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Saturday, 20 December, 2003



Senior General Than Shwe addresses graduation parade of 46th Intake of Defence Services Academy.—MNA

Unity is strength

- ★ Unity is indispensable for accomplishing everything, as the saying “Unity is strength” goes.
- ★ It is the bounden duty of all Myanmar nationals to totally eliminate the evil legacy left by the colonialists— discord, hatred and disunity— among themselves with Union Spirit.
- ★ As we have been living together so long that we are inseparable, love and friendship and unity are indispensable for all of us.

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
(From guidance given to trainees of the No 35
Primary Teachership Course of University for
Development of National Races)

Independence Day commemorative
features on Pages 6, 7 and 11.

Persons discharging national defence duty must be courageous and brilliant Nations weak in internal unity are likely to invite dangers from outside Leadership can be obtained only through industry

Senior General Than Shwe addresses Graduation Parade of 46th Intake DSA

YANGON, 19 Dec —The Graduation Parade of the 46th Intake of the Defence Services Academy was held at the DSA Parade Ground in PyinOoLwin this morning, with an address by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe.

Also present on the occasion were member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and Lt-Gen Tin Aye of the Ministry of Defence, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Kyi Min, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Hein, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen

Myint Swe, Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Ministers Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin, U Aung Thaung, Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, U Soe Tha, Maj-Gen Saw Tun, Brig-Gen Thein Aung, Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe, Brig-Gen Lun Thi, U Thaung, Maj-Gen Tin Htut and Dr Kyaw Myint, Military Appointment General Maj-Gen Hsan Hsint, Judge Advocate-General Brig-Gen Soe Maung, Inspector-General Brig-Gen Thein Htaik, Vice-Chief of Military Intelligence Maj-Gen Kyaw Win, Vice-Chiefs of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win

Myint, Maj-Gen Aung Kyi and Brig-Gen Nyan Win, Directors Maj-Gen Mya Win, Maj-Gen Tin Soe, Maj-Gen Thein Tun, Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint, Maj-Gen Khin Maung Tint, Col Than Aung, Maj-Gen Tin Tun, Maj-Gen Than Htay, Brig-Gen Sein Lin and Brig-Gen Aye Myint, senior military officers, Commander of PyinOoLwin Station Commandant of the DSA Brig-Gen Min Aung Hlaing, military attaches of foreign embassies in Yangon, Mandalay Mayor Brig-Gen Yan Thein, departmental officials, members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association, Red Cross Society and Auxiliary Fire Brigade, relatives of the graduating cadets and guests.

First, Senior General Than Shwe inspected the companies of the cadets. The graduating companies marched past the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services.

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Circulation
23,599

Excerpts from Senior General's address

- In the course of history, our country once lost her independence and sovereignty due to the absence of a Tatmadaw that was able to ward off the colonialists.
- We should have the internal unity, so that, the sovereignty will be free from transgression.
- The Union will fall apart and will become weak if the spirit to live in weal or woe or Union Spirit deteriorates.
- In line with the Pali saying which goes “Samaggaṇam Tapo Sukho” meaning unity brings prosperity, all our people will be free from dangers and enjoy peace and safety only if the national solidarity is consolidated.



Cadet companies seen at graduation parade of 46th Intake of Defence Services Academy.—MNA

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

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 20 December, 2003

Protection of the environment through active cooperation

As the world today is facing with numerous and diverse environmental problems, environmental protection is an imperative of our time.

Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt delivered an address at the inauguration ceremony of the 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment, hosted by the Union of Myanmar, at Sedona Hotel on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road on 17 December.

In his address the Prime Minister said: "Our countries, realizing that economic development cannot be sustained without protecting the environment, have established environmental protection agencies and ministries. We took these measures even before the historic 1992 Earth Summit. Our countries displayed strong political will to pursue sustainable development path by formulating and implementing national development strategies."

ASEAN countries are fully aware of the fact that the prime cause of environmental degradation is poverty. Poverty eradication is therefore an important challenge that ASEAN must address.

The majority of ASEAN population still depends on natural resources for their livelihood. It is therefore vitally important that these resources are managed and used in a sustainable manner.

Myanmar is making sustained efforts to conserve its rich natural resources and environment. In 1997 the National Commission for Environmental Affairs developed and adopted a development strategy. Sustainable management of land, forest, agriculture, mineral, marine and fresh water resources has been promoted in keeping with the strategy.

Over 70 per cent of Myanmar's population live in rural areas. In order to improve the quality of life of the rural people, including those living in the remote border areas, integrated rural development programmes are being implemented.

In addition to promoting education, health, transport and communication, these programmes also address land degradation, deforestation, availability of water for agricultural purposes as well as safe drinking water and rural poverty.

While striving to bring economic development and improve higher standard of living for the people, the Government is also committed to protecting the environment of Myanmar. Myanmar is a party to many international environmental conventions and has strictly adhered to its international obligations.

We would like to present here that Myanmar is actively taking part in ASEAN's endeavours for successful implementation of national development strategies and solving the environmental problems.

L & F Deputy Minister tours Shan State (North)

YANGON, 19 Dec—Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Aung Thein met with Deputy Director-General Mr Yang Zhimin of Agriculture Department of Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China at Shwe Thiri Yeiktha in Muse, Shan State (North), on 8 December morning.

The deputy minister attended the coordination meeting on control of transboundary animal diseases and inspection of animal and animal products be-

tween Myanmar and China. Next, officials signed the agreement on technological cooperation for control of transboundary animal diseases. Next, the deputy minister attended the opening ceremony of the border animal disease control laboratory.

On 9 December, the deputy minister and party inspected Toe Pwa Aung 50-ton Feedstuff Factory in Lashio and Township Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department in Hsipaw.

MNA

e-Education Learning Centre

သင်ခန်းစာထုတ်လွှင့်မည့် အစီအစဉ်
နေ့လည်း ၁၃:၀၀ နာရီမှ ၁၅:၀၀ နာရီထိ

၂၀-၁၂-၂၀၀၃ (စနေနေ့)

* အစောင့်တက္ကသိုလ် ကျောင်းသူ/သားများအတွက် သင်ခန်းစာများ

၂၁-၁၂-၂၀၀၃ (တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့)

* အစောင့်တက္ကသိုလ် ကျောင်းသူ/သားများအတွက် သင်ခန်းစာများ

၂၂-၁၂-၂၀၀၃ (တနင်္လာနေ့)

- * Language and Education (3)
တက္ကသိုလ်ဒီဂရီကောလိပ်များတွင် အင်္ဂလိပ်စာသင်ကြား
ပို့ချလျက်ရှိသော ဆရာ/မများ
- * Sociolinguistics(3)
တက္ကသိုလ်ဒီဂရီကောလိပ်များတွင် အင်္ဂလိပ်စာသင်ကြား
ပို့ချလျက်ရှိသော ဆရာ/မများ

၂၅-၁၂-၂၀၀၃ (ဗုဒ္ဓဟူးနေ့)

- * Stylistics(3)
တက္ကသိုလ်ဒီဂရီကောလိပ်များတွင် အင်္ဂလိပ်စာသင်ကြား
ပို့ချလျက်ရှိသော ဆရာ/မများ
- * Survey of Literary Theories(1)
တက္ကသိုလ်ဒီဂရီကောလိပ်များတွင် အင်္ဂလိပ်စာသင်ကြား
ပို့ချလျက်ရှိသော ဆရာ/မများ

၂၆-၁၂-၂၀၀၃ (သောကြာနေ့)

- * Teaching Drama(1)
တက္ကသိုလ်ဒီဂရီကောလိပ်များတွင် အင်္ဂလိပ်စာသင်ကြား
ပို့ချလျက်ရှိသော ဆရာ/မများ
- * Teaching Poetry(1)
တက္ကသိုလ်ဒီဂရီကောလိပ်များတွင် အင်္ဂလိပ်စာသင်ကြား
ပို့ချလျက်ရှိသော ဆရာ/မများ

နံနက် ၉:၀၀ နာရီမှ ၁၆:၀၀နာရီအထိ

၂၇-၁၂-၂၀၀၃ (စနေနေ့)

* အစောင့်တက္ကသိုလ် ကျောင်းသူ/သားများအတွက် သင်ခန်းစာများ

နံနက် ၉:၀၀ နာရီ

၂၀၀၃-၂၀၀၄ ယဉ္ဇာသင်နှစ် ယဉ္ဇာရေးရာနည်းပုံတော်

၂၈-၁၂-၂၀၀၃ (တနင်္ဂနွေနေ့)

* အစောင့်တက္ကသိုလ် ကျောင်းသူ/သားများအတွက် သင်ခန်းစာများ

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

Objectives of the 56th Anniversary of Independence Day

- All the national people to collectively safeguard the national independence and ensure perpetuation of sovereignty
- All the national people to be united to ensure non-disintegration of national solidarity
- All the national people to strive for the emergence of enduring State Constitution and for the building of a new, modern and developed nation
- All the national people to participate with full sense of Union Spirit and Patriotism in the successful implementation of the seven-point roadmap of the State.

Hlawga Wildlife Park opens on Kayin

New Year Day

YAGON, 19 Dec — The Forest Department of today announced that the Hlawga Wildlife Park will

be kept open on Kayin New Year Day (23 December 2003) for public recreation. MNA

ISD Women's Aerobic Contest ends

YANGON, 19 Dec—Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint attended a ceremony to present prizes to winners in the Ninth Inter-State/Division Women's Aerobic Contest at National Indoor Stadium-1 in Thuwunna this afternoon.

Also present were Leader of the panel of patrons of Myanmar Women's Sports Federation Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe and members, officials of the Ministry of Sports, President of MWSF Prof Dr Daw May May Yi and executives and fans.

Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe presented the first prize to Su Nanda Aung of Kachin State, joint second prize to Hnin Pan Khaing of Yangon Division and Yamin Hla Win of Mon State and third prize to Su Htwe of Shan State (North).

Later, the minister presented championship shield to Kachin State team.—MNA

Myanmar Hoteliers Association meets

YANGON, 19 Dec —The executive committee meeting of Myanmar Hoteliers Association was held at Zay Kabar meeting hall in Mingaladon Garden City this morning, attended by MHA President Dr Khin Shwe and executives of hotel zones.

They discussed matters relating to hotel industry and the meeting came to a close. MNA



Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe presents prizes to winners in Ninth Inter-State/Division Women's Aerobic Contest.—SPED

Instructor course of GAD concludes

YANGON, 19 Dec —The Instructor Course No 2 of the Administrative Development Training School of the General Administration Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs concluded at the training school this morning.

Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing made a speech.

It was attended by Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Phone Swe, directors-general, officials and advisers of Myanmar Police Force and departments under the ministry. In his speech, the minister said the trainees are to conduct courses in states and divisions using the teaching

methods they learnt at the instructor course. As the staff of the department, playing an essential role in the administrative machinery of the nation, are required to be imbued with strong morale and fine disciplines based on correct conviction and attitude, he pointed out. In conclusion, he urged the trainees to strive

for the successful implementation of the seven-point future policy programme of the State.

Next, the minister presented prizes to the first, second and third prize winners.

A total of 50 officers from states and divisions attended the six-week course. MNA

56th Anniversary Independence Day Exhibition

Date — 3rd to 11th January 2004

Time — 9 am to 5 pm

Place — Tatmadaw Hall on U Wisara Road, Yangon.

