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Senior General Than Shwe gives guidance to officials on construction of the Traditional Medicine University. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe inspects construction of Traditional Medicine University, Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon)

YANGON, 23 Dec— Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, accompanied by member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Kyi Min, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Hein, Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, the ministers, the Mandalay mayor, senior military officers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and heads of departments arrived at the project site of Traditional Medicine University in Mandalay on 21 December.

Senior General Than Shwe and party were welcomed by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, heads of departments, the rector of Traditional Medicine University, the pro-rector, professors, lecturers and students.

Minister Dr Kyaw Myint reported on the construction project, efforts for production of potent Myanmar medicine and new therapies, traditional medicine hospitals and dispensaries opened, diseases being cured, courses at the Traditional Medicine University, one-year traditional medicine practitioner course, one-month training course, teaching of traditional medical science at the institute of medicine, establish-

ment of herbal gardens, measures undertaken for production of traditional medicine, research and development.

Senior General Than Shwe and party heard a report on the use of video conferencing system, linking Yangon and Mandalay, in teaching students at the University. Managing Director of ACE Construction Co U Tint San reported on construction of the university.

In his guidance, Senior General Than Shwe said traditional medicine practitioners are to introduce new medicines and therapies in keeping with the advancing world without sticking to old thoughts.

He spoke of the need to make efforts for uplift of the role of Myanmar traditional medicine in combination with modern sciences and traditional medical science of other nations. He said courses conducted at the university must be of high standard and they can also be recognized and accepted by other nations. He said traditional medicine practitioners should study developing traditional medical science of other nations and should occasionally invite scholars from abroad for giving lectures.

He said the traditional medicine practitioners should not be contented with the existing standard and they must try to find out new medicines and therapies without sticking to the old methods.

He said arrangements are to be made for producing traditional medicine practitioners through wider and higher standard of teaching.

(See page 8)

Independence and modern Tatmadaw

When we study the history of mankind, we will see that there emerged organized groups for defence purpose because of the requirement to safeguard their own families and collectively defend their own communities. Hence, the armed forces have been indispensable for every independent people and nation since early history.

If we look at the current world affairs, we will see that there still exists the use of force in solving problems. This being so, all the countries of the world are striving to defend themselves.

In our history, the independence was lost easily due to the lack of modern standing Armed Forces. The independence and sovereignty should always be safeguarded with full awareness. We are in the process of building a strong and brilliant modern Tatmadaw to fully safeguard our independence and sovereignty. Modernization and development of the Tatmadaw should be on a par with the progress of the nation.

Senior General Than Shwe,
Chairman of State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
(From address at the graduation
parade of the 45th Intake of
Defence Services Academy)

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Senior General Than Shwe inspects Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) Construction Project. — MNA

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

PERSPECTIVES

Wednesday, 24 December, 2003

Towards industrial and agricultural development

On self-reliant basis, the State Peace and Development Council is striving for the nation to be on a par with nations of the world. In the process, arrangements are being made in line with the national policy to turn out national forces in political, economic and social sectors.

As industrial development is vital for the emergence of a modern and developed nation, the Government is making all the possible arrangements for the development of the industrial sector that will lead the nation into an industrialized one.

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe and party, on 20 December, inspected Hsinmin Cement Plant in Kyaukse Township, Sewing Machine Factory of the Ministry of Industry-1 in Kyaukse industrial zone and Pharmaceutical Factory (Inyaung) of Myanma Pharmaceutical Industries.

New factories are under construction for regional development in Kyaukse industrial zone and production of import-substitute machinery. Emphasis is also being placed on development of technical know-how, possessing strong economy and increasing productivity.

The opening of Myanma Farm Machinery Factory of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation was held at the factory near Ingon Village in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Division, on 20 December. State Peace and Development Council Chairman Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Than Shwe graced the ceremony by attending it and unveiled the stone inscriptions of the factory.

As regards the industries, the Head of State gave guidance to officials on production of effective, user-friendly and durable farm machinery for farmers and production of threshers in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry-2 for greater efficiency.

Construction of the Myanma Farm Machinery Factory began in June, 2001. The test-runs were made from April to November 2003. The target of the factory is to produce 10,000 power tillers including 16 hp engines and 5,000 reapers including six hp engines a year.

Production of farm machinery is one of the projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to fulfil the needs of the agriculture sector. In the process, factories and workshops under the Agricultural Mechanization Department are producing various kinds of machinery to be used in farming.

At a time when efforts are being made for industrial development and extension of import-substitute industries, the opening of Myanma Farm Machinery Factory will surely contribute much towards the agriculture sector.

In producing farm machinery, officials of the factory are urged to produce effective, user-friendly and durable ones for farmers.

Book shops at School Family Day

YANGON, 23 Dec — Booths of the universities as well as private book shops will be opened on the first floor of the Diamond Jubilee Hall, the venue of the School Family Day, to be held from 27 December 2003 to 3 January 2004. The booths will sell various

kinds of books at reasonable prices. Apart from booths and shops of the universities and entrepreneurs, the Educational Research Bureau and the Sarpay Beikman and the News and Periodicals Enterprise of the Information Ministry will also open shops and booths. — MNA

59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives

- To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the State's seven-point policy programme
- To crush internal and external destructive elements hindering the stability and progress of the State through people's militia strategy
- To implement border area development tasks and the five rural development tasks hand in hand with the entire people
- To build up a strong and efficient Tatmadaw to uphold 'Our Three Main National Causes'



Yangon Station Commander and Commander of No 2 Military Region Commandant of DSRO Brig-Gen Myo Myint and wife attend the baby show and contest. — MNA

Baby show held

YANGON, 23 Dec — Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day, the Maternal and Child Welfare Association of the Defence Services Records Office organized the 15th baby show at the DSRO this morning.

A total of 94 babies took part in the contest.

Present on the occasion were Commander of Yangon Station and Commander of No 2 Military Region Commandant of the DSRO Brig-Gen Myo Myint, President of the association Dr Daw Thi Thi Aye, the deputy commandant and others. — MNA

Tourists arrive

YANGON, 23 Dec — S/Y Alithia Liner arrived at Nanthida Jetty yesterday afternoon, after touring Myeik Archipelago in Kawthoung District via Thailand.

The ship carried eight tourists, who would visit Ngpali, Bagan, Mandalay, Sittway, MraukU and Palatwa from 27 December 2003 to 22 January 2004.

MNA

Talks on education opportunities in Malaysia to be given

YANGON, 23 Dec — Mr Loh Pak Tin, Director of Nilai International College of Malaysia, will give talks on opportunities to obtain internationally-recognized degrees and further studies in Malaysia for those who have completed the basic education high school level at the Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel on Alanpya Pagoda Road here from 1 pm to 4 pm on 28 December. Interested persons are invited to the ceremony.

Courses conducted at the college are Business and Marketing Management, Computer Science, Information Technology, Business Information Technology, Hospitality Management, Engineering and so on.

For further information, contact can be made to Moe International Co Ltd at No 196, Bogyoke Aung San Street, Botataung Township, Yangon (Tel: 245663 and 246776).

NLM

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

Efficient use of electricity

- * Use daylight as the main source of light
- * Use the least possible amount of electricity only if there is not enough natural light
- * Use the least possible amount of electricity required in production and service enterprises
- * Preventing waste of electricity benefits the user and others

There are about 500,000 households using electricity in Yangon. Thus, saving a four-foot fluorescent lamp every day by each household amounts to saving power that is equal to the capacity a 20-megawatt power station can supply.

Efficient use of fuel

- * Saving one gallon of fuel per car per month will save the nation one US dollar
- * Thus, a total of 455,822 cars in Myanmar can save US\$ 5.5 million in a year
- * The amount, US \$ 5.5 million, can build a major bridge across Ayeyawady River

All this needs to be known

- * Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
- * Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
- * Do not be softened whenever appeased



School Family Day

(27 December 2003 to
3 January 2004)

**The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now.**

Gulf Arab leaders welcome power transfer in Iraq

KUWAIT CITY, 23 Dec—Oil-rich Gulf Arab monarchies, adopted steps to speed up economic unity and welcomed US plans to transfer power to Iraqis, at the end of their annual summit.

The GCC groups the gas- and oil-rich states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

In a number of moves aimed at accelerating the pace of economic integration, the Gulf leaders approved legislation to outlaw dumping practices, a key obstacle to the smooth implementation of the customs union launched in January 2003.

They reaffirmed their commitment to set up a monetary union and a single currency in 2005 and 2010, respectively.

The summit decided to set up an information centre in Riyadh to link the GCC customs departments, another important step to promote the implementation of the customs union, seen as a major step toward establishing a Gulf common market.

The leaders ordered that all measures be taken to facilitate the free flow of goods between their countries and that all obstacles

blocking that be removed immediately.

They also ordered facilitating the movement of GCC nationals and agreed to issue a single GCC passport but after completing "technical details."

The Gulf leaders welcomed US plans to speed up the transfer of power in Iraq, saying this was a positive step on the road to allowing Iraqis to run their own affairs, but remained silent on Baghdad's desire to join the regional bloc.

"The summit welcomes the US policy of speeding the transfer of power in Iraq... and believes it is a step in the right path for the Iraqi people to run their own affairs," said the communiqué.

The Kuwaiti minister said the GCC states would resume diplomatic ties with Baghdad once a provisional Iraqi government was formed next summer.

They called for the Middle East to be rid of weapons of mass destruction.—Internet

Ice-lantern show opens in N-E China City

HARBIN, 23 Dec—The 30th ice-lantern festival opened Saturday in China's "ice city" Harbin, capital of northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

More than 2,000 ice sculptures, using a total 30,000 cubic metres of ice, are showing at Zhaolin Park, where the festival is held each year. The works include a 19-metre-high Mount Qomolangma (Mount Everest), colourful springs and a wide film screen. The public can make their own sculptures with ice provided by the park. "It is the first time I have ever seen ice sculptures and lanterns, and they are really very beautiful," said Zhao Yu, a seven-year-old boy from Taiwan. The first annual ice-lantern festival was in 1963. It has become a part of the city's culture and won international fame. It is known as the oldest outside ice art show in the world. — MNA/Xinhua

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US troops casualty in Iraq climbs to 463

BAGHDAD, 23 Dec—As of Monday, December 22, 463 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq according to the Department of Defence. Of those, 317 died as a result of hostile action and 146 died of non-hostile causes, the department said.

The British military has reported 52 deaths; Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Denmark, Ukraine and Poland have reported one each.

On or since 1 May, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 325 US soldiers have died — 202 as a result of hostile action and 123 of non-hostile causes, according to the Defence Department's figures.

Since the start of military operations, 2,310 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department's figures as of Monday. Non-hostile injured numbered 369.

The latest deaths reported by the military: — Two 1st Armoured Division soldiers were killed when the convoy in which they were riding struck a roadside bomb Monday in Baghdad. —Internet



Blast kills two troops, translator in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 23 Dec—A roadside bomb exploded near a US military convoy Monday, killing two American soldiers and an Iraqi translator, the military said.

