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Those imbued with patriotism able to restore independence and sovereignty

Since time immemorial, Myanmar have been known to be fully equipped with patriotism — the spirit to love their own race, literature, traditions and culture and customs; the spirit of never tolerating any insult against the nation and the race; and the spirit to make selfless sacrifices for the national cause. They cherish the independence. And because of the patriotism, that is their innate nature, they were able to restore independence and sovereignty.

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

(Message sent on the occasion of the 56th Anniversary Independence Day)



For the nation to stand tall among world's nations, not to become lackey of others' Political, economic and social infrastructures to be built, safeguarded and shaped

Shwemyaung-Taunggyi-Saikkhaung-Namhsan-Mongnai Railroad inaugurated

YANGON, 1 Jan — Ceremonies to put Shwemyaung-Taunggyi-Saikkhaung-Namhsan-Mongnai Railroad in Shan State (South) into service were held at Namhsan Station in Namhsan Township and Saikkhaung Station in Hsihseng Township this morning.

Prime Minister General Soe Win delivered an address at the opening ceremony.

The Shwemyaung-Taunggyi-Saikkhaung-Namhsan-Mongnai rail-

road was opened at the pandal of Namhsan Station in Namhsan Township at 8.30 am.

It was attended by member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Kyaw Win of the Ministry of Defence, Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, the ministers, the deputy ministers, senior military officers, officials of the State Peace and Development

Council Office and departments concerned, authorities of Loilem and Langkho Districts and township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials, the President of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, national entrepreneurs, local people, Tatmadawmen and families, employees of Myanmar Railways, members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association, social organizations and stu-

dents.

Prime Minister General Soe Win delivered an opening address.

He said: Shwemyaung-Taunggyi-Saikkhaung-Namhsan-

Mongnai railroad was built in 1992. The Namhsan-Mongnai section, Phamon-Banyin section, Taunggyi-Phamon section, Shwemyaung-Taunggyi sec-

tion, Banyin-Saikkhaung section, Saikkhaung-Ponchaung section and Namhsan-Kaungsai section were opened. After completion of

(See page 16)

With better transport, unprecedented progress has been made in all parts of the Union. Plans to bring about equitable development across the nation have been laid down and are being implemented in building a new, modern and developed nation.



Prime Minister General Soe Win and party being cordially greeted by local nationals on board before departure of the train. — MNA

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 2 January, 2006

Safeguard independence and sovereignty

Myanmar is home to over 100 national races who have been residing in different parts of the Union in unity and amity, sharing woe or weal since yore.

A glance at the Myanmar history will reveal that Myanmar has stood staunchly in the world with own culture, traditions and customs dating back thousands of years.

However, colonialists waged three aggressive wars and took the nation into servitude. Patriotic leaders of national races took up arms and courageously resisted the colonialists. As a result, Myanmar became independent and sovereign on 4 January 1948. Each and every citizen are to safeguard the independence that was restored at the expense of a lot of lives, blood and sweat.

The Central Committee for observance of the 58th Anniversary Independence Day for 2006 held its coordination meeting at Zeyathiri Beikman in Yangon on 31 December with an address by Chairman of the Central Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

In his address, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein said that the Central Committee and 10 Sub-committees have been set up, and the sub-committees are making preparations for organizing the Independence Day ceremony. He stressed the need for officials from the respective sub-committees to submit their preparatory tasks, and to take part in the discussions.

The ceremony to mark the 58th Anniversary Independence Day will be observed on a grand scale in line with the Independence Day Objectives. The 58th Anniversary Independence Day Objectives are:

- All the national people to collectively safe guard the national independence and sovereignty of the State and ensure non-disintegration of the Union and national unity
- All the national people to unitedly strive with might and main for emergence of an enduring State constitution and for building a new modern and developed nation
- All the national people to work in concert for success of the seven-point Road Map of the State with Union Spirit and nationalist spirit
- All the national people to make concerted efforts for building of a new discipline-flourishing democratic nation

The objectives of the 58th Anniversary Independence Day are the national concerns each and every citizen are to discharge steadfastly at present and in future. Such being the case, the entire national people are to safeguard the independence which was regained at the expense of a lot of lives for its perpetuation as long as the world exists in consonance with objectives of the 58th Anniversary Independence Day.

Hanthawady golf course opened

YANGON, 1 Jan — Hanthawady golf course near the corner of Nanattaw street and Kyundaw street in Kamayut Township was opened this morning, undertaken as joint-venture by Yangon City Development Committee and Yadana Theingi Co Ltd. It was attended by Yangon Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin. Director U Nyan Tun of Sports and Physical Education Department and officials formally opened it.

The Yangon Mayor then unveiled the sign-board of the golf course.

It is 230 yards long and 100 yards wide, and is also provided with restaurants, sports facilities and car parking. — MNA

People's Desire

- * Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
- * Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation
- * Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
- * Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

Full-dressed rehearsal of Yangon City Flag Hoisting and Saluting Ceremony held

YANGON, 1 Jan — The full-dressed rehearsal of Yangon City Flag Hoisting and Saluting Ceremony to mark the 58th Anniversary Independence Day for 2006 was held at People's Square on Pyay Road this morning.

Yangon City Flag Hoisting Ceremony took place at 4.20 am and Flag Saluting Ceremony followed at 7 am.

Member of the subcommittee for observance of Yangon City Flag Hoisting and Flag Saluting Ceremony Deputy Commander of Yangon Command Brig-Gen Wai Lwin, Secretary and members of the subcommittee, military region commanders, senior military officers of Yangon Command, and chairmen, secretaries and members of District/Township PDCs attended the ceremony. — MNA

NC delegates visit Defence Services Museum, National Museum, Judson Church

YANGON, 1 Jan — Under the arrangements of the Invitation and Reception Sub-committee of the National Convention Convening Management Committee, delegates of the National Convention visited Defence Services Museum and the National Museum, here, yesterday morning.

This afternoon, Christian delegates said prayers at Judson Church in Kamayut Township.

Yesterday morning, NC delegates arrived at Defence Services Museum on Shwedagon Pagoda Road. Lt-Col Zaw Win of the Museum welcomed them. Major Kyaw Kyaw Myint ex-



National Convention delegates visit Defence Services Museum. — MNA

tended greetings and explained matters related to booths displayed at the museum.

The delegates viewed the booth on 12 State objectives on the ground floor, and booths of ministries, Tatmadaw

(Army, Navy and Air) and military commands and directorates of the Ministry of Defence on first and second floors.

At the National Museum, the delegates were welcomed by Director-General U Myint

Thein Swe of Department of Cultural Institute, Director Daw Nu Mra Zan and officials. Officials explained matters related to Thiha Thana Throne and booths of the museum.

Christian delegates together with officials of the Invitation and Reception Sub-committee this afternoon visited Judson Church on Pyay Road in Kamayut Township. Vice-Chairman of Myanmar Baptist Council Reverend U Arthur Ko extended greetings to them.

Later, Christian delegates attended the service.

MNA



National Convention delegates saying prayers at Judson Church in Kamayut Township.

MNA

Lecture on anaesthesia and research to be given

YANGON, 1 Jan — Organized by Myanmar Society of Anaesthesiology, a lecture on anaesthesia and research of the visiting Japanese anaesthesiologists, will be given at Myanmar Medical Association Auditorium starting from 2 pm to 4.30 pm on 3 January and all enthusiasts are invited to attend the talks. — MNA



In memory of late U Ko Ko Lay, wife Daw Khin Ma Ma and daughter Myat Thanda Ko of No. 9, Thukha Street, Sangyoung Township donate K 100,000 to the Hninzigon Home for the Aged recently. — H

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A woman works at a textile factory in Xiangfan, Hubei Province, China on 31 Dec, 2005. —INTERNET

FM says China will peacefully develop

BEIJING, 31 Dec — Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said here on Friday that China will peacefully develop and adhere to an independent foreign policy of peace in the coming year.

Li made the remarks at a New Year reception hosted by the Foreign Ministry in the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse, at which State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan and nearly 400 foreign diplomats and Chinese officials were present.

This year, China, in a bid to safeguard the fundamental interest of the Chinese and world people, carried out many exchanges and cooperation with foreign partners, played constructive role in major international and regional issues and made contributions to world peace and common development, Li said.

China will "hold high the banner of peace, development and cooperation", adhere to an independent foreign policy of peace, stick to a road of peaceful development, seek domestic development and

harmony and promote world peace and cooperation in 2006, he said.

Konan Kramo, ambassador of Ivory Coast said on behalf of the diplomatic corps in Beijing that China has been an "essential player" in the world political and economic arena, safeguarding world peace and promoting common development.

He expressed congratulations on China's achievements in national building-up and said he believes China will further cooperate with foreign partners. —MNA/Xinhua

US General says inspectors find Iraq jail problems

WASHINGTON, 31 Dec—Inspections of two Iraqi-run jails, prompted by the recent discovery of a bunker packed with mistreated prisoners, found overcrowding and signs of prisoner abuse, a senior US commander said on Friday.

Iraqi and American inspectors made the new findings at a Baghdad facility on 20 December and one in Tal Afar on Wednesday, a US military official said. The findings suggest broader problems at Iraqi-run detention facilities at a time when the US military is taking steps toward turning over to the Iraqi Government thousands of detainees held by American forces.

"While there were overcrowded conditions, there were no signs of recent abuse," Major-General William Webster, who commands a 30,000-strong force responsible for security in Baghdad, told Pentagon reporters by teleconference from Iraq.

"There were detainees who talked about having been abused before, and some of them showed signs of that," Webster added.

Webster did not describe these signs of abuse. He said a committee of Iraqi Government and US officials was continuing its investigation and inspections of Iraqi jails.

A raid by US forces last month at a secret Baghdad bunker found 173 men and

teenage boys held by the Interior Ministry, many malnourished, beaten and showing signs of torture. The Iraqi Government earlier this month said 13 prisoners at another Interior Ministry prison also showed signs of abuse.

The two new inspections also were at Interior Ministry facilities, Webster said.

The US military said this week it is holding 14,600 detainees in Iraq

and that its facilities were at 123 per cent of "optimal capacity". —MNA/Reuters

Venezuela recovers stolen radioactive capsule

CARACAS (Venezuela), 31 Dec — Venezuela said on Thursday it had found a capsule of highly

radioactive material that was aboard a truck stolen 10 days ago.

Officials had warned of a potential radioactive hazard after thieves seized the truck carrying the capsule in its lunchbox-sized protective container.

It was the third incident involving such devices this year.

"The radioactive capsule was found in Yaritagua in Yaracuy State thanks to the intelligence work of the National Guard," the Interior and Justice Ministry said in a statement.

Officials said an investigative police detective, two state security police agents and a salesman were arrested in connection with the theft.

MNA/Reuters



A man is seen through the shattered windshield of a car at the site where a roadside bomb exploded and killed five in Al-Khalis, 10 miles east of Baqouba, Iraq, on 31 Dec, 2005. —INTERNET

2,178 US soldiers killed in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 31 Dec—As of Saturday, 31 Dec, 2005, at least 2,178 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an *Associated Press* count. At least 1,705 died as a result of hostile action, according to the military's numbers. The figures include five military civilians.

The AP count is five more than the Defence Department's tally, last updated at 10 am EST Friday.