(Free entrance)

Iraq war was unjustified, says Putin, ahead of talks with US envoy

Moscow, 19 Dec—Russian President Vladimir Putin, speaking only hours before talks with a US envoy on Iraq debt, said that the US-led war in the country was unjustified because it was not authorized by the United Nations Security Council.

"The use of force abroad, according to existing international laws, can only be sanctioned by the United Nations. This is the international law. Everything that is done without the UN Security Council's sanction cannot be recognized as fair or justified," Putin said Thursday in an annual live televised question-and-answer session.

"I am being as restrained

as I can be when I choose these words," Putin added.

The comments came only hours before Putin was due to meet in Moscow with US envoy James Baker, who is trying to convince the international community to write off Iraq's crushing 120-billion dollar (97-billion-euro) debt.

Putin, who opposed the war in Iraq, described the

United States as a partner, but said the Iraqi campaign should not be lumped in with the broader international war on terrorism.

"We are do not want the United States to lose their war on terrorism — we are US partners in the fight against terrorism," Putin said.

"But as for Iraq, this is a separate matter. There were no international terrorists

under Hussein. This is a separate problem," said Putin.

He also suggested that the United States may be suffering from over-confidence on the international sphere, warning that "empires" had fallen before from feeling too strong and using their military might indiscriminately.

"I must say that in all times, great countries, empires, always suffered a series of problems that complicated their situation — this was a feeling of invulnerability, a feeling of grandeur, and a feeling that it never sins," said Putin.

"This always hurt countries that tried to call themselves empires. I very much hope that this does not happen to our American partners."

Moscow has been furious with Washington in recent days for barring countries that opposed the Iraqi war in participating in the lucrative first phase of reconstruction projects in the war-torn country.

Russia warned the United States on Tuesday that it was "unacceptable" to make such a decision.—Internet



Russian President Vladimir Putin prepares to answer questions of Russia's citizens, from Moscow Kremlin, during all-Russia interactive talks with Putin. Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the US-led war in Iraq was unjustified because it was not sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council.—INTERNET

ထုတ်တုန်းနစ်ဆ တိုးမြှင့်ခြင်း

US soldier killed in ambush in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 19 Dec — Guerrillas ambushed a US military patrol with small arms fire, killing one soldier, the military said Thursday, and suspected Saddam Hussein loyalists killed a representative of a major Shiite political party.

In Tokyo on Thursday, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi approved a plan to send 1,000 troops on a humanitarian mission to southern Iraq, the defense chief said. The schedule of the deployment was not released. It will be Japan's first troop dispatch to a combat zone since World War II.

The US soldier was killed Wednesday night when the 1st Armored Division patrol came under fire in al-Karmah, in northwest Baghdad, the military said. Another American was injured, as was an Iraqi interpreter.

The soldier's death brings the number of US soldiers killed in combat to 314 since the war started on 20 March, including 199 since President Bush declared the end of major combat on 1 May. Some 144 soldiers have died of non-hostile causes, according to the Pentagon.

It was the first fatal ambush of a US soldier since Saddam's capture on Saturday. —Internet

Japan may evacuate embassy staff in Baghdad

TOKYO, 19 Dec — The Japanese Foreign Ministry is considering temporarily evacuating the Japanese Embassy's staff in Baghdad after receiving a fresh warning of terror attack, *Kyodo News* reported on Thursday.

The latest warning came Tuesday from what the ministry describes a "reliable source" and is more specifically targeted at the embassy, *Kyodo* quoted ministry sources as saying. However, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda denied there was such a warning. "It was not a warning of terrorist attacks but a form of intimidation," he said on Wednesday.

The embassy issued a warning on Tuesday to Japanese residents in Iraq that they should not visit it for the time being for security reasons. Fukuda said the embassy was just more careful about security after the capture of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. — MNA/Xinhua

Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia sign cooperation agreement

COLOMBO, 19 Dec — Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia signed a bilateral cooperation agreement here on Wednesday to further strengthen relations between the two countries, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The agreement covering the trade and investment, science and technology, culture and sports fields, was signed by Nizar Bin O Madani, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, who is currently on a visit here, and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Tyrone Fernando. — MNA/Xinhua

Singapore's foreign trade up 6.4% in November

SINGAPORE, 19 Dec — Singapore's trade volume rose 6.4 per cent year-on-year to 40,304 million Singapore dollars (about 23,708 million US dollars) in November, moderating from the 13.1 per cent growth achieved in the previous months, a government release said on Wednesday.

Non-oil exports expanded by 2.3 per cent in November, nose-diving from the 20.6 per cent growth in October, said the Press release published by the International Enterprise Singapore (IE Singapore), or previously known as the Trade Development Board.

The exports of electronics contracted by 6.7 per cent in November, after a 16.6 per cent growth in the previous month, which was attributed to the decline in exports of disk drives and parts of PCs (personal computers), and also to the persistent decline in the exports of telecommunications equipment, PCs and resistors, it said.

MNA/Xinhua

China-ASEAN Expo to be held in Guangxi Nov 2004

BEIJING 19 Dec — The China-ASEAN Expo will be held in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, according to a Press briefing held by the State Council Information Office here Wednesday.

The Expo, to be held annually in Nanning, is proposed by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on October 8 in Bali, Indonesia, during the Seventh China-ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) Summit.

An Min, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Commerce, said the Expo would be an international and inclusive event encompassing trade in goods and services, investment coop-

eration, cultural exchanges and specialized forums.

He said the Expo, based on the Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation between China and ASEAN, will enhance the economic and trade cooperation between China and the ASEAN member countries.

MNA/Xinhua

Malaysia's rubber output up in first 10 months this year

KUALA LUMPUR, 19 Dec — Malaysia's natural rubber production for January-October 2003 totalled 564,898 tons, up 16.2 per cent over the same period last year, the Malaysia Statistics Department said recently.

Total exports for the first 10 months of 2003 surged by 5.8 per cent to 791,484 tons, the department said in a Press release issued here.

For the period of January-October 2003, China was the top buyer of Malaysian rubber at 173,476 tons (21.9 per cent of the total exports), followed by Germany (109,464 tons or 13.8 per cent), the United States (64,702 tons or 8.2 per cent), the department said.

Meanwhile, the country's imports of rubber for the first 10 months of this year totalled 362,562 tons, a drop of 5.4 per cent versus the same period in 2002.

The natural rubber imports came mainly from Thailand, the Philippines, Myanmar, Indonesia and Vietnam.

However, for October 2003, the country's rubber output decreased by 6.6 per cent to 58,814 tons compared to that of the previous month, according to the department. — MNA/Xinhua



A US soldier from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Regiment, (1-22) of the 4th Infantry Division checks an Iraqian while on a patrol in Tikrit, Iraq, on 18 Dec, 2003.

INTERNET

No SARS case on Chinese Mainland

BEIJING, 19 Dec — There was no report of any severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) case in the 24 hours from 10:00 am Wednesday to 10:00 am Thursday on the Chinese Mainland, the Ministry of Health said here Thursday afternoon.

According to reports from all localities, there have been neither clinically confirmed nor suspected SARS cases on the Chinese Mainland since August 16, when the last SARS patient on the Mainland was discharged from hospital, said the ministry. The ministry resumed daily reporting on the epidemic disease on 19 September. — MNA/Xinhua

Annan wants Jan 15 meeting on UN role in Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, 19 Dec — UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Thursday proposed a Jan 15 meeting with the Iraqi Governing Council and the US-led coalition to see what role the United Nations should play if it returns to Baghdad.

Annan told a year-end news conference that he had spoken to the Governing Council, which would prob-



UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan speaks during this year-end news conference at United Nations headquarters in New York, on 18 Dec, 2003. Annan called Thursday for a Jan 15 meeting with the Iraqi Governing Council and the US-led coalition to discuss what role the United Nations might play as Iraq heads toward self-government. — INTERNET

ably attend, but had not yet fixed a date with the coalition, which has advocated the United Nations play a key role in Iraq but never defined it.

"What I am asking is for them to indicate to me exactly what role they want the United Nations to play, who is going to be responsible for what, and who takes what decision, so that there is no confusion," Annan said.

"Once we have that, I will make a judgment whether we can take on that role, and if so how, and where, and under what circumstances," Annan said.

Internet

ဝက်စွမ်းအား ခေတ်ကျော်လွှား

ICRC seeks access to Saddam soon

BAGHDAD, 19 Dec — The International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) is awaiting official notification from Washington to visit captured Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Florian Westphal, a press officer at the ICRC, said the procedures for visiting Saddam will begin after the detaining power has informed the Geneva-based humanitarian organisation that they are holding a prisoner of war.

"To the best of my knowledge, that hasn't happened yet," he said.

But this was not unusual in "the first few days" of detention, said Westphal.

The ICRC is "waiting for notification and hopes these visits will begin as soon as possible," he said, stressing that such visits are stipulated under the Geneva Conventions.

Washington has said that Saddam is a prisoner of war and his rights under the Geneva Conventions would be upheld. "We expect the law is being followed and we expect to be visiting Saddam Hussein," he said. It was not clear when this would happen. — Internet

Beijing takes emergency measures against spread of SARS

BEIJING, 19 Dec — Beijing public health departments have reacted to the latest (SARS) case in Taiwan Province and issued five emergency measures to prevent the spread of the disease to the Mainland.

Jin Dapeng, head of the Beijing Municipal Health Bureau, said all municipal entry-exit inspection and quarantine departments should strengthen temperature screening systems and send any travellers with a body temperature over 38 degrees Celsius to government-designated hospitals.

The latest SARS patient, identified in Taiwan on 17 December, was believed to have contracted the disease while destroying SARS samples after using them for an experiment. Beijing Municipal Health Bureau urged all

labs doing research on SARS to strictly adhere to safety procedures.

Hospitals are required to be vigilant when receiving fever cases, especially those that have travelled in Taiwan. From 17 December, the Beijing Municipal Disease Prevention and Control Centre started collecting information on SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) around the clock and would pay special attention to Taiwan, the Hong Kong Special Administra-

tive Region and some South-east Asian countries.

Emergency task forces in the city's districts and counties are required to work in shifts night and day to help trace people who had close contact with SARS patients if any were found.

Jin said that Beijing would learn from lessons in the first half year and take strict, prompt measures to guard against a possible return of the epidemic disease.

MNA/Xinhua

Guerilla attacks on Iraqi collaborators increasing

BAGHDAD, 19 Dec — Guerilla attacks against Iraqi collaborators and security forces are increasing, a senior US officer said yesterday.

Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt said over the past month the number of attacks on coalition forces remained lower than in previous months although enemy attacks on Iraqi security services were increasing.

He said over the past week there had been an average of 22 daily "engagements" against US-led coalition forces, three daily attacks against Iraqi police and

other security personnel, and two against civilians.

Iraqi police are a favourite target of insurgents targeting the coalition and its "collaborators".

Also the previous day, about 1,000 people demonstrated in support of Saddam, firing their weapons in the air.

The protest took place in Hawija, 50km from Kirkuk, which is 255km north of

Baghdad.

And in Saddam's hometown of Tikrit, children sang his praises, even in front of US soldiers who are coming under sporadic gun fire from those loyal to the captured leader.

"With our hearts, with our souls, we will redeem you Saddam," chanted a group of Iraqi children as infantry troops walked past.

Internet

World Tourism Organization cites Thailand as regional leader

BANGKOK, 19 Dec — The World Tourism Organization (WTO) described Thailand as a regional tourism leader, and said that it would award a certificate to Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra for his role in the Kingdom's tourism industry at the beginning of next year, the Thai News Agency reported Thursday.