L Paul Bremer, the US administrator of Iraq, told NBC's "Today" show that "there's been a suggestion of high terror threats" in Iraq in the last weeks unrelated to Saddam Hussein capture on 13 December.

Two other soldiers from the 1st Armored Division were wounded in the attack at about 11:45 am in Baghdad. The soldiers' names were being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

Three American soldiers have now been killed in combat in the past week, raising the toll to 317 soldiers killed in combat since military operations began in March.

In other towns, troops in tanks, Humvees and Bradley armored vehicles imposed curfews and roadblocks and went house to house, smashing through doors in the search

for guerillas and weapons.

Among targeted towns are Fallujah, a centre of resistance west of Baghdad; Samarra, 75 miles north of Baghdad; Jalulah, northwest of the capital; and Rawah near the western border with Syria, where troops dubbed the raids "Operation Santa Claws."

In Samarra, a 70-year-old man died when US troops put a bag over his head and prepared to detain him Sunday night, Iraqis said. Neighbours said Mehdi al-Jamal died of a heart attack. A 60-year-old woman was killed Sunday when soldiers blasted open the reinforced steel door of her home, said Lt Col Henry Kievenaar, who was directing the Army's 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment in raids in Rawah.

Internet

Thai PM inaugurates "OTOP City" fair

BANGKOK, 23 Dec—A grand trade fair, "OTOP City", aimed at showcasing locally-made products under the Thai Government's one tambon (district), one product (OTOP) scheme, was inaugurated Sunday, the Thai News Agency reported.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra opened the 8-day event amid hundreds of distinguished guests and visitors, including Cabinet members, foreign ambassadors, Thai and foreign celebrities, media representatives, local producers, and the general public. The OTO City event is scheduled to be held at the Impact Exhibition Centre in Muang Thong Thani of Nonthaburi Province which close with Bangkok on December 21-28, with community-based products from across the country to be showcased.

Thaksin said on the opening that the government wanted the OTO City event to be a golden opportunity for local producers to showcase and sell their products to exporters and the general public, and to be also a golden opportunity for exporters and the general public to have their personal touch on the amazed community-based products produced from the "Thai innovative wisdom and knowledge."

Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusritipak, who heads the National OTO Board, said at the opening ceremony that about one million 3-5 star selected OTO items would be showcased during the eight-day trade fair.

He reported that sale of community-based products under the OTO scheme this year, both domestically and internationally, has jumped up to around 33 billion baht (835.443 million US dollars), far greater than the government's earlier target of around 20 billion baht (506.325 million US dollars). — MNA/Xinhua

China plans to form up to 10 big coal firms to ensure supplies

BEIJING, 23 Dec—The Chinese Government unveiled plans Saturday to form eight to 10 large coal mining firms capable of each producing more than 50 million tons of coal annually to ensure supplies meet China's rising demand.

The Chinese Society of the Coal Industry, formerly the Ministry of the Coal Industry, announced at the ongoing national reform and development conference for

the coal sector that four or five of the planned firms will be expected to turn out 100 million tons each on a yearly basis.

Those large merged firms are expected to control 60 per cent of the domestic coal market.

The plan was formed after the government found that a lack of large coal firms made it hard to relieve serious coal shortages earlier this year. —MNA/Xinhua



A US soldier runs in the street during a large patrol in downtown Tikrit on 22 December. — INTERNET

Crocodile kills Australian man, stalks his friends

SYDNEY, 23 Dec—A large saltwater crocodile dragged a young Australian man to his death in an outback river and then stalked his two companions as they clung to a tree in the middle of the river for 22 hours, police said here.

Brett Mann, 22, and his two friends had ridden their quad bikes 50 miles southwest of Darwin in the Northern Territory on Sunday when they stopped on the banks of the flooded Finniss River to wash mud off their bodies and bikes.

Mann was swept into the river by a strong current and as his two 19-year-old friends swam after him, a 13 feet crocodile grabbed him by the shoulder and dragged him underwater.

"They had gone to the river to cool off," police sergeant Gary Casey told reporters in Darwin.

MNA/Reuters

Russia willing to write off part of Iraq's debt in return for contracts

Moscow, 23 Dec— The head of the Iraqi Governing Council said after talks with President Vladimir Putin that Moscow was ready to forgive a large portion of Iraqi debts in return for favourable treatment for Russian oil and other companies. "The two sides "discussed the question of writing off Iraq's debt and we received a generous promise to write off the debt, or at least a part of it," Abdul Aziz al-Hakim told reporters after meeting Putin for the first time in the Kremlin.

In return "we will be open to all Russian companies," he added. Officials in the Iraqi delegation said the debt owed by Iraq would be reduced to 3.5 billion dollars.

The sum represents debts owed by Baghdad to Moscow from the Soviet era and means that Russia has agreed to write off interest payments that reach at least five more billion dollars according to various estimates.

"Russia said it is willing to consider the write-off of the rest of the debt if it received beneficial treatment in terms of oil contracts," said Kurdish leader Jalal Talabani.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Saltanov said earlier that Moscow was ready to consider easing Iraq's debts to Russia. "As far as debts are concerned, this problem was obviously also discussed. We are ready to consider this

issue constructively, understanding the importance of easing the debt burden which the Iraqi people now faces," he said. "Contacts over these issues will continue," Saltanov added.

The negotiation on the debt are expected to continue through the Paris Club of mainly Western creditor nations.

An unidentified Kremlin source told the *Interfax* news agency that the final size of Russia's writeoff depended on how Iraq takes "Russian economic interests into account" — a direct reference to participation in the country's reconstruction and right to future oil contracts.

Some analysts speculate that one possibility is that Russia will write off Iraqi debt in exchange for winning back rights to Iraq's oil fields.—*Internet*

US ups security in Iraq during holidays

BAGHDAD, 23 Dec—The US Army's 1st Armoured Division has increased security in Baghdad ahead of possible rebel attacks over the Christmas season, a top US military official said Monday.

Brig Gen Mark Hertling, one of two deputy commanders of the division that is responsible for security in the Iraqi capital, said US forces have received information that shows security needs to be tightened over the holidays.

"There has been some intelligence — throughout the month — that it would be wise to check our precautions during the period of mid-December to early January," Hertling wrote in an e-mail to *The Associated Press*. "We are doing that, and we in fact will go on the offensive against anyone who threatens the Iraqi people or the coalition forces."

Meanwhile, US troops continue their pursuit of guerrillas.

In Tikrit, north of Baghdad, Maj Josslyn Aberle of the Army's 4th Infantry Division said "people who are loyal to Saddam could try to make one last effort and try to attack coalition forces."

Internet



US soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Regiment, (1-22)4th Infantry Division, partol outside Tikrit's city hall, Iraq on 22 Dec, 2003.

INTERNET

New Chinese regional jet goes into production

SHANGHAI, 23 Dec— Production of an entirely Chinese-developed regional jet aircraft was launched Saturday in the cities of Shanghai, Shenyang, Chengdu and Xi'an around China.

The ARJ21 turboprop aircraft was designed to fly distances anywhere from 1,200 to 2,000 nautical miles at a cruising speed of 833 kilometres per hour in the country's western regions, but its speed can reach as high as 854 kilometres per hour at times.

It could carry 85 to 100 passengers across regions like the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Sichuan Basin and would be the largest aircraft of its type in China, said Tang Xiaoping, manager of Commercial Aircraft Co, Ltd of China Aviation Industry Corporation I (AVIC).

Its running costs were estimated at five to 10 per cent below similar aircraft, Tang said. — *MNA/Xinhua*

Steady eco growth urged to bridge China's income gap

SHANGHAI, 23 Dec— A leading economist has called for promoting steady economic growth to bridge China's widening income gap rather than unduly relying on the current social security system.

Fan Gang, director of a Beijing-based national economy research centre, said at the third economic annual conference Sunday that the government should focus on creating enough jobs for peasants pouring into cities.

"China's economy is not strong enough to endure a full-fledged social security system that is based on high expense," said Fan, noting a widening income gap is inevitable at the current stage when the agriculture-based Chinese economy faces globalization and the country is in the process of modernization.

He said Chinese peasants' income from agriculture had given way to manual work in cities as the major source for income increase, and enough jobs for them might be of great importance to narrow the income gap between the rich and poor and between the employed and unemployed.

More peasants in China prefer to undertake manual jobs in cities like washing cars, waiting table and serving as porters rather than working the fields back home.

MNA/Xinhua

India, Pakistan to resume Samjhauta Express

NEW DELHI, 23 Dec— Taking another step towards improving people-to-people contacts and enhancing trade ties, India and Pakistan on Friday decided to resume Samjhauta Express from Attari to Lahore twice a week as also freight services from January 15, after a gap of two years.

"Samjhauta Express and freight services will resume with effect from January 15, 2004 as per the earlier timetable. The fare structure will be announced shortly," a joint statement issued at the end of two days' extensive parleys between top railway officials of the two countries here said.

An Indian team of officials will be visiting Pakistan to work out the modalities relating to the fare structure, number and type of coaches as also discuss the feasibility of extending the service to Delhi.

The agreement to restore the services after a gap of two years was signed by S. B. Ghosh Dastidar, Additional Member (Traffic) in the Railway Board and Muhammad

Iqbal Khatri, Additional General Manager (passenger operations), Pakistan Railways.

The fares that existed before the service was suspended would be applicable till the fare structure was worked out, Dastidar and Khatri said at a joint Press conference here.

The existing agreement relating to rail communication between India and Pakistan valid till January 20, 2004, has been extended to a further period of three years till January 20, 2007, the statement said.

Dastidar, who led a four-member Indian team at the talks, said the decision would help enhance people-to-people contacts as also give a fillip to bilateral trade and commerce.

MNA/PTI

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Syria says terror charge a pretext to target Arabs

DAMASCUS, 23 Dec — Syria said at the start of regular regional talks with Egypt on Monday that the West was using the pretexts of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction to intervene in the domestic politics of Arab nations.

"These false pretexts and accusations are used to intervene in their internal affairs and infringe on their independence to serve Israel's interests," Syrian Prime Minister Naji al-Otari said at the start of regular talks with Egyptian counterpart Atef Obeid on trade and commerce.

Syria is under mounting US pressure over accusations that it supports anti-Israel "terror" groups and is developing chemical weapons. Damascus denies the charges.

Otari did not mention nearby oil-rich Libya, which said last week it was abandoning plans to build an atomic bomb and other banned weapons. Libya has long been on the official US list of sponsors of terrorism.

Instead, the Syrian Prime Minister accused Israel of stockpiling an arsenal of mass destruction which constituted "a threat to the region's security".

