave crashed into their village in Ujong Baroh on the island of Sumatra. Her mother, Yusniar had been trying to escape the waters to safety with Wati and her two siblings when she lost her grip on the little girl, according to the Indonesian news agency Antara. Wati then disappeared into the consuming water and was swept away to her apparent death. Yusniar managed to hold onto her other two children and became resigned Wati had perished. Her family made sev-



Banda Aceh, pictured, was one of the worst hit places in the Indonesian tsunami.—INTERNET



The scale of the damage caused just south of Banda Aceh can be seen in this aerial photograph.—INTERNET

eral attempts to find her but she was not seen since. But on Wednesday the girl's grandfather Ibrahim met a friend at his home in the city of Meulaboh. He took along a teenage girl he had found who had no memory of her family. She had been discovered sitting alone in a coffee bar but when questioned she said that she had arrived in the city by bus from Banda Aceh and was trying to find her way home, The Telegraph reported.

Ibrahim immediately suspected that she could be Wati and contacted Yusniar and her husband who arrived to meet her. The couple said they recognised the girl as their daughter after seeing a distinctive mole and scar on her elbow from when she was six-years-old. It remains unclear what happened to Wati in the seven years since she disappeared.—Internet

Mistletoe supplies short in Canada

The owner of a flower shop in Ottawa says there is a shortage of the traditional decorative plant mistletoe this holiday season in Canada.

Minoo Banaei, owner of the Bel Fiore shop, said she had difficulty locating the plant from suppliers, *the Canadian Broadcasting Corp* reported Friday.

"I called three suppliers and two of them just laughed at me," she said. "The third said it would be expensive, but he tried. He ended up importing it from Europe."

Banaei said the mistletoe plants she managed to obtain have been selling for \$25 each.



Traditional decorative plant mistletoe

Diamond ring found on train

A Massachusetts woman who left her engagement ring on a commuter train said she was able to find the item with the help of some dedicated conductors.

Katelyn Peckham said she got off the train Tuesday morning at the North Station in Haverhill and realized about a half hour later that she did not have the engagement ring, which bears a large diamond that had once belonged to her mother, *The Boston Globe* reported Wednesday.

"I was just thinking how disappointed everyone would be in me," Peckham said. "You just don't lose things like this." Peckham said she hurried back to the station and enlisted the help of some conductors to help her search the trains at the station. Peckham said she burst into tears when a conductor handed the ring back to her.

"I felt sick to my stomach when it was over," Peckham said. "It could have been the worst day of my life."

News Album

\$88 million condo sets New York record

A 22-year-old Russian heiress set a New York record for the price of a home when her father bought her an \$88 million condominium in Manhattan. Ekaterina Rybolovleva, 22, daughter of Russian billionaire Dmitry Rybolovlev, set the record when a company associated with her signed a contract to

purchase the 6,744-square-foot condo at Central Park West, the *New York Post* reported Wednesday.

A representative for Rybolovleva, whose father is worth an estimated \$9.5 billion, said the heiress is studying in the United States and will be staying at the condo while in New York. "Ms Rybolovleva

was born in Russia, is a resident of Monaco and has resided in Monaco and Switzerland for the past 15 years," the representative said. The previous highest price paid for a home in the city was \$53 million, which J Christopher Flowers paid for a townhouse in 2006, the *Post* said.

Twins give birth minutes apart

A pair of twin sisters in New Jersey said they both gave birth to their first children only minutes apart in adjacent hospital rooms.

Danielle and Nicole Fisher, 23, of Clementon, who were born 12 minutes apart, said they gave birth to sons only 13 minutes apart Tuesday at Virtua Hospital in Voorhees, *The Courier-Post*, Cherry Hill, NJ, reported Thursday.

The sisters said they found out about their pregnancies weeks apart and their due dates were two weeks apart. However, Danielle was induced Monday and was still in labor Tuesday when Nicole's water broke. "I just think it's the twin thing," Nicole Fisher said. "It just has something to do with that twin communication. By now we're kind of used to it."

Daniel Radcliffe aspires to be a writer



Actor Daniel Radcliffe

LONDON, 24 Dec—Actor Daniel Radcliffe says he aspires to become a writer.

