

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (R) shakes hands with US Secretary Hillary Clinton (2-L) next to Colombian President Manuel Santos (L) and Chilean President Sebastian Pinera, during Brazilian President-elect Dilma Rousseff's inauguration in Brasilia, Brazil on Saturday. Rousseff, who beat opposition candidate Jose Serra in a runoff election last October with 56% of the votes, has become the South American nation's first female president.



PHOTO: AFP

NEWS IN brief

Tehran 'must free German reporters'

BBC ONLINE

More than 100 prominent Germans have signed an open letter to the Iranian government, calling for the release of two German journalists.

The two were arrested in October while interviewing the son of Sakineh Mohammadi Ashtiani, 43, sentenced to death by stoning for adultery.

German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle and footballer Franz Beckenbauer were among the signatories.

On Saturday, Ashtiani said she planned to sue the German journalists.

She told reporters at a news conference in the north-western city of Tabriz that the journalists had "embarrassed" her, but did not elaborate.

Also on the list of those appealing for the release of the two journalists from the Bild am Sonntag newspaper were film director Volker Schlöndorff and the head of the Islamic Council of Germany, Ali Kizilkaya.

Mr Schlöndorff, who has officiated at Iranian film festivals as a jury president, said he loved Tehran but no longer wanted to travel there because of the imprisonment of the two journalists and other cases.

Finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble, defence minister Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg, tennis player Boris Becker and a winner of the Nobel Prize for literature, Herta Müller, also signed the letter.

Palestinian shot by Israelis at West Bank checkpoint

BBC ONLINE

A Palestinian man has been shot dead after trying to attack Israeli troops at a checkpoint near the West Bank city of Nablus, Palestinian officials say.

Mohamed Daraghme, a worker in his 20s, tried to attack troops with a bottle when he was refused permission to pass through the checkpoint, officials said.

The incident happened early yesterday.

On Friday, a Palestinian woman died after inhaling gas fired by Israeli troops during a protest against the West Bank barrier at Bilin.

Japan population shrinks by record in 2010

AP, Tokyo

Japan's population fell by a record amount last year as the number of deaths climbed to an all-time high in the quickly aging country, the government said Saturday.

Japan faces a looming demographic squeeze. Baby boomers are moving toward retirement, with fewer workers and taxpayers to replace them. The Japanese boast among the highest life expectancies in the world but have extremely low birth rates.

Japan logged 1.19 million deaths in 2010 the biggest number since 1947 when the health ministry's annual records began. The number of births was nearly flat at 1.07 million.

As a result, Japan contracted by 123,000 people, which was the most ever and represents the fourth consecutive year of population decline. The top causes of death were cancer, heart disease and stroke, the ministry said.

Japanese aged 65 and older make up about a quarter of Japan's current population. The government projects that by 2050, that figure will climb to 40 percent.

Like in other advanced countries, young people are waiting to get married and choosing to have fewer children because of careers and lifestyle issues.

Japan's total population stood at 125.77 million as of October, according to the ministry.

Russia-China oil pipeline opens

BBC ONLINE

The first oil pipeline linking the world's biggest oil producer, Russia, and the world's biggest consumer of energy, China, has begun operating.

The pipeline, running between Siberia and the northeastern Chinese city of Daqing, will allow a rapid increase in oil exports between the two countries.

Until now, Russian oil has been transported to China by rail.

Concentrated in western Siberia, Russia's network of pipelines for oil exports has so far run towards Europe.

Russia is expected to export 15m tonnes of oil through the new pipeline each year during the next two decades -

about 300,000 barrels a day.

The project cost \$25bn (\$16bn) and was partly financed by Chinese loans.

Russia overtook Saudi Arabia as the world's largest oil producer in 2009.

China surpassed the US as the world's largest consumer of energy last year.

"The operation of the China-Russia crude oil pipeline is the start of a new phase in China-Russia energy co-operation," said Yao Wei, general manager of Pipeline Branch of Petro China, as he pushed a button near the Russia-China border to start the flow of oil.

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has said in the past that the pipeline would help Russia diversify its exports.

'Black boxes' of exploded Russian plane found

AP, Moscow

Investigators in Russia say they have found the "black box" recorders from a passenger jet that caught fire and exploded as it taxied for takeoff in Siberia, killing three people.

The Interstate Aviation Committee, which oversees civil aviation in much of the former Soviet Union, said in a statement yesterday that the data and voice recorders from the Tu-154 had been recovered at the accident site in Surgut.

Beijing launches car quota to counter gridlock

AP, Beijing

For thousands of hopeful commuters in China's capital, 2011 started with a click, not a bang.

Residents hoping to snap up Beijing car license plate numbers under a new quota system aimed at easing paralyzing traffic logged onto a website that launched in the first moments of the new year. Within 10 minutes, 6,000 people had applied for new plate numbers.

By 5:00pm, more than 53,000 applications had been submitted online, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The applicants are competing for the first batch of 20,000 plates, which are to be awarded by lottery on Jan. 25. Every month a new batch of plates will become available.

The new system aims to reduce the number of cars in the notoriously gridlocked capital.

The city will only allow 240,000 new car registrations in 2011 and is parcelling them out through the monthly online lottery.

2010 through the eyes of hairdressers

BBC ONLINE

Hair salons the world over are often seen as barometers of the mood of a particular time and place. The BBC World Service has been looking back at 2010 through the eyes of hairdressers across the globe, from cash-strapped Athens to Miami, where a haircut can cost \$700. **Alexandros Kyriakakos, Athens, Greece**

Obviously the situation right now is very rough.

