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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

Myanmar Fishery Federation opens new head office

YANGON, 24 Jan — The Myanmar Fishery Federation opened its new building on Bayintnaung Road, Insein, here today.

Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe unveiled the bronze plaque of the new MFF building. Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Director-General of Fisheries Department U Than Tun and President of MFF U Htay Myint formally inaugurated it. At the sixth annual general



Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe presses the button to unveil the bronze inscriptions of the new office of the Myanmar Fishery Federation. — MNA

meeting of the federation, the commander said that departments, enterprises and organizations have been formed to material-

ize the Senior General's guidance — to increase distribution of pedigree strains; to accelerate momentum of pearl cul-

ture; and to develop rural fish and livestock farming. Myanmar Livestock Federation and Myanmar Fishery Fed-

eration have been founded to realize the goal. The ASEAN established the ASEAN Fishery Federation in 1988.

The MFF has started its operation under the AFF since 18 June 2002. The MFF is (See page 8)

Meeting of Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics and Information in ASEAN+3 Countries commences

YANGON, 24 Jan — The opening ceremony of the Meeting of Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics and Information in ASEAN+3 Countries and the Third Focal Point Meeting of AFSIS Project hosted in Myanmar took place at Kandawgyi Palace this morning.

Present were Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Myint, heads of departments, directors-general from ASEAN countries, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and Japan and guests.

Deputy Minister U Ohn Myint delivered an ad-

dress. He said: In the meeting, the progress activities and performance of the ASEAN Food Security and Information System will be reviewed and evaluated, and future work plan will also be discussed to achieve the objectives of the project. I am fully confident that closed coordination and cooperation among our ASEAN members and plus three countries can overcome global and regional challenges and difficulties.

The meeting is also the forum for cordial discussion of problems and issues facing the project. I do hope that, your deliberation and efforts in the meeting will come up with valuable solutions and concrete results on the problems. In this connection, Myanmar, besides fulfilling the basic needs of its people, contributes to the food security of the region, with certain rice reserve.

I would like to stress that overall economic strategy of our country has given high priority to the efficiency and development of agriculture, fishery and forestry sectors.

(See page 8)



Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Myint and high-ranking officials of ASEAN + three countries pose for a documentary. — MNA

INSIDE

A new soya bean strain is being tested on the 500-acre field in Kyaukhtat region near Bawsai Road in Heho Township. It is an export quality strain and yields about 50 baskets an acre. Its total oil content is the same as Hamsi strain.

(Page 7)

MAUNG SEEPWA

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

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 25 January, 2005

Strive for ICT development

For the political future of the Union of Myanmar, the government is translating the seven-point policy programme into reality for the emergence of a modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic state.

At the same time, it is putting its energies into the economic and social sectors for health, education, human resource and economic development, and much progress has been made in all these areas, especially due to the development of information and communication technology. Information and communication technology is one of the essentials of the present-day lifestyle.

The Fourth Myanmar ICT Week 2005 was opened at the MICT Park in Hline Township on 23 January and it was attended by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, also Chairman of Myanmar Computer Science Development Council.

In his address at the opening ceremony, Lt-Gen Thein Sein said that the government was fully committed to ICT development and that rapid and significant progress had been made in ICT through the cooperation and coordinated efforts of the government, the private sector, computer scientists, computer entrepreneurs and computer enthusiasts. He added that ICT could boost production, facilitate trade and service industry, ensure better society and bring rapid development to Myanmar.

For ICT development, Myanmar Computer Science Development Law was promulgated in 1996, e-National Task Force formed in 2002 and Myanmar ICT Park and Mandalay ICT Park were opened in 2002 and in 2003 respectively. All the requirements including electric power and broadband Internet technology are being provided at the ICT parks so that the ICT development of Myanmar can be on a par with that of other nations.

While the government is providing all that is necessary for the ICT development on a national scale, all the computer scientists and entrepreneurs on their part are required to work in concert so that the ICT development of Myanmar can be realized in so short a time.



Myanmar ICT Week, 2005

Organized by
Myanmar ICT Development
Corporation
21-27 January 2005
MICT Park
Yangon, Myanmar.

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

Minister tours South District of Yangon

YANGON, 24 Jan — Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Maung Oo, accompanied by General Administration Department Director-General U Myat Ko, Prisons Department Director-General U Zaw Win, Deputy Director-General of Myanmar Po-

lice Force Col Zaw Win, Police Quartermaster General Police Brig-Gen Win Soe and officials, yesterday morning inspected the thriving plantations of beans in Ohnhe Village, Thonegwa township, Yangon South District. After inspecting the

Thonegwa township police station, the minister visited Bawathit Agriculture Camp No 9 in Kyauktan township where he met with service personnel and gave instructions on boosting of production, minimizing loss and wastage, engaging in

farming on a commercial scale.

Later, the minister oversaw the Tada police station and the General Administration Department in Kyauktan township and left necessary instructions there.

MNA

PBANRDA Ministry holds work coordination meeting



Minister Col Thein Nyunt speaks at the work coordination meeting. — MNA

YANGON, 24 Jan—Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs held its work coordination meeting at the conference hall of the Development Affairs Department on Thanlyetsun Road in Botahtaung Township this morning with an address by Minister for PBANRDA Col Thein Nyunt. Also present on the occasion were Deputy Ministers Brig-Gen Than Tun and Col Tin Ngwe and officials.

In his address, Minister Col Thein Nyunt said that steps are to be taken for making cities clean and pleasant, ensuring regional development and availability of potable water and for timely completion of work for availability of potable water in Mandalay, Magway and Sagaing Divisions, construction of

rural model housing and village-to-village roads.

Next, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Than Tun spoke on the occasion.

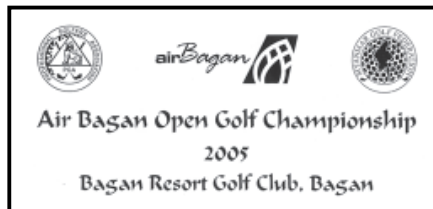
Afterwards, Director-General of Department for Progress of Border Areas and National Races Col Than Swe, Director-General of the Education and Training Department Col Than Win, Managing Director of the Sibin Thayayay Bank Ltd U Myo Win took part in the discussions.

Next, Director-General of Development Affairs Department Col Myo Myint reported on future task.

This was followed by a general round of discussions. The meeting ended with the concluding remarks by the minister.

MNA

Air Bagan Open Golf Championship 2005 concludes



283 strokes, second prize winner Bo Bo (290) and third prize winner Thein Zaw (293) in amateur level (Men).

Afterwards, Chairman Maj-Gen Win Hlaing (Retd) awarded prizes to Soe Kyaw Naing (Srixon) who stood first with 287 strokes and Than Naing (Wilson) and Min Naing (Srixon) who shared second with 289 strokes each in professional level.

After that, Chairman of Air Bagan Ltd U Te Za presented a cheque to Soe Kyaw Naing (Srixon) and Thank You Plaque to Chairman of MPGA and MGF. The event was successfully organized by Han Event Management successfully. — MNA

YANGON, 24 Jan — Organized by Myanmar PGA and Myanmar Golf Federation, the fourth day's event of Air Bagan Open Golf Championship 2005 and its prize presentation ceremony were held at Bagan Resort Golf Club in NyaungU, Mandalay Division yesterday evening.

Present on the occasion were Chairman of Myanmar PGA and Myanmar Golf Federation Maj-Gen Win Hlaing (Retd) and executives, Chairman of NyaungU District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Te Za and officials, those of Air Bagan Ltd, guests and local golfers.

After the event, Lt-Col Te Za presented prizes to Daily Best-Golfers in amateur level (Men) and Managing Director of Air Bagan Ltd U Soe Win awarded prizes to Daily Best-Golfers in professional level.

Next, the Vice-Chairman of Air Bagan Ltd presented prizes to first prize winner Zaw Zin Win with



U Te Za presents the prize of cheque to champion Soe Kyaw Naing (Srixon). — MGF



Chinese Vice-President leaves for five-nation tour

BEIJING, 24 Jan— Chinese Vice-President Zeng Qinghong left here Saturday evening for an official visit to Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica, from 23 January to 3 February.