Egypt's Obeid said in remarks carried by the Syrian state media that his country was exerting efforts "to coordinate efforts in face of the vicious campaign against Arabs and Muslims, using the outcome of the September 11 (2001) incidents to label as terrorists Arabs and Muslims".

Otari reiterated that his country wants balanced relations with the United States based on dialogue and cooperation and that it seeks peace with the Jewish state that has occupied a strategic border area known as the Golan Heights since 1967.

The two officials voiced hope that Iraq will regain its sovereignty as soon as possible. Syria vehemently opposed the US-led war in Iraq raising tension with Washington that is mulling further sanctions against Damascus.

MNA/Reuters



A protester shouts a slogan during a rally to protest the government's decision to send South Korean troops to Iraq near the National Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, on Tuesday, 23 December, 2003.—*INTERNET*

CONTINUING RESISTANCE AGAINST US TROOPS



A US soldier watches the road during a daily patrol in Tikrit, Iraq, on Monday, 22 December, 2003. — INTERNET



A military helicopter flies over column of smoke near pipeline about 40 km (25 miles) north of the refining town of Baiji, or about 230 km (143 miles) northwest of Baghdad, on 22 December, 2003. — INTERNET



An arrested Iraqi man is seated handcuffed on the ground in front of a US armored vehicle while an Iraqi boy plays nearby in Baghdad. Two US soldiers and an Iraqi interpreter died as Russia signaled readiness to forgive much of Iraq's debt in exchange for favorable treatment of Russia's oil and other businesses. — INTERNET



An Iraqi man drags branches along a street to his home for heating and cooking fuel in Baghdad, on 20 December, 2003. —INTERNET



Iraqi police officers stand by a burning car in Baghdad, on Monday 22 December, 2003. — INTERNET



Iraqi children visit a wounded woman, who was shot while walking to work in the city of Najaf on 21 December, 2003. — INTERNET

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Independence was thus safeguarded

The Tatmadaw, after forming the Caretaker Government which would play a leadership role in carrying out the responsibilities of the State, exposed hidden weapons all over the country and seized them with the aim of enforcing the rule of law and stabilizing the country. The Tatmadaw also had to repulse the gangs of kidnappers and robbers in areas around Yangon and Suburban ar-

an evil legacy handed down by the British colonialists. It was on 21 April 1959 that Sawbwas and Sawphyas entered into a contract with the government announcing that they would renounce their rights enjoyed under the feudal system. In particular, the Caretaker Government successfully reached an agreement with the Chinese side on the long-drawn-out negotiation concerning the delineation

got demoralized on account of the diversity of ideology among themselves and loss of confidence in the armed struggles. In consequence of it, a total of 3,618 insurgents surrendered. And there were 2,201 sorts of arms seized in the battles and 2,466 sorts of arms handed over by the insurgents who surrendered. These are historical evidences standing witness to the military, political and organi-

and ensuing unrest, posing an enormous political issue to the Pa-hta-sa government.

More problems surfaced as there occurred power struggles between the two factions — the U-Bo group and Thakin group — inside the Pa-hta-sa. The functions of the government were marred by the factional conflicts of the ruling party. As it was busy trying to solve the inner-party

that the votes which came from the genuine wish of the people became worthless. The general hardships of the Pa-hta-sa had led to deteriorating peace

conference of the leaders of the regions on the hills and the plains as a means to appease them on 24 February 1962. Meanwhile, some leaders of a certain

Ketu Nila

and stability of the State, community peace, and the rule of law restored by the Caretaker Government. Moreover the BCP which would return to the legal fold after holding negotiations with the government changed its demands and attitude, taking advantage of the government's weakness and hardships. It even demanded the integration of the BCP troops into the Tatmadaw. The insurgents were blowing up passenger trains and attacking small towns in the nation, with the internal conflict spreading in the whole nation. In that situation, some political

state were secretly hatching a plot to break away from the Union and to join the SEATO whether or not the State permitted the federal policy. The vice-chairman of the AFPFL (Stable) presented a letter disclosing the scheme to the then prime minister of the State on 28 February.

The federal policy was heading towards disintegration of the Union. It had become a critical issue for the nation.

Resulting from the weakness of the Pa-hta-sa government in leading the nation, the danger of the Union disintegration and the loss of independence was looming large. As the duty to save the nation from those dangers was the national task, the Tatmadaw, a national force, took over the State duties on 2 March 1962.

In other words, the Tatmadaw saved the nation for the third time from losing her independence and sovereignty.

(Translation:
KTY+TMT)



Through negotiations between the governments of Myanmar and China, the Caretaker government signed a treaty on border demarcation with China. Myanmar Tatmadawmen seen trying to demarcate borderline between Myanmar and China.

eas. In the time of the AFPFL Government, pocket armies set up by respective groups were abolished. As a matter of fact, no right was granted to any groups to form armies, save the Tatmadaw formed with the approval of the Parliament.

Therefore, the Caretaker Government abolished illegal pocket armies as well as departmental armed groups, organizing some into the Tatmadaw and others into the military police force. Besides these measures, the Tatmadaw established new satellite towns such as South Okkalapa, North Okkalapa and Thaketa after removing slums in Yangon City to make the city possess characteristics of a city and to keep it free from the outbreaks of fire and crimes.

Moreover, the Caretaker Government took measures to get rid of the feudal system of Sawbwas and Sawphyas,

of the Myanmar-China borderline after coordinations between the two governments.

The Caretaker Government could carry out tasks for reconstruction of the nation, enforcement of the rule of law, and prevalence of peace and stability, and at the same time had launched military operations to put an end to internal conflicts.

During those military operations, there were 368 major battles and 2,743 skirmishes in which the Tatmadaw engaged with the enemies. Altogether 314 members of the Tatmadaw including officers and other ranks sacrificed their lives and 453 were wounded. A total of 1,872 enemies including nationalist Chinese, BCP, Red Flag, and other armed insurgents were killed, 1,959 injured, and 1,238 arrested. With the victories won in the military operations launched by the Tatmadaw, the insurgents

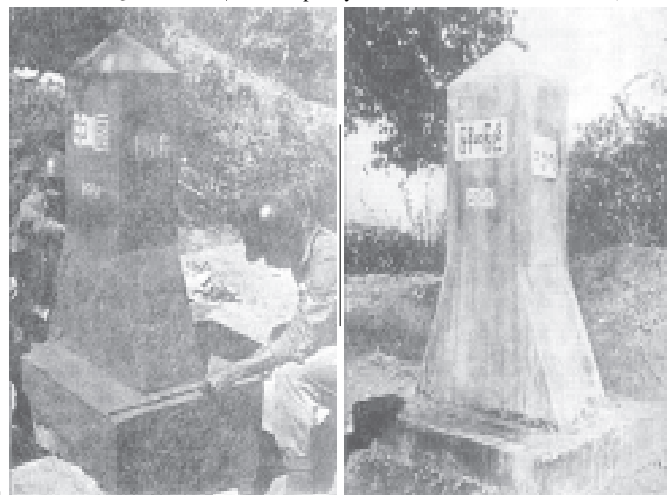
sational efforts the Tatmadaw had made to end the internal strife.

The Caretaker Government could thus solve the problem of the internal conflicts during its 14-month period and also could bring to the country prevalence of peace and tranquillity and stability and enforcement of law and order successfully to a certain degree. Later on, the Caretaker Government managed to hold successfully free and fair elections for the chamber of Deputies on 6 February 1960 and chamber of Nationalities elections on 29 February. In the wake of the holding of elections, State Power was returned to the AFPFL (Clean) (Pa-hta-sa), winner of the elections, on 4 April 1960. Unfortunately, election pledges made by the Pa-hta-sa government turned out to be the driving of wedge among national races and occurrence of racial issues

conflicts, the Pa-hta-sa government was not able to keep its election promises such as internal peace, community peace and tranquillity, the rule of law, the economy and the food, clothing and shelter of the people, and development undertakings. Thus, the people lost confidence in the Pa-hta-sa. The newspapers began to criticize the government

parties made secret contacts with the SEATO, under the influence of a powerful western group, raising the issue of the federal policy to break away from the Union and to join the SEATO. They tried to blackmail the Pa-hta-sa to realize their demands.

But the Pa-hta-sa did not dare to decisively solve the problem of the federal policy. It held a



Tatmadawmen erected border post, the proof of friendship between Myanmar and China.

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Endeavours to safeguard independence



People encouraged Myanmar Tatmadawmen who were on a march to quell the internal insurgency at Kokkai, Yangon, in January, 1956.



People in Kyaiklat of delta region welcoming Myanmar Tatmadawmen who were going to defeat the internal insurgency in January 1956.



Myanmar Tatmadawmen seen undergoing military training at the Central Military Training School in Mingaladon in 1951.

Resulting from the weakness of the Pa-hta-sa government in leading the nation, the danger of the Union disintegration and the loss of independence was looming large. As the duty to save the nation from those dangers was the national task, the Tatmadaw, a national force, took over the State duties on 2 March 1962.

In other words, the Tatmadaw saved the nation for the third time from losing her independence and sovereignty.



Myanmar Tatmadawmen seen after the capture of a camp of the insurgents in 1956.



Myanmar Tatmadawmen seen on a march during the Operation Min Yan Aung which was designed to quell the internal insurgency from 1 May 1957 to 31 May 1958.

Senior General Than Shwe inspects...

(from page 1)

Only when the qualifications of the teachers and standard of the curriculum are high, will students at the university become well-versed in their respective subjects.

Hence, the university will

eral Than Shwe then gave guidance.

For the entire people to be healthy and fit and be able to live with high life expectancy is the health objectives of the State. The Ministry of Health is making efforts for realization of these objec-

proper ratio between the population and health personnel.

As the State has been fulfilling the requirements, the doctors also should give effective health care services with their qualification and skill.

and the growth rate of per capita income of Aungmyethazan Township.

In connection with the reports, the Senior General gave guidance, saying that whenever he made a tour of Mandalay, he dropped into the industrial zone and looked into the improvement on the quality of goods, boosting



Senior General Than Shwe pays reverence to the Maha Myat Muni Buddha Image. — MNA

be perfect in form and essence, he said.

The government will fulfil requirements in accord with the status of the university, he added.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected scale model of the university and construction of the university.

Senior General Than Shwe and party went to the Mandalay General Hospital and inspected lithotripter and modern X-ray machines.

Senior General Than Shwe met heads of departments, medical superintendents, professors, physicians, specialists and sisters.

Minister Dr Kyaw Myint reported on health care services after opening of hospitals and health care centres in Mandalay Division, installation of modern equipment in Mandalay General Hospital like the one in Yangon, diagnosis and treatment, health education and ratio of doctor and population.

Next, Director-General of Health Department Dr Wan Maung reported on upgrading of treatment and teaching at the MGH. Senior Gen-

tives. In the process, effective measures are to be taken through the three tasks—education, disease control and treatment, he noted.