The 22-year-old actor, who became a popular name as Harry Potter in the famous film franchise, says he wants to pen a play or a film. But he says he isn't completely confident that he will achieve his dream, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*. "Every time I see a play or a film, I'm at that point where I want to write something. I'm convinced in my heart that I am a writer, but I have no ideas," he said.

Internet

Leonardo DiCaprio finds new love with yet another model!



Leonardo DiCaprio

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—Leonardo DiCaprio has got himself yet another model girlfriend this Christmas season and she is no other than blonde bombshell Erin

Heatherton.

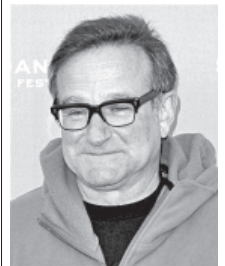
The 'J Edgar' star dated Victoria's Secret Angels Gisele Bündchen and Bar Refaeli in the past.

DiCaprio, 37, is currently in Sydney shooting Baz Luhrmann's 'The Great Gatsby' and has reportedly grown very close to the 22-year-old blonde beauty.

The pair was spotted walking around the grounds of Vaucluse House last week

and have been seen at a martial arts event and out for dinner at the city's hot spot Barrio Chino.

"There were times when they weren't really talking but then they would get chatty again and laugh and stuff," Radar Online quoted an eyewitness as telling the *Daily Telegraph*. "If they're not 'together' I would say they are very close," the source added.—*Internet*



Robin Williams hates ferrets

LONDON, 24 Dec—Actor Robin Williams has revealed that he hate ferrets because they are the "most annoying" creatures.

The 60-year-old, who gave voices to two characters in animated movie "Happy Feet Two", acknowledges that some people view the creatures as "loveable weasels" but he is not a fan of them.

"The ferret is the most annoying animal. I'm probably going to get hate mail from angry ferret owners now, 'How dare you insult the ferret! It's basically a loveable weasel'," *femalefirst.co.uk* quoted Williams as saying.

"There's a show in America where all these people compete with ferrets and they don't even do anything. They basically hold them up and if they don't bite you might win," he added.

Internet

Sarah Michelle Gellar vows to spend more time with hubby

LONDON, 24 Dec—Actress Sarah Michelle Gellar has vowed to spend more time with husband Freddie Prinze Jr in the new year after realising her marriage has taken a back seat after she became a mother.

The 34-year-old, who recently returned to the small screen with "Ringer", has struggled to divide her time between her career and two-year-old daughter Charlotte. "Charlotte is my best friend, and any free time I have, I want to spend with her. But while it's easy to forget yourself, I can't define myself as only Charlotte's mother—one day,

she's going to be an adult, and then where am I?" *daily-star.co.uk* quoted Gellar as saying. "Like in any other relationship, you have to remember who you are through all this. After she goes to bed at 7.30, I might take a bath or read. And Freddie and I get our time together, too. Relationships are like flowers: They need attention to grow and develop. You have to make time to be there for the



Actress Sarah Michelle Gellar

other person," she added.

Internet

Alec Baldwin not interested in politics

NEW YORK, 24 Dec—Actor Alec Baldwin has revealed he has no plans to run for the position of mayor because he has become disenchanted with politics and politicians. "I've lost my appetite. Plus the people that are running for mayor - I know this is terrible - I look at them and I don't see myself in that crowd," *femalefirst.co.uk* quoted the 53-year-old as saying.

"They're like a guy on a date that you can tell he just can't wait to get his hand up your blouse before even the lights go out. They're all just so horny for it. Horny for their own ascension," he added.—*Internet*



Actor Alec Baldwin

Spider-Man creator to make new superhero for India!

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—Stan Lee, co-creator of some of the world's leading superhero characters like Spider-Man, X-Men, Fantastic Four, Iron Man, Daredevil, Hulk and Thor will be launching an original superhero for the Indian market.

Multi-media company Pow! Entertainment's Lee, will develop the new superhero with a team of Indian artists working at Liquid Comics, a leading creator of Indian character franchises, the two firms announced Thursday.