The AP count is unchanged from Friday's total, despite an additional death, because one death had been included twice. The date of death in the initial announcement conflicted with the one released when the servicemember was identified, leading to the error.

Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 2,039 US military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,596 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers. —Internet

Millions looted from railway accounts office in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 31 Dec — Four persons including a policeman have looted 36.1 million rupees (600,000 US dollars) from a railway accounts office in the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore, according to GEO TV report on Friday.

The railway staffers knew about the incident when reaching the office on Thursday morning. According to the divisional paymaster of the railway accounts office Arshad Mohammed, the money was received through a private security company and deposited in the strong room on Wednesday.

One of the looters, a policeman named Nawaz, mixed a sedative substance in eatables to make eight other policemen present in the office unconscious, while a guard Kamran who was on duty at the gate was also called in

the office to make him unconscious, according to the report.

The accused with three unidentified accomplices broke locks of the strong room, opened money bags, left a policeman Kamran tied in the strong room and escaped from the scene with looted money.

The inspector general of the railway police and other top officials reached to the scene after getting report of the incident. The official arms were also looted from the office, police said.

MNA/Xinhua

Venezuela, Cuba intensify bilateral trade

CARACAS, 31 Dec — Along with a strengthening of the political relationship between the two countries, Venezuela and Cuba have also significantly increased their bilateral trade in recent years, Venezuelan media reported on Thursday.

Venezuela has increased its export of oil and manufactured products, with Cuba receiving 98,000 barrels of Venezuelan crude oil every day, said Gustavo Marquez, Venezuelan State Minister for Integration and Foreign Trade.

"I don't have the final figures of trade volume this year, but it will probably exceed 1.2 billion US dollars, including the supply of petroleum," Marquez said, adding that "the commercial relationship between the two countries is strong and clearly growing".

The total trade volume between Cuba and Venezuela climbed from 464 million dollars in 1999 to 912 millions in 2000.

Although it dropped to 744.7 million dollars in 2002, it has experienced steady growth over the past three years.

The trade between Venezuela and Cuba has greatly benefitted the two nations, Marquez noted. *MNA/Xinhua*



Australian Gary Cunningham (L) takes his 100th jump with Stefan Mueller of the US from the Kuala Lumpur Tower in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 31 Dec, 2005. Cunningham of Sydney started jumping since midnight on Saturday in an attempt to create a new record of 120 jumps from 300 metres (984 feet) within 24 hours. —INTERNET

Global poll shows tsunami/Iraq top events of the year

LONDON, 31 Dec — The war in Iraq and the aftermath of the Asian tsunami were picked in a global poll as the most significant events of 2005.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the death of Pope John Paul ranked as the other major milestones of the year in the poll conducted among nearly 32,500 people in 27 countries.

"Global citizens see 2005 mainly as a year of natural and man-made disasters," said Doug Miller, President of the Canadian pollsters GlobeScan who conducted the survey for the BBC World Service.

"It seems likely that most people are happy for the year to be over," he added.

The aftermath of the

2003 US-led invasion to topple Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and the devastating effects of the Asian tsunami were chosen by 15 per cent of those questioned.

The hurricanes that wreaked havoc in the United States were picked by 9 per cent of those polled while 6 per cent opted for the death of Pope John Paul and the inauguration of Pope Benedict.

In an increasingly globalized world of 24-hour news coverage, the pollsters found that the assessments were strikingly similar across the countries

surveyed.

But another year of unremitting gloom could result in people turning their back on the world stage, Miller told *Reuters*.

"If all the news keeps being negative, there is some evidence of people shrinking back from the world," he added.

MNA/Reuters

Vietnam sentences eight drug traffickers to death

HANOI, 31 Dec — A court in Vietnam has sentenced eight people to death and nine to life in jail for trafficking 80 kilos (175 pounds) of heroin, state media reported on Friday.

Another 15 members of the gang were sentenced to between five and 20 years in prison, the

Vietnam News Agency quoted the court in Ho Chi Minh City as saying.

Trafficking more than 600 grammes (1.32 pounds) of heroin is punishable by death by firing squad in the Communist country.

Vietnam has been stepping up its campaign

WASHINGTON, 31 Dec — The US Justice Department has launched an investigation to determine who disclosed a secret NSA eavesdropping operation approved by President George W Bush after the 11 September attacks, officials said on Friday.

"We are opening an investigation into the unauthorized disclosure of classified materials related to the NSA," one official said. Earlier this month Bush acknowledged the programme and called its disclosure to *The New York*

Times "a shameful act". He said he presumed a Justice Department leak investigation into who disclosed the National Security Agency eavesdropping operation would get under way. Justice Department officials would give no details of who requested the probe or how it would be conducted.

The disclosure of the covert domestic spying programme has triggered concerns among both Democrats and Republicans, with many lawmakers questioning whether it violates the US Constitution.

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

Poll shows most Australians now oppose Iraq war

SYDNEY, 31 Dec — Australians' support for the Iraq war has fallen in the past year, with two-thirds now saying the war was not worthwhile, according to results of a poll published on Saturday.

The survey, conducted by Newspoll and published in *The Australian* newspaper, was bad news for Prime Minister John Howard, a staunch US ally who has vowed to keep Australia's 1,320 troops in and around Iraq as long as they are needed.

In the poll, 66 per cent of Australians said they believed the war was not worthwhile, up from 58 per cent a year ago, the newspaper said. Just 27 per cent believed the war was worthwhile, compared with 32 per cent a year earlier.

Among supporters of Howard's centre-right government, those who back the war had dropped from 50 per cent to 43 per cent in the past year. —INTERNET

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Danish troop withdrawal from Iraq expected in 2006

STOCKHOLM, 31 Dec — Denmark's 534 soldiers stationed in Iraq will be coming home in 2006, *Ritzau* news bureau reported on Friday.

Although the government has continually rejected opposition requests to set a date for when withdrawal will begin, most

political parties in the Parliament believe that it will do so this year, according to *Ritzau*.

One of the parties expecting that troops will be home for Christmas next year was the Danish People's Party, the government's close ally in the Parliament. "I believe that a pullout of Danish soldiers will begin next fall — around October or November. That would mean that the last soldiers are home by early 2007," said Soeren Espersen, defence issues spokesman for the Danish People's Party.

The Liberal-Conservative government has stated that Danish troops will remain in Iraq as long as the Iraqi Government requests their presence.

The Danish forces' parliamentary mandate to operate in Iraq expires on 1 February. The Danish Government intends to request an extension until 1 July.

Although the opposition has indicated that it will support the extension, it has also made clear that after that date it expects Iraqi forces to take over security operations. —MNA/Xinhua

US probes leak of domestic eavesdropping programme



Wearing gloves to protect his hands from the cold weather, a police officer sits manning his machine gun as he watches vehicles stuck in a traffic jam in the centre of the northeastern town of Baquba on 31 Dec, 2005. —INTERNET

Hu calls for sound style in party-building theory study

BEIJING, 31 Dec — Hu Jintao, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), said here on Friday that Party building theorists should adhere to the practical style of linking theory with reality, to substantially enhance the Party building theory study.

Addressing a group of representatives of the Party's theory researchers, Hu, also President of China, said that given that the Party and the whole nation are working hard for the building of a well-off society and pushing forward the process of socialist modernization, the CPC must enhance the construction of its governance capability and moral and intellectual superiority.

"To that end, we must step up the Party building theory study in a way that is in line with the new historical conditions and historical tasks the CPC is facing," said Hu.

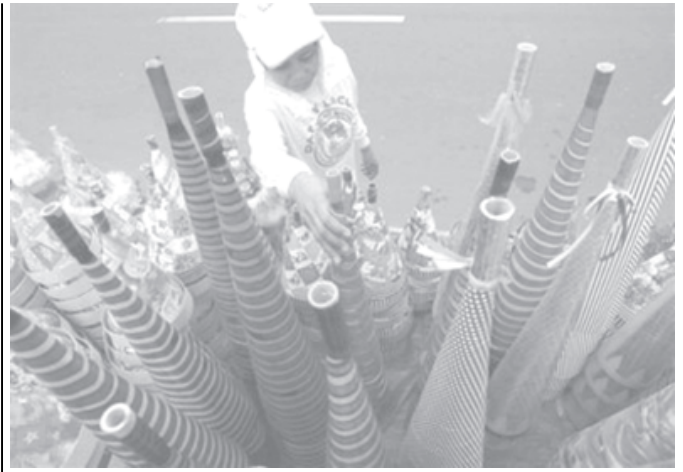
Fresh experiences during the Party building process should be carefully summarized and helpful practices of foreign political parties be studied and borrowed to enrich and develop the CPC's governance theories, he said.

He expressed the hope that the Party theorists could focus their study on the "scientific view of development", the enhancement of the Party's governance capability, the ongoing education campaign aimed at helping all Party members maintain their "advanced nature", and the building of a "harmonious socialist

society".

"I hope you will adhere to the guidance of Deng Xiaoping Theory and the important thought of 'Three Represents,' fully implement the 'scientific view of development', and make still greater contribution to the building of the Party," he said.

MNA/Xinhua



A street vendor arranges her paper horns on display on the sidewalk on the eve of the celebration of New Year on 31 Dec, 2005 in Manila, Philippines. —INTERNET

Mexico's "smoking mountain" spews puffs of gas

MEXICO CITY, 31 Dec — Mexico's giant Popocatepetl Volcano spewed out on Friday a column of gas, ashes and vapour of 500 metres into the air, the local media reported.

The 5,452-metre volcano released a puff five days after a three-minute eruption produced a three-kilometres-high column, without affecting the surrounding areas.

Popocatepetl, whose name means "smoking mountain" in the Nahuatl Indian language, is 64 kilometres east of Mexico City, and usually releases puffs of gas in December after it became active again on 21 December, 1994, following seven decades of

inactivity. According to the reports, the authorities decided, after Friday's eruption, to keep a "yellow phase-1 alert" that prevents the public from entering an area 12 kilometres from the crater. —MNA/Xinhua

Sudanese hostages reported free in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 1 Jan—Five Sudanese hostages held by Al-Qaeda in Iraq were reported to have been freed, as at least 14 people were killed in a series of attacks across the country.

A day after Khartoum shut down its embassy in Baghdad in line with the kidnapers' demands, Al-Jazeera television said the Sudanese foreign ministry has announced the release of the five hostages, who included a diplomat.

The Iraqi government in Baghdad was unable to confirm the report.

Al-Qaeda on Thursday claimed the kidnapping of five Sudanese in an Internet statement, giving Khartoum 48 hours to break off diplomatic

relations with Baghdad, close its embassy and "withdraw all its representatives" in Iraq.

Khartoum then closed down its embassy in Baghdad and withdrew its diplomats on Friday.

Six Sudanese nationals, including the embassy's second secretary Abdel Monem al-Huri and four embassy employees, had been seized by unknown assailants while exiting a mosque in the Iraqi capital, Sudanese officials said.—Internet

Strong earthquake jolts Panama

PANAMA CITY, 31 Dec — An earthquake measuring 6.0 on the Richter Scale rattled Panama on Friday afternoon, but no major damage or injuries were immediately reported.

The quake was centred in the Pacific Ocean, 335 kilometres southwest of Panama City, according to the US Geological Survey's National Earthquake Information Centre. It was felt across western Panama.