During his visit, Zeng will attend the opening ceremony of the first ministerial-level meeting of the China-Caribbean forum on trade and economic cooperation in Jamaica on 2 February.

Zeng's entourage includes Director of State Administration of Quality Supervision and Quarantine Li Changjiang, Vice-Foreign Minister Zhou

Wenzhong, Vice-Minister of Finance Li Yong, Vice-Minister of Commerce Ma Xiuhong, Deputy Director of Policy Research Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China He Yiting, and President of Export-Import Bank of China Yang Zilin.

MNA/Xinhua



A Singapore Airlines (SIA) plane takes off from Singapore's Changi Airport. Singapore and Australia are close to signing a full open-skies agreement that would give Singapore Airlines (SIA) access to lucrative Australia-United States routes, Transport Minister Yeo Cheow Tong said.—INTERNET

China's first self-designed digital TV chip passes appraisal

SHANGHAI, 24 Jan— China's first ever home-made digital TV chip "Zhongshi No 1" Saturday passed technical appraisal by experts from Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering.

The chip, which integrates more than 70 memory units, 2 million logic gates and 20 million transistors, has outperformed European and American products in terms of sensitivity and anti-jamming capacities at far lower costs. The chip was made by Grace Semiconductor Manufacturing Corporation and Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation, according to Zhou Dian, president of the School of Microelectronics of Fudan University, independent designer of the product.

"Zhongshi No 1" was based on China's DMB-T standard and has outdone European and US standards for experimental broadcasts of digital TV, respectively known as DVB-T and ATSC, in terms of definition, noted Zhou. He acknowledged that a dozen domestic electronics makers have integrated the new chip technology into their products, including Changhong, TCL, Skyworth and Haier. Central China's Henan Province has applied the new technology to launch mobile TV programmes, and at least 10 other localities — including Beijing, Tianjin and Guangzhou — have reported success in trial operations.—MNA/Xinhua



Canadian telecom giant Nortel Networks president Bill Owens (R) exchanges memorandums of understanding with South Korea's LG Electronics chief executive Kim Sang-Soo (L) during the signing of their joint venture in Seoul.—INTERNET

Manmohan Singh exhorts Indian firms to think global

NEW DELHI, 24 Jan— Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh exhorted Saturday more and more Indian companies to globalize their operations, emulating the Chinese model, and said his government would ensure that all barriers to their growth are removed.

"Our motto should be to do as well as China in terms of growth of gross domestic product, growth of manufacturing, growth of trade and growth of infrastructure," the *Indo-Asian News Service* quoted the Prime Minister as saying at a summit on "Indian CEOs — Competencies for Success".

"We must move away from the paradigm of incremental growth to a paradigm of exponential growth and grow into un-chartered territory," he told the summit, organized jointly by the government and apex industry chambers.

The Prime Minister also laid emphasis on the performance of public sector undertakings, saying they would be extended more autonomy so that the

country sees far more success stories among state-run enterprises in the future.

"We must strengthen their hands so that they can provide effective leadership and manage public resources more efficiently," the Prime Minister said.

He said the United Progressive Alliance government had an obligation toward public sector undertakings in terms of extending greater autonomy to their management.

At present, India contributes a mere 0.8 per cent to global trade. The medium-term export strategy for 2002-07 had set a target of 1 per cent share of global trade by 2006-07.

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese expected to buy 5.8 million cars this year

BEIJING, 24 Jan— Chinese people are expected to buy 5.8 million cars this year, a year-on-year rise of 12 per cent, said Xu Changming, director of the economic consultative centre under the State Information Centre on Saturday.

The demand for saloon cars this year would be 2.75 million, up 17 per cent on a year-on-year basis, said Xu at a forum on China's auto industry.

Xu predicted China's auto industry this year would be better than last year, but the blowout growth in 2002 and 2003 would never come again. A report by the State Development Research Centre said the growth of the automotive industry would keep dropping for the first half year of 2005, but in a slow pace.

The country's total car production

would grow at 15 per cent to 20 per cent, producing and selling some 6 million cars, said the report. Xu said further price cut would continue this year and attract more buyers. A survey by the State Information Centre shows 63.8 per cent of the residents would buy a car because of the price cut. In 2005, China would lower its car import tariff for cars to 30 per cent and abolish its quota system on car import. Xu predicted about 80,000 imported cars in storage would be sold in 2005.—MNA/Xinhua

Syria not allowing guerillas to cross into Iraq

WASHINGTON, 23 Jan— Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara rejected allegations his country was turning a blind eye to anti-American guerillas crossing the border into neighbouring Iraq. "There is a lot of exaggeration on the guerilla issue," Shara said in an interview with CNN television. "The guerillas, if they are crossing the Syrian border, they are crossing the Syrian border against the will of the Syrian government, no doubt

about it.

"We are not friendly with (the guerillas)," he added, "because this is not the right way to help the Iraqis."

"On the contrary, we are helping the Iraqis be united, go to the elections, to accept the political process," Shara said, while at the same time reiterating that his country had opposed the war and occupation of Iraq.

Shara also said that members of the toppled Saddam Hussein regime

were not welcome in Syria. "All the Iraqi previous regime members are not welcome in Syria," he said. "But we have many Iraqis, I mean, many Iraqis are fleeing their country in order to be safe in Syria."

"Many Christian Iraqis have fled Iraq, in order to be safe in Syria," he said. "They find in Syria a safe haven. We cannot expel them just because they are Iraqis. They have nothing to do with terrorism."

Internet

15 Iraqi national guardsmen killed by guerillas in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 24 Jan— A total of 15 Iraqi national guardsmen were shot dead by an Iraqi militant group, a web site statement said Saturday.

Ansar al-Sunna, an Islamic group believed to have links with al-Qaeda network, said its militants executed the 15 Iraqi soldiers who were kidnapped last week in Hit, a town 140 kilometres northwest of Baghdad.

The authenticity of the statement could not be independently verified.

Last Saturday, the group said in an Internet statement that it had abducted 15 Iraqi national guardsmen west of Baghdad.

The Iraqi police said the soldiers were kidnapped after finishing their work at a US military base in the restive western province of Al-Anbar.

MNA/Xinhua

China, Japan, S Korea, ASEAN to start feasibility study soon

BEIJING, 24 Jan— China and relevant countries will begin feasibility study very soon for an East Asia Free Trade Area which will cover China, Japan, South Korea and the 10-member ASEAN nations, a senior Chinese trade official said here Sunday.

Yi Xiaozhun, Assistant Minister of Commerce, told *Xinhua* in an exclusive interview that an East Asia Free Trade Area will help its members to explore more potentials for faster economic growth and benefit all.

China and ASEAN began to implement two major agreements leading to the China-ASEAN Free Trade Area. They will cut tariffs for about 7,000 items of products from July 1 this year.

Meanwhile, Japan and South Korea have also started making similar trade arrangements with the ASEAN.

"East Asia is economically the fastest growing region in the world," Yi said. "Total gross domestic product (GDP) of economies in the region, including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and ASEAN in 2003 reached 7.7 trillion US dollars, accounting for 21.2 per cent of the world's total."

Within the region, trade surged over the past years. Total trade volume hit 918.02 billion US dollars in

2003, accounting for 54.5 per cent of the region's total exports.

"It demonstrated that we have had a good basis for regional economic integration," said Yi. "China, Japan, South Korea and ASEAN have been important export market and destinations for outbound investment for each other."

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao made the proposal for an East Asia Free Trade Area in 2003 and the proposal received active response from leaders of Japan, South Korea and members of the ASEAN, Yi said.

But Yi said it will be a gradual and long-term process to establish the proposed East Asia Free Trade Area.

"Yet the free trade area will be established with joint efforts from relevant countries," Yi said. "An East Asia with healthy and rapid development will help the prosperity and stability of the entire world."