It will initially launch a series of downloadable web and mobile comics distributed throughout India on Liquid's recently announced 'Graphic India' platform and www.graphicindia.com website.

Created by Lee, "Chakra - The Invincible", will be the first Indian superhero created by Lee in collaboration with local Indian artists and writers.

Chakra tells the story of the young Indian teenager,

Raju Rai, a technology genius living in Mumbai.

Determined to use science to unlock the secrets of human potential, Raju develops a technically-enhanced suit that activates the mystical Chakras of the body, unleashing newfound abilities and powers.

"Wow! I'm incredibly excited to be collaborating with my friends at Liquid Comics and their best-in-class team of artists as we launch a great new, thrill-a-minute superhero saga named Chakra - The Invincible," said Stan Lee.

Internet



Stan Lee, Spider-Man creator



Rybolovlev is aiming to bring former glories back for Monaco's fans.

Russian billionaire Dmitry Rybolovlev takes over Monaco

LONDON, 24 Dec—Billionaire Russian businessman Dmitry Rybolovlev has bought a majority stake in AS Monaco. The seven-time French champions are in the second division but Rybolovlev has pledged to invest at least 100m euros (£84m) over the next four years. "I am a passionate football fan," said the 45-year-old. "I think this club has enormous potential. I hope it can now realise this potential, both domestically and in Europe."

The Russian, who is ranked 93rd on the Forbes list of billionaires, has acquired 66.67% of Monaco. He sold his stake in fertiliser producer Uralkali for \$6.5bn (£4.1bn) in June 2010, his net worth is estimated at \$9.5bn (£6.1bn), and he bought American businessman Donald Trump's Palm Beach mansion for \$100m

Arsenal manager Wenger mulls Henry return on loan

LONDON, 24 Dec—Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger is considering trying to bring Thierry Henry back to the club on a two-month loan from the New York Red Bulls to fill the void left by strikers going to the African Cup of Nations. Henry won two Premier League titles and three FA Cups during a hugely successful eight-year spell at Arsenal, establishing himself as the club's all-time top scorer. After leaving London for Barcelona in 2007, Henry moved to New York in 2010 but he has been back at Arsenal to train during the Major League Soccer offseason. A statue of the 34-year-old Frenchman was unveiled at the Emirates Stadium last month to coincide with the club's 125th anniversary.—*Internet*



Henry scored 226 goals in 370 games for Arsenal

(£64m) in 2008. The new owner faces a huge task to revive Monaco's fortunes. The club won the last of their French league titles in 2000 and were Champions League runners-up in 2004, losing to Jose Mourinho's Porto.

An 18th-place finish last season saw the club lose their place in the top flight and Rybolovlev may have to start spending immediately with Monaco now in danger of a second successive relegation. They are bottom of Ligue 2 with 13 points from 18 games. Rybolovlev, who has been elected president of the board of directors, added: "Having lived long enough in Monaco, I realise the club is not just one of the principality's sports teams but also represents one of the main symbols of the principality, its pride and traditions. "Prince Albert II, Monaco's head of state, welcomed the deal. He said: "The agreement opens a new page in the history of the football team so dear to the principality."

Internet

Ryan Giggs set for talks with Sir Alex Ferguson over Manchester United contract extension

LONDON, 24 Dec—Manchester United veteran Ryan Giggs is set to discuss a contract extension with manager Sir Alex Ferguson. The midfielder, who turned 38 at the end of November, has made 15 appearances for the club so far this season in all competitions, scoring three goals. Giggs' current deal is due to expire at the end of the season, but the Welsh winger has suggested he is not ready to follow former team-mate Paul Scholes into retirement.

"It's almost that time when I'll sit down with the manager and see what his plans



Manchester United veteran Ryan Giggs

are and I'll see how I'm feeling [about] playing for another season," he told the club's official website. "At the moment I feel really good and I'm enjoying things more than ever, so we'll just have to wait and see." Giggs was on target in the 5-0 victory over Fulham on Wednesday to continue his record of scoring in every Premier League season, and is enjoying his role as a central midfielder alongside Michael Carrick.