Panamanian officials said there was no immediate fear that the quake could lead to a tsunami. MNA/Xinhua

Avalanche kills seven in ex-Soviet Tajikistan

DUSHANBE, 31 Dec — An avalanche in ex-Soviet Tajikistan killed seven people when it crashed through a major highway, the Emergencies Ministry said on Friday.

"On Thursday evening, an avalanche pushed two cars off the Dushanbe-Khudzand Highway. All seven people in them were killed," a ministry spokesman said. Heavy snowfall had forced emergency workers to close the road, which winds through the mountainous Central Asian state to connect the capital Dushanbe with the country's second city, but some drivers had continued at their own risk.

MNA/Reuters

Five killed, 12 injured in Baghdad blasts

BAGHDAD, 31 Dec— At least five people were killed and 12 wounded when two blasts rocked central Baghdad on Friday, officials said, the latest in a surge of attacks after largely peaceful elections earlier this month.

Initially, Interior Ministry officials pinned the attacks on two car bombs, but a police source later said mortar rounds that landed on cars were to blame.

The blasts occurred near a transportation centre taking commuters to largely Shi'ite areas in northern Baghdad, officials said. —MNA/Reuters

24 bodies recovered out of landslide in N-W Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 31 Dec— The Pakistani soldiers on Friday morning retrieved 23 bodies of miners under a landslide in northwestern Pakistan and another one was recovered Thursday evening.

The state-run APP news agency quoted an Army statement as saying that 24 people were buried under landslide when they were exploring mines and precious stones in Sput Mali, a remote area of Kohistan District, which is some 350 kilometres northeast to the North-West Frontier Province capital of Peshawar.—MNA/Xinhua

Post-season Tropical Storm Zeta forms in Atlantic

MIAMI, 31 Dec— Tropical Storm Zeta formed in the eastern Atlantic Ocean on Friday, a month after the official

end of a record busy hurricane season but forecasters said the straggler storm did not threaten land.

Zeta was the 27th named storm of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season, which officially ended on 30 November.

At noon EDT (1700 GMT), Zeta was centered about 1,070 miles (1,720 kilometres) southwest of the Portuguese islands of the Azores and moving northwest near 8 miles per hour.

It had top sustained winds of 50 miles per hour and could strengthen briefly before fizzling during the weekend, forecasters at the US National Hurricane Centre in Miami said.

Tropical storms thrive when the seas are warm, so December storms are unusual though

not unprecedented in the northern Atlantic.

Six tropical storms have strengthened into hurricanes in December since record-keeping began in 1851, including Epsilon earlier this month.

Zeta closed out a record-setting year that forced forecasters to choose storm names from the Greek alphabet after exhausting their annual list of 21 names.

"It seems like the final little check mark for this year," said Martin Nelson, a lead forecaster at the hurricane centre. "I think it'll be the last."

The old record for most tropical storms was 21, set in 1933. Fourteen of this year's storms strengthened into hurricanes, breaking the old record of 12 set in 1969.

MNA/Reuters



An Iraqi resident holds a mortar shrapnel which hit part of a Karadah residential neighbourhood in central Baghdad on 31 Dec, 2005. —INTERNET

China grants \$3.72m in aid to Niger

LOME, 1 Jan — China signed a pact with Niger on Friday and agreed to grant the African country 30 million RMB (about 3.72 million US dollars) in aid, according to news reports from Niger's capital Niamey.

The agreement was signed by Chinese Ambassador to Niger Chen Gonglai and Niger's acting Foreign Minister and Defence Minister Hassane Souley Dito Bonto.

Under the agreement, the Nigerian Government could spend the money on projects agreed by the two governments.

At the signing ceremony, Souley said the assistance was another testimony to the friendly ties between China and

Niger and the great importance attached by the Chinese leadership to the bilateral ties.

China has granted several concessional and interest-free loans to Niger under the two countries' cooperation framework, said the minister.

What is more, the projects constructed with the assistance of the Chinese Government, such as the Zinder water supply project, the renovation of the Koutie gymnasium and

stadium and a farm tool assembly plant have contributed greatly to Niger's poverty-reduction cause.

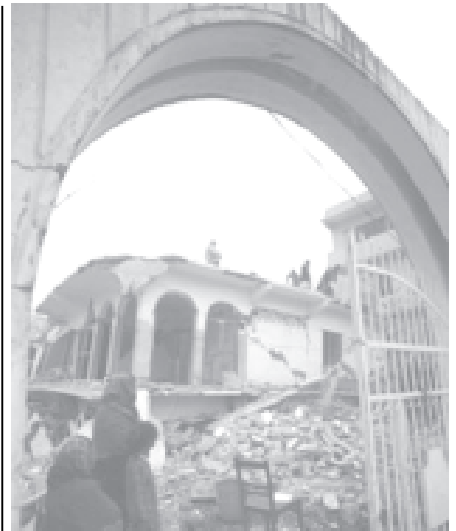
The two countries also have fruitful cooperation in the fields of energy, public health, water conservancy and troops, and the bilateral cooperative relations are a great example of South-South cooperation, said the minister.

He said Niger appreciates Chinese President Hu Jintao's

pledge at the summit marking the 60th anniversary of the United Nations to give more assistance to African countries and strengthen cooperation with developing countries. His country is willing to strengthen the existing friendly and cooperative ties with China, the minister added.

He also expressed the Nigerian Government's gratitude to the Chinese Government and people for their continuous assistance and support.

MNA/Xinhua



Kashmiri earthquake survivors look at workers remove rubble from the roof of their house in the devastated city of Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-administered Kashmir on 31 Dec, 2005. —INTERNET

Arabic nations attract Chinese tourists

BEIJING, 1 Jan — Chinese tourists may experience a different Spring Festival in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which will hold a "Dubai Shopping Festival" in late January and early February.

More Chinese people get to know about Egypt through cultural weeks and other tourism promotions, thus increasing the number of Chinese tourists, said Naser Abdel Aal, an Egyptian tourism attache in China.

Egypt conducted the Egyptian tourist and

cultural festival in Beijing in July and the Egyptian cultural week in Shanghai in November.

Some 32,000 Chinese visitors went to Egypt in 2004, and the number may hit a record 40,000, he said.

To promote tourism exchanges with the Arab world, China signed a cooperative pact with

Lebanon on 9 December, following Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia—three China's tourism destinations, and Morocco and Syria as well.

China's gross domestic product per capita exceeded 1,000 US dollars in 2003 and the individual foreign exchange reserve totalled 900 billion dollars. The country also allows more freedom on the use of foreign currencies on private trips.

MNA/Xinhua

Australia on bushfire alert as fire destroys homes

SYDNEY, 1 Jan — A large bushfire destroyed five homes in Victoria State as thousands of firefighters remained on high alert throughout southeastern Australia on Sunday in the face of soaring temperatures and hot gusting winds.

A fire near the town of Stawell in western Victoria gutted five homes and damaged others late on Saturday, authorities said, with scores of blazes reported in Victoria, South Australia and Australia's most populous state, New South Wales.

Gusting hot winds took the temperature to more than 42 degrees Celsius (108 Fahrenheit) in Melbourne, and

temperatures above 43 degrees with hot winds were forecast for much of New South Wales on Sunday.

Victoria's Country Fire Authority said the Stawell fire had burnt out about 9,000 hectares (22,000 acres) of grass and scrub and could pose a risk to several towns in the region because of a

forecast wind change.

"We're treating it as extremely serious and the wind shift is causing us concern," spokesman Alex Twomey said.

A ban on lighting fires in the open is in place across New South Wales and much of Victoria and South Australia until midnight on Sunday.

MNA/Reuters

Mortar kills one person in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 1 Jan — A mortar round landed on a residential house in southern Baghdad on Saturday, killing one civilian and wounding two others, police said.

"A mortar round hit a house in Karrada District at about 4:30 p.m. (1330 GMT), killing one civilian and wounding two," Captain Ahmed Abdullah told Xinhua.

The blast caused severe damage to the house, Abdullah said.

Karrada District is close to the heavily fortified Green Zone, which houses the Iraqi Government and the US Embassy. — MNA/Xinhua

Australia to focus security, economy in New Year

CANBERRA, 1 Jan — Australian Prime Minister John Howard said on New Year's day that his government will focus on national security and continued economic growth in 2006.

In a brief New Year's

message, Howard praised Australia's international reputation earned last year, describing the country as strong and respected.

But he did not mention Australia's role in the war of Iraq, a security issue which drew him more criticism than approval in recent polls.

He said: "Our nation's standing abroad has never been higher" as last year showed Australia as a "compassionate country with a big heart" in an apparent reference to Australians' donation, one of the biggest in the world, to regional countries suffering the Boxing Day tsunami a year ago.

Howard vowed to continue economic reforms in the New Year, describing it as a key to continue the strong economic growth.

MNA/Xinhua

Reshuffle at Indonesian Military announced

JAKARTA, 1 Jan — The Indonesian Military (TNI) has announced its latest reshuffle affecting three-star generals, including former Aceh commander Lieutenant-General Endang Suwarya as TNI's chief of general affairs, the Jakarta Post reported on Saturday.

Endang, the current Army Deputy Chief of Staff, will be replaced by Major-General Herry Tjahjana, currently operations assistant under the TNI chief of general affairs.

In the order issued by TNI Commander-General Endriartono Sutarto, another three-star general, Lieutenant-General Djadja Suparman, will be replaced by three-star Navy officer Vice-Admiral Sumardjono as the TNI inspector-general. Sumardjono's old post as commander of TNI staff and command schools will be filled by Rear Marshall M Basri Sidehahi, who is currently security affairs assistant to the Air Force chief.

The current reshuffle, however, failed to appoint a three-star military officer as the TNI intelligence chief, despite the fact that the post is considered strategic.

The post of TNI intelligence chief has remained vacant since last month when Vice-Admiral M Luthfie retired. The TNI leadership has appointed Major-General Nurdin Zainal to temporarily hold the post. Nurdin's main job is an intelligence assistant in the TNI general affairs department.

The latest reshuffle was announced ahead of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's plan to propose candidates to replace TNI Commander-General Endriartono next month. — MNA/Xinhua



A Pakistani police officer stands guard in front a restaurant, on 31 Dec, 2005 in Karachi, Pakistan. Security agencies are on high alert on the occasion of the New Year to avert any attempted violence. —INTERNET

14th Mayor Cup Horticultural Show Competition held

YANGON, 1 Jan — The opening ceremony of the 14th Mayor's Cup Horticultural Show Competition to mark the 58th Anniversary Independence Day, took place in the grounds at the junction of Mindhamma and Tawwin Roads in Mayangon Township this morning, attended by Patrons of Myanmar Floral Culturalist Association Daw Khin Than Nwe, Daw Khin Lay Thet, Daw Khin Khin Win and members of panel of patrons, Yangon City Development Committee

Chairman Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and wife Dr Daw Khin San Nwe, committee members, departmental heads and their wives, executives of MFCA and enthusiasts.

Member of YCDC Col Hla Aye explained the purpose of organizing the horticultural show competition. There were 20 types of competitions with a total of 445 items in the horticultural show competition.

At 10 am, prize-presenting ceremony followed and the patrons of

MFCA awarded the prizes to those who won in the respective competitions. Afterwards, the mayor presented the shield to U Soe Nyunt (Tawwin Hninsi) who secured shield prize of the 14th horticultural show competition.