The government is reforming the old organizational set-up of the Ministry of Health that was formed to provide health care services when the population of the nation was over 12 million, he said.

Now there are over 53 million of population in the country. It is not possible for the people to rely on the hospitals in Yangon only.

Therefore, he said, specialist hospitals like the ones in Yangon were opened in Mandalay for the people in upper Myanmar.

At the same time, hospitals were upgraded, specialists were appointed and modern equipment was installed in 24 development regions for national development.

Health care services have become wider and effective, he said.

At the same time, the government is producing necessary scholars after opening more institutes and schools on health in order to keep a

Brilliant and healthy human resources are required for long-term national development. In this regard, the State has been giving priority to the health and qualification of the human resources. The health staff will have to strive to save the lives, to keep people free from diseases and to enable them enjoy a longer life, using experience and qualification as an effective tool.

The Senior General then cordially greeted the medical superintendents, medical professors, specialist surgeons, doctors and nurses.

The Senior General and party held a meeting with members of development committees of Mandalay Industrial Zone 1 and 2 and officials at Kanaung Hall later in the morning.

On the occasion, Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint reported on realization of the guidance given by the Senior General during his inspection tour of Mandalay Industrial Zone the previous December, manufacturing of import-substitute products, use of modern machines, manufacturing conditions



Senior General Than Shwe and party offer gold foils to the Maha Myat Muni Buddha Image. — MNA



Senior General Than Shwe makes cash donations to the fund of the Maha Myat Muni Buddha Image. — MNA



Senior General Than Shwe inspects Mandalay General Hospital. — MNA

production and manufacturing processes.

According to these inspections, the industrial zone is developing cumulatively, and it is important for the industrial zone to accelerate the development growth year by year.

The world is gaining a rapid development thanks to the science so industrial zones are to exert efforts to make greater progress.

In the process, emphasis is to be placed on extending

manufacturing of new items as well as boosting production in accordance with the requirement of the State.

In manufacturing the products, endeavours are to be made to boost production of import-substitute items by putting less reliance on the imported items using locally-made machines.

With the use of modern machines and the application of modern production methods, it is needed to lay

down the target to place no reliance on imported machines.

As Myanmar is an agro-based nation, it is important to establish industries that produce farm machinery.

Moreover, it is also needed to establish more industries that produce personal goods and machinery so as to ensure increased manufacturing of quality products.

(See page 9)

Senior General Than Shwe inspects...

(from page 8)

Only then, will Myanmar can transform itself into an industrialized nation and the people's living standard improve and will there emerge a modern developed nation.

The Senior General and party viewed finished wooden products, textiles, household items, bicycle tyres and tubes and machines round Kanaung Hall.

Senior General Than Shwe and party headed for Mandala power tiller factory of Good Brother's Machineries Co Ltd in the industrial zone 1, where Director of the company U Maung Aye conducted them round the production site.

The Senior General and party viewed the power tillers and vehicles used for agricultural purpose.

Next, the Senior General and party looked into Myitnge-Htonbo-PyinOoLwin shortcut and Mandalay-PyinOoLwin road and progress of Mandalay by car.

On 21 December evening, the Senior General and party visited Maha Myat Muni Buddha Image and offered gold foils to it.

The Senior General signed in the visitors' book and made cash donations to the image. They viewed documentary photos of the image and Ganthakuti



Senior General Than Shwe hears a report presented by Minister Maj-Gen Saw Tun on progress in implementation of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) Construction Project. — MNA

Kyaungdawgyi.

Senior General Than Shwe and party yesterday morning inspected Mandalay Kandawgyi and the eight-lane strand road.

Next, they proceeded to the construction project site of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon).

At the briefing hall, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun reported on construction of the bridge and progress of work.

Next, Deputy Superintending Engineer U Hsan Win reported on installation of steel beams.

In response to the reports, Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance.

Afterwards, Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected construction of the bridge.

Construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) to link Mandalay and Sagaing started

on 30-10-2001. The four-lane bridge will be 5,614 feet long and 49 feet wide.

Out of 36 piles to be placed for the main bridge and approach structures on either side, 15 piles have already been placed. Another 17 piles are being placed and there are only four piles left to be placed.

After inspecting the bridge, Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected progress in construction of the entrance to Mandalay International Airport and construction of Panhsa Creek Bridge in TadaU Township by car.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe and party left Mandalay International Airport by Tatmadaw aircraft and arrived back here in the evening.

Chairman of the Central Organizing Committee of Myanmar War Veterans Organization Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, who

accompanied Senior General Than Shwe, on 21 December morning attended the opening of the Tagun Wood Based factory, a joint venture undertaking of Myanmar War Veterans Organization (Headquarters) and Flying Tiger Engineering Co and unveiled the signboard of the factory.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, members of the Central Organizing Committee for Myanmar War Veterans Organization ministers, departmental officials of Sagaing Division, the WVO members and guests.

Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye, member of the Central Organizing Committee for Myanmar War Veterans Organization

Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung and Managing Director U Naw Aung of the Tagun Wood Based Industrial Co Ltd formally opened the factory.

Next, Chairman of the Central Organizing Committee of Myanmar War Veterans Organization Secretary-

2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein unveiled the signboard of the factory and inspected round the factory.

Next, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein met with officials and staff of the factory and gave necessary instructions.

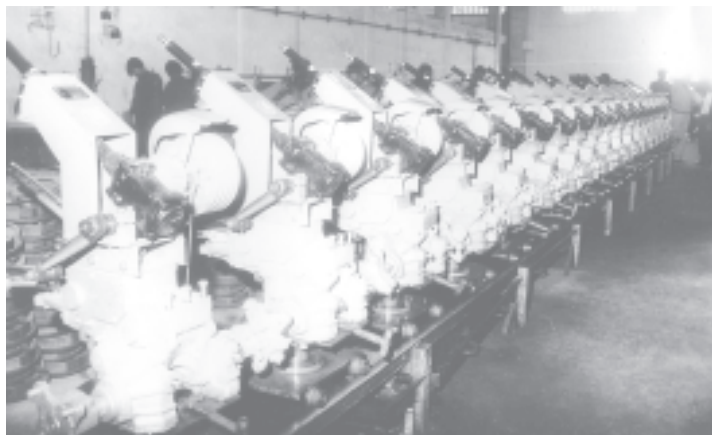
MNA

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ACWF delegation arrives

YANGON, 23 Dec — At the invitation of President of the Myanmar National Women's Affairs Federation Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, a four-member delegation led by Vice-President of the All-China Women's Federation (ACWF) Madame Chen Xiurong arrived here by air this evening.

The delegation was welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Vice-President of MNWAF Prof Dr Daw May May Yi, Secretary General Prof Dr Daw Khin Aye Win, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Myanmar Mr Li Jinjun and officials. — MNA



Senior General Than Shwe inspects Mandala power tiller factory of the Industrial Zone 1. — MNA



Senior General Than Shwe inspects work progress at Traditional Medicine University Construction Project site. — MNA

Thailand to set up institution to help victims of family violence

BANGKOK, 23 Dec— Thailand would open a centre next month to help victims of family violence, local Press reported on Monday.

The center would provide medical treatment and legal counselling to victims, mainly women, assaulted by their spouses, partners or relatives.

"From now on they will no longer have to grin and bear it. They can come and seek help from us anytime they want," *Bangkok Post* quoted the hospital's deputy director Ronnachai Kongsakon as saying.

He noted that domestic violence had been a silent problem for a long time and

hardly received attention from the public and state.

However, the topic of family violence has drawn more public interests recently in Thailand since a respected Thai doctor was convicted in November for killing and dismembering his estranged wife in 2001. The convict's cold-blooded actions against his wife roused the public's sympathy for the deceased woman and concern over the situation of Thailand's family violence.

The other doctor from a university cited United Nations' report saying Thailand was ranked among world's 10 worst countries for its bad record of domestic violence.

The ranking was based on the number of complaints received by the police and cases dealt with by the court, said the doctor named as Yongyuth Wongpiromsarn, adding that he wanted to raise public concern over the issue by declaring the content of the report.

Some 20 to 50 per cent of married women in Thailand were physically and verbally assaulted by their partners, according to a study by the Mahidol University of Thailand. — *MNA/Xinhua*



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents a gift to an outstanding athlete who gained gold medal in the XXII SEA Games on 22-12-2003. (News reported) — MNA



Secretary-1 Li-Gen Soe Win presents a gift to an outstanding athlete who won gold medal in the XXII SEA Games held in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, on 22-12-2003. (News reported) — MNA



Secretary-2 Li-Gen Thein Sein presents a gift to an outstanding athlete who won gold medal in the XXII SEA Games held in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, on 22-12-2003. (News reported) — MNA

Parmalat scandal widens as founder named in probe

ROME, 23 Dec— A four billion euro accounting scandal at Parmalat deepened on Monday when the Italian food group's founder and three former finance directors were targeted in a criminal probe.

As prosecutors sought to unravel a complex web of financial transactions that have led Parmalat to be called Europe's Enron, a rescue management team was weighing up the best option for bankruptcy protection.

Parmalat exploded into one of Europe's worst corporate crises last week when the firm said a document showing 3.95 billion euros held by a Cayman Islands unit, Bonlat Financing Corp, had been declared false by Bank of America.

Prosecutors launched a fraud probe, and on Monday named in their investigation

Parmalat's founder Calisto Tanzi, who resigned last week as chairman and CEO of Italy's biggest food group, a judicial source said.

Also targeted in the probe into possible false accounting, fraud and market rigging were former chief financial officers Fausto Tonna, Alberto Ferraris and Luciano Del Soldato, all of whom held the post during 2003, other judicial sources said.

Ferraris and Del Soldato were questioned on Monday. They admitted providing false information but said the plan had been thought up by

Tanzi and Tonna, one of the sources told *Reuters*.

Parmalat has 35,000 staff in 30 countries and is one of Italy's best-known brands and its eighth-largest industrial group.

The missing four billion euros dwarfs a one billion euro accounting scandal at Dutch retailer Ahold and drew comparisons with the collapse of energy giant Enron. Media reports said the hole could be as big as 10 billion euros, making it one of Europe's biggest accounting scandals.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi vowed on Saturday his government would save operations and jobs at Parmalat.

On Monday, Parmalat's newly appointed Chairman and CEO Enrico Bondi met Industry Minister Antonio Marzano. The minister may be required to name administrators for Parmalat.

A statement from Berlusconi's office after the meeting suggested that his Cabinet could approve on Tuesday a decree dealing with the Parmalat crisis.

MNA/Reuters

Japan, South Korea launch FTA talks

TOKYO, 23 Dec— Japan and South Korea began Monday their first round of government-level negotiations to conclude a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA).