MNA/Xinhua

ဝက်ပုရွင်းအား ခေတ်တော်လွှား

Two US soldiers sentenced for killing woman interpreter

BAGHDAD, 24 Jan— Two US soldiers have been sentenced to jail terms, reduction in rank and bad conduct discharges for their role in the killing of a female civilian interpreter in Iraq in November, the US military said.

In a statement, the military said Specialist Charley . Hooser of the 1st Cavalry Division was sentenced to three years in jail after being convicted of one count of involuntary manslaughter and one count of making a false statement.

"The convictions stem from an incident on 24 November, when Hooser killed an interpreter,

shooting her in the head," the military said late on Saturday. "Later that day, he made an official statement with the intent to deceive, denying involvement in the death of the civilian interpreter."

Another soldier from the 1st Cavalry Division, Specialist Rami Dajani, was sentenced to 18 months in jail for his role in the incident, the military said.

It said Dajani had supplied the gun that killed the interpreter and had later "made an official statement with the intent to deceive, denying involvement in the death of a civilian interpreter".

Several US soldiers have been sentenced or are awaiting court martial in Iraq for their role in the killing of Iraqis.

MNA/Reuters

Beijing prepares for Spring Festival passenger rush

BEIJING, 24 Jan— Beijing's transportation departments are ready to handle hundreds of millions of people rushing home for a family reunion during the coming Spring Festival, or China's Lunar New Year, which will fall on 9 February this year.

Information from local transportation departments show that Beijing's railways will see 7.35 million passengers during the Spring Festival rush season which will last for 40 days from January 25 to 5 March.

Local buses and subways will see 471 million passengers during the Spring Festival season. To handle these passengers, Beijing Railway Administration has prepared 75 pairs of makeshift passenger trains, 10 per cent more than that for last year's same period, and has worked out three emergency plans to handle sudden passenger peaks.

Local civil aviation authorities have arranged an additional 1,500 charter flights for the Spring Festival season, during which daily passenger flow by air is expected to reach 900 landings and take-offs at the Capital International Airport and peak at approximately 1,000 flights daily.

Beijing municipal transportation administration has prepared 150 large-sized passenger buses and rearranged time schedule for urban and long-distance buses to deal with possible peak passenger flow.

MNA/Xinhua

Russia criticizes US for accusing Syria

Moscow, 24 Jan — Russia criticized the United States for accusing Syria of having ties to terrorism, saying such an approach would harm security in the Middle East.

"It's well known that slapping labels on countries and unilaterally describing certain states as part of the 'axis of evil' has not improved anyone's security," Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Yakovenko told *Interfax* news agency, on Friday.

"Syria is one of the key players in the region and resumption of talks with Israel on the Syrian question is important in the context of the Middle East peace process."

US Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice has warned Syria it faces new sanctions because of its suspected interference in Iraq and ties to terrorism.

Yakovenko made the

comments ahead of a visit to Moscow by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad by next week.

Israeli political sources said on Thursday that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had urged Russian President Vladimir Putin

in a telephone call not to sell arms to Syria because that would strengthen the Lebanese Hizbollah guerilla group.

Israel accuses Syria of backing Hizbollah and Palestinian militants.

MNA/Reuters



A Chinese couple walks in front of an advertising poster for cell phones in Nanjing, East China's Jiangsu Province on 23 Jan, 2005. —INTERNET



A Chinese performer holds up the word which reads 'possible' near logos for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and Adidas during a media event to announce Adidas being selected as the Official Sportswear Partner of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, China, on 24 Jan, 2005—INTERNET

Southern Iraq's oil exports shut down

DUBAI, 23 Jan—A power cut followed by strong winds have shut down Iraq's southern oil terminals since Saturday afternoon, leaving tankers backed up in the Gulf waiting to load Iraqi crude, an oil shipping agent in Iraq said Sunday.

The power failure on Iraq's tattered electrical grid prevented oil from flowing and high winds and rough seas have kept the massive oil tankers from pulling alongside Iraq's two offshore oil terminals at Basra and Khor al-Amaya, said the agent, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Both Iraqi terminals remained closed Sunday morning.

The delays have curbed Iraq's oil export lifeline and compounded the wait from previous weather and power-related shutdowns, he said.

Three tankers berthed at the terminals had been unable to complete their loading and depart, and seven more are anchored in the Gulf waiting to take on Iraqi crude, the agent said in a telephone interview. "We were already seven days delayed. Now add one more," he said.

Iraqi oil exports have been perennial targets of Iraqi insurgents, with sabotaged pipelines costing the country billions of dollars in export earnings, officials have said.

Internet

Iran warns US against making "strategic mistake"

TEHERAN, 24 Jan— Iran on Sunday warned the United States against any attack attempt, saying any aggressive manoeuvres against Iran would be a great strategic mistake.

"The Islamic Republic is fully capable of defending itself, so only those who want to make a great strategic mistake would have the idea of attacking Iran," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said at his routine news briefing.

Asefi, however, said the US threat was unlikely to materialize, terming it as only "psychological war".

"We don't think a real attack is going to be launched by the United States," Asefi said.

The spokesman also called on the international

community to take actions to stop the US policies.

"Iran expects the international community to keep close watch on the Bush Administration, for it is eligible to stop any wrong policy of some countries," Asefi said.

US President George W. Bush said on Monday that he would not rule out military actions against Iran.

Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice urged the world to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons and threatened to refer Tehe-

ran's nuclear case to the UN Security Council.

At the inauguration ceremony of Bush's second term on Thursday, Vice-President Dick Cheney ranked Iran at top of a list of global trouble spots. Iranian President Mohammad Khatami said in response that Iran would strongly stand up to any aggression.

The United States, accusing Iran of secretly developing nuclear weapons, has threatened to launch preemptive attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities.

MNA/Xinhua



A man catches up on the news at a mobile newspaper and magazine stand in Beijing on 24 Jan, 2005.—INTERNET

India's manufacturing sector records higher exports

NEW DELHI, 24 Jan—India's manufacturing industry is experiencing higher export growth, with motor vehicles, colour TV sets, plastics and auto components driving "excellent" results, according to a survey.

While 18 sectors showed "excellent" exports growth, 16 registered "high" and 10 "moderate" growth, the survey conducted by the Associations Council of the Confederation of Indian Industry for April-December 2004 released here Sunday said.

Plastics, auto components, ball and roller bearings, fluid power, diesel engines, industrial furnace, sugar, machinery, cars, colour TV sets, light commercial vehicles and heavy commercial vehicles, mopeds, motorcycles, utility vehicles, scooters, electrical fans, drugs and pharmaceuticals were the sectors that showed excellent growth, the survey said.

The survey highlights certain specific problems

like high input prices, lengthy procedures for obtaining export benefits, capacity under utilization and unrestricted second hand goods import which it said were restricting to some extent, the potential growth in Indian manufacturing industry.

"On the export front, the Indian manufacturing industry is experiencing higher growth compared to the last quarter results. The latest survey indicates that 18 sectors have shown excellent growth in exports. There were 16 sectors in the high growth category, 10 sectors recorded moderate growth, while 9 sectors registered a fall in exports," it said.

According to the survey, out of the 68 sectors reporting sales, 18 sectors

registered excellent growth, 19 sectors registered high growth, and 25 sectors reported moderate growth while six sectors recorded low or negative growth. During the corresponding period last year, six sectors had recorded excellent sales growth, 21 recorded high growth rate, and 40 recorded moderate growth rates while 9 sectors had registered negative growth.

It said out of the total of 134 sectors reporting production, 30 sectors recorded an excellent growth rate of more than 20 per cent. 42 sectors recorded a high growth rate of 10-20 per cent, 48 sectors registered moderate growth rate of 0-10 per cent while 14 sectors reported negative growth.—MNA/Xinhua

UN to launch global campaign on clean water, sanitation

LONDON, 24 Jan— The United Nations will launch a global campaign on Monday aimed at ensuring every school in the world has clean water and sanitation within a decade, cutting health risks and raising attendance.

Access to safe water and sanitation is one of the key Millennium Development Goals to be met by 2015. Studies show that besides safeguarding health, cleaner water helps boost school attendance which in many deprived areas is very low.