In one year everything collapsed. There is now a lot of unemployment and fear. Customers come less frequently and only for the basics. They are very concerned about what exactly they are going to have done, and how much money it is going to cost.

Just two or three years ago, there was always a smile on the client's face. Now you do not see that - everyone looks sad and angry. That is very bad energy, you know? And it is contagious.

Cai Huilin (English name: Amy), Beijing, China
I am from Taiwan but have been in mainland China for two years now, working as a hairstylist at the Tony Studio. My husband's business is in

China and I came with him.

Here in Beijing, there are many foreign customers but most of the foreigners can speak very good Chinese. At first I was really surprised about that. I believe it is because China's economy is developing so fast, and also because they know they will always be a minority in this country. They have to learn good Chinese for their own survival. China has come a long way. I remembered I was afraid of coming to China because I was worried that I would have to use a public toilet without doors. The China that I see now is very different. The service that people are getting here in Tony Studio is up to the same standard as services in Taiwan, if not better. **William Isaac, Miami, US**
People here are so image-conscious. We are always beauty, beauty, beauty, beauty. My salon is a central area for diet, for nutrition, for plastic surgery - you name it, we have a number, we know somebody.

Two years ago everyone was spending money, spending money, spending money and they did not care, there were no issues. Now I think they have to think twice about what they spend.

FLOOD IN AUSTRALIA

'Biblical flood' claims first victim

BBC ONLINE

A woman swept from the road in her car has become the first victim of widespread flooding in the Australian state of Queensland yesterday.

At least two other people have been reported missing.

More than 20 towns have already been cut off or flooded across an area larger than France and Germany, with more than 200,000 people affected.

In some areas waters are receding, but in Rockhampton - a city of 77,000 - they have yet to reach their peak.

The 41-year-old woman who was killed had been trying to cross the Leichhardt River on a causeway with one other car when both vehicles were swept away.

Police rescued eight people from the cars, but were unable to reach the woman.

Her body was recovered later.

Rescue workers have also been searching for a man whose small fishing boat was swamped by flood waters in the mouth of the Boyne River, and for a swimmer who disappeared in the Fitzroy river, the Sydney Morning Herald reported.

There are fears that damage from the floods could cost billions of Australian dollars to repair.

Officials have warned that the mining, farming and tourism industries will all suffer.

Recovery efforts are beginning in some areas where flooding has subsided, including the severely affected towns of Emerald and Bundaberg.

Residents are preparing to return home, though the towns of Theodore and Condamine, which were completely evacuated, remain empty.

IVORY COAST CRISIS Pressure mounts on Gbagbo

AFP, Abidjan

Pressure ratcheted up yesterday on Ivory Coast's defiant leader Laurent Gbagbo to quit even as his rival faced the threat of a mob attack on his internationally recognised government's headquarters.

Gbagbo's notorious "Street General", Minister for Youth Charles Ble Goude, had urged Ivorian youths to rise up after the New Year to seize control of Alassane Ouattara's headquarters in the waterfront Golf Hotel resort.

Two 'Western spy' drones grounded Claims Iran guards

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Revolutionary Guards have shot down two "Western spy" drones in the Gulf, the Fars news agency quoted a top commander of the elite military force as saying yesterday.

"Westerners have a series of capabilities which cannot be ignored, especially satellites, or for example they have spy planes which can take pictures in some places," Amir Ali Hajizadeh, head of the air force wing of the Guards said.

He said that the drones were mainly being used in Iraq and Afghanistan but "some violations against our soil" have also occurred.

"And we have so far downed many of their advanced spy planes. In the Persian Gulf, we have downed two of their planes and this is the first time that we are saying it," Hajizadeh said without specifying when exactly the drones were shot down.



PHOTO: AFP

A woman lights a cigarette outside a cafe in Burgos yesterday following the introduction of a new law today banning smoking in all bars, restaurants and public places. The new law bans smoking in all enclosed public spaces, including bars, restaurants and nightclubs and makes it illegal to smoke in children's parks or anywhere on school or hospital grounds.

Career with Chevron Bangladesh



Chevron Bangladesh is currently looking for smart and dynamic **Senior Planning/Financial Analysts** for Dhaka office. (Those who applied before for this post need not apply again)

Major Responsibilities

- Corporate Business Planning cycle - Detailed analytical, Financial & Planning lead for Business Plan submissions;
- Focal point for planning, economic analysis and analytical support on key deliverables for Major Capital Projects and Funding Appropriations;
- Country level support for Economics and probabilistic decision analysis for new capital projects and new venture opportunities;
- Monitor and track industry trends, Regional Oil & Gas M&A activities and Industry analysis;
- Interface with Finance and Accounting for regular Corporate reporting.

Minimum Requirements

- Bachelors in Finance & Accounting or B.Sc. Engineering. MBA & strong accounting knowledge would be a plus;
- 5-10 years of experience in Finance & Investment banking industry or Oil & Gas sector;
- Experience in developing economic models and analysis preferred;
- Proficient in MS Word, advanced Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook;
- Excellent leadership, interpersonal and communication skills.

Applications are invited either online at www.bdjobs.com/chevron or to the following address on or before **13th of January 2011**. Only short-listed applicants will be called for assessment(s);

**Human Resources Department
Chevron Bangladesh
"Bay's Galleria", 4th Floor
57 Gulshan Avenue
Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212**