About 70 officials from various ministries of the two countries, such as finance, economy, commerce, agriculture and energy, are attending the closed-door talks at the Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry in Seoul, Japan's *Kyodo News* reported. Deputy Minister for Trade Kim Hyun-Jong heads the South Korean team, while the Japanese mission is led by Ichiro Fujisaki, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs. In the first stage, the officials — about 40 from

South Korea and 30 from Japan — are expected to fine-tune the composition of the negotiation groups, the timetable for future negotiations, and basic guidelines for a free trade pact, *Kyodo* said.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun agreed in Bangkok in October to launch formal talks by the end of this year on a bilateral FTA, which would

be concluded in 2005. Japan has an FTA with Singapore, a nonagricultural nation. Tokyo has also agreed to start FTA negotiations with Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand next year. In addition, the Japanese Government is preparing to start FTA talks with the 10-member Association of South-East Asian Nations as a whole in early 2005 so as to create a regional FTA in 2012. — *MNA/Xinhua*

Trade between Zhuhai, Macao rising

ZHUHAI, 23 Dec— A 15.8-per-cent annual growth was reported in trade between Macao and Zhuhai when people celebrated the fourth anniversary of Macao's return to China.

Zhuhai is the nearest city to Macao on the Chinese Mainland.

Trade between the two cities was 230 million US dollars in 1999, but shot to 310 million US dollars in 2002.

In the first 11 months of the year, according to Zhuhai Customs statistics, the trade volume climbed to 350 million US dollars, an increase of 24.9 per cent from the same period last year, with Zhuhai's imports up 5 per cent to 48.86 million US dollars. Garments, machine and electronic products comprised most of the goods shipped to Macao, while Zhuhai imported textile raw materials and garments.

Zhuhai under jurisdiction of Guangdong Province is also one of the country's five special economic zones.

MNA/Xinhua

Texmaco to sell 200 buses to Saudi Arabia

JAKARTA, 23 Dec— Indonesia's auto and engineering company Texmaco Group has secured a 4.6-million-US-dollar order for the delivery of 200 buses to Saudi Arabia-based Al Jomaih Holding Co, a leading economic daily reported Monday.

Produced by Texmaco's subsidiary PT Wahana Perkasa Auto Jaya (WPAJ), all the buses will be delivered in stage until March 2004 at the latest, reported *Bisnis Indonesia* newspaper. "Prior to the latest order, WPAJ also has exported 100 buses worth 2.3 million US dollars to the country," WPAJ president Ben Sinivasan was quoted as saying.

Saudi reportedly needs 5,000 new buses to transport millions of worldwide Muslim pilgrims flooding the country for a religious journey every year.

Sinivasan claimed that Texmaco Group also has secured order from Malaysia for 500 buses and trucks and auto parts for the Greek Army's military vehicles. — *MNA/Xinhua*

Water shortage in Tanzanian capital to last until next year

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 23 Dec— Water shortage will continue in Dar-es-Salaam, capital of Tanzania, until major rehabilitation of the supply network finishes next year, local newspaper *The Guardian* reported on Monday. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of City Water Services Limited Mike O'Leary was quoted as saying on Sunday that the weeklong water crisis in Dar-es-Salaam was caused by weakness in pipes due to corrosion.

The company intends to replace all old pipes in six months with a total cost of about 1.2 million US dollars and the work will begin in January next year, O'Leary said.

Water rationing will be carried out in the capital. Every part in the city may have water two or three days from morning to evening in a week, the CEO said.

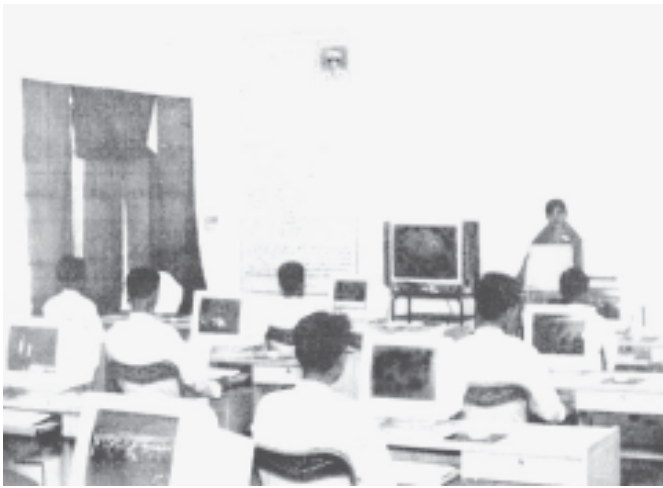
The CEO urged local people not to wash vehicles and water gardens.

The city has been suffering a water crisis since two major water pipes in Dar-es-Salaam were broken last week.

MNA/Xinhua

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Progress in basic and higher education sector of national races in border areas in the time of the State Peace and Development Council



Lectures being given at the learning centre of skill development degree college for nationalities in Mandalay.



Trainees living in border areas learn vocational education at the cottage industrial training school in Lashio, Shan State (North).

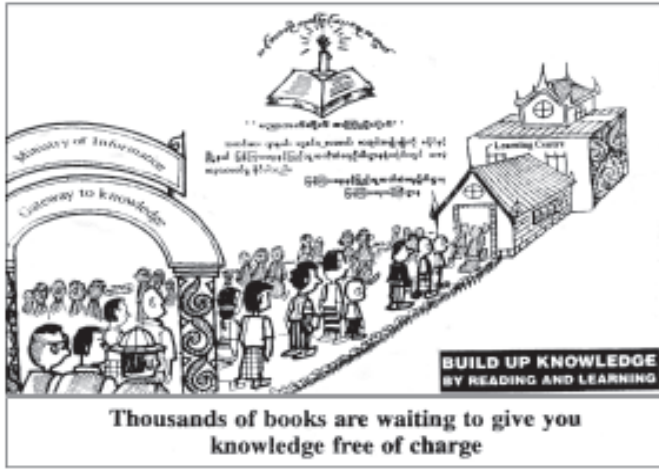
Education campaigns launched in border areas from 1988 to 2003 for development of local national races

Subject	1988	2003
Youth development training schools	—	16
Cottage industrial training schools	—	13
Higher education		
Skill development degree colleges for nationalities	—	2
Basic education		
Basic education schools	—	750
Teachers	—	2,812
Students	—	88,277
Vocational training schools and workshops	—	3
Parahita schools	—	11

The basic education high school in Myawady, constructed by the State to enable youth nationalities residing in border areas of Kayin State to have access to basic education.



The youth development training school in Kengtung, Shan State (East) is built for the development of nationalities in border areas.



NEWS OF THE WORLD

Malaysian PM urges youths to take up technical subjects

KUALA LUMPUR, 23 Dec—Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Monday urged the youths to take up technical subjects as technology and technical skills were much needed in the country.

It was clear that the technical field had vast potential for growth and offered much opportunity for quality employment for Malaysian youths, Abdullah said when officially opened the Japan-Malaysia Technical Institute in Pinang, north Malaysia.

The founding of the institute is one of manpower training cooperation programmes between Malaysia and Japan.

"However, this field may not be popular among youths in this country compared to the other disciplines because

if given the option, they will still be attracted to courses in the arts and humanities even though job opportunities in these fields are limited and more competitive," he said.

Abdullah said he believed that youths were less interested in technical courses because of the public perception that such courses were for those who were less successful in the academic field.

The Prime Minister said the government's objective of achieving a knowledge-based economy called for the development of industries

based on knowledge such as science, bio-technology, information and communication technology (ICT) as well as on research and development activities.

"In line with this trend, the demand for manpower has also shifted towards highly educated workers who are skilled in the field of science and technology, as well as having technical skills," he said.

He said close links between technical institutes and the industry were crucial to ensure that the courses and training provided were always relevant and of high quality.—MNA/Xinhua

Thailand's BOI predicts Investment trends bright for 2004

BANGKOK, 23 Dec—The Board of Investment of Thailand (BOI) is confident that investment trends for next year look promising, with a large-scale hiring of new employees in the automobile and petrochemical industries, and the construction of new production plants.

BOI official, Yuthasak Khunasawat, predicted that while in recent years most changes had been in the form of adjustments to the production line to boost production, this year is likely to see the construction of new factories and the establishment of new production lines, the *Thai News Agency* reported on Monday.

The appreciation of the baht was likely to have a major impact on some industries, particularly those with low added value, he said.

In addition, agreements to open up free trade areas (FTAs) with a number of other countries could throw some industries into crisis, while opening up opportunities for others, he projected.

He said that industries which had performed well in 2003 were automobiles, food, electronics, gemstones and construction materials, while the fabric industry had

faced a quieter time due to fierce competition from China.

Citing figures showing that use of industrial production capacity had grown from 62 per cent in September 2002 to 68.4 per cent in September 2003, he said that this boded well for the future, particularly in the petroleum, artificial fibre, tyre, paper pulp, corrugated iron and sheet steel industries, in which industrial production capacity usage now stood at over 80 per cent.

He also showed figures for the end of the third quarter of 2003, showing that investment promotion concessions had been granted to 471 projects worth 4.025 billion US dollars and 98,128 new jobs.

The automobile industry had seen the bulk of this investment, followed by the chemical industry, plastics, electronics and electrical goods and agro-industry.

MNA/Xinhua

Small quake jolts central North Island of New Zealand

WELLINGTON, 23 Dec—A small earthquake hit central North Island of New Zealand Monday morning measuring 5.2 on the Richter Scale, New Zealand's Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (IGNS) announced Monday.

Dr Ken Gledhill from the IGNS said in an announcement that the quake, which occurred at 6:22 a.m. about 30 kilometres north-west of the Central Plateau town of Raetihi, was 150 kilometres deep and unlikely to have caused any damage. "I don't expect it would have been felt very much," he said.

That quake and other smaller ripples were the result of the Pacific plate being "pushed under" the Australian plate, which was part of a "very long-term" event, Gledhill said.

More interesting to seismologists was a smaller quake in Northland on Thursday, he said.—MNA/Xinhua



Heavy snowfall and a brisk wind hampers christmas shoppers in Helsinki. Snow blizzards wreaked havoc in Denmark, Finland and Sweden, leaving at least two dead, 100,000 households without power and causing major delays in air, road and rail traffic.—INTERNET

မြန်မာ့ပြန်လည်အားပေးပါ

Indonesia needs \$72b in infrastructure investment

JAKARTA, 23 Dec—The Indonesian Government will need much more assistance from the private sector to help finance the development of the country's sub-standard infrastructure, which is seen as crucial to boosting economic growth, an agency has said.

The Committee on Policy for the Acceleration of Infrastructure Development (KKPPI) predicted that Indonesia would require tens of billions of dollars to build key facilities over the next six years.

"Indonesia will need around 613 trillion rupiah (72 billion US dollars) in infrastructure investment between 2005 and 2009," Bambang Susantono, the KKPPI secretariat chairman, was quoted Monday by *The Jakarta Post* as saying.

"The government will incur a 31.34-billion-dollar financing gap even if macroeconomic conditions improve and debts are better managed," he added.