"Half of the schools worldwide lack access to basic facilities like safe water and clean toilets. This is the start of a major effort to change that," a spokeswoman for the UN children's fund UNICEF said.

A three-day conference starting in the central English city of Oxford is bringing together governments, international agencies and NGOs from the United States to Tajikistan but with a strong emphasis on Africa, Asia and Central America. Sta-

tistics show only 13 per cent of Afghans have access to safe water and only 8 per cent to sanitation. In Ethiopia 22 per cent of the population has safe water but only 6 per cent enjoys sanitation.

The picture is repeated across Africa and Asia and is closely tied to low school attendance with all the accompanying implications for literacy levels and future economic development. In both of those countries primary school attendance is below 60 per cent—dropping to just 30 per cent in Ethiopia.

In Somalia, Burkina Faso, Niger, Comoros and Chad primary school attendance ranges from 11 to 39 per cent and in each case the countries are among the 10 with the least access to safe water

and sanitation.

The campaign, led by UNICEF aims to capitalize on the link and make governments realize that simply providing clean water and toilets in schools will boost attendance and therefore primary education. But once in school not only will hygiene be a hot topic of education, it should also help raise the general health of the population.

Millions of children get sick and die each year because of water-borne diseases either from dirty water or from fecal contamination. UNICEF hopes that making governments and aid agencies realize that providing the facilities and raising awareness of the importance of hygiene will bring a major bonus.—MNA/Reuters

Brazil monitoring case of engineer Vasconcelos held in Iraq

SAO PAULO, 23 Jan— Brazil will mobilize its diplomats in the Middle East to find more information about the plight of Joao Jose Vasconcelos, an engineer kidnapped last week in Iraq, the Foreign Relations Ministry said.

Foreign Minister Celso Amorim has kept President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva informed about developments in the kidnapping by Islamic militants of Vasconcelos, a Brazilian working in Iraq for Construtora Norberto Odebrecht SA, construc-

tion company, the ministry said in a statement on its Web site.

Al-Jazeera television showed footage from his captors yesterday of documents belonging to Vasconcelos, 49, including his diving card and Brazilian currency, O

Estado de S Paulo newspaper reported. Vasconcelos, who was captured on 19 Jan. in an ambush close to the Iraqi town of Beiji, was helping to repair a generator in a power plant in the north of the country, Estado reported.—Internet

Mauritian PM arrives Beijing for visit

BEIJING, 24 Jan—Mauritius' Prime Minister Paul Raymond Berenger arrived here Sunday, kicking off his seven-day visit to China.

From January 23 to 29, Berenger will visit Sanya, a coastal city in southeastern Hainan Province, and Shanghai. This is Berenger's first visit in China since he took office.

Altogether nine officials accompany his visit, including Minister of Labor, Industrial Relations, Employment, Women Rights, Children Development and Family

Welfare. With a population of 1.2 million, Mauritius lies in the southwestern part of Indian Ocean, occupying an island area of 2,040 square kilometers.—MNA/Xinhua



A US Marine runs for cover during a two-hour period of sporadic battling with guerillas, while another Marine points his rifle down the road, in Ramadi, Iraq recently.—INTERNET

Chinese Vice-President arrives in Mexico for official visit

MEXICO CITY, 24 Jan— Chinese Vice-President Zeng Qinghong arrived here Sunday for a three-day official visit to Mexico at the invitation of the Mexican Government.

Zeng said in a prepared airport statement that his visit is aimed at enhancing friendship, strengthening mutual trust, deepening cooperation and sharing common development. During the visit, Zeng said, he will exchange views with President Vicente Fox and other Mexican leaders on bilateral relations and international and regional issues of shared concern.

"I am convinced that my current visit will yield positive results as expected and help further deepen the China-Mexico strategic partnership," he said.

China and Mexico cherish their traditional friendship, with Mexico being China's important

cooperation partner in Latin America, Zeng said. He added that since the two established diplomatic ties 33 years ago, bilateral relationship has advanced smoothly and friendly cooperation has yielded fruitful results in various fields.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Mexican President Fox announced the establishment of a strategic partnership between the two countries during Wen's visit to Mexico in December 2003, indicating bilateral ties entered a new period, Zeng said.

In August last year, the two countries set up a committee and held its first session, laying down a solid foundation for bilat-

eral cooperation in the new century, he added.

Zeng flew in here from Fiji, where he met with Fijian President Ratu Josefa Iloilovato Iluivuda and Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase during a stop-over there.

Mexico is the first leg of Zeng's first five-nation visit to Latin America and the Caribbean, which will also take him to Peru, Venezuela, Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica.

Zeng is also scheduled to attend the opening ceremony of the first ministerial-level meeting of the China-Caribbean economic and trade cooperation forum on 2 February in Kingston, capital of Jamaica. — MNA/Xinhua



Chinese workers put finishing touches at Shanghai General Bus Station in China's financial capital on 23 Jan, 2005.— INTERNET

Danish Army personnel charged with abuse of Iraqi prisoners

COPENHAGEN, 24 Jan — A Danish intelligence officer and four military policemen have been charged with abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Danish headquarters in southern Iraq, the Danish Army said.

Reserve Captain Annemette Hommel and the four others soldiers could face up to one year in prison if found guilty of breaking military law during interrogations last year, the Army said in a statement.

Hommel was sent home in July from Iraq, before her tour of duty was up, after former unit colleagues

complained about the way she interrogated prisoners. She has denied the abuse.

Army investigators have said Hommel subjected Iraqi prisoners to ill-treatment including verbal humiliation, forcing them to maintain painful postures and restricting access to food, water and toilets.— MNA/Reuters

Tanzania targets 1 million tourists a year by 2010

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 24 Jan— Tanzania, with Africa's highest mountain peak and world renowned wildlife parks, expects to attract one million tourists a year by 2010 thanks to the increased rate of tourist influx.

Between 1993 and 2003, the annual increase rate of tourist influx was 15 percent on average, with the number of tourists having increased from 230,166 in 1993 to 576,198 in 2003, according to statistics released by Tanzania's Ministry for Natural Resources and Tourism.

The number of tourists for the past year is not yet available.

"If there will be an

increase of an average between 15 and 20 (per cent) per year," said Tourism Ministry Permanent Secretary Salmon Odunga, "Tanzania will get one million tourists per annum by 2010, which is our target in our medium-term programme."

With the number of tourists ever increasing, the tourism sector is becoming an important pillar of the economy of the

East African country.

In 1992, Tanzania earned 146.84 million US dollars from the tourism sector whereas the tourism contribution toward the state coffer increased to 731 million dollars in 2003, accounting for 16 per cent of that year's gross domestic product.

Tourism has become the country's number two economic sector behind agriculture. — MNA/Xinhua

Earthquake jolts southern coast of Turkey

ISTANBUL, 24 Jan — An earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter Scale struck off Turkey's southern coast on Monday, sending people fleeing in panic but causing no casualties, officials said.

The quake occurred just after midnight in the Mediterranean Sea near the resort town of Kas, the Kandilli observatory in Istanbul said on its

Internet site, adding that at least four smaller aftershocks were felt afterwards within an hour.

The US Geological Survey measured the magnitude of the quake at 6.1. "There are no deaths or injuries... Residents were frightened and ran outside for safety," Kas mayor Halil Kocær told CNN Turk television. — MNA/Reuters

40 people food poisoned in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 24 Jan— Forty people in Singapore, who had been at Parkway Group's Gleneagles Hospital for checks, were reported to have food poisoning, according to local media reports Saturday night.

Fifteen of them, including 10 children, have been admitted to the hospital for observation, said a spokesperson for the Parkway Group.

The reports said that most of the people affected are Japanese, who have attended an event at a local golf course before showing the symptoms of food poisoning. — MNA/Xinhua



Models introduce portable communication tools that will assist visitors and staff at the 2005 World Exposition in Aichi Prefecture, central Japan in March.— INTERNET

US miltary helicopter crashes in Kuwait, pilot killed

KUWAIT, 24 Jan— A US military helicopter pilot was killed and another injured during a training accident in Kuwait, the US military said on Saturday.