A total of 126 shops of fertilizers, pesticide and agricultural appliances from private and departmental gardens, are being put on display at the show and the enthusiasts may observe and buy free of charge. — MNA



Commander Lt-Gen Myint Swe views exhibition to mark School Family Day . — MNA

School Family Day for 2005-06...

(from page 16)

They also attended the entertainment of the School Family Day and skills demonstration. Eighth standard student Ma Htet Htet Aung and seventh standard student Ma May Eindra Kyaw of Latha BEHS No 2 acted as MCs. School girls of Sangyoung BEHS No 2

and Dagon BEHS No 1 and Maung Ye Lwin Oo and Saw Monday of Dagon BEHS No 3 performed entertainment.

After the ceremony, Lt-Gen Myint Swe cordially greeted those present. Also present were Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo, Min-

ister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, deputy ministers, ambassadors, representatives of UN agencies, departmental heads, rectors and principals of universities and colleges, school heads and outstanding students. — MNA



The opening ceremony of School Family Day for 2005-2006 academic year of the Ministry of Education being held. — MNA

China's Central Govt website to open formally on New Year's day

BELING, 1 Jan — The Website of China's central government, www.gov.cn, will open formally on 1 January, 2006, in simplified Chinese, original complex Chinese character and English versions, according to a decision of the State Council reaching here Saturday.

The website, which went into trial operation on 1 October, is aimed to provide a platform for the departments under the State Council, and provincial, autonomous regional and municipal governments to release information on government affairs and provide on-line services.

According to the State Council, the building of the central government website is a major step to push forward administrative innovation as the central authorities strive to build a service-oriented government.

It will be significant to promoting the openness of government affairs, and improving public services and administrative efficiency

so as to facilitate public participation in and supervision over government affairs, which the Chinese authorities have been devoted to.

The website has four sections. The section of information about government affairs is for providing information on government work, including important policies, regulations and documents. The service section provides on-line services to citizens, enterprises and foreigners. The section offers communication channels between the government and citizens.

The section of applied functions provides surfers with a search engine.

The website has the seven columns of China

Today, China Factfile, Services for Non-Residents, Business, Official Publications, Laws and Regulations, and Special Reports in its English version.

The General Office of the State Council is responsible for the content design, organization and coordination for the website, while Xinhua news agency is responsible for website operation, content updating and technical support.

During the trial operation of the website, public response has been positive, and improvements have been made according to the suggestions and proposals of the general public.

MNA/Xinhua

Merkel calls on Germans to achieve more in coming year

BERLIN, 1 Jan — German Chancellor Angela Merkel issued a personal call on the German people to achieve a bit more in the coming year.

In her first New Year's speech to be broadcast Saturday, Merkel said: "How would it be if we all set a goal tonight to accomplish a bit more in the coming year?" She said her grand coalition government would set the best example.

Germany has the potential to resolve its economic and social problems

and the government intends to lead the way with a frank discussion of the challenges and plans of tackling them, the new Chancellor said.

"Setting unattainable goals? That is not our style. Making promises we cannot keep? You have had enough of that," she said.

She reaffirmed her promise to rebuild Germany into one of Europe's most dynamic economies by 2010 by slashing public debt, reforming the labour market, curbing red tape and improving the in-

vestment climate.

She said her "greatest wish" for 2006 was for Germany to live "in peace and freedom" with its neighbours and called to that end for a rapid relaunch of efforts to approve a European Constitution, which was rejected in French and Dutch referenda in the mid-2005.

Merkel noted that the whole world would focus their attention on Germany in 2006, especially when next summer's football World Cup is staged throughout the country. —MNA/Xinhua

Industry-1 Minister inspects factories in Patheingyi, Kyaukse, Shwedaung

YANGON, 1 Jan — Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Taung together with Managing Director U Soe Yi of Myanmar Ceramics Industries and officials inspected Patheingyi Glass Factory in Patheingyi yesterday morning, and gave instructions on the maintenance tasks reported by Managing Director U Soe Yi.

At 9.30 am, the minister and party proceeded to Kyaukse Ce-

ment Factory and inspected raw materials and spare parts of machines. He told them to put the vicinity of factory under jettison at the briefing hall.

While in Shwedaung Advanced Textile Factory, the minister met with officials and staff, giving instructions on growing of jettison curcus.

He viewed round the factory and urged

them to boost the quality of products. The minister presented cash awards to outstanding employees.

In the evening, the minister arrived at Thayawady Enamelware Factory and inspected on installation of new machines and production process. Minister U Aung Taung looked into the ceramicwares and ceramic tiles produced by the factory.—MNA

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HAILING THE 58TH ANNIVERSARY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Perpetuation of Myanmar independence and sovereignty-2

Thiha Aung

Myanma independence was regained from colonialists on 4 January 1948. British colonialists had to grant independence to Myanmar due to united strength of national leaders, the Tatmadaw and the people.

When they had to inevitably give independence, the colonialists resorting to various ways and means sowed discord and dissension among the national brethren. They drove a wedge among the national races by means of practising the divide-and-rule policy. They saw that evil schemes left undone were carried on by the stooges. They crushed the national forces with the help of traitorous axe-handles relying on them.

Owing to divide-and-rule policy of colonialists, there emerged discord and dissension among national brethren. Suspicion reigning among national brethren had led to narrow-minded racism. Applying the Frontier Crossing Regulation, the colonialists weakened the national unity.

Furnival, one of senior British administration officers in Myanmar categorically stated that the British rule did not encourage national solidarity but triggered racism and suspicion among national races. It not only drove a wedge among Bamars and those from hilly regions but also sowed discord among tribes in hilly regions.

Myanmar was on the verge of disintegration soon after she had regained independence due to wicked schemes of colonialists. There were remnants of arms and ammunition left behind from the Second World War and that left behind by colonialists. There were those who professed a variety of ism. And there were national traitors who relied on colonialists. At that juncture, only the Tatmadaw should have to exist as an armed organization. However, a number of political parties and racial groups or organizations were holding arms brazenly or furtively.

Therefore, the government had first to face armed conflicts among national brethren soon after independence was regained. The national people

were not in a position to enjoy the fruits of independence but had to suffer much in consequence of armed conflicts. Myanmar was on the verge of losing sovereignty to the extent that foreign newspapers dubbed the government 'Yangon government' due to internal insurrection and armed conflicts. The Tatmadaw that regained independence together with the people had to safeguard independence tenaciously hand in hand with the people not to let it be lost again.

By the end of 1949, the KMT or nationalist Chinese, who were the minions of colonialists, intruded into Myanmar territory. The KMT in collusion with internal insurgents made attempts to topple the existing government.

The Tatmadaw had to drive the KMT, who encroached upon sovereignty of Myanmar, out of the nation, by waging a string of major operations from 1950 to 1954. Although foreign aggression had come to an end, power struggle among political parties had resulted in contradiction and conflict among them.

There were power struggles among political parties in 1958. Each and every party had its own pocket army which brazenly committed a series of

our citizens and our national races. We can not put them in the hands of any alien directly or indirectly. Once the sovereignty of our country is influenced in any way by others, it is tantamount to indirect enslavement under neo-colonialism. Hence, the Tatmadaw must ensure perpetuation of sovereignty at the risk of lives.

The essence of sovereignty is freedom to shape the future of the nation and the people ensuring peace, prosperity, modernization and development in accordance with national culture and historical traditions.

In the world today, the balance of power is upset and the major power is blatantly committing random acts at will practising hegemony. In view of the geopolitics of Myanmar and changes in the international affairs in which small nations are subject to bully after a break in the balance of power, there is the need for Myanmar to build up political, economic and defence strengths.

Similarly, at a time when globalization process is at its height these days the country is facing external concepts and interferences and we need to

In the world today, each and every nation lacking national unity has met its end one by one. Even some of the apparently strong unions have collapsed and got disintegrated in a short period. Public lives and property and cultural heritage were destroyed in the process. All need to take lessons from these events.

crimes. They made attempts to launch battles even in towns and cities. There emerged armed conflicts through lack of community peace and tranquillity and prevalence of law and order. At that time, the Tatmadaw had to assume the State responsibilities to put an end to the split stories of political parties.

The feudalist Sawbwas revived the divide-and-rule policy and other various administrative means which had been practised by the colonialists in the course of the colonial period. Thus in 1962, the situations of the nation deteriorated to the extent that the Union was on the verge of disintegration. According to its tradition of standing steadfastly before the people in times of emergency, the Tatmadaw had to safeguard the independence and sovereignty by assuming the State responsibilities.

In 1988, the nation had again to face the dangers of disintegration. The national security was on the brink of falling into abyss. Axe-handles who relied on external elements were at large. Neo-colonialists and saboteurs were conspiring together to pose a grave danger to the nation. There were many attempts made by neo-colonialists to invade Myanmar's territory. The Tatmadaw could not bear to remain with folded arms and it had to assume State responsibilities in time in order to safeguard the national sovereignty.

In his address regarding perpetuation of Myanmar independence and sovereignty at the 52nd Anniversary Armed Forces Day held on 27 March 1997, Chairman of State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe said: **Sovereignty is the life blood of a nation. Three powers—legislative, executive and judicial—must be understood as sovereignty. Three powers must be in the hands of**

keep in mind such threats to cause the disintegration of the Union unless preventive measures are taken.

Myanmar was in no position to concentrate on national development and she was left far behind other nations despite her rich natural resources. This had been due to the exploitation of the colonialists and internal strife caused by the instigation and plots of the colonialists. All the national races of the Union are to cement national solidarity and then build a modern and developed nation while repulsing the conspiracies and interferences of the neo-colonialists in order to recover from such backwardness.

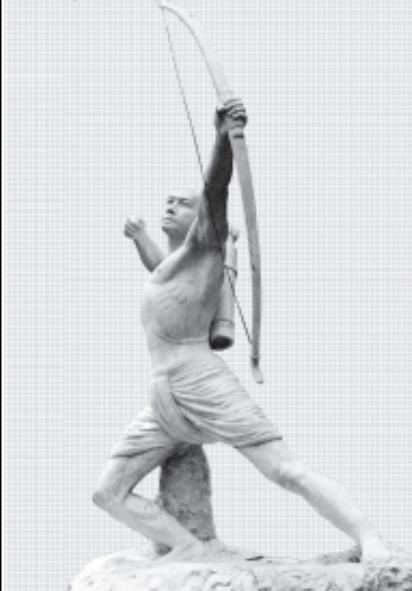
The entire mass of the people had been dutiful in performing the historic task of mounting the independence struggle and safeguarding the regained national independence. Moreover, they are capable of discharging the historic duty of building a peaceful, modern and developed new nation.

Today, all should be aware of the fact that there are some big nations attempting to get Myanmar under their thumb like a minion without realizing the conditions and historic traditions of Myanmar people. The people had to sacrifice a lot of lives, blood and sweat to set the country free from servitude. In fact, the independence movement was launched so that the country would be free from subjugation.

In the world today, each and every nation lacking national unity has met its end one by one. Even some of the apparently strong unions have collapsed and got disintegrated in a short period. Public lives and property and cultural heritage were destroyed in the process. All need to take lessons from these events.

(See page 9)

Cherish the Independence, safeguard it at the risk of lives



Communication sector witnesses sustained progress

Development of communication in the time of the Tatmadaw government

Development of communication services in States and Divisions

Myanma communication service is developing in parallel with national development, progress in higher living standard of national people and changing market-oriented economic system.