"I love playing there. I've made no secret of that and it's probably my preferred position now," Giggs said. "I said the other night it's a joy for me and Michael to play in midfield when you've got the movement in front of you like we had at Fulham. "It makes our job so much easier when you've got three or four players making great runs when you're on the ball."—*Internet*

Jones injury boost for United

LONDON, 24 Dec—Manchester United star Phil Jones looks set to play in their Boxing Day match at home to Wigan after scans revealed he has not broken his cheekbone. The club had expected the 19-year-old to be sidelined after he was injured in the 5-0 win at Fulham. But manager Sir Alex Ferguson said: "Phil Jones should be okay for Monday. We feared the worst but there is no break."

Jones' availability will be welcome news for Ferguson, who is already missing a number of key players. Captain Nemanja Vidic is out for the season and fellow defender Rio Ferdinand is doubtful for the Wigan match, while midfielder Darren Fletcher has decided to take some time off



Phil Jones was forced off during the match against QPR.

on medical advice. The news on winger Ashley Young was not as good as Ferguson revealed he will miss the next few weeks with a knee injury.—*Internet*

Sharapova out of Brisbane event with ankle injury



Maria Sharapova

BRISBANE, 24 Dec—Maria Sharapova has withdrawn from the Brisbane International because of her continuing recovery from a left ankle injury. Sharapova was hurt at the

Pan Pacific Championships in Tokyo in September. Sharapova told Brisbane tournament officials in a statement released Saturday that "unfortunately my ankle is not 100 percent and I won't be able to make it this year."

It would have been her first appearance at the Brisbane event, which begins on 1 January. She said the injury, which also forced her to withdraw from the China Open and later the WTA Championships in Istanbul after two losses, should not affect her chances of competing at the Australian Open, which she won in 2008 and which begins on 16 January in Melbourne.—*Internet*

Van Persie closing in on goalscoring record

LONDON, 24 Dec—Arsenal striker Robin van Persie has expressed his delight at his superb goalscoring form in 2011. Gunners captain Van Persie equalled Thierry Henry's club record of 34 Barclays Premier League goals in a calendar year when he scored a penalty in Arsenal's 2-1 victory at Aston Villa on Wednesday. Van Persie now needs three more goals from the home matches against Wolves and QPR to beat Alan Shearer's top-flight record of 36 goals in a calendar year.

Arsenal striker Robin van Persie has expressed his delight at his superb goalscoring form in 2011. Gunners captain Van Persie

equalled Thierry Henry's club record of 34 Barclays Premier League goals in a calendar year when he scored a penalty in Arsenal's 2-1 victory at Aston Villa on Wednesday.

Internet



International Sports

Simeone confirmed as new Atletico Madrid coach

MADRID, 24 Dec—Atletico Madrid this Friday confirmed Diego Simeone as the new coach of the BBVA Primera Liga club. Simeone replaces Gregorio Manzano, who was sacked by Atletico on Thursday following his side's defeat to Albacete in the Spanish Copa del Rey and a poor start to the season that has left the club just four points above the relegation zone in Spain's top flight.

By choosing Simeone, Atletico's Directors, Miguel Angel Gil and Enrique Cerezo have chosen a man who was a hero with the Atletico Madrid fans during his period as a player at the club in an attempt to divert some criticism from their direction of the club in recent years. Simeone becomes the 49th coach at Atletico



Diego Simeone

since Miguel Angel's father, Jesus Gil took control of the club in 1987. The 41-year-old was a key part of the Atletico Madrid side that won a league and cup double in the 1995-96 season, before leaving to play in Italy, where he played for Inter Milan and Lazio.

He returned for another year at Atletico late in his career in 2003, but again left the club to end his playing career in his homeland. Moving into coaching after hanging up his boots, Simeone worked with Racing Club, before working with River Plate, Estudiantes, San Lorenzo and with Italian side Catania, before returning to Racing, who he abandoned at the end of last week. That move prompted speculation that Atletico had approached Simeone with a view to him replacing Manzano and those expectations have been fulfilled. Simeone has signed a deal for the remainder of this season and the 2012-2013 campaign.—*Xinhua*

Chelsea step up pursuit of Bolton defender Gary Cahill



Cahill has scored 12 top-flight goals for Bolton since joining three years ago.