The helicopter crashed northwest of the capital on Friday after it took off from Camp Arifjan, a US military base in southern Kuwait, a military statement said.

"One AH-64 Apache pilot was killed and a second injured in a training accident", it added. The soldiers were not named pending notification of their families.

MNA/Reuters

Indian actress Parveen Babi found dead at home

BOMBAY, 24 Jan — Indian actress Parveen Babi, who played the siren in dozens of Bollywood films, was found dead at her home on Saturday, a police officer said.

Police broke into the Mumbai suburbs apartment where she lived alone after neighbours said her door had not been opened for two days, deputy commissioner Amitav Gupta said.

Gupta said the actress, who once featured on the cover of Time magazine as the face of the modern Indian woman, appeared to have died of natural causes. Her age was not immediately known.

Babi, famed for her unconventional Western

looks, starred in more than 50 Hindi films mostly in the 1970s and early 1980s.

She was cast in her first Hindi film while still a student at the Ahmedabad University, and was best known for her roles alongside Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan.

Babi came to represent the Bohemian Indian woman on celluloid, unafraid to smoke or drink on camera, at a time when these were considered taboo.

MNA/Reuters

Extend cultivation of quality strain soya bean

Maung Seepwa

Soya bean is a nutritious crop. Many nations have recommended soya bean as the best food for health. As it contains around 50 per cent of protein and 20 per cent of oil, man can rely on the crop for production of protein and edible oil on a large scale. It also contains amino acid, which is necessary for man and animals. Soya bean oil is top-class vegetable oil. Containing high-rate protein, expelled soya bean cake can be used as feedstuff. Currently, a metric ton of soya bean is sold for about US\$ 200 in the world market.

It plays an important role in the point of nutrition and economy. Soya bean powder is used for baking snacks such as bread, biscuit, candy, soya milk, butter, yoghurt and ice-cream; fermented soya bean, for production of fish sauce, miso, tofu and bean curd cake; and soya bean seed power, for production of coffee powder, artificial meat, baby milk powder and beverages. And roasted soya bean seed is eaten as snack.

Furthermore, it can be used for production of colour pencils, glycerine, shampoo, pesticides, anti-fungus cream, printing ink, paint, cement, resistors and bio diesel. And lacinthin, a by-product of the bean, can be used for production of foodstuff and medicines. It is believed that some contents of soya bean can prevent man from cancer.

For the past 4,000 years, the crop has been taken for an important kind of foodstuff in China, Manchuria, Japan, Korea and Malaysia. It is one of the five major crops in the cultural sector of China. According to historical facts, it spread from northern China to Korea and to Japan. After the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the crop spread from Russia to Europe. The crop could draw the attention of Europe.

The US, Brazil, Argentina, India, China, EU and Paraguay grow soya bean most in the world. The world soya bean output is 189 million tons a year. The People's Republic of China imports about 16 million tons of soya bean from Brazil and Argentina yearly. Now, world nations regard soya bean as the world crop, and many countries are growing the genetically modified (GM) strain for boosting

production of the crop.

In Myanmar, soya bean is mainly cultivated in Shan State, which occupies 50 per cent of soya bean sown acreage of the nation. It is also cultivated in Mandalay, Sagaing, Ayeyawady and Bago Divisions, and Kachin and Mon States. In Myanmar, sown acreage of soya bean is 40 per cent of sown acreage of beans and pulses. The purpose of soya bean production is just for local consumption.

Soya bean cannot thrive in all parts of the nation, and its cultivation season depends on different strains and regions. Average per acre yield of soya bean is around 20 baskets.

The Myanma Agriculture Service is imple-

The Myanma Agriculture Service is implementing the plan for development of beans and pulses cultivation method in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization. Now it is carrying out pilot cultivation of soya bean in the States and Divisions with the use of different strains imported from Thailand, Taiwan and India. Among them, Taiwan strain is the most suitable and promising for export.

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It is necessary for soya beans to meet quality standard with big seeds for export. According to the findings of the project for development of beans and pulses cultivation methods, the strains being grown in Hamsi and Kyaukhtat regions in Shan State meet export quality. Hamsi Village is located near the road

that leads to the Mwedawkekku Pagoda in Taunggyi, Shan State (South), and the whole village cultivates Wagyi 90-day strain, whose total oil content (TOC) is 20 per cent, on some 800 acres. Its per acre yield is about 50 baskets. According to the research finds, the native of the Hamsi strain is believed to be China or Thailand but it is not local strain. The experimental cultivation of Hamsi strain in Monywa region showed success along with high yield and export quality. A new soya bean strain is being tested on the 500-acre field in Kyaukhtat region near Bawsai Road in Heho Township. It is an export quality strain and yields about 50 baskets per acre. Its total oil content is the same as Hamsi strain.

The North-East Command Headquarters is making preparations to increase the sown acreage of a new Chinese soya bean strain from 60 to 500 acres around Lashio. Its seed is highly marketable with high oil content and a little bigger than Thai strain GBS, which is currently grown there. More than 48,000 acres are put under monsoon soya bean strain called local strain in Shan State (North) and the output is expected to be over 700,000 baskets. Now, the per acre yield has increased from 20 to 50 baskets due to the use of seeders, high-yield strain and modern agricultural methods.

Now, Myanmar exports soya bean to Singapore, Malaysia, India, China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea through border trade and regular trade. They import Myanmar soya bean as oil bearing crop rather than a kitchen crop.

The strain with larger seeds and high oil content is in high demand in foreign markets, and what local farmers should do is just to place emphasis on boosting per acre yield.

Local farmers in Kyaukme, Hsenwi and Lashio Townships in Shan State (North) are growing the strains under their own arrangements. Therefore, all local farmers are urged to choose only quality strains with larger seeds and high oil content so as to boost export of soya bean.

(Translation: MS)

Myanma Alin, Kyemon: 24-1-2005

Emergency relief phase almost over in Aceh

BANDA ACEH (Indonesia), 24 Jan — The emergency relief phase is almost over in Indonesia's tsunami-ravaged Aceh, the minister in charge of the province said on Sunday.

Alwi Shihab, Indonesia's chief social welfare minister, said that, moving ahead, civilian relief workers would be of more use than foreign militaries.

"I think that is only logical (that they scale down), not only the Americans but the Singaporeans as well. The Singaporeans are bringing in more engineers and civilians and withdrawing military," Shihab told reporters as he observed preparations for one of several

planned refugee relocation camps.

"The emergency stage is almost behind us, so the military will no longer be as effective to give their contribution. Civilians are needed," he said.

"We are opening up isolated areas through ground transportation, so we don't need more helicopters to fly.

We need more pickups (trucks) to go to isolated villages."

Shihab's comments contrast with UN officials who have said US Navy helicopters remain a key tool for reaching isolated pockets of people four weeks after the quake and tsunami, which

killed more than 166,000 Indonesians.

The presence of foreign military personnel, particularly the Americans, in Aceh has been a sensitive issue for authorities in the world's most populous Muslim nation.

Shihab said the people of Aceh were beginning to cope better with the situation.

"They are moving on ... we have our religious clerics going around to comfort them, talk to them, and try to get them to cope with the new situation.

I think they are now in a better condition. They can understand. They can accept the reality."

MNA/Reuters

Dengue fever claims three in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, 24 Jan — A total of 2,465 suspected dengue cases with three deaths had been reported in Malaysia since January 1, Malaysian Health Minister Chua Soi

Lek said Saturday.

The number could increase during the current rainy season if the disease was not checked, Dr Chua told reporters after opening the Malaysian Society

of Hypertension's second scientific meeting here.

The local councils must rid areas under their jurisdiction of mosquito breeding grounds or face being fined, he said.

The Cabinet last Wednesday directed the Health Ministry to strictly impose the penalty on errant local councils, he said, adding the ruling had extended beyond the local councils' compounds to include vacant lands, playgrounds and landfills.

According to earlier reports, as a preventive measure, the Health Ministry has inspected 2.83 million premises throughout the country, of which the owners of 14,186 premises were fined for breeding mosquitoes, 59 were charged in court and 13 closed down.