Bambang expressed the need for the government to raise infrastructure management standards in order to better maintain and improve existing facilities. Management reform and new financing schemes are crucial in attracting the private sector to back a host of projects stalled since the late 1990s economic crisis.

MNA/Xinhua



US singer Britney Spears performs at a Christmas event in Tokyo, on 14 December, 2003. Spears was in Tokyo to promote her new album 'In the Zone'. —INTERNET

World Heritage Yungang Grottoes site to be upgraded

TAIYUAN, 23 Dec—North China's Shanxi Province is investing 100 million yuan (12.09 million US dollars) to improve infrastructure and environment around the Yungang Grottoes, built more than 1,500 years ago.

The Yungang Grottoes were included in the World Heritage List in 2001.

The improvement project consists of three phases: construction and improvement

of infrastructure; demolition and removal of unsightly buildings from scenic areas; and tree-planting at the scenic site.

The Yungang Grottoes, 16 kilometres west of the city of Datong, were hewn from the cliffs in a honeycomb pattern and stretch for a kilometre from east to west.

Building of the grottoes began around 460 AD in the Northern Wei Dynasty. Within four decades, 1,000 grottoes and 100,000 Buddhist statues were completed together with large numbers of niches and colourful decorations.

The infrastructure construction and improvement project will cover the building of a water purification plant with a capacity of 300 tons of drinking water daily, a sewage treatment plant with a daily capacity of 1,400 tons and power, water and heating supply facilities.

The project is expected to be completed at the end of July next year, a source with the grottoes administration said.

The Yungang Grottoes have been extensively damaged over the centuries. At least 1,400 Buddhist statues were stolen and shipped out of the country.

MNA/Xinhua

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Putin anticipates Russian participation in rebuilding Iraq

Moscow, 23 Dec—Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday expressed the desire that his country may attend reconstruction in the postwar Iraq, pledging a huge investment from Russian companies in the near future.

Putin made the statement while meeting in the Kremlin with Abdel Aziz Al-Hakim, head of the Iraqi Interim Governing Council, noting that "Russian companies are ready to be active in Iraq", the *Interfax* news agency reported.

The President estimated that "investment from Russian companies may soon total four billion US dollars".

Moscow, which has had historically good relations with Baghdad, expects to

maintain such ties with the new Iraqi authorities on the basis of developing relations with the Iraqi people, Putin told the Iraqi official, whose delegation arrived here Sunday night. "We wish the people of Iraq the soonest possible solution of their problems, as we know how hard

life is for the Iraqi people now," Putin noted, expressing his belief that Iraq's current difficulties will soon be resolved.

Talks between the Iraqi delegation and Russian leaders are expected to cover the issues of postwar settlement in Iraq, the prospects of the

participation of Russian companies in the economic reconstruction of the war-torn nation, and the Iraqi debt payments.

Among the 120-billion-dollar foreign debt, Iraq owes Russia some eight billion US dollars.

MNA/Xinhua



Iraqi workers end their shift at a reconstruction site in downtown Baghdad, on 21 December, 2003. — INTERNET

Egypt says no information about hosting next Arab summit

CAIRO, 23 Dec—Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher said on Sunday that his country has no information about hosting the next summit of the Arab League.

"No one has contacted us about this issue," Maher said, quoted by the official MENA news agency.

According to what has been agreed upon, the summit is supposed to be held in the Tunisian capital of Tunis, he said.

An Arab newspaper quoted Arab diplomatic sources in Washington as saying on Saturday that there was a trend that the next Arab summit would be held in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, instead of Tunis.

MNA/Xinhua

Hebei Province intensifies forest planting efforts

SHIJIAZHUANG, 23 Dec—North China's Hebei Province, located around the national capital Beijing, plans to invest more than 15 billion yuan (1.8 billion US dollars) in tree planting in the coming several years.

According to the provincial forestry bureau, forest area is expected to reach 4.33 million hectares by 2005, with the forest coverage rate hitting 23 per cent.

By 2010, the province will have 4.93 million hectares of forest and the forest cover rate will reach 26 per cent.

Currently, 19.48 per cent of the province is covered with trees, and 63,000 square kilometres, or 30 per cent of its total land space, is suffering from soil erosion. The province also has 27,200 square kilometres of desert, accounting for 14.4 per cent of its total land area.

MNA/Xinhua

US judge blocks forced military anthrax shots

WASHINGTON, 23 Dec—A federal judge ruled on Monday that the US military cannot force troops to be vaccinated against anthrax against their will without a special order from US President George W Bush.

US District Judge Emmet Sullivan issued an order barring the forced vaccinations, agreeing with six service members and contractors who filed suit arguing the practice violated federal laws.

"Absent an informed consent or presidential waiver, the United States cannot demand that members of the Armed Forces also serve as guinea pigs for experimental drugs," Sullivan wrote in a 33-page opinion.

The Pentagon declined comment. Justice Department spokesman Charles Miller said: "All we're saying is that we're reviewing (the judge's order) at this stage and no determination has been made as to what our next step will be."

In his ruling, the judge rejected the Defence Department's argument that the refusal of Armed Forces personnel to be vaccinated undermined US military readiness and hampered its ability to protect troops if biological weapons were used in battle.

The judge said he was "not convinced that requir-

ing the (Defence Department) to obtain informed consent will interfere with the smooth functioning of the military."

At issue is a law passed by Congress in 1998 that bars the military from giving troops experimental, or "investigational," drugs without their consent.

In an executive order the following year, President Bill Clinton required the Pentagon to get permission from individual service members before giving them an experimental drug.

Waivers of the consent requirement can be granted only by the President, and only "when absolutely necessary," Sullivan said in his ruling.

Mark Zaid, an attorney representing the six plaintiffs, said hundreds of troops had been disciplined for refusing to take the anthrax shots since the Pentagon began its mass vaccination programme in 1998.

Anthrax is a deadly bacterial disease. Airborne anthrax spores are inhaled and lodge in the lungs, then multiply and produce toxins that spread through the body. —MNA/Reuters

Iran calls for fight against terrorism, unilateralism

TEHRAN, 23 Dec — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami Sunday called for campaign against terrorism and unilateralism at the international level.

In a meeting with his visiting Kyrgyz counterpart Askar Akayev, Khatami said the two countries share similar stance on development and progress as well as fight against terrorism and establishment of security and stability in the world.

Khatami stressed the importance of efforts to establish stability and security in the region, and strengthen economic, scientific and technical ties among the regional states.

Referring to the establishment of a popular government in Iraq, Khatami said it would be a step towards the interests of the Iraqi nation and even the occupiers.

"We should all try to establish stability in Iraq and allow the Iraqis to decide their own fate. Tehran is ready to cooperate with the global community in this regard," the President said. — MNA/Xinhua

Oil price falls after nine-month highs

LONDON, 23 Dec—Oil prices tumbled further from nine-month highs on Monday as OPEC's incoming president voiced concerns over sustained high prices.

Traders were also prompted to lock in profits from this month's over 10 per cent rally by forecasts of a warmer week approaching for the US Northeast, the world's biggest single heating oil consuming region.

By midday in London, benchmark Brent blend was down 41 cents at 29.64 US dollars a barrel, extending Friday's 75-cent fall. In overnight New York trade, US crude futures were down 39 cents at 32.63 US dollars a barrel, sliding away from Friday's post-Iraq high of 33.93 US dollars a barrel.

Activity was limited by the approaching holidays, which brokers said was also encouraging some speculative dealers to lock in profits gained on the 10 per cent or three US dollars rally from the start of December.

"There's a bit of momentum carrying on from Friday's close. The uptrend has been broken so there's al-

most certainly some profit-taking contributing to slightly weaker prices," said oil markets analyst Kevin Norrish of Barclays Capital.

Forecasts for milder weather in the northeast United States over the coming days was also expected to soften demand for heating fuel, but traders remained cautious on the level of winter oil stocks cover for the world's biggest energy consumer.

OPEC's incoming president added to the more bearish tone by expressing concern over high prices, echoing outgoing president Abdullah al-Attiyah's comments last week.

"Currently the oil prices is too high, especially the OPEC basket. We hope the oil price will fall in January."

However, the price developments will depend on the weather and also depend on developments in Iraq," Indonesian Oil Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro, due to take office on January 1, told *Reuters* on Monday.

"I will see developments through early January. If oil prices stay high, I will consult other OPEC ministers to discuss the price development."

Cartel kingpin Saudi Arabia and other members have said that prices above the group's 22-28-US-dollar price band were "right" due to the US dollar's weakness relative to other currencies.

"This is perhaps a sign that OPEC is looking at prices with a bit of concern," Norrish said of Yusgiantoro's comments.

MNA/Reuters



Rescue workers examine the earthquake destruction of a jewellery store in Paso Robles, approximately 180 miles north of Los Angeles, on 22 December, 2003. Two people were killed and 46 were injured in the area after the earthquake hit the small town. First reports said three people were killed but officials said that two women, aged 55 and 19, were killed when the town's landmark 19th Century checktower building collapsed, spewing tons of debris into the street below. —INTERNET

SPORTS

Anderlecht well clear ahead of winter break

BRUSSELS, 23 Dec—Anderlecht won 4-1 at La Louviere on Sunday to take an eight-point lead into the Belgian league's First Division four-week winter break.

The leaders are on 46 points with Standard Liege, 2-1 winners over Germinal Beerschot, on 38, seven clear of third-placed Genk.

The league resumes on January 17 but fans may not witness a more unusual goal than the one at Mons-Bergen on Saturday when the home side drew 2-2 with fellow strugglers Charleroi.

Bertrand Laquait, in goal for Charleroi, scored after two minutes when the wind caught his clearance and bounced once over the head of opposing keeper Kris van de Putte and into the net.

Remarkably, it was the second time in his career Laquait, who used to play in his native France, had scored such a goal.

He said: "It was four or five years ago with the reserve team of Nancy in a game in Calais... where the wind was also blowing hard. It's just a pity that my goal was not enough for Charleroi to win."

Charleroi remain bottom on 11 points from 17 games.

On Sunday, Standard Liege keeper Fabian Carini also scored but his goal came from the penalty spot in the victory over Beerschot.—MNA/Reuters

AC Milan lose unbeaten record

ROME, 23 Dec—AC Milan, who had not been beaten in Serie A this season, slumped to a 2-1 home defeat to in-form Udinese on Sunday.

Fellow big guns Juventus were held 1-1 at lowly Lecce which meant leaders AS Roma, 2-0 winners at Empoli on Saturday, stayed top on 36 points with a healthy six-point advantage.

Later on Sunday Inter Milan can leapfrog Juve and Milan into second by beating Lazio in Rome.

Udinese arrived at the San Siro stadium on the back of three consecutive league wins and dented Milan's hopes in the second minute when striker Dino Fava fired past Brazilian keeper Dida from the edge of the area.