Thai Tourism and Sports Minister Sontaya Kunplome was quoted as saying that WTO had praised Thailand for its outstanding role in developing tourism at an international level on a year-on-year basis, and had passed a resolution naming Thailand as a leader in the south-eastern Asian region's tourism sector.

The WTO would also grant an award to Thailand via Thaksin as leader of the nation in a ceremony to be held in Bangkok at the beginning of next year, he said.

Explaining the WTO's decision, Sontaya stressed Thailand's role in drawing up tourism promotion and development policies, in particular through its work in

developing its tourism industry in line with neighbouring countries.

He also spoke of Thailand's exemplary tourism administration, describing Thailand as an example for other countries in the region, and pledged that the WTO would continue to offer support to Thailand to the best of its ability. — MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

India to produce 140 "Sukhoi" aircraft in coming years

NEW DELHI, 19 Dec — India will produce 140 Sukhoi aircraft and have these warplanes as its mainstay in the coming years to replace the MIGs, Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes said on Thursday.

Speaking at the Lok Sabha (the Lower House) Thursday,

Fernandes said that India had already received the Sukhoi multi-role combat aircraft in two installments and some technical problems faced by these aircraft, including those in the engine, had been resolved.

"We are going to produce 140 of these aircraft in

the country. The MIGs have been our mainstay so far. The Sukhois will be the mainstay in the future," he said, adding that the Indian Air Force had formulated a modernization plan to enhance the combat strength of the aircraft in terms of quality and quantity.

MNA/Xinhua

India test-fires "Trishul" missile

NEW DELHI, 19 Dec — India's most sophisticated short range surface to air missile was successfully test-fired Thursday from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur near Balasore, east India, ITR sources said.

The missile, indigenously developed by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO), was test-fired from a mobile launcher at 3:20 pm (local time).

It hit a moving target dropped from an AN-32 aircraft, the sources said.

The solid fuel propellant missile with nine-kilometre range has a triple battlefield role for the Army, Navy and Air Force. It could carry a warhead weighing 15 kilos.

Thursday's trial was intended to gauge its accuracy and various other parameters.

Trishul, which formed part of India's Guided Missile Development Programme, is about three metres in length and 200 centimetres in diameter. It flies at supersonic speed.

The missile was last test fired from the ITR on June 25, the sources said.

MNA/Xinhua



A soldier of the US Army's 4th Infantry Division watches an Iraqi family outside a house being searched during a night raid in the town of Baquba in central Iraq, on 18 Dec, 2003. — INTERNET

IGC head welcomes any country for rebuilding Iraq

BERLIN, 19 Dec — The head of the US-backed Governing Council in Iraq said on Thursday he opposed excluding any country that wants to help rebuild the country.

The United States effectively barred Germany and other opponents of the US-led invasion of Iraq, including France and Russia, when it said it intended to hand out 18.6 billion US dollars' worth of Iraq reconstruction contracts only to companies from countries that had participated in the war effort.

Abdelaziz al-Hakim told journalists, at a news conference with German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, the Council wanted to open the reconstruction effort to any company or country who wanted to help.

"We in the Governing Council have decided that we want to hold the door open for all countries and all companies that want to contribute to the reconstruction of Iraq," he said, when asked about a US ban on German firms. "No exceptions."

Washington's decision to limit the bidding for contracts

upset Berlin, which opposed the war but has since tried to help the US efforts on debt relief for Iraq. Germany also has 8,000 troops on peacekeeping missions abroad, including in Afghanistan.

The Iraqi leader said he was particularly interested in Germany's expertise in privatizing state-owned companies. Following the collapse of Communist East Germany, the German Government privatized most state industries in the east.

"Naturally Germany has the corresponding experience," he added, referring to Germany's long history of business ties with Iraq that predate Saddam Hussein's regime. "Germany also has the capacity to contribute to the reconstruction of our country in this regard." Fischer reiterated Germany's readiness to help rebuild Iraq and renewed an offer to help train Iraq police. — MNA/Reuters

China, Russia vow to strengthen military cooperation

Moscow, 19 Dec — Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov met with Chinese Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan on Thursday, during which they expressed readiness to further strengthen military cooperation between the two countries.

Kasyanov said that the Russian Government attaches great importance to reinforcing contacts between the two countries' armies, because this not only serves the interests of Russia and China, but also helps maintain regional peace and stability and that of the world.

Cao, who is also vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission and a State Councilor, said that China would continue to implement the common understanding reached by the heads of state.

Cao also thanked Russia for its persistent and effective support to China on the Taiwan issue.

Cao arrived here Monday for a week-long visit at the invitation of his Russian counterpart Sergei Ivanov.

MNA/Xinhua



US Army's 1st Infantry Division soldiers conduct a raid in Samarra, Iraq, on 18 Dec, 2003.—INTERNET

Thailand, Australia sign MoU to combat human trafficking

BANGKOK, 19 Dec — Thailand and Australia on Wednesday signed a memorandum here to improve their cooperation on combating human trafficking in the region, local Press reported on Thursday.

The newly inked memorandum of understanding was designed to improve Custom cooperation between the two countries. The three-year cooperative project would first focus on establishing specialist anti-trafficking units within national police agencies.

The memorandum also included schemes to boost relations between victim support groups and crimi-

nal justice system.

The Thai-Australian cooperation was under a broad project which covered Thailand, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia in the combat against human trafficking with a fund of 8.5 million Australian dollars (about 5.95 million US dollars) provided by the Australian Government.

The Thai Justice Minister Pongthep Thepkanchana on

Wednesday met with Australian Senator Chris Ellison at Bangkok for related talks.

The Thai minister said Thailand was both a transit country and a country of origin for people trafficked abroad, while Australia was usually a final destination.

"We'll work together. International cooperation is important. We know that people trafficking causes not only harm to the women trafficked, but also to their families," Pongthep was

quoted by newspaper *The Nation* as saying.

As part of the project, the Australian Government will grant new visas to victims of trafficking and an Australian officer would be stationed in Bangkok to deal with related issues.

The Australian senator noted that human trafficking, including the trafficking of sex workers, had been classed as one of the top three transnational crimes by the International Criminal Police Organization.

MNA/Xinhua

Internet

Distance education develops in west China

YINCHUAN, 19 Dec — Both teachers and students in Guyuan City, west China's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, have benefitted from the modern distance education network.

An official with the local educational bureau said that in the past, educational facilities were in severe shortage and teachers were sparse and not well educated in poverty-stricken Guyuan City.

In 2001, the local government launched a distance education plan, bringing 491 primary and middle schools modern educational methods, the official said.

Touying Middle School, set to be a pilot school for distance education, was equipped with 34 computers all linked onto the school's

local area network (LAN).

Ma Shangjin, the school principal, said distance education broadened the skills of teachers, improving their teaching qualities while raising the interest of students, bringing them more study initiatives.

Hu Shunping, a teacher for 10 years in the middle school, had learnt many new ideas from the new way of education.

"Students rather than teachers play the main role in the distance education process, which helps to exert their potential and contributes to a good interactive effect in class," said Hu.

Ma Li, a 14-year-old student at the school, said that the atmosphere of the class became more lively thanks to the introduction of the new method," she said.

MNA/Xinhua

Another five persons placed in quarantine in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 19 Dec — Another five persons who were in contact with the Taiwanese SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) patient have been placed on Home Quarantine Orders (HQOs) in Singapore, bringing the total number of people on HQOs to 75, Singapore's Health Ministry said on Thursday. The ministry said contact tracing of the Taiwanese man, who was here on December 7-10, has been completed. Only five contacts are unwell so far, it said. — MNA/Xinhua

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17 Iraqis killed in seething streets

FALLUJA, 19 Dec — American troops killed at least 17 Iraqis over the course of a day, the military reported Tuesday, in ambushes and violent rallies around the nation's Sunni Muslim heartland, where anger and disbelief at the capture of Saddam Hussein were still boiling.

Demonstrators took to the streets in almost every major city north and west of Baghdad, where support for Saddam, himself a Sunni, remains strong, and where attacks against US soldiers have been fiercest. The capture of Saddam has churned up strong emotions.

Some Iraqis have expressed delight and have called for an immediate public trial. Others, even those who hated Saddam, describe their disgust at television images showing him undergoing a medical exam and at the fact that he had surrendered without having fired a shot. And while some Iraqis lauded the Americans for finally catching him, there seemed no palpable increase in support for the American occupation of Iraq.

"We hope that the Americans will put Saddam on trial, form a free and democratic Iraqi government, then end the occupation and leave us alone," said Muhammad al-Majedy, 32, who attended a rally in Baghdad on Tuesday

in support of Saddam's capture.

The rally was organized by the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a body of Shiite Muslims, the majority in Iraq, who have been broadly tolerant of the American presence. But in Falluja, about 64 kilometers, or 40 miles, west of Baghdad, supporters holding pictures of Saddam took over the main municipal office on Monday night, ejecting the city's police force as they fired off guns, ransacked the building and burned files. At least one person was killed by American gunfire early Tuesday after US soldiers took back control of the building. It had been captured in a rally fueled partly by rumors that Saddam was still free and had not surrendered in haggard humiliation from inside a small hole in the ground on Saturday night. "Last night Saddam Hussein was in Falluja," said one man who would give only a nickname, Abu Ahmed, 30, and said he had watched the chaotic rallies of the last day.

"I didn't see him," Abu Ahmed said. "But some people swore on the Koran at the mosques they saw him. What was on television was not true." In Samarra, about 97 kilometers north of Baghdad, the military reported that it had killed 11 people who had staged a "complex ambush" against an American military convoy on Monday afternoon.

The attack was signaled, the military reported, by a flock of pigeons released as the convoy neared. Then two men opened fire from a motorcycle that was passing children leaving school, a tactic the military said had been used to discourage return fire.



A US soldier of the 4th Infantry Division takes position while on a patrol of Tikrit, Iraq, on 18 Dec, 2003. Three Iraqi men opened a fire from their car near US soldiers Thursday and disappeared immediately. —INTERNET

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Safeguard national Independence

Gyobingauk Tin Maung Oo

The winter mist makes the days of a season cool and pleasant, while the thazin (*Bulbophyllum auricomum*) flowers add grace and beauty to a person who wear them. Independence brings peace and tranquillity to all the people, while helping enhance the image and dignity of their nation. Hence, the people of Myanmar cherish and safeguard independence.

Myanmar regained independence on 4 January 1948. The time was four in the morning. The images of the State Flag hoisting ceremony of the independence still capture the hearts of many Myanmar till today. The venue was the lawns in front of the Hluttaw. Present on the occasion were the acting President and ministers, the chief justice, the chiefs of the defence service, and invited guests. Members of the provisional parliament, the acting prime minister, representatives of foreign countries and those of the national races were seated at the place in front of the Hluttaw.

The sound of the royal drum was reverberating around the place. But the Union Jack still fluttered on top of the flag pole in front of the Hluttaw in the early morning breeze. At 4.19 am, a red light signalled all the officials and guests to stay still.

At 4.20 am, the naval ship Birmingham fired guns into the air to mark the start

of the ceremony. A British Naval officer slowly lowered the Union Jack, while the band was playing music. At that time, the entire Yangon was reverberated with the sound of sirens, rifles firing into the air, and crackers. The early morning sky was decorated and lighted with fireworks.