MNA/Xinhua

British research ship to survey near epicentre of deadly Quake

Jakarta, 24 Jan — A British research ship will survey the sea floor near the epicentre of the earthquake that triggered the Indian Ocean tsunami to gather data for an early warning system, the British Embassy in Indonesia said.

The *HMS Scott* will "collect data to help scientists assess the stability of the tectonic plates", the embassy in Jakarta said in a statement. The ship was expected to arrive in the area on Saturday.

The vessel, which is fitted with a multi-beam sonar suite enabling the mapping of the ocean floor, can retrieve information from waters up to 5,000 metres deep, making it the first ship capable of such an assessment to reach the region off the west coast of Indonesia's Aceh Province, the embassy said.

The data is expected to help predict natural events in the affected area and develop an early warning system. — *MNA/Reuters*

Myanmar Fishery Federation opens...

(from page 1)

now a six-year old organization, and under it were 58 branches doing their own functions.

In addition to her fresh water and sea resources, its environment is still in its pristine stage. The fresh water area of the major rivers and their tributaries is about 8.2 million hectares. About six million hectares of land of the nation are formed as lakes for six to eight months every year. Moreover, reservoirs contributes another 1.8 million hectares for fresh water aquatic creatures.

As Myanmar is an

agro-based country, priority must be given to setting up fish farms on land which is not in use for agriculture. Cage breeding should be conducted in natural waterbodies and coastal areas for long-term interest. The task of putting fingerlings in the natural waterbodies should be given priority to developing the local fish industry. The progress of fish farming sector will also help develop feedstuff and ice industries, transport and generate new jobs.

In conclusion, he urged the MFF to try to become as a national force serving the coun-

try's interest; to play a role for the emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation; to help raise the nation's dignity in addition to its own image; to strive to run business shoulder to shoulder with the AFF and private industries of other ASEAN nations; and to make efforts for its consolidation.

Also present were Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, members of the MFF, other related bodies



Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe visits a booth of the Marine Products Exhibition. — MNA

and social organizations and other officials.

Annawa Fishery Holdings Ltd presented K 3 million to the federation. Fisheries and Marine Product 2000 Ltd, Yuzana Con-

struction, Minzani Company, Yuzana Seafood Export Co Ltd, Yuzana Aqua & Agriculture Co Ltd, Benhur Trading Co Ltd and Fortune International Co Ltd also contrib-

uted K 1 million each to it.

The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries and private companies open 34 booths at the exhibition held at the MFF.

MNA



Minister Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Director-General U Than Tun and MFF President U Htay Myint formally open the exhibition. — MNA



The new building of Myanmar Fishery Federation.

MNA

Meeting of Directors-General of Agricultural...

(from page 1)

In Myanmar, total crop sown area accounts for 41.32 million acres (16.72 million hectares). Concerted efforts are exerted to increase rice production so as to meet the requirements of both increasing local consumption and international market demand. Traditionally, paddy was grown once a year, mainly as monsoon crop. With an introduction of the summer paddy programme in 1992, rice is being produced throughout the year. Total sown area of summer paddy reached 2.7 million acres (1.1 million hectares) in the year 2003-2004. Various irrigation projects are being implemented along with the increase in the utilization of available water,

particularly for agriculture development. The number of dams and reservoirs constructed after 1988 to date is 170. The number of river water pumping projects completed after 1988 to date is 271.

For control of shifting land cultivation, upland reclamation scheme was launched in the year 2003, achieving 12,070 acres (4,887 hectares), and is currently extended for further development to increase agricultural production.

Under the systematic agricultural planning, our rice production has significantly increased, and stands as one of the top rice producing countries in ASEAN. Myanmar also plays the leading role among ASEAN countries in pulses production.

These efforts are intended to fulfill national and regional food security and we will continue to diligently use our natural resources to the fullest extent. Introducing high-quality and high-yielding strains, and

transforming from traditional to mechanized farming are also significant measures for agricultural development.

May I inform the status of food security and information activities of our country. Although concerted efforts are being made into account on food security, there are still some weaknesses in process of food information system such as data collection, analysis and dissemination, due to incapability of modern technology and insufficient facilities. Also preparation of National Food Balance Sheet is delayed, requiring some technical assistance.

In Myanmar, 75% of its population resides in rural areas and agriculture sector provides 38% of total GDP. Agriculture sector remains basic in our national economy, and in the year 2003, Myanmar Agricultural Census was conducted to obtain the relevant and reliable agricultural data which can provide basic indicators in preparation of the National Food Balance Sheet.

Field enumeration and data collection on agricultural production, consumption, family farm income and other economic indicators are taken annually to ensure the correct information in publication of the national economic statistics.

However, some countries in this region, in conducting the same work are facing some difficulties in obtaining reliable data and information in timely manner. At this juncture, introduction of modern technology will improve these work's activities efficiently and effectively. I am sure that discussions in this meeting will be providing us valuable outcomes to overcome these constraints and difficulties.

(See page 9)



Deputy Minister U Ohn Myint delivers an introductory speech. — MNA

Deputy Minister for Transport leaves to attend ASEAN-China workshop on tsunami disaster warning

YANGON, 24 Jan — A delegation led by Deputy Minister for Transport U Pe Than left here to attend ASEAN-China workshop on tsunami disaster warning caused by an underwater earth-

quake to be held in Beijing, the People's Republic of China from 24 to 25 this month.

The delegation was seen off at the airport by Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Thein Swe and officials.

The delegation comprises Director-General of Relief and Resettlement U Than Oo and Assistant Director of Meteorology and Hydrology Department Daw Yi Yi Nyein.

MNA



Minister Maj-Gen Thein Swe sees off Deputy Minister U Pe Than and party on their departure for China. — TRANSPORT

Annual General Meeting of Myanmar Fishery Federation held

YANGON, 24 Jan—The sixth Annual General Meeting of the Myanmar Fisheries Federation under the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries took place at the office of MFF in East Gyogon, Insein Township at 10.30 am today.

It was attended by Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, directors-general and managing directors of departments and enterprises under the ministry, departmental officials, CEC members of MFF and others.

Minister Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein made a speech on the occasion. He said that generating of foreign exchange earnings through marine products of Myanmar stood third position; that it is required to boost the export quality and explore foreign mar-

kets, and wished the MFF to see constant success.

Next, President of MFF U Htay Myint extended greetings.

Then, Secretary of MFF U Kyi Ngwe read the CEC's report and financial report and sought the approval.

Later, a representative of Myanmar Fisheries Federation (Upper Myanmar) reported on the work done.

Afterwards, Director-General of Fisheries Department U Than Tun spoke, and 45 new CEC members were elected.

The meeting came to a close with the concluding remarks by President of MFF U Htay Myint.—MNA



Minister Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein addresses Annual General Meeting of Myanmar Fishery Federation. — MNA

Construction Minister tours Ayeyawady Division

YANGON, 24 Jan — Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun inspected the Panmawady river-crossing bridge construction project on Patheingyi Motor Road yesterday.

At the briefing hall, engineers reported on progress of the construction of the bridge. After hearing the reports, the minister gave instructions on implementation of the project in accord with the set standard.

The bridge is of steel beam type and its length is 540 feet. The approach road on Myaungmya bank is 360 feet, while that on Patheingyi bank is 360 feet. The bridge has a 20-foot-wide motor road and a three-foot-wide pedestrian lane on both sides. The bridge can withstand 60 tons of loads.

The bridge will shorten the travel miles to 33 miles and one furlong.

In the afternoon, Minister Maj-Gen Saw Tun oversaw the road construction at Patheingyi Road, Myaungmya-Einme Road, Wakema-Kyungon Road, and Pantanaw-Shwelaung-Wakema Road.

At the Hnetpyawso bridge reconstruction project, the minister inspected the construction works and gave instructions on timely completion of the project. —MNA



Meeting of Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics and Information in ASEAN+3 Countries and Third Focal Point Meeting in progress. — MNA

Meeting of Directors-General of Agricultural...