A clumsy challenge by Udinese keeper Morgan De Sanctis on Brazilian midfielder Serginho earned the home side a penalty, but midfielder Andrea Pirlo's usual composure deserted him and he pushed the ball against the post.

Udinese made it 2-0 six minutes after the interval when defender Nestor Sensini nodded Valerio Bertotto's powerful freekick past Dida.

Milan's Brazilian winger

Cafu pulled one back for the home side in the 70th minute, but the visitors withstood a period of late pressure to hold on for the win and go seventh, level with Parma on 24 points.

Lecce started the day in 16th position and few expected them to offer much resistance to Juve, who demolished Parma 4-0 last weekend. But striker Ernesto Chevanton was especially energetic, closing down quickly on loose passes and harrying keeper Gianluigi

Buffon. In the 24th minute Cedric Konan nodded a cross past Buffon to put the home side ahead.

On the stroke of halftime Lecce keeper Lukas Poleksic pulled off two reflex saves to deny Juve strikers Fabrizio Miccoli and Alessandro del Piero.

With half an hour left, Juve's chances of scoring looked even slimmer when defender Mark Iuliano was sent off for a second bookable offence.

MNA/Reuters



AC Milan's striker Filippo Inzaghi reacts after missing a chance against Udinese, during their Serie A soccer match at San Siro Stadium in Milan, on 21 December, 2003. Udinese won the match 2-1.—INTERNET

Man Utd go top after 2-1 win at Spurs

LONDON, 23 Dec—Manchester United swept to the top of the English Premier League with a 2-1 away win over Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

United manager Alex Ferguson opted to include Rio Ferdinand two days after he was sentenced to an eight-month ban for missing a drugs test, beginning in January, but the England defender had little to do in a game dominated by the champions, at least for the first hour.

They went ahead in 16th minute when defender John O'Shea got his toe to a low corner and made it 2-0 in the 23rd with a deflected Ruud van Nistelrooy shot following some slick midfield passing.

United remained in charge but were caught on the break when Gus Poyet poked in from close range in the 63rd minute after a clever low cross from the lively Stephane Dalmat. Spurs then stepped up the pace but United held out without too many serious scares to go into the busy holiday period in pole position.

The victory took them to 40 points — one above Arsenal and Chelsea, who both

have 39. The two London clubs also have an identical goal difference and have both scored the same number of goals.

Ferdinand's ban is due to begin on January 12 — or later if United go through with their planned appeal — and Ferguson said he would probably keep him in the side as long as possible.

Earlier on Sunday Southampton climbed to fourth on 26 points after thrashing local rivals Portsmouth 3-0 at St. Mary's.

The first goal, after 34 minutes, came direct from a Jason Dodd corner while superb second-half finishes from Marian Pahars — his first goal for 15 months — and James Beattie completed a comfortable success in the first league meeting between the south coast clubs since 1988.

Portsmouth remain stuck in the bottom three and manager Harry Redknapp was furious with their performance.

MNA/Reuters

Nedved Voted European Footballer of the Year

PARIS, 23 Dec—Juventus midfielder Pavel Nedved has been named European Footballer of the Year, France Football magazine confirmed Monday.

Czech international Nedved was rewarded with the Golden Ball after a series of outstanding performances for Juventus as they retained the Italian league title and reached the Champions League final in May.

The 31-year-old was named ahead of Arsenal striker Thierry Henry and AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini in a poll of European soccer journalists from 52 countries published by France Football magazine.

"I did not even dream of winning such an award. I'm very happy to receive such an important, such an extraordinary honor," Nedved

said.

"I heard about the nominees and being among them. But I did not believe in my chances too much.

"A lot of players had good results like Paolo Maldini, (Real Madrid striker) Raul, (Zinedine) Zidane. All of them deserved to win," he added.

Nedved missed the Champions League final through suspension after being booked in the semi-final, when his spectacular performance was a major factor in the defeat of competition favorites Real Madrid.

Juventus, already Serie A winners for the second year

running earlier in May, lost the Champions League final on penalties to AC Milan.

Nedved joined Juventus from Lazio in 2001, replacing French playmaker Zidane, named last week as FIFA's player of the year, who left the Italian club to join Real Madrid.

"I left Juve and he stepped in and worked wonders," said Zidane.

"I'm happy for him because he's a good guy or so I was told at Juventus. The result speaks for itself. The golden ball is rarely wrong," the Frenchman added.

Nedved helped Juve to the Serie A title in 2002 and again in 2003.

Nedved, who was also voted player of the year by the magazine World Soccer, is the second Czech to win the prestigious Golden Ball after Josef Masopust in 1962.

It is the eighth time a Juventus player has been crowned.

The Czech earned 190 points. France's Henry was second with 128 points and Maldini third on 123 points.

Milan's Ukrainian striker Andrei Shevchenko was fourth on 67 points with Zidane on 64 points.

"It was definitely my best year. I had lots of luck as well. Luck is part of a player's career," Nedved added.—Internet



Czech soccer player Pavel Nedved of Italy's Juventus poses with his trophy after being named European Footballer of the Year by France Football Magazine, on 22 December, 2003. Nedved won the Golden Ball ahead of Arsenal striker Thierry Henry and AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini.—INTERNET

Real beat Mallorca to finish year as leaders

MADRID, 23 Dec—Real Madrid recovered from a shaky start to win 3-1 away to Real Mallorca on Sunday and secure the league leadership in Spain going into the New Year.

Fernando Correa took advantage of a dreadful mistake from Francisco Pavon in the Real defence to put Mallorca ahead early on but Raul headed the visitors back level in the first minute of injury-time.

Ronaldo struck 10 minutes after the break with an eye-catching solo goal and Luis Figo wrapped up the win from the penalty spot after the Brazilian had been brought down in the box on another run towards goal. Victory for Real gave them 39 points from 17 games and took them back two points ahead of Valencia, who had gone top overnight thanks to their 1-0 win over Sevilla on Saturday.

With the next round of league games scheduled for the weekend of January 3 and 4, Real will go into 2004 as Primera Liga leaders.

Deportivo Coruna stayed within striking distance of the top two with a 2-1 win at home to Espanyol that left them in third on 33 points. Osasuna lost ground with a 1-0 defeat at home to Real Zaragoza but they at least remain fourth with 27 points, ahead of Villarreal and Atletico Madrid on goal difference.

Real Madrid had an exhausting extra-time victory over Leganes in the King's Cup on Thursday and they looked to be feeling the effects as Mallorca took an early lead.

Pavon, looking to make a straightforward clearance on the edge of the box, somehow miscontrolled the ball and Michel Salgado, in an attempt to tidy up, managed

only to poke the ball straight to Correa to tuck a shot past Iker Casillas.

Samuel Eto'o missed two good chances to increase the Mallorca lead and Real punished them with their equalizer in first-half injury-time.

MNA/Reuters



Chilean soccer star Ivan Zamorano acknowledges fans after his farewell match at the National Stadium in Santiago, on 22 December, 2003. Zamorano, 36, bid farewell to fans as a player after a professional career that began when he was just 17-years-old.—INTERNET

MRTV-3
**24-12-2003 (Wednesday)
(Programme Schedule)
Morning Transmission
(9:00 - 10:00)**

- 9:00 Signature Tune
Greetings
- 9:02 Song of Myanmar
Beauty & Scenic
Sights "Myanma
Panorama &
Myanma Sentiment"
- 9:06 Lacquerware made
from Porcelain and
glaze
- 9:10** **Headline News**
- 9:12 Easily Cooked Tasty
Dishes (Short-
headed Fish with
Roasted Rice Soup)
- 9:15** **National News**
- 9:20 Myanmar Royal
Regalia (I)
- 9:25 Brave Youth Show-
ing His Strength &
Ability
- 9:30** **National News**
- 9:35 Unique Biodiversity
of Indawgyi Lake (I)
- 9:40 Song "Ngwe Hsaung
Beach Resort"
- 9:45** **National News**
- 9:50 Biological Expedi-
tion to Hpon Kan
Razi Region (III)
- 9:58 Song of Myanmar
Beauty & Scenic
Sights "Come and
See Myanmar"

**24-12-2003 (Wednesday)
Regular Programmes for
Viewers from Abroad
Evening Transmission
(15:30 - 17:30)**

- 15:30 Signature Tune
Greeting
- 15:32 Song of Myanmar
Beauty & Scenic
Sights "Mingalabar"
- 15:36 Lacquerware made

- from Porcelain and
glaze
- 15:40** **Headline News**
- 15:42 Easily Cooked Tasty
Dishes (Short-
headed Fish with
Roasted Rice Soup)
- 15:45** **National News**
- 15:50 Myanmar Royal
Regalia (I)
- 15:55 Brave Youth Show-
ing His Strength &
Ability
- 16:00** **National News**
- 16:05 Unique Biodiversity
of Indawgyi Lake (I)
- 16:10 Song "Ngwe Hsaung
Beach Resort"
- 16:15** **National News**
- 16:20 Biological Expedi-
tion to Hpon Kan
Razi Region (III)
- 16:25 Song of Myanmar
Beauty & Scenic
Sights "Myanma
Panorama &
Myanma Sentiment"
- 16:30** **National News**
- 16:35 Eel, Marketable
Product
- 16:40 Myanmar Cuisine
"Steamed Prawn
Curry"
- 16:45** **National News**
- 16:50 Hill Resort Town
(Thandaung)
- 16:55 National Dance
"Wararya Dance"
- 16:58 Inlay Wild Bird
Sanctuary
- 17:00** **National News**
- 17:05 Extravagant Evi-
dences of Myanmar
Cultural (II)
- 17:10 Song "Creating of a
love-like song"
- 17:15** **National News**
- 17:20 All Lives under
the Sky
- "Catch of Fish by
cooperation of Fish-
erman & Dolphin"
- 17:25 Song of Myanmar
Beauty & Scenic
Sights "Come and
See Myanmar"

**Evening Transmission
(19:30 - 23:30)**

- 19:30 Signature Tune
Greetings
- 19:32 Song of Myanmar
Beauty & Scenic
Sights "Myanma
Panorama &
Myanma Sentiment"
- 19:36 The Beauty of
Zwegabin and
Livelihood of Kayin
National
- 19:40** **Headline News**
- 19:42 Easily Cooked Tasty
Dishes (Snake gourd
stuffing pounded
prawn)
- 19:45** **National News**
- 19:50 Fabulous Shweku
Dake Daw Gyi
- 19:55 Kayin Dance (We
Bu or Paddy Win-
nowing Dance)
- 20:00** **National News**
- 20:05 Ayeyawady Second
Defile
- 20:10 Song "Hill Resort
Town (Thandaung)"
- 20:15** **National News**
- 20:20 Biological Expedi-
tion to Hpon Kan
Razi Region (II)
- 20:25 Song "Across
the Ayeyawady"
- 20:30** **National News**
- 20:35 Early Silver Jubilee
Era of Myanmar
Motion Picture
- 20:40 Myanmar Cuisine
"Noodle with
Coconut-soup"
- 20:45** **National News**
- 20:50 Golden Plum Job of
Central Myanmar
- 20:55 The "Htaung Yaung
Nay" Classical Male
Dance"
- 21:00** **National News**
- 21:05 Kayin Traditional
Vegetable Curry
(Tarlabaw)
- 21:10 Myanmar Modern
Song "Love Boat"
- 21:15** **National News**
- 21:20 Extravagant Evi-