In its drives for equitable development of all regions in the nation, the Tatmadaw government is implementing the 24 special regions development projects, rural area development projects and border area development projects.

Thanks to the implementation of these projects, the communication sector is developing along with other development undertakings

and, it is providing better services to people living throughout the country. Easy access to every region in the country con-

tributes much towards regional development and development of socio-economic life of the people. The table provides the

readers with facts and figures of increase in post offices, telegraph offices and telephone stations.



Local people using rural telecommunication installed at Apaukwa village in Kyauktaw Township, Rakhine State.

Development of communication services in States and Divisions

State and Division	1988			2005			Progress		
	Post office	Telegraph office	Telephone station	Post office	Telegraph office	Telephone station	Post office	Telegraph office	Telephone station
Kachin	64	20	12	79	28	56	15	8	44
Kayah	8	3	3	13	11	15	5	4	12
Kayin	27	7	5	33	13	24	6	6	19
Chin	29	11	8	45	22	25	16	11	17
Mon	58	16	11	64	18	29	6	2	17
Rakhine	61	19	17	81	25	41	20	6	24
Shan	101	31	27	157	88	125	56	57	98
Sagaing	157	32	23	158	45	85	1	13	62
Taninthayi	29	9	6	46	20	29	17	11	23
Bago	115	33	30	124	41	106	9	8	76
Magway	132	29	23	145	34	75	13	5	52
Mandalay	140	37	27	148	47	70	8	10	43
Yangon	68	32	22	103	51	79	35	19	57
Ayeyawady	124	31	31	142	42	94	18	11	63

Perpetuation of Myanmar independence and sovereignty-2...

(from page 8)

Some national race armed groups rose against the successive governments due to doubts and suspicions they entertained for various reasons. After realizing the fact that such disunity was caused by conspiracies of the colonialists, they returned to the legal fold and they are serving the interests of the Union today.

Hence, all the national races of the Union are to forge unity that cannot be impaired in any way. As much as narrow racism, the evil legacy of the colonialists, is done away with independence and sovereignty will be safeguarded and all the national

races of the Union will be able to enjoy the fruits of peaceful, modern and developed nation all the more.

Our country is rich in natural resources and it is a nation of fine historical and cultural traditions. The people too are better known for their patriotism capable of enhancing national prestige and national characters.

In the age of globalization engendered by the rapid technological advancement, we will have to work harder for the existence of the nation keeping in mind changing conditions. We will have to build up national interests.

POEM:

Independence and Our Responsibility

* When it is said, we're Independent
We can't say, our nation is solidarized
And cling to that thought undaunted
If you pay scant attention
There are those who'll disturb, and destroy
The danger of axe-handles and pessimists
Are still left to be repulsed
These must be constantly kept in mind.

* A long time past regaining Independence
Even then, unity and solidarity
Get no attention, in an instant
External colonialists, will interfere
And strive to re-enslave your nation
Their schemes and acts
These must be constantly kept in mind.
Sovereignty, of the State
To endure, solidarity and unity
Must remain with amity undivided
All of us kin, must keep hands clasped
To remain undivided, Our Three Main Causes
These must be constantly kept in mind.

* Seven-step Road Map, set down for journey ahead
For emergence of New Constitution
Always planning, with Union Spirit
And love of nation to keep us one-minded
Let's be united, full of discipline
To set up a new democratic State
All nationals must try equally hard
Together, march toward golden track
With hands held fast, for national interest
Seriously espousing, Our Objectives
We shall march on, with firm resolve
Toward New Nation, with unity and amity.

(Hailing the 58th Anniversary Independence Day)

Po Yan Naing (Kyaukkyi) (Trs)

Although Myanmar is just a developing nation, it is well known for its fine traditions and national character. It is capable of striving for the uplift of the standard of the nation and the people.

If we are able to build a modern and developed nation in earnest and most efficiently through uplift of national prestige and integrity, forging national unity, that is historical tradition, free from the danger of destructive elements and with the help of heightened intellectual awareness, we can look forward to the emergence of Myanmar as a leading Asian nation in the near future.

All the citizens of the Union of Myanmar, therefore, are to exert collective and concerted efforts for safeguarding national independence and perpetuity of sovereignty in order that we can serve the interests of the nation and the people independently and free from interferences and disturbances. Then only will we be able to hand down the fine traditions to the posterity.

Translation: TS/AK

(from page 16)

Rakhine State. Shwebo-Myitkyina Road, Mandalay-Thabeikkyin-Tagaung-Bhamo Road and Myitkyina-Putao Road were built for development of Kachin State and Myeik-Taninthayi-Bokepyin-Kawthoung new Union highway was also built in order to link Taninthayi Division and other divisions and states.

For Shan State, Mandalay-Nawngkhio-Lashio-Muse road and Meiktila-Thazi-Shwenyaung-Taunggyi-Loilem-Namhsan-Kengtung road are being upgraded, he said. Moreover, Hanmyintmo-Myogyi-Ywangan-Aungban road, Pyinmana-Pinlaung road, Yaksauk-Kyaukgu-Nawngkhio road and



Prime Minister General Soe Win poses for group photo together with officials of Myanma Railways and local people. — MNA

Emphasis needs to be placed on the production of diesel-substitute biofuel in using farm machinery for the agricultural development

Hsipaw-Namlan-Panketu-Loilem road were built as tarred roads, he added.

New bridges across Thanlwin River such as Tar-kaw-et Bridge, Tarshan Bridge and Tar-par

Bridge were built in Shan State and the people can travel on Tangyan-Pangsang road, Mongpan-Tarhsan-Mongtong road and Tamoenye-Monesi-Tarshwehtan road

smoothly.

With the construction of the new railroads, Aungban-Pinlaung-Loikaw railroad and Shwenyaung-Yaksauk railroad have emerged. Tachilek, Kengtung, Heho, Namhsan and Lashio were renovated, he said. He added that, better transport has been brought about only in the time of the Tatmadaw government with the emergence of a network of roads and bridges.

As roads and bridges are being constructed the length and breadth of the nation including Shan State, a string of tarred roads, gravel roads and earth roads with a length of over 57,100 miles emerged coupled with 210 majors bridges including seven Aye-yawady river crossing bridges, two Chindwin river crossing bridges, five Thanlwin river

crossing bridges and one Sittoung river crossing bridge.

In the rail transportation sector, new railroads with a length of over 1,100 miles were constructed. In addition to railroads in Shan State, railroads in the plains including Ye-Dawei railroads emerged as new transport routes.

With better transport, unprecedented progress has been made in all parts of the Union. Plans to bring about equitable development across the nation have been laid

down and are being implemented in building a new, modern and developed nation.

With this end in view, the 24 special development zones and the five rural development tasks have been laid down and are being implemented.

In the Union of Myanmar which is made up of seven states and seven divisions, Shan State is the greatest in terms of area and population.

Over 40 national races including Shan,

Bamar, Pa-O, Palaung, Kachin, Intha, Dhanu, Kokang, Wa, Lahu, Padaung and others reside in Shan State.

Measures for development of Shan State and improvement of education, health and social standards of local people residing in Shan State were ignored not only in the colonial period but also in the time of feudalism.

Coupled with a series of insurgencies, Shan State lagged behind in development.

(See page 11)



Prime Minister General Soe Win speaks at the opening of the railroad. — MNA

- * The Head of State has given guidance that Myanmar can produce biofuel as jetropha curcus can grow in any part of the country.
- * So, duties have been assigned to the States and Divisions to extend cultivation of jetropha curcus.



Emphasis needs to be placed...

(from page 10)

Hence, in accordance with the guidance of the Head of State, Taunggyi region, Lashio region and Kengtung region have been designated as development regions and regional development tasks are being launched with added momentum. At present, Taunggyi region together with other regions in Shan State are enjoying the fruits of development.

Nowadays, Panglong region, where Union Spirit was conceived, has been designated as a special region and tasks for development of education, health and human resources are being carried out. As a result, the region is making progress in all aspects.

It is safe to say that remarkable progress has been made the whole Shan State, and this was due to concerted efforts of local authorities and local people with the prevalence of peace and tranquillity in the region.

In the past, local people had suffered from



Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint and Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min formally open Shwenyuang-Taunggyi-Saikkaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroad. — MNA

tion of diesel-substitute biofuel in using farm machinery for the agricultural development. The Head of State has given guidance that Myanmar can produce biofuel as jetropha curcus can grow in any part of the country. So, duties have been assigned to the States and Divisions to extend cultivation of jetropha curcus. In addition, jetropha curcus paste can be used as fertiliser as it has a big amount of nitro-

As the final section of Ponchaung-Kaungsai, 27.57 miles long was completed, now people can travel along Shwenyuang-Taunggyi-Saikkaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroad.

Saikkaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroad was successfully built with the strength of Tatmadaw members, staff of Rail Transport and local people. Next he urged the people to continue their active participation in building a peaceful-modern and developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation as well.

Next, Maj-Gen Aung Min said the railroad was built in accord with the guidance of the Head of State in which he said projects are to be implemented to upgrade and build transport facilities so as to fill urban-rural development gap. As the final section of Ponchaung-Kaungsai, 27.57 miles long was completed, now people can travel along Shwenyuang-Taunggyi-Saikkaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroad. The railroad opened today is the new one built in the time of the State Peace and Development Council government in Shan State. Along the railway, 561 small and big bridges and

45 stations have been constructed. The Ministry of Rail Transport have built 3069.96 miles of railroad in the nation although there were only 1967.35 miles before 1988.

Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint made a speech, saying that it is ensured that social welfare and economy of the local people would develop thanks to its opening. In addition, the people in Shan State could be accessible to every region of the nation. Arrangements for better transportation, education, health, economy, supply of electricity have been implemented by the State.

In Shan State (South), there were only 125 miles of railroad in the past. Now, Shwenyuang-Yaksawk, Aungban-Pinlaung, Pinlaung-Loikaw and Shwenyuang-Taunggyi-Saikkhaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroads have been extended. He also called on the local people for the maintenance of it and active participation in building of new discipline-flour-

ishing democratic nation.

Next, on behalf of the local people, USDA member U Sai Tun Aye expressed thanks for opening it.

The Prime Minister and party then cordially greeted local national races and members of social organizations.

Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint and Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min formally opened Shwenyuang-Taunggyi-Saikkhaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroad.

The Prime Minister and party together with local national races posed

Hsihseng Township, the Prime Minister and party attended the opening ceremony of the railroad and the Prime Minister explained the construction of motor roads and railroads for ensuring better transport to develop Shan State, the implementations of the development projects for equitable development of all parts of the Union including Shan State, community peace and stability and prevalence of law and order and the need for the national consolidation among national races.

Afterwards, Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min and



Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint makes a speech at opening ceremony of Shwenyuang-Taunggyi-Saikkaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroad.

MNA

armed insurgencies, drug problems and lack of security. Therefore, all the national races are to place emphasis on prevalence of peace and tranquillity and development of education and economic sectors in the region.

As economic development of Shan State relies on the agricultural sector, priority is to be given to development of the agricultural sector while striving for development of livestock breeding and industrial sectors. Shan State, where there was no self-sufficiency in rice in the past, is now enjoying food sufficiency with extended cultivation of paddy in Shan State (East), Shan State (North) and Shan State (South).