As soon as the Union Jack was lowered to the ground, the State Flag of the Union of Myanmar was hoisted to the accompaniment of the military band, and proudly took over the place of the British flag. As soon as the State Flag reached the top, conch shells were blown and the royal drums beaten, while the officials and guests at the ceremony were saluting the State Flag. Since that moment, Myanmar has become an independent and sovereign nation in the world. It was the most auspicious day marked as the Independence Day of the nation.

But a large number of national races had sacrificed lives, blood and sweat to regain independence. They fought for the cause for over 100 years. Independence is a great victory for the people in their struggle to liberate the nation from the enslavement of the colonialists.

Since time immemorial, Myanmar had lived in dignity under their own monarchs. Myanmar has precise land and

territorial waters, and her people have their own history. Located in the strategic place of Southeast Asia, its land area is twice the size of the British Isles, larger than Germany, and wider than France.

Myanmar civilization flourished in the country since the establishment of city states. The Myanmar race continues to exist till today, thanks to the love for the motherland, patriotism and nationalist fervour. The people have been known national pride.

The colonialists launched unjust aggressive wars against Myanmar for three times — the first in 1824, the second in 1852 and the third in 1885 — and annexed the country. Myanmar, a sovereign nation standing tall among the world nations, fell into subjugation in the Konboun era on 1 January 1886. Since then Myanmar had to live under subjugation, restriction and oppression.

However, the Myanmar with the unyielding spirit fought back

the colonialists with any available weapon they had. Under subjugation, Myanmar had to face the unforgettable bitter experiences of exploitation and oppression in various forms.

For the patriots it is better to be dead than to be kept in bondage. Thus, they repulsed the occupiers with unyielding spirit and valour. They knew that the colonialists had much better weapons than they had, but they were not afraid, showing their courage and ability in every battle for independence. All the national races including Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan unitedly and daringly took part in the armed independence struggle at the risk of their lives.

With strong patriotism, all the national races launched an armed opposition against the colonialists through all possible means. In addition to the armed struggles, there were political movements nation-wide to oppose the colonialists and their enslavement of the country. The activities of the Young Men's Buddhist Association had vitalized the patriotism of the local people. Thus, the entire people felt more and more bitter about the

colonialists.

The activities of the YMBA and GCBA plus the Saya San uprising and the year 1300 movement occurred followed by the national movement. The Tatmadaw was formed and the entire mass of the people launched the nationalist movement with the sole objective of regaining independence.

Later, the Panglong Agreement was signed with the resolve — for all the national races of the Union to live in equality and unity. In this way, the entire national races showed their determination to regain independence through Union Spirit.

The independence, the final and desirous goal of the entire national races, was restored on 4 January 1948. Myanmar has regained the sovereign independence that is free from alien interference.

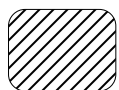
The people are free to shape the nation's future. Independence is the invaluable victory won through the lives, blood and sweat of the Myanmar after launching the struggle with unyielding spirit. It is the duty of all the patriotic national brethren to safeguard the independence regained by the ancestors at high costs.

(Translation: TMT)

Through the united strength of the entire national people, the Union of Myanmar regained her Independence on 4 January 1948. (The first anniversary of Independence Day was held at the Monument of Independence in Maha Bandoola Park in front of the City Hall on 4 January 1949.)



The Union Flag hoisted up on 4 January 1948, at 6.30 pm, Independence Day ceremony of the Union of Myanmar was held at the Governor's Residence.



Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Images of Myanma history



Myanmar patriots who fought against the colonialists for regaining the Independence of the motherland.



Teachers of Myoma School who have uplifted the nationalistic fervour in anti-colonialist national movement.

For the patriots it is better to be dead than to be kept in bondage. Thus, they repulsed the occupiers with unyielding spirit and valour. They knew that the colonialists had much better weapons than they had, but they were not afraid, showing their courage and ability in every battle for independence. All the national races including Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan unitedly and daringly took part in the armed independence struggle at the risk of their lives.

With strong patriotism, all the national races launched an armed opposition against the colonialists through all possible means.



Bagyi Han Soe's painting on the entire national people sacrificing their sweat and blood waging a gurilla warfare against fascist intruders.



Myanma Tamadaw members being mobilized on the Signals Pagoda Road in Yangon before going to the battle field to fight against the fascists.

As the entire Myanmar people desired to be free from the rule of the British colonialists, Myanmar delegation demanded independence at the House of Lords in London, England, on 27 November 1931.





Senior General Than Shwe takes the salute of cadet companies at the graduation parade of 46th Intake of DSA.— MNA

Persons discharging...

(from page 1)

Next, the Senior General presented Aung Sithi Award to cadet Saing Zaw Latt, Excellence in Training Award to cadet Moe Kyaw Htein, Excellence in Studies (Computer) Award to cadet Tun Lin Aung, Excellence in Studies (Science) Award to cadet Hlaing Myo Oo. Afterwards, the Senior General delivered an address. He said:

Today, the graduation parade of the 46th Intake of the Defence Services Academy is held, thereby adding new strength to the Tatmadaw. Comrades, as you are the new generation who will have to relay the 12 noble traditions of the Tatmadaw, I will tell you all what you need to know.

The three main tasks of the Tatmadaw are to fight, to undergo training if there is no combat, and to serve public interest if there is no training and combat.

As for the first duty — to fight — the Tatmadaw is an institution formed to

safeguard and protect the nation and the people. Hence, it must safeguard the territorial waters, land and airspace of the nation. It must safeguard the sovereignty. It must protect all the nation's interests. And it must safeguard the lives and property of the citizens for their safety.

In the course of history, our country once lost her independence and sovereignty resulting from the absence of a Tatmadaw that was able to ward off the colonialists. In this regard, the Tatmadaw must be a strong, brilliant and modern institution. Only then will it be able to safeguard the nation, ensuring that even an inch of the territory will not be subject to alien intrusion.

We should have the internal unity, so that, the sovereignty will be free from intrusion. In this world today, the nations weak in internal unity are like those inviting dangers from outside, likely to face the alien

armed intrusion.

Ours is a Union where over 100 national races are living in unity and togetherness. The Union will fall apart and will become weak if the spirit to live in weal or woe or Union Spirit deteriorates. In addition, the nation will be subject to alien intrusion and insults.

The fact that the backwardness of the nation is the result of the internal conflicts, which broke out soon after the regaining of independence, is an unforgettable lesson for all of us.

litical course. Only if we continue to maintain the tradition, will the nation be able to develop and prosper on the right track despite the changes in the era.

In addition, we will have to safeguard the lives and property of the nation's people. We will have to discharge our duties at the risk of our lives to prevent loss of lives and property due to enemies from inside and outside, and to ensure community peace, the rule of law, and the national stability. Thus, you need to have

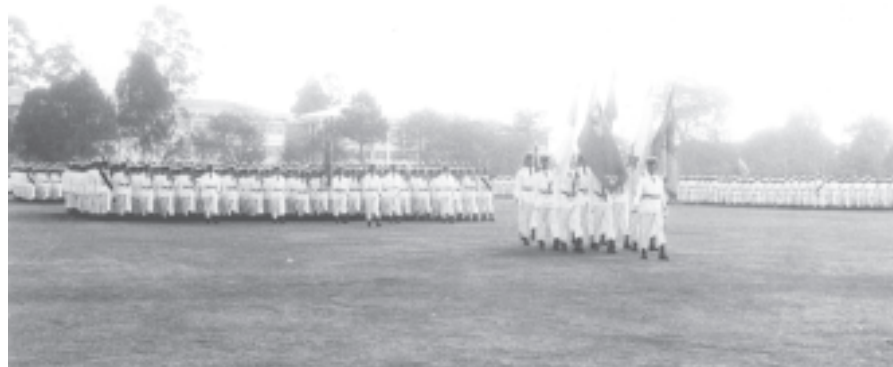
constantly you must be good trainers for subordinates.

As Tatmadawmen are born of the people they are Tatmadawmen of the people. Therefore, they are to serve the interest of the people if they have no combat and training. You will have to engage in the community welfare tasks in wherever regions you are, regarding those regions as your natives.

You will be sent the length and breadth of the nation to discharge duties

ously, thereby contributing to national development.

Rural economy is the national economy. Rural health and education is the national health and education. You will have to make efforts for ensuring better transport between rural and urban regions as well as among rural regions, for ensuring water supply for drinking and agricultural purpose, for enabling the rural people to be strong and educated and for ensuring development of rural economy. You will also



an ardent will to make sacrifices for the State in addition to having patriotism and Union Spirit. The ones discharging the national defence duty must be courageous and brilliant.

Tatmadaw must be of high capabilities to shoulder national security and defence duties. To be equipped with high capabilities you will have to undergo training. The nature of military work needs much of training. You will constantly have training and supervision throughout your life in the army. As you need to train yourselves

for the prevalence of peace and stability in the nation. You must have the firm determination to develop wherever regions you are. Nowadays, the government is making all-out efforts to bring about harmonious development in all parts of the Union. In the process, the rural development task contributes towards the national development. Seventy per cent of Myanmar population reside in rural regions.

That is why, only when rural regions are making progress will all parts of the Union develop harmoni-

have to make efforts with goodwill in realization of the five rural development tasks as the good sons of the people on whom the people can rely.

The Tatmadaw has been placing unusual emphasis on development of border areas and national races since its assumption of State responsibilities.

Nowadays, a series of significant achievements have been made in rural regions. You are to take part in development tasks with much of goodwill in wherever regions you are for

(See page 9)



Senior General Than Shwe inspects cadet companies at graduation parade of 46th Intake of Defence Services Academy.— MNA



Senior General Than Shwe meets four outstanding cadets and their parents.— MNA

Persons discharging...

(from page 8)

enhancing of the living standard of rural people.

As you are the future victorious soldiers you need to prepare for the future. The forms of future battle can be changed with the passage of time. Therefore, you must keep pace with changes. You are to constantly study the modern battles that break out these days. I would like to urge you to study military science and technology in earnest.

In addition, you all who are going to be assigned duties in the Tatmadaw today need to be good leaders. Leadership can be obtained only through industry.

Only then, will the unit under your leadership obey your command.

In conclusion, I would like to urge you to dis-



Senior General Than Shwe presents Best Cadet Award to Cadet Saing Zaw Lat.— MNA

charge the three main duties of the Tatmadaw straightforwardly, to continue to uphold the 12 fine traditions of the Tatmadaw and to strive to become good leaders, keeping Our Three Main National Causes in the fore.

Next, the Senior General left the parade ground.

After the graduation parade, the Senior General spoke words of encouragement to the parents of the outstanding cadets at the parlour of the DSA Headquarters. — MNA



Senior General Than Shwe presents Excellence in Studies Award (Science) to Cadet Hlaing Myo Oo.— MNA



Dignitaries attending at the graduation ceremony of 46th Intake of DSA.— MNA



General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party attending the graduation ceremony of 46th Intake of DSA.— MNA



Dignitaries attending at graduation ceremony of 46th Intake of DSA.— MNA

Lt-Gen Maung Bo inspects development tasks in Myeik

YANGON, 19 Dec— Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Coastal Region Command Brig-Gen Ohn Myint and departmental officials, donated provisions to members of the Sangha of monasteries in Myeik, at Sasana Beikman of Laygyun Hsimi Theindawgyi Pagoda on 17 December morning.