- dences of Myanmar
Cultural (I)
- 21:25 Song of Myanmar
Beauty & Scenic
Sight "Mingalabar"
- 21:35 Lacquerware made
from Porcelain and
glaze
- 21:40** **Headline News**
- 21:42 Easily Cooked Tasty
Dishes (Short-
headed Fish with
Roasted Rice Soup)
- 21:45** **National News**
- 21:50 Myanmar Royal
Regalia (I)
- 21:55 Brave Youth Show-
ing His Strength &
Ability
- 22:00** **National News**
- 22:05 Unique Biodiversity
of Indawgyi Lake (I)
- 22:10 Song "Ngwe Hsaung
Beach Resort"
- 22:15** **National News**
- 22:20 Biological
Expendition to Hpon
Kan Razi Region
(III)
- 22:25 Song "Let go of me"
- 22:30** **National News**
- 22:35 Eel, Marketable
Product
- 22:40 Myanmar Cuisine
"Steamed Prawn
Curry"
- 22:45** **National News**
- 22:50 Hill Resort Town
(Thandaung)
- 22:55 Wararya Dance
- 22:58 Inlay Wild Bird
Sanctuary
- 23:00** **National News**
- 23:05 Extravagant Evi-
dences of Myanmar
Culture (II)
- 23:10 Song "Creating of a
love-like song"
- 23:15** **National News**
- 23:20 All Lives under the
Sky "Catch of Fish
by cooperation of
Fisherman & Dol-
phin"
- 23:25 Song of Myanmar
Beauty & Scenic
Sights "Come and
See Myanmar"

Asleep in Jesus**Daw Than Yin**

(Aged 89 years)

Daw Than Yin, wife of the late U Saw Kya Doe, Member, Multi-Party Democracy General Election Commission, No. 18 C, Inya Road, Kamayut Township, Yangon-Youngest daughter of the late (Mahn Shwe Pi and Gha Nyo), sister of (Daw Aye Sein), (Daw Aye Shin), (Daw Than Tin) and (Rev. Mahn Po Way) mother of Nithe Doe, aunt of (Daw Hnin Yee), Daw Kyi Kyi, (Daw Yi), Daw Mya Mya Way-B.E.H.S (I) Ahlone, fell asleep in Jesus on Tuesday, the 23rd of December, 2003 at 7:15 am. The funeral service will be held at Yangon Brayton Pwo Kayin Baptist Church on Thursday, the 25th of December, 2003 at 11:00 am and then will proceed to the Htein Bin Cemetery for entombment.

Bereaved Family**Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas****WEATHER**

Tuesday, 23 December, 2003

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy to cloudy in the whole country.

Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Rakhine State, Mandalay, lower Sagaing, Magway and Bago Divisions, (5°C-6°C) above normal in Kachin State, (5°C-6°C) below normal in Kayin, Mon States, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions and about normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 22-12-2003 was 27.8°C (82°F). Minimum temperature on 23-12-2003 was 16.0°C (61°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 23-12-2003 was 83%. Total sunshine hours on 22-12-2003 was (0.4) hours approx.

Rainfall on 23-12-2003 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2003 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 11 mph from North at (13:50) hours MST on 22-12-2003.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in West Central Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 24-12-2003: Weather will be partly cloudy in Kachin, Rakhine States, upper Sagaing, Ayeyawady, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas.

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

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

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 24-12-2003: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 24-12-2003: Partly cloudy.


**Wednesday, December 24
View today:**

- 7:00 am**
1. Recitation of Parittas by
Missionary Sayardaw U
Ottamathara.
- 7:25 am**
2. To be healthy exercise
- 7:30 am**
3. Morning news
- 7:40 am**
4. Nice and sweet song
- 7:50 am**
5. ဝေးသလ္လံအစီအစဉ်
- 7:55 am**
6. အတိ-မြိုင်မြိုင်
- 8:05 am**
7. မြေမြေကြွယ်ကြွယ်စော့စော့
- 8:15 am**
8. ဝံ့ညိုတန်းတန်း
- 8:30 am**
8. International news
- 8:45 am**
9. Learning English the
easy and happy way
for children and
beginners
- 4:00 pm**

1. Martial song
- 4:15 pm**
2. Song to uphold `National Spirit
- 4:30 pm**
3. Practice in Reading
- 4:45 pm**
4. Musical programme
- 5:00 pm**
5. အဆေးသင်တန်းသို့လမ်းညွှန်ရန်မြိုင်မြိုင်
သံကြားသင်တန်းစာ-ဒုတိယနှစ်
(ရုပ်စောအထူးပြု) (ရုပ်စော)
- 5:15 pm**
6. Songs for uphold
National Spirit
- 5:30 pm**
7. Classical song
- 5:45 pm**
8. နိုင်ငံအခန်းသစ်တောခွမ်းဖြင့်စိမ်း
လန်းစေရမည်
- 6:00 pm**
9. ရုက္ခဗေဒသင်တန်းအစီအစဉ်
- 6:10 pm**
10. Discovery

- 6:30 pm**
11. Evening news
- 7:00 pm**
12. Weather report
- 7:05 pm**
13. Milo success in
soccer
- 7:10 pm**
14. ဓာတ်ပုံ (အပိုင်း-၂)
- 7:20 pm**
15. Musical programme
- 7:35 pm**
16. အချစ်အမြင်အာသာရပ်နဲ့ရည်ကြာ
ခိုင်းစောစော ခိုချေမှု
"ကျွန်ုပ်တို့လမ်းပန်းကြွေရန်လုပ်ကိုင်
မှုပုံစံပြောင်းလဲ" (အပိုင်း-၁)
- 8:00 pm**
17. "News"
18. International news
19. Weather report
20. နိုင်ငံခြားစာတိုလမ်းဆွဲ
"တုယုလီ" (အပိုင်း-၆)
21. The next day's
programme

အိမ်တိုင်းမှာသစ်ပင် ရွာစဉ်မှာတောတန်း

တစ်တောင်တစ်တောင်ဆက်

မြို့တက်မယ့်လမ်း။

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 General Khin Nyunt presses the button to drive bore-pile for construction of Hledan Centre. — MNA

Prime Minister attends pile-driving for Hledan Centre

YANGON, 23 Dec — The bore pile-driving ceremony for Hledan Centre, jointly-constructed by the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development of the Ministry of Construction and Asia World Co Ltd was held at the construction site at the junction of Pyay Road and Hledan Road in Kamayut Township, here, this morning, attended by City Planning Supervisory Committee Chairman Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Yangon mayor, deputy ministers, officials from the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads, the managing director of Asia World Co Ltd, officials and invited guests.

At the auspicious time, Prime Minister formally opened the ceremony. After the CPSC Chairman had sprinkled scented water on the bore pile, the ceremony came to a close. The Prime Minister performed rituals of silver and golden showers to mark the success of the ceremony.

At the briefing hall, Managing Director U Tun Myint

Naing reported to the Prime Minister on data relating to the project including location and area of the centre, ground-testing, pile designing tasks, architectural design that can bear earthquake, structures of floors, sewerage system, arrangements for electricity and communication, construction tasks.

After giving necessary instructions, the General inspected the scale model of Hledan Centre.

The centre on an area of 1.5 acre of land will be a 28-storey building. Two underground floors will have a car park which can accommodate 270 cars. Eight escalators will be installed for offices, shops, restaurants, coffee shops and health care centres and garden restaurant on the first five floors.

There will be apartments from the sixth floor to the 25th floor. The building will have special security system, garbage system, fire prevention system, sewerage system and 24-hr electricity system. Three passenger lifts and one freight lift will be installed there.

MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hears a report presented by Asia World Co Ltd Managing Director U Tun Myint Naing on construction of Hledan Centre with the use of a scale model. — MNA

Minister inspects development tasks in Shan State (East)

YANGON, 23 Dec — Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt on 21 December morning inspected opium substitute rubber plantation along Pangsan-

Mongpauk Road in Shan State (East).

Afterwards, the minister went to the station hospital in Mongpauk and fulfilled the needs. When he arrived at Mongpauk Basic Education High School, he donated

school uniforms and exercise books.

Later, the minister and party inspected border areas development office, agricultural office and communication office in Mongpauk and met with staff members of

the ministry. During his tour, the minister also inspected the opium substitute plantation in Mongphyau and Mongyan. He also discussed matters on regional development tasks and opium substitute cultivation and breed-

ing in Mongla.

When he arrived at domestic science vocational training school and rural areas and national races development school in Kengtung, the minister attended to the needs of the schools. — MNA

Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition goes on

YANGON, 23 Dec — The Fourth Myanmar Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition continued for the seventh day today at Tatmadaw Convention Centre on U Wisara Road.

On display at the exhibition were the booths of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Industry-1 and Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and 134 booths of private traditional medicine houses.

Today, being a public holiday, more visitors including those from other townships studied the exhibition. It will continue till 26 December from 9 am to 6 pm daily. — MNA

Education Minister attends opening of multimedia classrooms of No 1 BEHS in Lewe

YANGON, 23 Dec — Minister for Education U Than Aung together with officials concerned attended opening of multimedia classrooms of No 1 Basic Education High School (Myoma School) in Lewe on 21 December morning. Next, the minister, officials and guests viewed round classrooms of the school.

Afterwards, opening of the diamond jubilee commemorative hall of the school was held. Director-General of No 2 Basic Education Department Lt-Col Win Htein, the headmaster, the headmistress and old students formally opened the facility.

Next, old students unveiled the signboard of the facility whereas the minister unveiled the stone inscription of the facility.

Next, Headmistress Daw Mya Sein presented the commemorative pennant to the minister.

Eighth grader Ma Phyu Phyu Han, the headmistress and the Chairman of the School Board of Trustees U Pyu spoke words of thanks.

Next, the minister accepted K 500,000 donated by three wellwishers for stipends, followed by the respect-paying ceremony.

In the afternoon, the minister attended the ceremony to hand over the new Shwe Pyi Soe school building worth K 27 million donated by U Soe Tint and Daw Yin Nu for No 3 Basic Education Primary School in Mingalar Ward, Pyinmana and unveiled the signboard of the new building. Director-General Lt-Col Win Htein, wellwisher and the Chairman of SBT formally opened the new building. Next, U Soe Tint handed over the related document to the director-general. Next, the minister presented a certificate of honour to the wellwisher and spoke words of thanks. — MNA