Emphasis needs to be placed on the produc-

tion. That is why efforts are to be made to improve the agricultural sector and to increase the incomes of farmers by extending the cultivation of jetropha curcus. Besides, extended cultivation of jetropha curcus should be a national duty to ensure the full operation of machinery for increased production of rice and other crops.

The Prime Minister said the government is building all necessary infrastructures with the strength of the people for the development of the country. In order not to become a puppet of other countries, the country requires to shape and safeguard strong economic, social and defence conditions. In conclusion, the Prime Minister said Shwenyuang-Taunggyi-

U Khun Aung Kyaw of Saikkaung expresses thanks on behalf of local people.

MNA



Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min makes a speech at opening ceremony of Shwenyuang-Taunggyi-Saikkaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroad.

MNA



for a documentary photo.

Afterwards, the local national races on board set forth for their journey.

The Prime Minister and party cordially greeted local nationals and those attending the opening ceremony and viewed round Namhsan Station. The local people observed the booths on the thriving of jetropha curcus and its use as diesel-substitute fuel, being displayed at the ceremony.

After the ceremony, the Prime Minister and party inspected the progress of constructing the railways and Pon Chaung Bridge with helicopter. On arrival at Sakhaung Station in

Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint made speeches. Next, U Khun Aung Kyaw expressed thanks for opening the railroad on behalf of the local people.

Later, the Prime Minister and party cordially greeted those present. At the auspicious time, Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint and Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min formally opened the railroads. Next, the Prime Minister and party had documentary photo taken together with the local nationals. When the train started to leave Sai Khaung Station, Prime Minister and party were greeted by local nationals on board. — MNA

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 Airport due to
 engine glitches**

NEW YORK, 31 Dec — A British Airways plane that was forced to return to John F Kennedy International Airport due to an engine fire safely landed and no one was injured, local officials have said.

The Boeing 747, heading to London, had to fly back shortly after takeoff late Thursday night because one of the plane's four engines was found catch fire, the officials said.

MNA/Xinhua

**Swiss couple in
 World Record
 tour arrive in
 Vietnam**

HANOI, 31 Dec — A Swiss couple have arrived in Vietnam's southern Ho Chi Minh City from neighbouring Cambodia in what is described as the longest journey by car that has been registered in the Guinness Book of World Records, local afternoon Saigon Times Daily reported Friday.

The couple, named Emil and Liliana Schmid, have driven more than 600,000 kilometres in the past 20 years. On Thursday, they arrived in Vietnam, the 152nd country they have visited.

After leaving for Vietnam's capital city of Hanoi for the New Year celebrations, they will continue their journey to Laos.

Since October 1984, the couple have visited North and South America, Africa, Australia, Asia and the Middle East.

MNA/Xinhua

**Death victims increase to six in
 bomb blast in Indonesia**

JAKARTA, 31 Dec — The death victims in bomb explosion early Saturday morning in Palu, Central Sulawesi Province, Indonesia, increased to six and 45 others injured, provincial police Brigadier-General Ugro Seno chief told Xinhua.

The bomb exploded at 07:05 am local in Palu, Central Sulawesi Province, he said in telephone. The blast took place in a traditional market at the vendor of dog meat and pork, said the general.

Both the dead and injured victims have yet to be identified but they have been evacuated to the nearby hospitals, he said.

The local police anti-bomb (Jihandak) have arrived and are combing the

area, the only place selling pork on Pulau Sulawesi Street, to confirm another victims.

Tens of policemen have also been deployed in the location.

MNA/Xinhua



A video grab shows an Indonesian policeman helping a victim after a blast at a crowded market in Palu, Indonesia's Central Sulawesi, on 31 Dec, 2005. —INTERNET

**Angolan AIDS orphans to
 increase 70% in 5 years**

LUANDA, 31 Dec — Angola has nearly 200,000 AIDS orphans and their number could increase by about 70 per cent in the next five years, according to an official estimate.

The Minister of Welfare and Social Reinsertion, Joao Baptista Kussumua, announced the tentative figures Wednesday in a year's end speech to ministry employees.

"There may already be in our country close to 197,000 orphans as a result of HIV/AIDS, and by 2010 331,000 children" may face the same plight for the same reason, Kussumua said, forecasting a rise of 68 per cent.

He said the government would provide "so-

cial assistance" to some 35,000 AIDS patients in 2006.

Angola has the lowest incidence rate of HIV/AIDS in southern Africa, with a recent study indicating the rate could be below 3 per cent of the population of 14 million.

Experts have suggested that one reason the country has been relatively spared in the pandemic is the fact that the long civil war, which ended in 2002, had limited the movement of people. —MNA/Xinhua

Phenomenal rise in air traffic in India

NEW DELHI, 31 Dec — India witnessed a significant increase in domestic and international air traffic during 2004-2005 over the previous year, according to annual review report released here Friday by Indian Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The report says that "the recent growth in the Civil Aviation Sector has been more than encouraging".

In fact, during the year 2004-05, air transport witnessed a very high growth of above 24 per cent over

the previous year, the report said. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) handled 730,000 aircraft movements in 2004-05, an increase of 12 per cent over the previous year. Up to 59 million passengers travelled during the period, an increase of 20 per cent over the previous year.

Cargo also saw an increase of 22 per cent during the same period.

"The growth of service sector now demands a faster, safer and wider network of air service. If the present growth trend can be sustained, civil aviation will be the reason for the 'take

off' of the Indian economy," the report said.

Five new airlines, Air Deccan, Kingfisher, Spice Jet, Paramount Airways and Go Airlines, have started operations in past one-and-a-half year or so. Two more new airlines, Inter Globe and Indus Airways, are expected to start operations shortly.

The report said that liberalization of air services in the last year has created history. It has increased connectivity and helped lower fares.

Under a revised air services agreement with USA, both sides can desig-

nate any number of services to any point in the territory of the other country with full intermediate and beyond traffic rights.

Similarly traffic rights were enhanced with 18 other countries also in order to enable greater connectivity to/from India e.g. Australia, Britain, Germany, China, France, Netherlands, Belgium, Canada, Singapore, Mauritius, New Zealand and UAE.

Also, the Aircraft Act and Aircraft Rules have been reviewed from time to time to keep the provisions abreast of international standards. —MNA/Xinhua

STI expected to hit 2,500 points next year

SINGAPORE, 31 Dec — Singapore's benchmark Straits Times Index (STI) is expected to hit 2,500 points by the end of next year, Channel NewsAsia report quoted analysts as saying Friday.

The STI closed at 2,347.3 points on Friday, the last trading day in 2005, up some 13.5 per cent as compared with the beginning of this year.

Noting that almost all key sectors performed well this year, the report

attributed the increase to oil and gas stocks and yield plays that dominated the stock market in the first half of this year, as well as to property, banking and technology stocks that were in the spotlight in the second half.

Analysts forecast that key sectors like banks and technology will be well-supported by strong fundamentals while the oil and gas sector may continue to grow strongly in 2006.

MNA/Xinhua

**Illinois Bank robber turned in
 by sons sentenced**

CHICAGO, 31 Dec — A 64-year-old bank robber whose three sons turned him in to police after recognizing him in pictures taken by a bank security camera was sentenced on Thursday to 40 years in prison, authorities said.

William Ginglen had pleaded guilty to seven bank robberies that netted some 56,000 US dollars and two counts of using a firearm to commit an act of violence.

Ginglen cried during the sentencing and issued a short apology, said

Patrick Chesley, the US Attorney in central Illinois.

A former US Marine and respected auxiliary police officer in the town of Lewistown, Ginglen left behind a detailed diary of robberies, cocaine use, spending sprees on a

long-time mistress and hiring prostitutes.

Though his father wore a surgical mask during the robberies, his son Jared, a police officer, quickly recognized him and the silver-plated handgun given to him by the sons as a gift. —MNA/Reuters

**Mysterious liquid found in
 excavated bronzeware in N-W China**

XI'AN, 31 Dec — Archaeologists unearthed some yellow liquid inside a bronze vessel, which is in the shape of a garlic bulb at Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

The vessel, belonging to the early Han Dynasty from 206 BC to 220 AD, is approximately 30-centimetre tall with a long-neck, round belly.

"Such vessels were usually used to keep liquors, but we could hardly tell what it is before testing," said Xu Yongchu, an expert with Shaanxi Pro-

vincial Archaeology Research Institute.

The vessel was unearthed in a six by four-metre tomb, which is possibly owned by a ranking official, and it is among a couple of tombs belonging to the early Western Han Dynasty, Xu acknowledged. The cache of relics also included cocoon-

shaped pottery kettles, food-cooking earthen utensils, pottery jugs, pottery cauldrons, bronze mirrors and bronze combs.

Ancient liquor belonging to the imperial Han Dynasty has been unearthed in Shaanxi Province before the latest finding.

MNA/Xinhua

စည်သူရေးဖြင့် ခေတ်စိမ့် ပြိုစိုးတက်သော နိုင်ငံတော်ကြီး တည်ဆောက်အံ့

Switzerland experiences coldest night this winter

GENEVA, 31 Dec — The big freeze gripping Europe has pushed temperatures in parts of Switzerland down to Siberian levels, and left some communities short of water, the official website Swissinfo reported on Friday.

Thursday night was the coldest yet this winter: in La Brevine, known as the "Siberia of Switzerland", the quicksilver dropped to -35 degrees Celsius. But more unusual, according to the Swiss weather service, were the icy temperatures at lower altitudes.

Despite plenty of snow, the freezing air has exacerbated the dry conditions, leaving some small lakes virtually empty. Some farmers in La Brevine are being forced to buy water for

their livestock because its reservoirs have run dry.

Normally, these farmers use hydrants to provide water for their animals but the shortage is so acute that from 2 January they will have to buy water from other areas.

Levels in rivers and larger lakes, such as Constance on the German

border, are also very low, although not low enough for the authorities to call an emergency.

Several accidents have happened on icy roads and one death was reported on Wednesday night in Canton Neuchatel. Weather experts are warning of a worsening of the severe road conditions.

In Switzerland, a gradual warming is predicted over the weekend, although weather experts are warning of strong winds and heavy snowfall on Friday night. By Saturday, the snow is expected to turn into rain at lower altitudes which should help relieve the drought.

MNA/Xinhua



Street lights illuminate the snow covered city of Arosa, Switzerland, on Friday evening, 30 Dec, 2005. —INTERNET

Rare violin stolen from improperly parked US car

SAN FRANCISCO, 31 Dec — Police on Thursday investigated the disappearance of a 175,000-US-dollar violin from a car that was towed after a music student left it in an unauthorized parking spot.

The violin was made by 18th-century Italian craftsman Nicolo Gagliano and Sabina Nakajima, 24, had borrowed the instrument from a dealer while considering whether to buy it. She left the violin in the trunk of her car, which she parked in a supermarket lot while she went to work elsewhere.

"I thought it was pretty safe in my car," a crestfallen Nakajima told KTVU television. "There's no broken windows and I'm sure I had locked the car." Police inspector Vince Repetto said authorities are interviewing officials at the towing company as well as seeking other leads.

"There's been expensive musical instruments that have been stolen from cars as long as there have been cars and there have been a number in San Francisco over the years that have been almost as valuable as this," he said.

The violin was insured by its owner, who had loaned it to the dealer so it could be sold, KGO-TV reported.