(from page 8)

In conclusion, on behalf of the Government of the Union of Myanmar, and on my own behalf, I would like to convey again our appreciation for having this opportunity to host the meeting for Directors-General of Agricultural Statistics and In-

formation of ASEAN+3 Countries. I would like to urge all delegates to fully cooperate and actively participate in the deliberations of the meeting for the successful conclusion. I wish all of you a pleasant and joyful stay in Myanmar.

Director-General of

Settlement and Land Records Department U Win Kyi extended greetings and Statistics Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forest and Fisheries of Japan Mr Kozo Konoshi delivered an opening speech.

After the opening ceremony, the deputy minis-

Merchants check jade, gem lots

YANGON, 24 Jan — Local and foreign merchants are checking jade and gem lots they are going to buy in tender and auction systems at the 18th sales of Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Limited on 27 January.

Ninety-three foreign merchants and their 276 local counterparts inspected 308 lots of jade and 317 lots of gems at the Gems Mart, the venue

of the sales, and in its compound on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here today. The inspection time ends on 5.30 pm on 26 January.

Managing Director of the UMEHL Maj-Gen Win Hlaing (Retd) cordially greeted them at the mart today. He also observed the lots in the mart and the compound.

MNA



Director-General U Win Kyi extends greetings at the meeting. MNA



Japanese Director-General Mr Kozo Konishi delivers address at the meeting. — MNA

ter and senior officials of ASEAN+3 countries posed for documentary

photos. The first day session of the meeting ended at

5.30 pm. The meeting continues till 28 January.—MNA

The 58th Anniversary Union Day objectives

- For all national races to safeguard the national policy— non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty
- To keep the Union spirit ever alive and dynamic among the national people
- For all national people to defend and safeguard the Union for its perpetual existence
- To prevent, through national solidarity, the danger of internal and external destructive elements undermining peace and stability of the State and national development, and
- For all national races to make concerted efforts for successful implementation of the seven-point future policy programme



Minister U Thaung presents a prize to an outstanding student at the prize presentation ceremony of the Ministry of Science and Technology on 24 January. — MNA

Sports Minister addresses work coordination meeting

YANGON, 24 Jan— Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint this morning attended the work coordination meeting held at the National Indoor Stadium-1 in Thuwunna here and made a speech on the occasion.

Also present on the occasion were Director-General of Sports and Physical Education Department U Thaung Htaik, deputy directors-general,

assistant directors and others.

First, Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint made a speech.

Next, Director-General of Sports and Physical Education Department U Thaung Htaik reported on execution of duties in states and divisions, deputy directors and assistant directors of states and divisions on work carried out and officials of Institute of Sports and Physical Education

(Yangon) and Institute of Sports and Physical Education (Mandalay) on courses on combined sports and education and sports training courses.

This was followed by a general round of discussions.

Next, Deputy Director-General U Maung Ko of SPED reported on steps being taken for boosting the standard of football and Deputy Director-General U Thein Aung and directors on other salient

points.

The meeting ended with the concluding remarks by the minister.

At 4.30 pm, the minister attended the opening of Myanmar Olympic Committee Trophy's Round robin Hockey Tourny (Men) held at the Theinbyu Hockey Pitch and formally opened it.

In the match, team of Defence Services Record Office played against No 11 LID.

MNA

Fourth MICT Week 2005 draws host of enthusiasts

YANGON, 24 Jan — Under joint sponsorship of the National Task Force for Electronic Committee of the Union of Myanmar in cooperation with the Myanmar Information and Communication Development Cooperation, the Fourth Myanmar Information and Technology Week 2005 continued for the fourth day at the Myanmar Information and Communication Technology Park (MICT) in Hline Township here today. On display at the exhibition are ICT projects of ministries and tasks for the realization of e-government and staff management.

Private computer-related companies opened their booths at the exhibi-



Knowledge seekers observe booths at the Fourth Myanmar ICT Week 2005.

MNA

tion.

Today, SNA Co Ltd gave talks on Software Presentation, and ACE Data System Co Ltd on Active Enterprise Resource Planning and Other

ACE Software Presentation, followed by a workshop on Outsourcing Opportunities and Challenges.

The exhibition attracted a large number of

students and people from all walks of life including monks.

The exhibition will be kept open till 27 January from 10 am to 5 pm. Admission is free. — MNA

National Management College invites applications

YANGON, 24 Jan — A part-time ten-week course on Certificate in English for Secretaries will be opened at National Management College as of 31 January from 7 am to 9 am through Monday to Friday.

Likewise, a part-time six-week course on Understanding Networking Fundamentals will also be opened for those whose education is higher than matriculation level. The course will start as of 31 Janu-

ary every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The similar nine-week course will be opened as of the same day on Saturdays and Sundays.

Interested persons should apply to the National Management College, Merchant Street, Botahtaung Township, Yangon, as of 24 January.

For further information, contact should be made at the college by the phone number 290034.

MNA

District news

Wellwishers' tubewell opened in Thabeikkyin

THABEIKKYIN, 20 Jan — Local people in Kyahnyat Village of Thabeikkyin Township enjoyed supply of water after opening a tubewell on 26 December.

Chairman of the Township Peace and Development Council U Thein Win and Executive Officer of Township Development Affairs Committee U Kyaw Moe Hlaing opened the tubewell. It is a two-inch diameter tubewell sunk at a cost of K 330,640 by Sabin Thayayay Bank and K 989,360 by Township DAC. The tubewell pumps 1,000 gallons of potable water an hour. — KYEMON

Bus lines launched in Taze

TAZE, 12 Jan — For ensuring smooth transport of the local people, the launching ceremony of Taze-Mawke and Taze-Padee bus lines under the leadership of Taze Township Union Solidarity and Development Association was held at the Bus Terminal of Shwetaze Bus Association in Taze on 2 December.

Secretary of Township Peace and Development Council U Kyaw Naing and departmental officials, Secretary of the Township USDA U Win Zaw Myint and members, townselders and bus owners attended the ceremony.

KYEMON

Village self-reliant library opened in Bawlakhe

BAWLAKHE, 5 Jan — The self-reliant library was put into service at Village Basic Education Primary School in Nannauk Village of Bawlakhe Township on 29 December.

District Union Solidarity and Development Association Executive U Kyi Win and officials opened the library. Photo Technician-2 U Hla Shwe of Bawlakhe District Information and Public Relations Department gave talks on the purpose of the opening the library. Executive U Kyi Win on donations of books and handed over various kinds of books to Chairman of Village PDC U Ba Myint.

KYEMON

Myinmu gets tubewell in rural area

MYINMU, 20 Jan — The Government has been implementing the five-task rural development plan throughout the nation including border areas. On 9 January, Myinmu Township Development Affairs Committee opened the tubewell in Kanswe Village.

Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U San Ngwe, Executive Officer U Tin Oo Lay and Chairman of the tubewell-sinking committee U Hsay cut the ribbon to put the tubewell into service.

The tubewell is four inches diameter one. It was sunk by the committee, spending K 793,000. The tubewell pumps 2,400 gallons of water an hour in supplying water to the local people.

KYEMON

School Family Day opened in Palaw

Palaw, 20 Jan — The School Family Day programme was opened at Basic Education High School in Palaw Township on 3 January.

Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U Than Tun presented prizes to winners for their outstanding performance in the subjectwise, those in the higher education level Tatmadaw Day commemorative quiz (central level) and those in essay and poem contests. Next, students performed arts entertainment to the enthusiasts.

KYEMON

Iraqi militant group kidnaps Brazilian

DUBAI, 24 Jan — A militant group said it had abducted a Brazilian man in an attack on a US firm in Iraq in which it also killed a Briton and another Brazilian, Arab satellite television Al-Jazeera said on Saturday.

The group calling itself Al Mujahedin Squadrons (Saraya al-Mujahedin) said it had carried out the attack in cooperation with Iraqi militant group Army of Ansar al-Sunna, and showed in an Internet video an identification card of a Brazilian man, the channel said.