LONDON, 24 Dec—Chelsea have opened talks with Bolton about England defender Gary Cahill.

Chelsea boss Andre Villas-Boas had already admitted he was interested in signing the 26-year-old centre-back, who is out of contract in the summer.

Now Bolton boss Owen Coyle has revealed that there

Robin Van Persie has scored 34 goals in 34 Barclays Premier League matches in 2011.

INTERNET

have been discussions between the two clubs. "Regarding Gary Cahill, there has been dialogue between ourselves and Chelsea," Coyle said.

However, the Wanderers boss added that Cahill was "fully focused on Bolton". Cahill, who joined Bolton in a £5m move from Aston Villa in January 2008, has become a fully fledged England international this season.

Arsenal had a bid for him turned down in August but the defender has now become a target for Chelsea. "We are aware of Gary's contractual situation," Villas-Boas said earlier this week.

"He's an interesting player for the club." Chelsea are short of cover in central defence, with Alex banished from the first-team squad after handing in a transfer request.

Internet

US survey sheds light on invasive beetle threatening forests

The ash borer has been known to devastate ash trees while authorities remain unable to eradicate.



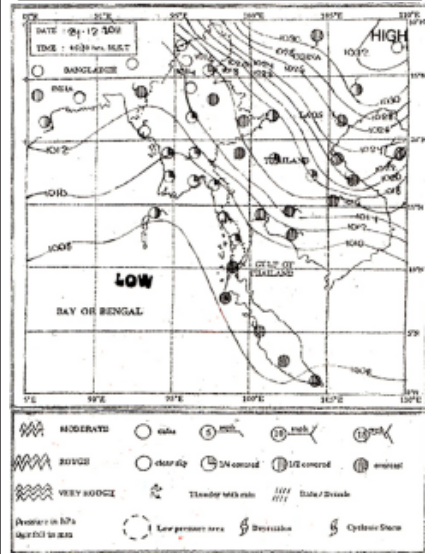
RICHMOND, 24 Dec—Kite-like contraptions placed in trees across the US are helping agriculture officials learn more about a deadly beetle that has killed tens of millions of ash trees in the United States and Canada and threatens countless more.

The 61,500 traps installed in 48 states are part of a survey led and funded by the US Department of Agriculture to track the emerald ash borer, a species native to China and eastern Asia that was first detected in the US in 2002. The invasive

pest likely arrived inside wood packing material from Asia and has since been detected in 15 states through the national survey using the traps that has been done annually since 2008. The states where the insect has been detected are: Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and Wisconsin. It also has been discovered in Ontario and Quebec. Currently the USDA has quarantined West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Illinois and the lower peninsula of Michigan. Certain areas of other states, like Virginia, also have quarantines, which means that ash trees, logs or nursery trees cannot be transported out of that specific area.

The 2011 survey shows the tiny, green beetle hasn't been detected outside of the states where it's already known to exist, but the bug has been found in about 60 more counties in those states, said Sharon Lucik with the USDA's emerald ash borer program. Some states have not yet completed their reports. "I don't know that we can say no news is good news, because we know that the beetle in low populations is difficult to detect," Lucik said.—*Internet*

Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas



WEATHER Saturday, 24th December, 2011

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hr MST: During the past (24) hours, weather has been partly cloudy in the whole country. Night temperatures were (5°C) below December average temperature in Kachin State, (3°C) to (4°C) above December average temperatures in Taninthayi Region, Shan and Mon States and about December average temperatures in the remaining Regions and States. The significant night temperatures were Putao and Pinlaung (2°C) each, Heho and Haka (4°C) each.