After supplicating on religious affairs to the Sayadaw, Lt-Gen Maung Bo went to the prayer hall of the pagoda and viewed the Htidaw for Maha Theikdzaya Pagoda to be

built on Sandawdy Hill in Sandawut Village, Myeik Township. He inspected the steel pivot and golden steel Htidaw and its parts.

On arrival at the construction site of the bypass at Mazawbyingyi junction, Deputy Superintending Engineer U Khin Maung Kyaw of Myeik-Taninthayi-Bokpyin Road Construction Special Group reported on construction works in progress.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo gave instructions on timely completion of the tasks meeting the set standard.

They proceeded to Basic Education Primary School in East Pyinchaung Village and met with Headmaster U Soe Myint Hlaing, teachers and students.

At the construction site of the bridge across Mazawbyingyi Creek, officials reported on construction of the bridge. The commander gave a supplementary report. Lt-Gen Maung Bo attended to their needs.

At BEPS in Nandawya Village, Lt-Gen Maung Bo met with local authorities and officials and gave instructions on smooth transportation and regional development tasks. He then saw over cultivation of summer paddy and other crops in Tanyint Village and

urged officials and local people to harmoniously strive for local sufficiency of food.

They went to Aung Hsu Pan Monastery in Tanyint Village. Lt-Gen Maung Bo supplicated on religious affairs. Next, local entrepreneurs U Kyar Maung, U Hla Than, U Win Bo and U Saw Jack of Myeik donated K 2 million the monastery.

Afterwards, they met with local authorities and local people at Affiliated BEMS in Tanyint Village. After hearing the reports, Lt-Gen Maung Bo gave instructions on putting of 2,870 acres of land under paddy, reclamation of land for 200 acres of summer paddy, providing of modern agricultural system to local farmers and joining hands with departmental officials and local people to be able to gain success in carrying out five rural development tasks.

Then, they inspected conditions for reclaiming agricultural lands along Kyaukphya River and gave instructions on maintenance for durability of Kywegu-Kyaukphya Bridge.

MNA

ASEAN + 3 Environment Ministers Meeting held

YANGON, 19 Dec— The 2nd ASEAN + 3 Environment Ministers Meeting, hosted by the Union of Myanmar, was held at the Sedona Hotel on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road today.

Present on the occasion were Chairman of National Commission for Environmental Affairs Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung and delegates, ministers who were leaders of the delegations from Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam and deputy ministers and members, deputy ministers who were leaders of the delegations from the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea and members, the ASEAN Secretary-General and officials.

Before the meeting, Chairman of National Commission for Environmental Affairs Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung had the documentary photo taken together with delegation leader ministers and party of ASEAN countries, deputy ministers and the ASEAN Sec-

retary-General.

At the meeting, Minister U Win Aung extended greetings. In his address, he said that it was his great pleasure to welcome the Honourable Ministers of Environment from the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

He expressed delight for the attendance of the delegates at the meeting.

China, Japan and Korea have vast experience in the field of environment. All three countries are actively engaged in addressing global environmental issues and have been providing technical and financial assistance to the developing countries in their pursuit of sustainable development. ASEAN countries have benefited from our cooperation with the plus 3 countries in environmental affairs. We have sent many trainees for courses in the field of environmental management and in areas related to pollution control and nature conservation.

(See page 15)

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Whatever faith they embrace...

(from page 16)

As the Government is also encouraging all the national races to profess whatever faiths they believe in accord with the teachings of their religions with the belief that the Union will always be overwhelmed with auspiciousness, all the religions are flourishing in unison in Myanmar.

Whatever faith they embrace, the national races will have to strive for perpetuation of the Union and strengthening of national unity, while trying to form Myanmar into a peaceful and pleasant community in accord with the religious teachings.

At present destructive elements from inside and outside the nation, who do not want to see Myanmar enjoying prosperity and progress, are applying various means to break up the Union. They are using the religion as

their tool hurl slanders against Myanmar to cause religious and racial differences in the country.

The national races of all faiths are required to know the conspiracies to misuse the religion to realize the sinister aims. All will have to strive for progress of the positive deeds in the nation. In this regard, all the national races should love each other, help each other in unity in accord with the essence of the Union and teachings of the religions. They will have to harmoniously strive for ensuring peace and prosperity of the Union and the people.

The Government will continue to play a key role in further developing the peace, unity, prosperity and auspiciousness in Myanmar, while giving encouragement for the purification and propagation of all faiths in accord with the respective noble aims.

All the people of the Christian Faith are urged to strive for the Union to always exist under the embrace of loving kindness, truthfulness and the Four Cardinal Values.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister wished all the Myanmar people to be blessed with peace, happiness, positive strength and auspiciousness in accord with the essence of Christmas; and the Union to always exist under the embrace of loving kindness, unity, peace, justice, and development as a family.

Bishop Sha Mway La San Si Htay of the Church of the Province of Myanmar said prayers. Myanmar Catholic Priests Council Executive Secretary Priest Father John Paul Zaw Min Aye read the Bible. Yangon Catholic Archbishop Charles Bo delivered a sermon, and those present sang religious songs in chorus. Yangon Kachin Baptist Church Rev U M Zaw Yaw also gave a speech, and MCCC Secretary U Kyaw Nyunt spoke words of thanks. Next, U Saw Mar Gaygyi presented a Christmas gift to Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt. U Thadin of MCCC spoke words of thanks, and the ceremony came to an end.

MNA

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than attends...

(from page 16)

The transport sector, a fundamental requirement, plays an important role in undertaking tasks for development of a region.

With the smooth transportation, the socio-economy of the national races will improve and there will be more contact and greater understanding among them, further cementing national solidarity.

With a view to ensuring a network of transport links, the government launched extended building of roads and railroads the length and breadth of the nation after laying down a strategy.

So, the length of the roads has increased to over 18,111 miles, compared with 13,635 miles in 1988-89. There are a lot of road construction projects being implemented. In a bid to construct roads, river-crossing bridges had to be built wherever necessary. All the nationals have witnessed that a total of 173 bridges with more than 180 feet in length have been constructed across the nation — 164 by Public Works, six by the Ministry of Rail Transportation and three by Defence Services Engineering Corp — based on the concerted efforts and guidance of the Head of State.

Since roads and bridges are part of the strength of the State, the government places emphasis on the construction of bridges.

Moreover, it is building more and more rural development roads in addition to division-to-division roads, state-to-state roads and township-to-township roads for ensuring swifter commodity flow, boosting production and raising the socio-economy of the entire people.

The Bago Yoma mountain range makes Bago Division into eastern and western parts.

The people travelling between eastern and western parts of Bago Division have to make a detour round the mountain range along Htaukkyant-Yangon-Pyay through Yangon-Mandalay Highway.

Thus, it causes hindrance to the commodity flow.

Now, the single 109.75-mile Paukkhaung-Ottwin bypass is no longer enough and so the Ministry of Forestry has to take responsibilities for construction of Myochaung-Seinkantlant Yoma bypass with 70 miles and two furlongs.

And duties have been assigned to the Defence Services Engineering Corp for construction of 42 miles and one furlong long Taikkyi-Phaunggyi-Bago Yoma bypass and the Ministry of Forestry, construction of 96 miles and six furlongs long Thagara-Koebin bypass.

The opening of Myochaung section will contribute towards develop-



Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party poses for documentary photo with local people at opening ceremony of Myochaung-Seinkantlant Bago Yoma Bypass.—MNA

ment of the villages along the road and timber extraction. For ensuring equitable development of all parts of the nation, the government is implementing the border areas and national races development project, the 24 special zones development project and five rural development tasks simultaneously. Measures being taken for better transportation, part of the five rural development tasks, helps raise social and economic sectors of local people, narrow the development gap and forge national solidarity.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than thanked the staff, local authorities and people who contributed to the project, calling for participation of responsible persons and local people in the tasks for construction of the new bypasses.

Then, a local people

spoke words of thanks.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than, the commander, deputy ministers and officials took their positions at the opening ceremony.

At the auspicious time, Commander Brig-Gen Ko Ko, Deputy Minister for Construction U Tint Swe and Deputy Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein formally opened Myochaung section of Myochaung-Seinkantlant Bago Yoma Bypass.

Then, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party posed for a documentary photo with a local people.

They then inspected the road. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than viewed Zamari Reserve Forest at Khagyin Hill which is the highest one on the road and gave instructions on forest preservation and reforestation matters.

In the afternoon, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party arrived at the archway where Seinkantlant section will be opened at Seinkantlant Village, Minhla Township, Bago Division (West).

At the opening ceremony, Deputy Minister U Tint Swe, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein and Chairman of Bago Di-

vision (West) Peace and Development Council Col Hla Min formally opened the bypass. Next, Deputy Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein handed over documents related to the bypass to Deputy Minister for Construction U Tint Swe. Then, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party cordially greeted local people. Myochaung-Seinkantlant Bago Yoma Bypass linking Bago Division (West) and Bago Division (East) is 70 miles and two furlongs long earth one. It will be upgraded into the gravel road.

MNA

Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition goes on

YANGON, 19 Dec—The Fourth Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition, organized by the Traditional Medicine Department of the Ministry of Health, continued for the third day at Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road today.

The portraits of State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe together with his message, Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Prime Minister General Khin

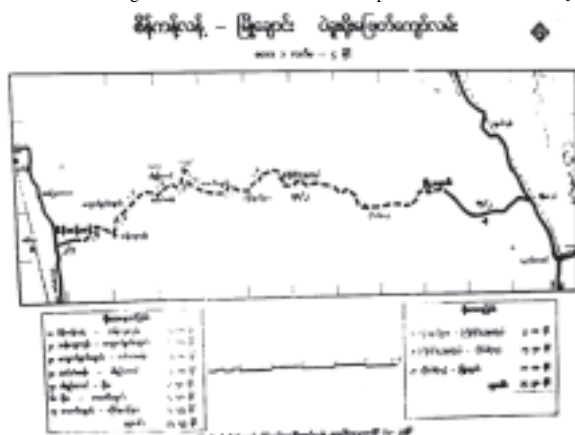
Nyunt together with their addresses were hung on the central of the hall.

Booths of Traditional Medicine Department, Medical Research Department (Lower Myanmar), the booth of Traditional Medicine Research, that of the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Industry-1, the

Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and booths of private traditional medicine clinics were displayed at the exhibition.

Over 20,000 people visited the exhibition. Everyone may visit the exhibition free of charge from 9 am to 6 pm daily up to 26 December.

MNA



The map showing Myochaung-Seinkantlant Bago Yoma Bypass.—MNA

Fourth Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition

Tatmadaw Hall on U Wisara Road, Yangon.
(17 to 26 December 2003)

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Milestones in the health sector in the time of the State Peace and Development Council

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt enquired after the health condition of conjoined twins of Moe Ma Ma Aung and Moe Pa Pa Aung who underwent surgical operation on 11 August 2002. (The success of Myanmar surgeons was the 19th of its kind in the world. And it can be said that it is one of the milestones in the Myanmar medical science.)



Subject	1988	2003
Operation on conjoined twins	1	3
Renal transplant	-	8
Heart transplant	-	5
Replantation of crushed distal forearm	-	2



The government is providing modern medical equipment to hospitals in the country. The photo shows one of the facilities that was used in performing the replantation of a traumatically amputated crushed distal forearm of Maung Khaing Min Soe.