MNA/Reuters

Artificially-bred Asian elephant dies of infection in N-W China

Xi'an, 31 Dec — A 32-month-old Asian elephant has died of multiple infections at a northwest China wildlife park, zoo keepers said Thursday.

Xixi, the first artificially-bred Asian elephant ever to survive in northwest China, showed flu-like symptoms on 21 December and recuperated little after three days of treatment, said Shen Guancheng, assistant manager of the Qinling Wildlife Park in the suburbs of Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

Her situation wors-

ened on 26 December and she died despite emergency treatment by specialists from the No. 4 Medical University of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and the wildlife park in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province, said Shen. A postmortem shows the young elephant had died of carditis and pancreatitis following viral infections.

The birth of Xixi on 30 April, 2003 was big news in Xi'an because she was the first surviving baby Asian elephant born through artificial insemination. The park management has decided to make a specimen of Xixi's corpse, which will be put on display at the zoo.

MNA/Xinhua

Wild panda research base to set up in Shaanxi Province

Xi'an, 31 Dec — A base to study wild giant pandas is expected to be established in a nature reserve in northwestern China's Shaanxi Province, the administration of the key wild habitat of the endangered animal has said. A meeting was held recently to discuss the design and feasibility of the research base, which is scheduled to be set up in the Foping Nature Reserve of the Qinling Mountains in northwestern China, one of the country's major observation bases for wild life and plants.

Construction of the base is set to start next year.

With the help of the State Forestry Administration and the Animals Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the research base will focus on the study of giant panda habitat changes, migration and reproduction. — MNA/Xinhua

Study shows wetland bird species in Bangladesh on extinction

DHAKA, 31 Dec — The number of species of waterfowls in Bangladesh's wetland has come down to 70 from more than 250 in early 1990s, a study conducted by birdwatchers has revealed.

Environmental pollution and offensive activities of people such as killing of birds and spoiling their eggs and dwelling places are major reasons for this decline, Sajahan Sorder, president of Bangladesh Birdwatchers' Society, was quoted by local newspaper *The Daily Star* on Friday as saying.

Sajahan emphasized "wetland management"

to conserve birds, especially the waterfowls.

He called on immediate measures to be taken to control trapping, killing and selling of water fowls and stressed the need for protection, monitoring and raising public awareness to conserve wetland birds and their habitats.

Of the 70 species of waterfowls found, 30 are resident and 40 migratory species.

MNA/Xinhua

Ancient invertebrates fossil discovered at E China temple

HEFEI, 31 Dec — Construction workers have found the fossils of 550 million-year-old unknown invertebrate creatures in a temple renovation in eastern Anhui Province, a local government source said Friday.

The crimson worm-like fossil appeared on two pieces of sand stone, about 1.7 metres high and four metres and seven metres long respectively, when the workers were laying the foundation of the main hall in the Qinglong Temple of Fengtai County, according to the source.

Experts from the provincial museum confirmed the curved lines were fossils of some spineless creatures more than 550 million years ago, however, the exact species is still a mystery to them, according to the cultural office of Fengtai County.

Experts said these fossils offered direct evidence for the research on the origin and evolution of metazoan, or multicellular organisms.

MNA/Xinhua



Visitors are silhouetted against a monitor showing the Hong Kong Disneyland logo on 31 Dec, 2005. —INTERNET

SPORTS

Chelsea too good for Birmingham

LONDON, 1 Jan— Chelsea continued their march towards a second consecutive Premier League title on Saturday with a convincing 2-0 home win over struggling Birmingham City.

A spirited Aston Villa held Arsenal to a 0-0 draw, Egyptian striker Mido made one and scored the other as Tottenham Hotspur beat Newcastle United 2-0 and Darren Bent did the same for Charlton Athletic in their 2-0 derby win over West Ham United.

Chelsea were in imperious form at Stamford Bridge, with Argentine striker Hernan Crespo taking only one of a string of first-half chances and Dutch winger Arjen Robben firing home their second just before the break.

The win gave Chelsea a 14-point lead over second-placed Manchester United, who were playing Bolton Wanderers in a later kickoff.



Chelsea's Joe Cole, right, is challenged by Birmingham City's goalkeeper Maik Taylor, left, and Julian Grey during their English Premiership League soccer match at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge ground in London, on 31 Dec, 2005. Chelsea won the game 2-0. —INTERNET

Arsenal, who face old foes United on Tuesday, carved out few clearcut chances against a determined Villa side, with midfielder Freddie Ljungberg hitting the bar and defender Kolo Toure

missing from close range in the final minutes.

Czech striker Milan Baros missed Villa's best chance, firing over the bar with keeper Jens Lehmann at his mercy.

MNA/Reuters

Rangers end year on winning note

GLASGOW, 1 Jan— Scottish champions Rangers ended a remarkable year with a 3-0 home win over Dundee United on Saturday.

Goals from Belgian international Thomas Buffel, Stevie Thompson and Danish forward Peter Lovenkrands in the final 22 minutes earned them the points to lift them to fourth on 34 points from 21 games in the Premier League (SPL).

Leaders Celtic, with 48 points from 20 matches, face second-placed Hearts on New Year's Day at Tynecastle. Hearts have 44 points.

Rangers won the Scottish championship in May and reached the Champions League knockout phase this month but they suffered an alarming domestic slump this season that almost cost manager Alex McLeish his job.

"This year has been terrific," said McLeish, whose saved his job when Rangers secured a place in the last 16 of the Champions League with a 1-1 draw at home to Inter Milan on 6

December. "But for the SPL blip everything has been fantastic and the year ahead augurs well when you see the players out (coming back) and the young players who have come on.

"The future for Rangers is bright when you see the performances today of kids like Chris Burke and Stevie Smith."

He added of Saturday's match: "We had to be patient today with the young kids we had in that team. There was a wee bit of nervousness but I had a good feeling about it.

"Lovenkrands' scoring record is incredible and he is looking deadly through

the middle and I thought he had a really hard working first half without any reward." The first half was a non event with only a couple of missed chances to liven up proceedings.

Rangers took command after the interval and Buffel crashed a shot into the roof of the net after Lovenkrands failed to connect properly with an attempted overhead kick on 68 minutes.

Thompson powered home a downward header in the 83rd and Lovenkrands grabbed his ninth goal in six matches in all competitions with a neat finish past keeper Derek Stillie two minutes from time. —MNA/Reuters

Owen suffers broken toe against Tottenham

LONDON, 1 Jan— England striker Michael Owen faces a lengthy lay-off after breaking a bone in his foot during Newcastle United's 2-0 Premier League defeat at Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday.

Owen, who was injured shortly before halftime in a collision with Tottenham goalkeeper Paul Robinson, will be out for two to three months after fracturing his fifth metatarsal, according to a report on the BBC.

The injury is unlikely to threaten his participation in the World Cup finals, although it is a major blow to struggling Newcastle who paid 17 million pounds (29 million US dollars) to bring Owen back to English football from Real Madrid in August.

"It's a mighty blow," Newcastle manager Graeme Souness said. "It's an absolute disaster for him and an absolute disaster for the club. It's a dark day for us."

Despite Newcastle's mediocre form, the 26-year-old Owen has forged a dangerous strike partnership with former England teammate Alan Shearer, scoring seven league goals, including a hat-trick against West Ham United earlier this month.

Owen also scored a memorable late double to hand England a stunning 3-2 victory over Argentina in a friendly international in November. —MNA/Reuters

Morocco hand reins to Fakhir

RABAT, 1 Jan— Mohammed Fakhir was named Morocco coach on Saturday to replace sacked Frenchman Philippe Troussier, the national federation (FRMF) said.

"The FRMF has named Mohammed Fakhir as the new national coach. He will soon present the federation with the line-up of his selected aides, including medics," it said in a statement.

Troussier, who coached South Africa and Japan at successive World Cups, was sacked on Friday after two months in charge.

The 52-year-old Fakhir steered Moroccan club Royal Armed Forces (FAR) to victory in the African Confederation Cup last month.

He will lead the Atlas Lions, as the Morocco squad is known at home, in the African Nations Cup finals in Egypt starting on 20 January.

Fakhir, who has also coached leading Moroccan club sides Raja Casablanca and Agadir, signed a contract for three years until the 2008 African Nations Cup in Ghana.

FRMF sources said Fakhir, a former Morocco international who won the Moroccan Cup with Raja in 1974 and 1977 as a player, was second to Troussier among 17 candidates for the national job when the Frenchman was appointed in October. —MNA/Reuters

Answers to yesterday's Crossword Puzzle

P	R	E	C	I	O	U	S	S	S	U	S	E
I	N	S	L	S	S	T	O	N	E	S		
E	X	C	H	E	Q	U	E	R	S	W	S	
C	L	X	R	S	E	S	E	R	A			
E	R	O	S	S	H	E	R	A	L	D	S	Y
S	S	S	S	S	R	S	S	S	S	S	S	E
P	L	E	N	T	Y	S	C	O	P	I	E	D
L	S	S	A	S	L	S	N	S	M	S	S	
U	S	S	I	N	G	E	R	S	S	M	U	G
N	I	L	L	S	A	S	I	S	U	S	A	
D	O	S	E	A	V	E	S	D	R	O	P	
E	B	O	N	Y	S	E	S	L	S	E	S	E
R	S	P	S	S	A	S	C	E	N	D	E	D



Germany's Nicolas Kiefer and Anna-Lena Groenefeld react after winning a point against Australia's Wayne Arthurs and Samantha Stosur in their doubles match at the mixed teams Hopman Cup tennis tournament in Perth, Australia, on 31 Dec, 2005. Germany won the match 4-6, 6-3 (10-8). —INTERNET

Mourinho delighted by 2005 performance

LONDON, 1 Jan— Jose Mourinho summed up the last year at Chelsea as unbelievable and said on Saturday it would be very tough for the chasing pack to catch the champions in the Premier League this season.

Speaking after Chelsea cantered to a 2-0 home win against a lacklustre Birmingham City, he said: "Our 101 points in 2005 (calendar year) is unbelievable — no defeats at home, lots of victories, better position than in 2004, unbelievable."

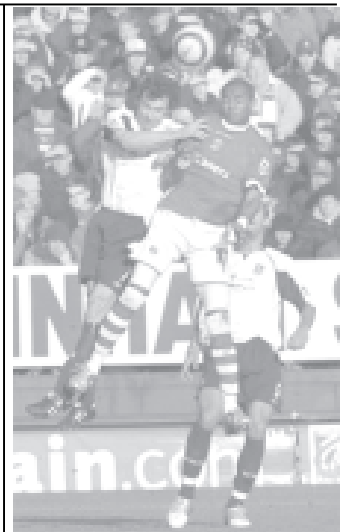
With a cushion of at least 11 points over Manchester United in the 2005-06 title race, Mourinho said the London club had to believe they were in a comfortable position. "You don't believe you are going to lose a lot or draw a lot. I believe the team is very strong and in a very good moment," Mourinho said.

"It's very difficult for them to catch us but in football you have to

believe in everything so we must play safe, safe safe."

Chelsea scored first half goals through Argentine striker Hernan Crespo and Dutch winger Arjen Robben but squandered a host of other chances and Mourinho described the match as merely "acceptable". The Portuguese perfectionist then berated Joe Cole, whom he had lauded earlier this week as his best attacker, for returning to his old habits and playing to the crowd rather than for the team.