Bay Inference: Weather is cloudy in the South Bay and West Central Bay and Partly cloudy in the Andaman sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of the 25th December, 2011: Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Region, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and likelihood of isolated rain in the remaining Regions and States. Degree of certainty is (60%)

State of the sea: Squally with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) mph. Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight increase of night temperature in the whole country.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and Neighbouring areas for 25th December, 2011: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Yangon and Neighbouring areas for 25th December, 2011: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Mandalay and Neighbouring areas for 25th December, 2011: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Focus Myanmar TV Programme

MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL

(25-12-11 09:30 am ~ 26-12-11 09:30 am) MST
Oversea Transmission

- * News
- * Tapestry: A Unique Combination of Painting and Craftsmanship
- * Eminent Authors from Myanmar Literature World
- * News
- * Today's Efficient Youth (Debate)
- * Music Gallery
- * News
- * Who is U Jon Gyi?
- * Products Of Myanmar (Stone of the Heavens)
- * News
- * Prestigious Myanmar Silversmith
- * VCD Centre
- * A Day Tour on a Cart
- * Culture Stage
- * Around The Maha Boditahtaung
- * Reflection of Myanmar Fashion "Today casual Hairstyle"
- * Myanmar Movies "Guilt Over Love"

MYANMAR TV

(25-12-2011) (Sunday)

- 7:00 am 1. Paritta by Hilly Region Missionary Sayadaw
- 7:30 am 2. Morning News
- 7:50 am 3. Nice and Sweet Song
- 8:15 am 4. Health Programme
- 8:25 am 5. Documentary
- 8:40 am 6. International News
- 11:00 am 7. Martial Song
- 11:30 am 8. TV Drama Series
- 12:30 pm 9. Myanmar Video
- 4:40 pm 10. Songs of National Spirit
- 5:00 pm 11. Songs for Upholding National Spirit
- 6:20 pm 12. Cartoon Series
- 7:00 pm 13. Myanmar Movies
- 8:00 pm 14. News
- 15. Cartoon Series
- 16. Myanmar Movies

NIM-ner Johe Europe English!

The European Commission has just announced an agreement whereby English will be the official language of the EU rather than German which was the other possibility.

As part of the negotiations, Her Majesty's Government conceded that English spelling had some room for improvement and has accepted a five year phase-in plan that would be known as "Euro-English".

In the first year, "s" will replace the soft "c". Certainly, this will make the sivil servants jump with joy. The hard "c" will be dropped in favour of the "k". This should clear up konfusion and keyboards can have 1 less letter.

There will be growing publik enthusiasm in the second year, when the troublesome "ph" will be replaced with "f". This will make words like "fotograf" 20% shorter.

In the 3rd year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling can be expected to reach the stage where more komplikated changes are possible. Governments will enkorage the removal of double letters, which have always been a deterrent to akurate speling. Also, al wil agre that the horrible mes of the silent "e"s in the language is disgraseful, and they should go away.

By the fourth year, peopl wil be reseptiv to steps such as replasing "th" with "z" and "w" with "v". During ze fifz year, ze unesasary "o" can be dropd from vords kontaining "ou" and similar changes vud of kors be aplid to ozer kombinations of leters.

After zis fifz yer, ve vil hav areli sensibl riten styl. Zer vil be no mor trubl or difikultis and evrivun vil find it ezi to understand ech ozer. Ze drem vil finali kum tru! And zen world!

DISTRICT NEWS

Loans disbursed to 100 vendors

SHWEDAUNG, 24 Dec—Under the supervision of Shwedaung Township Development Affairs Committee of Bago Region, disbursement of loans to vendors was held at the Township DAC Office on 28 November.

The local authorities and departmental officials presented K 3 million to 100 vendors individually.—*Kyemon*



Model paddy plot produces over 70 baskets per acre

MAWLAMYINE, 24 Dec—A monsoon paddy was harvested on 6.43 acres of model plot in Naungkhay Village of Mawlamyine Township on 12 December.

District and township level departmental officials supervised the harvesting of paddy, and local farmers participated in the works.

Hsinthwelatt paddy strain of model plot produced 73.91 baskets of paddy per acre.—*Kyemon*

Fire prevention talked

MINBYA, 24 Dec—Minbya Township Fire Services Department organized an educative talk on fire preventive measures at Basic Education High School in Minbya Township of Sittway District on 13 December.

Head of Township FSD U San Tun explained fire preventive measures and distributed pamphlets on knowledge about danger of fire.