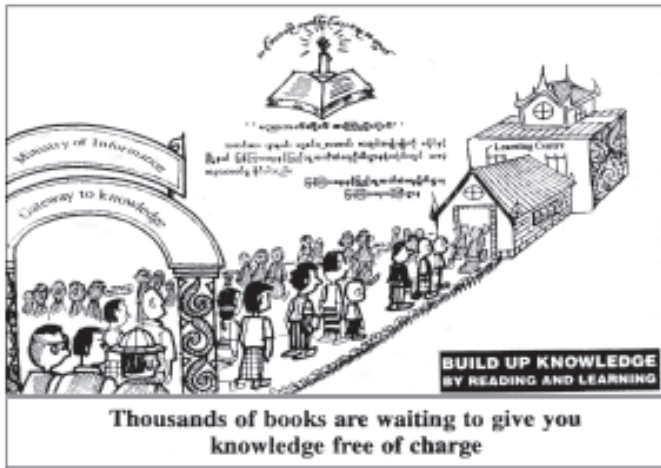


In Myanmar medical history, Myanmar surgeons and nurses successfully performed the renal transplant operation for the first time on 8 May 1997 in Yangon. Again on 3 January 2002, Myanmar surgeons also successfully performed operation of renal transplant in Mandalay General Hospital.

Minister Dr Kyaw Myint views successful performance on replantation of a traumatically crushed distal forearm at Yangon General Hospital. The patient underwent operation on 4 November 2003.

The Ministry of Health has successfully performed the operation on replantation of crushed distal forearm twice in the history of Myanmar medical science. The first time was on 31 July 2000 when replantation of a traumatically amputated crushed distal forearm was successful. The patient was 18-year-old Maung Khaing Min Soe whose left forearm was crushed and cut off. The second operation was also successfully performed on 4 November 2003. The patient was named U Tin Naing whose right forearm was almost cut in a car accident.





ADVERTISEMENTS

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၁။ အမှတ်(၁) စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာနမှ မြန်မာစက္ကန့်စာတုဗေဒလုပ်ငန်းကြီးကြပ်မှုအောက်ရှိ စက်ရုံများအတွက် အောက်ပါပစ္စည်းများကို မြန်မာကျပ်ငွေဖြင့် ဝယ်ယူလိုကြောင်းကြေညာအပ်ပါသည်။

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မြန်မာစက္ကန့်စာတုဗေဒလုပ်ငန်း

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၁။ ဆပ်ပြာစက်ရုံ(မန္တလေး)အတွက် Submersible Pump (1)Set ကို မြန်မာကျပ်ငွေဖြင့်ဝယ်ယူလိုပါသည်။

၂။ တင်ဒါပေးသွင်းမှုကို ၁၃-၁-၂၀၀၄ရက်နေ့ (၁၄:၀၀)နာရီတွင် ပိတ်ပါမည်။

၃။ တင်ဒါအသေးစိတ်အချက်အလက်များကို အောက်ပါလိပ်စာတွင် လာရောက်ဝယ်ယူနိုင်ပါသည်။

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ဖုန်း-၅၆၇၂၀၊ ၅၆၇၅၀

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Ph: 248108/723043
(For: **Domnern Somgiat & Boonma attorneys at Law, Thailand**)
Dated: 20 December, 2003.

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THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR သတင်းစာတိုက်

ကမ်းနားလမ်းနှင့် ၄၃ လမ်းထောင့်၊ ဗိုလ်တထောင်မြို့နယ်၊ ရန်ကုန်မြို့

ဝတ်စုံရန် ဖုန်း-၂၉၆၁၆၁

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV QING CHUN MEN VOY NO (053)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV QING CHUN MEN Voy No (053) are here by notified that the vessel will be arriving on 21-12-03 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINE**

Phone : 256908/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV GEE HONG VOY NO (319)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GEE HONG Voy No (319) are here by notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-12-03 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S EAGLE CORPORATION**

Phone : 256908/378316/376797

California's Burbank Airport renamed Bob Hope Airport

LOS ANGELES, 19 Dec —Burbank Airport, near Los Angeles, was renamed Bob Hope Airport on Wednesday in honour of the beloved entertainer who died in July at the age of 100.

Hope, who spent six decades flying around the world to entertain US servicemen abroad, kept a private plane at the regional flying hub located at the heart of US television and movie production studios.

Hope's widow Dolores, his daughter Linda and comedienne Phyllis Diller took part in the renaming ceremony which coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Wright Brothers first flight.

"He was in the air most of the time... on the air, in the air, one way or the other, it was his thing and this was his airport," Diller told reporters.

"Everything about him was around Burbank. He lived here, he worked here and he flew here," she said.

MNA/Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MILE STONE VOY NO (3)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MILE STONE Voy No (3) are here by notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-12-03 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of Myanma Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAS SUTRA VOY NO (049)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAS SUTRA Voy No (049) are here by notified that the vessel will be arriving on 22-12-03 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S PREMIER SPECTRUM**
Phone : 256908/378316/376797

New Yorkers have no clear favourite among WTC memorial designs

NEW YORK, 19 Dec — A majority of New Yorkers said they had so far no clear favourite among the final eight memorial designs for the World Trade Center (WTC), according to a report published by *Imagine New York* on Tuesday, a grassroots organization for the rebuilding of the WTC site.

The group conducted an email survey and held discussion groups involving a total of 2,800 people. Many respondents viewed the jagged wreckage and other relics from the September 11 attacks more favourably than the final eight memorial designs.

"A lot of the people really felt the facade sent the most powerful message," said project manager Michael Kuo. There was a feeling that the designs of the eight finalists are too abstract, or "too architectural", he added.

The respondents, by and large, liked elements of each of the plans, but none of the

plans stood out, the report said.

A number of comments called for including tangible items from the site because they "possessed an inherent story-telling quality that could never be duplicated by abstract symbolism", said the report.

"There's nothing here in any of these designs that says anything about what happened on that day," said one comment from the workshops.—MNA/Xinhua

မညာရေးဖြင့် ခေတ်မီပွဲပြီးတိုးတက်သော နိုင်ငံတော်ကြီး တည်ဆောက်အံ့



An 80-meter-tall (250 feet) tree in the Styx Valley in Tasmania is adorned with over 3,000 lights to create what organizers said is the world's tallest living Christmas tree, on 17 Dec, 2003.—INTERNET

Zanzibar underscores importance of education

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 19 Dec— Zanzibar President Amani Abeid Karume has stressed that education should be considered as catalyst and the engine of development growth and that to support education is to support the nucleus of ever other development.

President Karume made the remarks on Wednesday while officiating the first graduation ceremony of the Zanzibar University.

He said that if a country wants to ensure sustainable development, there must be many highly educated persons who would help in achieving better development plans.

President Karume who is also the chancellor of the Zanzibar State University, said his government will use all her capabilities in providing higher education to all youths of Zanzibar.

He also said the government will seek more chances of higher education for her people in other foreign institutions. He either said that the better method of enhancing education is the introduction of higher learning institutions and colleges, which would help in obtaining experts of different fields, that would help in bringing development of the country.

During the ceremony President Karume presented degrees to 127 students of the faculties of Commerce and Law and inaugurated the Library and a Computer Centre.

MNA/Xinhua

Fine brings Niagara falls jumper down to earth

ST CATHARINES (Ontario), 19 Dec— An American who survived a plunge over Niagara Falls and went on to sign a lucrative deal as a circus stuntman, was fined 2,256 US dollars on Thursday.

Kirk Jones, 41, whose 100,000 US dollars circus contract stipulates an unlimited supply of shaved-ice snow cones, pleaded guilty to mischief and to unlawfully performing a stunt.

Jones, who admitted he was afraid of heights, said he had been seeking "a new challenge in his life" when he took the plunge down the falls in October. The Michigan resident said he was physically ill as he approached the massive cataract.

"The walk I walked from the parking

lot across the street was one of the longest walks of my life," he told Reuters. "I really threaded the needle that day."

At the end of that October 20 walk, Jones climbed over a wrought iron barrier and jumped into the swift flowing water that tossed him over the brink of the tourist attraction.

The Horseshoe Falls straddle the Canadian-US border between Ontario and New York State.

MNA/Reuters

US state attorneys discuss smoking glamourization in movies

LOS ANGELES, 19 Dec— Executives of major Hollywood movie studios met here with attorney generals from several US states Wednesday to discuss the public concerns about the glamourization of smoking in movie-making.

Jack Valenti, head of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) also attended the meeting. The studio executives were from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures, Universal, Warner Bros., Fox and Disney.

Attorney generals of California, Connecticut, Maryland, Vermont and Utah were also taking part in the talks, which were aimed at providing movie industry officials with information about the potential consequences for children's health associated with the gratuitous depiction of smoking in movies.

California Attorney General Bill Lockyer said the entertainment industry executives indicated they were willing to work to address youth health concerns.

"I have great respect for the artistic rights and freedoms afforded by the First Amendment," Lockyer said. "But youth smoking ranks as a major public health problem, and we all need to pitch in to solve it." The First Amendment of

the US Constitution protects the right of US citizens to free speech.

"I'm pleased that movie directors and motion picture industry officials are willing to explore ways they can help keep our kids from starting down a deadly road," he said.

Under the 1998 national Master Settlement Agreement, tobacco companies cannot pay to have their products appear in movies. However, recent studies indicate the depiction of smoking in films has increased since 1998.

A Dartmouth Medical School study published this year found that children aged 10-14, who watched the highest amount of smoking in movies, were more than 2-1/2 times more likely to start smoking than those children who watched movies that contained far less cigarette puffing.

Researchers said that the data suggests that eliminating adolescents' exposure to movie smoking could reduce smoking by half.

MNA/Xinhua

China training officials, professionals from ethnic minorities

BELING, 19 Dec— The Chinese Government is training hundreds of thousands of officials and professionals from minority people, in an effort to accelerate development in minority-dominated areas, according to sources with China's Ethnic Affairs Commission (SEAC).

China has 56 ethnic groups with a total population of 1.3 billion, with the Han group accounting for 91.59 per cent.

The remaining 55 ethnic groups are ethnic minorities, mostly living in remote, economically backward areas.

The government plans to train 4,000 to 5,000 people from minority groups between 2000 and 2009. These people will be assigned to work in minority areas after being trained in different professional skills.

About 650,000 people from minority groups work as civil servants in governments at various levels, while government institutions employ 1.6 million minority people as professional staff, and state-owned companies employ 600,000 as managerial personnel.

Over the past few years, the SEAC has undertaken a massive training programme

for minority officials and professionals.

The six existing minority universities have set up training centres for minority officials and professionals. Since 2000, over 2,500 minority people have been trained in these universities and centres.

From 2000 to 2002, central government or local governments in developed areas employed 1,645 minority people officials, many as trainees.

Meanwhile, over 200 minority officials were trained in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and European nations.

MNA/Xinhua

Two-year-old Arizona girl survives several days after dad dies

PHOENIX, 19 Dec— A two-year-old girl survived on a diet of butter, mayonnaise and water for at least several days in her west Phoenix home as her father lay dead on the couch nearby, authorities said here.

Police said they believed the girl was able to open the refrigerator and turn on a kitchen water faucet to sustain herself for the days she spent alone in the small residence.

She was found late on Wednesday by police officers and was reported to be in good condition at a crisis nursery at a local hospital.

"This is just an amazing story," said Detective Tony Morales. "She was dehydrated and a little undernourished but she came through it and should be fine."

Officers were called after an alert neighbour spotted water spilling from the home, knocked on the front door and heard cries when no one answered, Morales said.