He praised Crespo, who scored his eighth goal of the season, for his movement off the ball and said the Argentine showed he had adapted well to English football after a difficult start. —MNA/Reuters



Charlton Athletic's Shaun Bartlett, right, and West Ham United's Christian Dailly go for a header during their English Premiership League soccer match at The Valley, London, on 31 Dec, 2005. Charlton won 2-0. —INTERNET

Malaysia PM calls for greater national prosperity

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 Jan — Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi made his New Year speech Saturday night, calling on the Malaysian people to work with the government to bring greater national prosperity.

The Malaysian people can help the government resolve problems impeding greater national development through their preparedness, understanding

and patience, Badawi said in his 2006 New Year speech televised over Radio Television Malaysian (RTM). Meanwhile, the government would ensure more intensive

economic growth through creating new investment opportunities in the private sector, Badawi said.

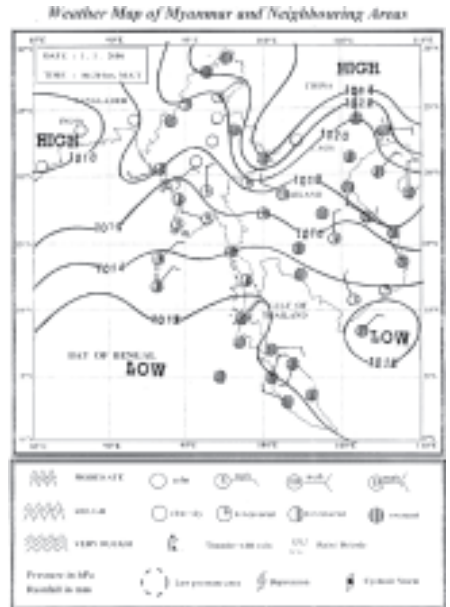
The Prime Minister pledged to his people that all projects promised by

the government under Budget 2006 would be implemented successfully "I will ensure that everything provided for under our budget ... projects that must be carried out are implemented in earnest," he said.

He added the government would keep enhancing its capacity to cope with any crises immediately and effectively, noting that the nation should be constantly prepared for serious problems such as tsunami, surging oil prices and floods in the northern and east coast of Peninsular Malaysia.—MNA/Xinhua



Revellers use cameras to capture the fireworks that flash above Sydney Harbour bridge and Opera House during New Year celebrations in Australia's largest city, Sydney, on 1 January, 2006. —INTERNET



WEATHER

Sunday, 1 January, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been generally fair in the whole country. Night temperatures were (7°C) below normal in Chin State, (3°C) below normal in upper Sagaing and Yangon Divisions. (3°C) above normal in Mon State, (5°C) above normal in Taninthayi Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were Haka (-4°C), Mindat, Pinlaung and PinyinOoLwin (4°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 31-12-2005 was 91°F. Minimum temperature on 1-1-2006 was 57°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 1-1-2006 was 75%. Total sunshine hours on 31-12-2005 was (8.5) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 1-1-2006 were nil at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2006 were nil at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (4) mph from Northeast at (11:40) hours MST on 31-12-2005.

Bay inference: Weather is generally fair in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 2-1-2006: Rain will be scattered in Taninthayi Division. Weather will be generally fair in the whole country. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Generally fair weather in the whole country.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 2-1-2006: Fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 2-1-2006: Fair weather



Monday, 2 January Tune in today

- 8.30 am** Brief news
- 8.35 am** Music: -Sweet for my sweet ... C I Leuis
- 8.40 am** Perspectives
- 8.45 am** Music: -The real thing... Joni Di Bant
- 8.50 am** National news & Slogan
- 9:00 am** Music: -You & me... A Cappella
- 9:05 am** International news
- 9:10 am** Music: Rock my heart
- 1:30 pm** News & Slogan
- 1:40 pm** Lunch time music: -Music...F-R David
- Baby what about you... Crystal Gayle
- Now forever ...Richard Marx
- 9.00 pm** Spotlight on the star
- 9.10 pm** Article
- 9.20 pm** Radio Magazine/ Drugs
- Elimination
- W o m e n ' s Affairs
- 9.20 pm** Local Gems
- 9.45 pm** New & Slogan
- 10.00 pm** PEL



Monday, 2 January View on today

- 7:00 am**
 - 1. Recitation of Parittas by Missionary Sayadaw U Ottamathara
- 7:25 am**
 - 2. To be healthy exercise
- 7:30 am**
 - 3. Morning news
- 7:40 am**
 - 4. Nice and sweet song
- 7:55 am**
 - 5. Song of national races
- 8:05 am**
 - 6. Cutel little dancers
- 8:10 am**
 - 7. အတီးပြိုင်ပွဲ
- 8:15 am**
 - 8. ပုံဆွဲ-တန်းကတား
- 8:30 am**
 - 9. International news
- 8:45 am**
 - 10. Grammar Made Easy
- 4:00 pm**
 - 1. Martial song
- 4:15 pm**
 - 2. Song to uphold National Spirit
- 4:30 pm**
 - 3. Musical programme
- 4:45 pm**
 - 4. အဝေးသင်တန်းသို့လှည့်ရာ ရုပ်မြင်သံကြားသင်ခန်းစာ ဒုတိယနှစ် (ရုက္ခဗေဒအထူးပြု) (ရုက္ခဗေဒ)
- 4:55 pm**
 - 5. Dance variety
- 5:10 pm**
 - 6. အတီးပြိုင်ပွဲ
- 5:20 pm**
 - 7. Song and dance of national races
- 5:30 pm**
 - 8. မြန်မာစာ၊ မြန်မာစကား
- 5:40 pm**
 - 9. Musical programme (The Radio Myanmar Modern Music Troupe)
- 6:00 pm**
 - 10. Evening news
- 6:30 pm**
 - 11. Weather report
- 6:35 pm**
 - 12. နိုင်ငံခြားကာတွန်းဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ "ရယ်ရွှင်စော့ဖြိုး ပုရွက်ဆိတ်လေး" (အပိုင်း-၅၅)
- 6:55 pm**
 - 13. Industrial Achievement
- 7:05 pm**
 - 14. နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ "အရမ်းလှေကားထစ်လေးများ" (အပိုင်း-၂၆)
- 7:35 am**
 - 15. (၅၈)နှစ်မြောက်လွတ်လပ်ရေးနေ့ ဝတ်ပြုအစီအစဉ်
- 7:45 pm**
 - 16. အချုပ်အခြားအာဏာ ရွန်ဂျည်ကြော နိုင်မာစေမှု ဒီ.ဂျေ.စွရွှေအားကစား"
- 8:00 pm**
 - 17. News
- 18.** International news
- 19.** Weather report
- 20.** နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ "ချစ်သူလက်ဆောင်" (အပိုင်း-၂၃)
- 21.** The next day's programme

ဘုရား၊ သိမ်၊ ရဟန်း၊ ကျောင်း သာသနာ့ဒါယိကာကြီး
 ဦးချန်ချိန်ဇောကန် (C.H.Chan)(ခ)ဦးသက်ဝင်း
 (ဝတ်လုံတော်ရ ရှေ့နေကြီး)
 အသက် ၈၇ နှစ်

ရန်ကုန်မြို့၊ တမာရတ်မြို့နယ်၊ အမှတ်(၁၀)ရပ်ကွက်၊
 သယံဇာတအမှတ်(၅၅)နေပြီချန်ချောလှိုင်-ဒေါ်စောစော(ခ) တို့၏အသား၊
 (ဒေါ်မြတင်)၏ ခင်ပွန်း၊ (ဦးချန်စိန်)-ဒေါ်ချိန်ကင်း၊ (ဒေါ်ချိန်လှမ်း)-
 (ဦးချန်ချိန်ဝင်း)(ခ)ဦးတိုးဝတ်-ဒေါ်ဝေရန်) တို့၏ညီ/မောင်(ဦးချိန်ပိုး)-
 ဒေါ်သန်းသန်းရီတို့၏အစ်ကို၊ ဒေါ်ကြည်ကြည်ဝင်း၊ ဦးမြင့်တိုး-
 ဒေါ်နွဲ့နွဲ့ဝင်း၊ ဒေါ်ခင်သန်းနွဲ့ (ခ) မြင့်မြင့် တို့၏ဖခင်သည် (၁-၁-၂၀၀၆)
 (တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့)တွင် ကွယ်လွန်သွားပါ၍ ယင်းနေ့တွင်ပင်
 ထိန်ပင်သာသနာ့သို့ ပို့ဆောင်မိသလိုဖြစ်ကြောင်း၊ ရပ်ဝေရန်ရှိ
 မိတ်သဟာများအား အကြောင်းကြားသိစေအပ်ပါသည်။

ကျန်ရစ်သူမိသားစု

Four political objectives

- * Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
- * National reconsolidation
- * Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- * Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

Four economic objectives

- * Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
- * Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
- * Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
- * The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

Four social objectives

- * Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
- * Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
- * Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
- * Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Better transport brought about only in the time of the Tatmadaw government

(from page 1)

Ponchaung-Kaungsai section, the Shwemyaung-Taunggyi-Saikkhaung-Namhsan-Mongnai railroad has emerged as friendship railroad of national races. Nearly 700,000 national races such as Shan, Bamar, Palaung, Intha, Danu, Lahu and Lisu from 1,360 villages in the townships on the railroad can now go from one place to another easily.

He said the 197-mile railroad was built with difficulty through the forests and mountains with the efforts of the Tatmadawmen, engineers, experts and service personnel of the Ministry of Rail Transportation and participation of local people. Construction of such railroad is not an ordinary effort but a relentless one, he added.

Transport route of the State links four rivers flowing from north to south—Chindwin, Ayeyawady, Sittaung and Thanlwin and mountain ranges such as west, central and east Yoma. Most of the roads and railroads link with the south and the north. It is only old Sagaing Bridge and old Sittaung bridge that cross rivers flowing from east to west. Roads and bridges were built the length and breath of the Union in order to link states and divisions smoothly and to have closer relations among the national races in the time of the Tatmadaw government.

He said An road from Sittway to Yangon and Mandalay and Taungup road from Kyaukphyu to Yangon and Patheingyi have now linked inner parts of

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Prime Minister General Soe Win and party cordially greet local nationals at the opening ceremony of the railroad. — MNA

School Family Day for 2005-06 commences

YANGON, 1 Jan — The Ministry of Education launched the School Family Day for 2005-06 academic year at Diamond Jubilee Hall on Pyay Road in Kamayut Township this morning, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Lt-Gen Myint Swe.

Ninth standard student Ma Han Mon Myo Hein of Latha BEHS No 2 and eighth standard student Ma

Hsu Labh Yadana acted as MCs.

Altogether 14 students representing States and Divisions cut the ribbon to open the ceremony, and all the students sang the song titled “Myanma Kyaung”.

Next, the commander and party visited the booth to mark the School Family Day on the third floor of Diamond Jubilee Hall.

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Hence, all the national races of the Union are to forge unity that cannot be impaired in any way. As much as narrow racism, the evil legacy of the colonialists, is done away with independence and sovereignty will be safeguarded and all the national races of the Union will be able to enjoy the fruits of peaceful, modern and developed nation all the more.

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THIHA AUNG



Commander Lt-Gen Myint Swe views opening ceremony of School Family Day for 2005-06 academic year held at Diamond Jubilee Hall. — MNA