Township IPRD



President U Thein Sein inspects progress of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanatheinga) project



President U Thein Sein inspects Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanatheinga) project in Shwebo Township.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Accompanied by Lt-Gen Hla Htay Win of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief, Union ministers, the commander of Central Command, deputy ministers and departmental heads, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar U Thein Sein arrived at the briefing hall of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanatheinga) construction project in Nwenein Village of Kyaukmyaung Sub-township, Shwebo Township, Shwebo District in Sagaing Region this morning.

They were welcomed by Sagaing Region Chief Minister U Tha Aye, Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Soe Lwin, the Deputy Minister for Construction, region ministers and local people.

At the briefing hall, the President heard reports on progress of the project, roads linking the bridge and contribution of the

bridge to regional development presented by Union Minister for Construction U Khin Maung Myint and Chief Minister U Tha Aye.

After hearing the reports, the President instructed the officials to stockpile necessary steel frames for the bridge, strive for completion of tarmacking the approach road and inaugurate Ayeyawady Bridge (Sinkhan) to mark the 2012 Union Day, and he said that he will consider to fulfil the requirements of the Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanatheinga).

Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanatheinga) will link Nwenein Village of Kyaukmyaung Sub-township, Shwebo Township, Shwebo District in Sagaing Region and Singu of Pyin Oo Lwin District in Mandalay Region.

Since 16 April 2010, Bridge Construction Project Special

Group (14) of Public Works under the Ministry of Construction has been building the bridge.

It will be a two-way facility with 28 feet wide motor way and three feet wide pedestrian way on either side. The main bridge will be 2218 feet long with 66 feet long approach structure on Shwebo bank and 196 feet long approach structure bridge on Singu bank, totalling 2480 feet long. The water clearance will be 320 feet wide and 47 feet high, and the facility can withstand 75-ton loads.

The sub-structure of the bridge is of 1.5 metres diameter RC pile foundation and RC post structure. The upper structure of the facility is of steel frame and RC floor. The construction of sub-structure has completed by cent per cent, and the

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Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham attends opening of Mid-year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2011



Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham views pearl lots at Myanmar Gems Museum.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Mid-year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2011 kicked off at Mani Yadana Jade Hall on Yaza Thingaha Street in Nay Pyi Taw Zaburthiri Township today, attended by Vice-President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

Dr Sai Mauk Kham.

Also present at the opening ceremony were Patron of Central Committee for Organizing Mid-year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2011 Union Minister for Mines U Thein Htaik, Union Ministers, the

Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, deputy ministers, Nay Pyi Taw Council members, vice-chairpersons, secretaries and executive members of the central committee for organizing special sales, personnel of the subcommittees, Patron of Myanmar Gems Merchants Association U Aung Ko Win, Chairman U Tay Za, vice-chairmen, executives and guests.

Union Minister for Information and for Culture U Kyaw Hsan, Union Minister at the President Office Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Nay Pyi Taw Mayor U Thein Nyunt, Union Minister for Mines U Thein Htaik, Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung, Patron of MGMA U Aung Ko Win, Chairman U Tay Za, Vice-chairmen U Nay Win Tun and U Lpai Khun Sa formally opened the gems emporium.

Vice-President Dr Sai Mauk Kham unveiled the signboard of the gems

emporium. The Vice-President and party then viewed documentary video clips on previous Myanmar Gems Emporiums in Nay Pyi Taw and preparations for the Mid-year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2011.

The Vice-President then viewed jade lots, gems and jewelry shops of private companies and private businessmen at Mani Yadana Jade Hall and arrangements of respective subcommittees, and gems lots and pearl lots at Gems Market Floor in Myanmar Gems Museum.

Mid-year Myanmar Gems Emporium 2011 will be held till 3rd January 2012 at Mani Yadana Jade Hall where 11821 lots of jade, 230 lots of gems and 267 lots of pearls will be on sale. Pearl lots will be sold today and 26 December and gems lots today and 27 December through tender system and competitive bidding system at Gems market Floor in Myanmar Gems Museum whereas

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Virgin olive oil may help mitigate pancreatitis



PAGE 4

Simeone confirmed as new Atletico Madrid coach



PAGE 14

Sharapova out of Brisbane event with ankle injury



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