The daughter apparently was unable to turn off the water faucet.

Her 29-year-old father was found dead from what are believed to be natural causes. Authorities are trying to locate his family in El Salvador.

Police said the mother is apparently a known drug addict who has no custodial rights to the child. Her whereabouts were not immediately known.

MNA/Reuters



An arrow on an advertising sign is seen behind the Euro clock that once counted down the days and hours until the start of the Euro in Frankfurt, central Germany, on 18 Dec, 2003. The US dollar sank to another new low against the euro Thursday but was mixed against other currencies in European trading. The single European currency rose as high as \$1.2423 in early European trading.—INTERNET

SPORTS

Leicester's Adams, Thatcher charged by FA

LONDON, 19 Dec— Leicester City manager Micky Adams and defender Ben Thatcher were both handed misconduct charges by the English FA on Thursday.

Adams has been charged with improper conduct and using insulting words to a match official during the 2-0 home defeat by Birmingham City on Saturday, in which Leicester defender Matt Elliott and goalkeeper Ian Walker were both sent off.

The Leicester boss was sent from the dugout after walking on to the pitch at halftime to confront referee Mike Riley.

Thatcher has been charged with violent behaviour following a clash with Arsenal midfielder Freddie Ljungberg during a Premier League game on December 6.

Meanwhile, the FA said that no action would be taken against Middlesbrough defender Danny Mills for an incident involving Charlton Athletic striker Paolo Di Canio on Saturday.

Mills appeared to stamp on the Italian but the FA said the clash was accidental.

MNA/Reuters



Raphael Poiree, of France, shoots during the Biathlon World Cup 20 kilometers individual race at Osrblie, Slovakia, on 18 Dec, 2003. Poiree won the race and took the 5th position in the overall World Cup standings.—INTERNET

Gattuso slams FIFA's World Player of the Year award

ROME, 19 Dec— AC Milan midfielder Gennaro Gattuso has attacked FIFA's World Player of the Year award after Real Madrid's Zinedine Zidane was voted the winner for the third time in six years.

Frenchman Zidane claimed the accolade on Monday despite his club's indifferent 2002-03 season, in which the Spanish side were eliminated from the Champions League by Juventus.

"With all (due) respect to Zidane, who is without doubt one of the best players in the world, if I look at his season I think to myself: 'So what?'," Gattuso was quoted as saying in Gazzetta dello Sport on Thursday.

"If the prize is going to be handed out solely on the basis of talent, then Diego Maradona should have won it every single year he was playing."

The Italian international said Juventus playmaker Pavel Nedved and Milan defender Paolo Maldini had stronger claims to the prize.

Both were instrumental in their respective teams' progress to the final of last season's Champions League.

The FIFA Player of the Year award is based on the votes of 142 national team coaches.

Gattuso was also bemused by the decision of the coach of Caribbean islands Turks and Caicos to vote for him ahead of more illustrious names in Serie A.

"What do these coaches base their judgments on?" he asked.

"I went there once on holiday with Christian Vieri. Maybe this guy saw me having a kick around on the beach and liked what he saw."

"But does it seem possible to you that I got one vote and (Roma striker Francesco) Totti didn't get any?"

"These prizes don't have credibility anymore. They have more to do with sponsors than real values and results on the pitch".

MNA/Reuters

Substitute Bautista puts Pachuca on top in Mexican final

MEXICO CITY, 19 Dec— Mexican international striker Adolfo Bautista came off the substitutes bench to inspire Pachuca to a 3-1 win over UNL in the first leg of the Clausura championship final.

Bautista, relegated to the reserves after an inconsistent season, scored the second goal and won a penalty to set up the third as the team from the mining town of the same name scored twice in the last quarter of an hour of Wednesday night's match.

Pachuca, who two years ago won the championship for the first time since it turned professional in 1944, went ahead after 24 minutes thanks to a blunder by UNL's Argentine goalkeeper Gustavo Campagnuolo.

Campagnuolo attempted to punch away a Manuel Vidrio cross but the clearance struck his own defender Hugo Sanchez and flew into the net.

The Tigers, coached by Argentina's 1986 World Cup-winning goalkeeper Nery Pumpido, equalized in the 59th minute when Brazilian Irenio Soares played a one-two with Argentine Andres Silveira and scored with a left-foot shot.

MNA/Reuters

Blatter slams Europe's 'billionaire clubs'

LONDON, 19 Dec — FIFA president Sepp Blatter has accused Europe's richest clubs of "despicable" behaviour and engaging in "social and economic rape" as they scour the developing world for talent.

His comments echoed those made before this month's World Cup preliminary round draw when the 67-year-old head of world soccer's governing body railed against the many wrongs he sees in the world game.

"I find it unhealthy, if not despicable for rich clubs to send scouts shopping in Africa, South America and Asia to 'buy' the most promising players there," Blatter wrote in a column in Wednesday's Financial Times newspaper.

"Europe's leading clubs conduct themselves increasingly as neo-colonialists who don't give a damn about heritage and culture, but engage in social and economic rape by robbing the developing world of its best players."

"Dignity and integrity tend to fall by the wayside in what has become a glorified body market."

"If we are not careful, football may degenerate into a game of greed — a trend I will vigorously oppose."

Blatter, who last year was re-elected FIFA president for a second term and has a mandate to remain in the job until at least 2007,

also hit out at the number of foreign imports in the English game.

"I am also disturbed by the recent trend whereby players representing wealthy clubs in England and elsewhere are increasingly a hotchpotch of nationalities," he said.

"Many clubs don't deserve to be regarded as English any more because they are dominated by foreign legionnaires, whose allegiance is solely to whichever paymaster happens currently to be rewarding them to the tune of 30,000 pounds, 50,000 or even 100,000 pounds a week."

Blatter strongly defended FIFA's right to generate cash from international competitions despite criticism from some quarters that top players are expected to play too many matches.

He said FIFA, under Swiss Law, was a "non-profit" association unlike "billionaire clubs" who "have to maximise their own income...to absorb the ludicrously high player costs they are now lumbered with as a result of their own private but cut-throat competition to sign up the biggest stars".

MNA/Reuters

Ferdinand faces commission over missed drugs test

LONDON, 19 Dec — Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand goes before an independent disciplinary commission on Thursday after a missed drugs test that has caused turmoil in the world's favourite game.

Ferdinand, the sport's most expensive defender, has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association (FA) for his "failure or refusal" to take the test at United's Carrington training ground on September 23.

The nuance between the England centre back failing to take the test and refusing to undergo it will be a crucial aspect of the two-day hearing at Bolton's Reebok Stadium as it will have a direct bearing on the scale of any punishment.

Ferdinand risks a ban of up to two years that would deal a hammer blow to his career for both club and country, and much will turn on whether the three-man commission consider his actions at Carrington were deliberate or not.

Though he passed a test 36 hours later and has strongly denied ever having used drugs, the missed test prompted the FA to drop him for England's decisive Euro 2004 qualifier against Turkey in Istanbul in October.

Since then, the affair has escalated into a series of conflicts involving the entire Eng-

land squad, their manager, the FA and even the head of the game's ruling body worldwide, FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

Ferdinand's England team mates were outraged at him being sidelined and only after a series of crisis meetings with the FA did they back down from threats of a first ever player strike by the national team. The sympathies of coach Sven-Goran Eriksson were clearly with the players — and against his own employers.

The FA's decision was also bitterly criticized by both United, whose legal counsel will be defending Ferdinand this week, and the English players' union led by Gordon Taylor. The row with Blatter was equally damaging as the most powerful man in football believes Ferdinand should have been ineligible — instead of playing regularly — for United after missing the test and has roundly criticized the FA for its handling of the affair.

"The case should have been dealt with in a week," he told reporters in Frankfurt earlier this month. "This is not the way things should be done." — MNA/Reuters



Japan's Tomoka Takeuchi takes a gate during the Parallel GS Finals of the US Snowboard Grand Prix race on 17 Dec, 2003, in Park City, Utah. She finished in first place.—INTERNET

2nd ASEAN + 3 Environment Ministers Meeting . . .

(from page 10)

At the 7th Informal ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment held in November last year in Vientiane, Lao PDR, the environment ministers agreed that in order to achieve meaningful cooperation, ASEAN should prioritize its activities in the following ten areas:

- (1) Environmentally Sustainable Cities
- (2) Global environmental issues
- (3) Land and forest fires and transboundary haze pollution
- (4) Coastal and marine environment
- (5) Sustainable forest management
- (6) Sustainable management of natural parks and protected areas
- (7) Freshwater resources
- (8) Public awareness and environmental education
- (9) Promotion of environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production
- (10) Sustainable development monitoring and reporting, database harmonization

He welcomed the +3 countries to join hands with ASEAN in promoting any of the ten areas.

Sustainable development is a process that is to be carried out on a sustained basis over time. In this regard we face many challenges and have many tasks to accomplish. Friends and partners are needed to achieve our goals to protect and promote the environment. We look forward to working closely with the + 3 countries to make ASEAN and the world clean and green.

Then, Deputy Minister of Environment of the People's Republic of China Mr Guangyao Zhu, Deputy Environment Minister of Japan Dr Shuichi Katoh, Deputy Environment Minister of ROK Mr Kwak Kyul-Ho and ASEAN Secretary-General Mr Ong Keng Yong reported on environmental conservation. Next, those present discussed priority cooperation tasks between ASEAN and +3 countries—environmentally Sustainable Cities, global environmental issues, land and forest fires and transboundary haze pollution, coastal and marine environment, sustainable forest management, sustainable management of natural parks and protected areas, freshwater resources, public awareness and environmental education, promotion of environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production and sustainable development monitoring and reporting, database harmonization.

In the afternoon, the leaders of the delegation and the ASEAN Secretary-General coordinated cooperation matters between ASEAN and China, ASEAN and Japan and ASEAN and ROK. Later, the meeting approved the minutes of the 2nd ASEAN + 3 Environment Ministers Meeting.—MNA



Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung poses for documentary photo together with leaders of delegations to 2nd ASEAN + 3 Environment Ministers Meeting.—MNA

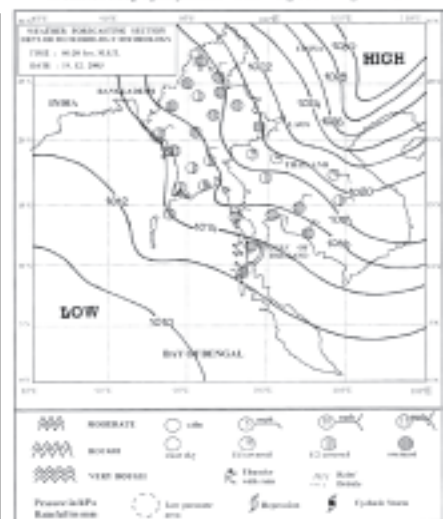
MRTV-3

20-12-2003 (Saturday) (Programme Schedule) Morning Transmission (9:00 - 10:00)

- 9:00 Signature Tune
- Greetings
- 9:02 Song of Myanmar
- Beauty & Scenic
- Sights "Mingalabar"
- 9:06 Yangon, The Capital
- 9:10 Headline News**
- 9:12 Easily Cooked Tasty
- Dishes (Fried Fermented Prawn)
- 9:15 National News**

- 9:20 The Beauty of
- Myeik Archipelago
- and The Life of Sa-
- lon
- 9:25 King Alaung Mint-
- ya's Palace Site
- 9:30 National News**
- 9:35 Myanmar Traditional
- Musical Instruments
- (Kyay-Naung)
- 9:40 Song "Wonderful
- Country"
- 9:45 National News**
- 9:50 The National
- Museum (II)
- 9:58 Song of Myanmar
- Beauty & Scenic
- Sights
- "Come and See
- Myanmar"

Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas



WEATHER

Friday, 19 December, 2003

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been scattered in Chin State, isolated in upper Sagaing Division, Kachin State and weather has been fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) below normal in Yangon Division, Kayin and Mon States, (6°C) below normal in Ayeyawady Division, (5°C) to (6°C) above normal in Kachin, Chin and Shan States, upper Sagaing and Magway Divisions and about normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 17-12-2003 was 31.8°C (89°F). Minimum temperature on 18-12-2003 was 14.6°C (58°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 18-12-2003 was 74%. Total sunshine hours on 17-12-2003 was (8.2) hours approx. Rainfall on 19-12-2003 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-12-2003 was 2211 mm (87.05 inches) at Yangon Airport, 2315 mm (91.14 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 2394 mm (94.25 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 12 mph from east at (10:50) hours MST on 18-12-2003. **Bay inference:** Weather is partly cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. **Forecast valid until evening of 20-12-2003:** Possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin State and Tanintharyi Division, weather will be generally fair in the whole country. Degree of certainty is (40%). **State of the sea:** Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. **Outlook for subsequent two days:** Generally fair weather in the whole country. **Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 20-12-2003:** Partly cloudy. **Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 20-12-2003:** Fair weather. **Weather Outlook For Third Week-end of December 2003:** During the coming weekend weather will be generally fair in Yangon and Mandalay Division.

Earthquake Report

(Issued at (09:30) hours M.S.T on Today)
An earthquake of moderate intensity (5.3) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside of Myanmar about (172) miles North of Kaba-Aye seismological observatory was recorded at (06) hrs (42) min (36) sec M.S.T on 19th December 2003.



Saturday, December 20
View today:

- 7:00 am
- 1. ခေတ္တစုံအောင်မြင်စွာ စာတတ်စေရန်
- 2. နိုင်ငံတော်သံသရာမဟာနာယက
- အစရှိ အကျိုးတော်ဆောင်ရွက်အားပေး
- မဟာရာဇာဓိပတိ အဘိဓမ္မာမဟာသမ္ဘူ
- ဇာတ်ကား တီထွင်ရေးဆွဲရာတွင် ရှိ
- ရာသီသံသီ ပရိတ်တရားတော်
- 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. Delicacies
- 8:05 am
- 6. အချိန်ပြည့်
- 8:15 am
- 7. နိုင်ငံတော်သံသီ
- 8:30 am
- 8. International News
- 8:45 am
- 9. Grammar Made Easy
- 11:00 am
- 1. Martial Song
- 11:10 am
- 2. Musical Programme
- 11:30 am
- 3. News
- 11:40 am
- 4. Games for children
- 12:05 pm
- 5. Roundup of the week's
- TV local News
- 1:00 pm
- 6. နိုင်ငံခြားစာတတ်စေရန်
- (အချိန်ပြည့်)
- (အချိန်ပြည့်)
- 1:35 pm
- 7. Dance of national races
- 1:45 pm
- 8. လောကီသဘောတရား
- စုပေါင်းပတ်စပိတ်
- (ဒါရိုက်တာ-စင်စောမောင်မောင်)
- 2:45 pm
- 9. International News
- 4:00 pm
- 1. Martial Song
- 4:15 pm
- 2. Song to uphold
- national spirit
- 4:30 pm
- 3. English for Everyday Use
- 4:45 pm
- 4. Musical Programme
- 5:00 pm
- 5. အထူးသတင်းအချက်အလက်
- ရရှိသည့်အချက်အလက်
- ပထမဆုံးသတင်းအချက်အလက်
- အထူးပြုစုရာ (သတင်းစာ)
- 5:15 pm
- 6. Dance variety
- 5:30 pm
- 7. နိုင်ငံတော်သံသီ
- 5:45 pm
- 8. နိုင်ငံခြားစာတတ်စေရန်
- 6:00 pm
- 9. Musical Programme
- 6:15 pm
- 10. Delicacies
- 6:30 pm
- 11. Evening News
- 7:00 pm
- 12. Weather Report
- 7:05 pm
- 13. Discovery
- 7:20 pm
- 14. Musical Programme
- 7:35 pm
- 15. အချိန်ပြည့်အထူးအချက်အလက်
- ရရှိသည့်အချက်အလက်
- စုပေါင်းပတ်စပိတ်
- (ဒါရိုက်တာ-စင်စောမောင်မောင်)
- 8:00 pm
- 16. News
- 17. International news
- 18. Weather report
- 19. Myanmar Movie
- "ခေတ္တစုံအောင်မြင်စွာ"
- (အချိန်ပြည့်)
- ရရှိသည့်အချက်အလက်
- စုပေါင်းပတ်စပိတ်
- 20. The next day's
- programme



Saturday, December 20
Tune in today:

- 8.30 am Brief news
- 8.35 am Music
- 8.40 am Perspectives
- 8.45 am Music
- 8.50am National news/
- Slogan
- 9.05 am Music
- 9.10 am International news
- 9.15 am Music (Spotlight on
- the star)
- Aron Carter
- 1.30 pm News/Slogan
- 1.40 pm Lunch time music
- The X'mas song
- (Connie Francis)
- White X'mas (Frank
- Sinatra)
- The X'mas Blue
- (Dean Martin)
- 9.00 pm ASEAN review
- Exchanged News
- 9:10 pm Article/Music
- 9:20 pm Myanmar Culture by
- Dr Khin Maung
- Nyunt
- 9:30 pm Souvenirs
- Music (FR David)
- Living on the island
- (Chris Debourg)
- 9.45 pm News/Slogan
- 10.00 pm PEL

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

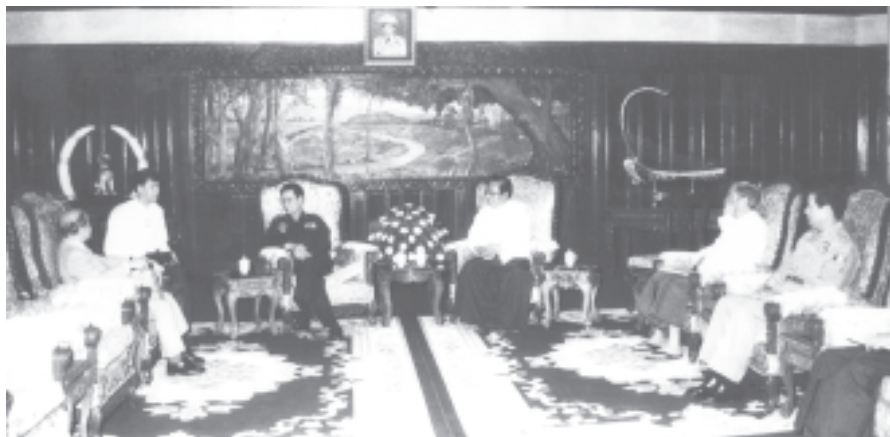
Prime Minister receives Japanese professor

YANGON, 19 Dec—Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received Professor Dr Kaneko Kazushige, President of Institute of Asian Ethno-Forms and Culture, President of Asian Ethno-Forms Society and President of Asian School of Japan at

Zeya Thiri Beikman on Konmyinthta, here, at 5 pm today. Also present at the call were Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win and Director-General of Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet.

MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Professor Dr Kaneko Kazushige, (President of Institute of Asian Ethno-Forms and Culture, President of Asian Ethno-Forms Society and President of Asian School of Japan).— MNA



Whatever faith they embrace, national races will have to strive for perpetuation of Union and strengthening of national unity

General Khin Nyunt attends Pre-Christmas Service and fellowship dinner

YANGON, 19 Dec — Christmas Service, and fellowship dinner, organized by Myanmar Christian Council of Churches and Yangon Catholic Archbishop, were held on the lawns of the office of the Church of the Province of Myanmar on Pyidaungsu Yeiktha Road in Dagon

read the Bible, Myanmar Baptist Council General Secretary U K D Htoo Lwan said opening prayers, and those present sang hymns.

Next, U Smith Ngu Zahtaung extended greetings and members of the Christian Musician Fellowship troupe sang

tional solidarity spirit that the national brethren have lived unitedly in the Union since the time immemorial, enjoying the freedom of worship and preserving the traditional customs and cultures of their own.

Different national races, preserving the culture of their own, profess the reli-

gion of the Union and national unity are always visible.

Thanks to the result of the unity of all the national races, their cultures, traditions and religions are freely flourishing without any conflict or argument, and the Union is over-whelmed with all the noble deeds of all the religions, cultures and cus-

toms.

As all the religions teach mankind to have kindness, truth, forgiveness and unity and to avoid committing sins such as hostility, hatred, prejudice, untruthfulness and wrongdoings.

So, All the religions have their noble places in Myanmar society where

four essences of the four Byamasa principles such as loving-kindness or desire for the good of others, sympathy, pleasure in the richness of others, and indifference and the two Lawkapala principles namely shame and fear to be wrong are flourishing.

(See page 10)



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt addresses Christmas Service and Fellowship Dinner.— MNA

Township, with an address by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

It was attended by ministers, deputy ministers, the vice-mayor, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental officials, Chairman of MCCC U Saw Mar Gaygyi and General Secretary U Smith Ngu Zahtaung, Yangon Catholic Archbishop Charles Bo, chairmen and officials of YMBA, All Myanmar Hindu Organization and Myanmar Muslim Organization, special guests and Christians.

U Smith Ngu Zahtaung

Christmas hymns.

U Saw Mar Gaygyi then extended greetings. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt spoke on the occasion. He said:

May all the national brethren of the Union be overwhelmed with the auspiciousness of the Birthday of Jesus Christ.

I believe good results for the Union will surely emerge thanks to the love of Jesus Christ.

Union of Myanmar is an adorable abode for those who possess patriotism and Union Spirit.

It must be attributed to the fine traditions of na-

tion of their choice. But their nationalities, religions, cultures and customs are mingled inseparably in Myanmar society, and the Union of Myanmar has become a pleasant abode for all the national races thanks to the mutual friendship, assistance and unity among them.

For instance, all the national races live in all parts of the country. Moreover, all the national races such as the Bamar, Mon, Rakhine, Shan, Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Chin profess the religion they believe including Christian. However essence

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than attends inauguration of Myochaung-Seinkantlant Bago Yoma bypass

YANGON, 19 Dec — The inauguration of Myochaung section of Myochaung-Seinkantlant Bago Yoma bypass, which was undertaken by the Ministry of Forestry, linking Myochaung village in Kyaukdaga Township, Bago Division (East) and Seinkantlant village in Minhla Township, Bago Division (West), took place at Myochaung village this morning.

It was attended by member of the State Peace and

Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than of the Ministry of Defence, Chairman of Bago Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Southern Command Brig-Gen Ko Ko, Deputy Minister for Construction U Tint Swe, Deputy Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, officials, local authorities and local people totalling around 3,000.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than delivered a speech on

the occasion, saying that with the aim of ensuring emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation, the national goal, the government has been making endeavours with added momentum for harmonious development of all sectors. In the process, it is implementing development projects in order to bridge the development gap in a short time among all parts of the nation made up of 14 States and Divisions.

(See page 10)