It was not clear if this was the same operation claimed by Army of Ansar al-Sunna in which it had earlier said it abducted and killed a Swede and a Briton working for an in-

telligence agency linked to US forces in the central city of Baiji. Sweden denied on Saturday that a Swede had been killed and said the victim was most likely Iraqi.

A Briton and an Iraqi employed by London-based Janusian Security Risk Management were killed on Wednesday in an ambush while travelling in a convoy near Baiji. The US military said a third foreign national missing was Brazilian. The Brazilian worked for Brazil's

Odebrecht industrial group and was in Iraq to repair a thermoelectric power generator.

The Internet video aired by Al-Jazeera showed an identification card with the name Joao Jose Vasconcelos Jr.

The tape, which has not appeared on Army of Ansar al-Sunna's web site or other main Islamist sites, showed four masked men, one of whom was reading a statement but his remarks were not audible. It did not show the hostage. — *MNA/Reuters*

Fertilizer shortage in Zimbabwe may affect cotton output

HARARE, 24 Jan — Zimbabwe is facing a shortage of ammonium nitrate, which might reduce cotton production this year, an official said on Sunday.

A cotton specialist with Cottrade Private (Ltd), Obert Jiri said cotton yield might drop to around 280,000 tons from the expected 350,000 tons if farmers don't get the commodity in time.

"The major problem that is likely to reduce cotton yield is the shortage of ammonium nitrate," Jiri said.

"The shortage of the fertilizer is quite critical at the moment. Seed houses like Seedco are getting 60,000 tons of ammonium nitrate fertilizer per week instead of 100,000 tons." Jiri said representations

about the shortage of the commodity had been made to the government, which has since announced that imports were being made from South Africa to augment local stocks. The cotton specialist said yields could still reach the projected 350,000 tons if the commodity was made available within the next two to three months.

Zimbabwe has been facing shortages of seed and fertilizer in the last few years due to low production capacity.

The country produced 340,000 tons of cotton worth close to 160 million US dollars last year.

The crop has emerged as one of the country's major foreign currency earners in recent years. — *MNA/Xinhua*

Official says no polio case reported in Tanzania in 8 years

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 24 Jan — "No case of polio has been reported in Tanzania in the past eight years, poising the East African country for a Polio Free Certificate to be issued by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Other factors contributing toward Tanzania's polio free status include that none of the countries that share borders with Tanzania has reported polio in recent years, according to Ali Mzige, director of prevention from Tanzania's Health Ministry.

Local newspaper *The Citizen* quoted the health official as saying that though there was no epidemiological surveillance in Tanzania since 1996, no case of polio has been reported.

Any state to be recognized as polio free has to

be free from the crippling disease for three years in a row and its neighbours have also to be polio free.

The World Health Organization is investigating whether there are still traces of the disease in Tanzania before issuing the polio free certificate.

Poliomyelitis, to give it its full name, is a highly infectious viral disease that was once prevalent in Europe and the Americas but has been wiped out in much of the world, except in a dozen countries. Polio spreads from the intestines and attacks the brain

and spinal cord, causing paralysis, muscle wastage and even death.

In 1988, there were 35.25 million reported cases of polio worldwide whereas in 1998 the number of polio cases reported worldwide dropped to below one million.

Ali Mzige warned that despite the sound record of Tanzania, there is still a danger of the disease creeping back, in that air and sea travel enable people in polio endemic countries to spread the disease into previously safe countries. — *MNA/Xinhua*



Ademilton, a 16.7 pound (7.57 kilogram) baby boy is seen at the Albert Sabin Maternity Hospital in Salvador, 1,450 kilometers 900 miles northeast of Sao Paulo, in the state of Bahia, on 18 Jan, 2005. — INTERNET

Water taps working again in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 24 Jan — Fresh drinking water flowed in thousands of Baghdad homes for the first time in a week on Sunday after engineers repaired supply pipes which had been damaged by guerilla bombs.

For some residents in the beleaguered Iraqi capital, this was the first drinking water to trickle through their taps since January 15, when guerillas blew up pipes leading from the Karkh water plant which serves the entire western half of the city.

"Thank God the water is back," said Kerrar al-Shuwaili, 26, a resident of western Baghdad.

"Now we can drink pure water again and avoid disease. I hope they (the guerillas) don't hit them any more."

The government confirmed the Karkh plant was once again working at full capacity.

The water shortage

provided a major headache for thousands of Baghdadis, already grappling with a sporadic electricity supply and endless lines to buy fuel — not to mention a daily dose of bombs and mortars.

"I can't believe people would target water, fuel and electricity," said Ahmed, who lives in the Huriya District of Baghdad, one of the worst affected areas.

"I can look forward again to washing my clothes and taking a bath," he said, adding that during the crisis traders had sold 20-litre containers of drinking water on his street for 1,500 Iraqi dinars (1 dollar).

The average Iraqi earns about 200 dollars a month. The week-long water crisis sparked fears of an outbreak of cholera or other water-borne diseases, particularly when 300 people were taken to hospital in west Baghdad complaining of stomach problems or of having been "poisoned".

Through all the hardships of recent decades, Iraq — which is mostly desert but boasts two of the world's major rivers — has seldom been short of drinking water.

This week's shortage prompted some Baghdadis to dig wells in their gardens in the hope of striking water.

MNA/Reuters

Bomb explosion kills 3, injures 5 in Algerian capital

ALGIERS, 24 Jan — A bomb placed by Islamic rebels exploded at a cemetery south of the Algerian capital, killing three women and injuring five others visiting loved ones during the Muslim Eid al-Adha holiday, newspapers said on Sunday.

The home-made bomb blew up at the entrance of a mausoleum in Ain Romana some 530 miles south of Algiers on Friday, the second day of the Muslim feast, newspaper *El Khabar* said.

The area has traditionally been a hotbed for rebel activity, particularly by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which authorities said last week was dismantled after years of deadly attacks.

Separately, a soldier had his throat

slit by rebels of the al-Qaeda-aligned Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) at a fake road block on the eve of the two-day holiday in the Bejaia Province some 100 kilometres east of Algiers, newspapers said.

Rebels dressed as soldiers and carrying Kalashnikov AK-47s took money and mobile phones from several other motorists and handed out GSPC leaflets, *El Khabar* said citing witnesses.

MNA/Reuters



MotoGP world champion Valentino Rossi (L) rides his new Yamaha YZR-M1 in front of Nicky Hayden from Repsol Team Honda during the MotoGP 2005 pre-season starts at the Sepang International Circuit near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on 23 Jan, 2005. — INTERNET

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 Dated. 25 January 2005.

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV KOTA MUTIARA VOY NO (175)
 Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA MUTIARA VOY NO (175) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-1-2005 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
 Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm upto Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharged of cargo from the vessel.
 No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER
 Phone : 256908/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV BOUGAIN VILLA VOY NO (075)
 Consignees of cargo carried on MV BOUGAIN VILLA VOY NO (075) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-1-2005 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
 Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm upto Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharged of cargo from the vessel.
 No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S PREMIER SPECTRUM
 Phone : 256908/378316/376797

Berlusconi to urge its citizens to cut down on unneeded medicines
 ROME, 24 Jan — Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi will write to 16 million households across Italy asking them to cut down on medicines they do not need, for the sake of their own health and the government's coffers.
 According to a newspaper report, the government is also set to ban lavish promotional gifts that drugs companies give doctors, in a crackdown on medical spending in a country where drug sales are worth 18 billion euros (23 billion US dollars) a year.
 "We invite you to take only those medicines which are essential," Berlusconi says in a letter that will be sent out next month with an 80-page booklet of advice on "the correct use of pharmaceuticals."
MNA/Reuters

ARRIVAL/CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV "MANDALAY" VOY NO 145/N
 Consignees of cargo carried on MV "MANDALAY" VOY No 145/N are hereby notified that the vessel has arrived at Yangon Port on 25-1-2005 and will be berthing on about 26-1-2005 and cargoes will be discharged into the premises of Myanma Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the bye-laws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
 Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.30 am and 12 noon to 4 pm upto Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.
 No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
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More than 2.5 million people take part at haj in Mecca

MECCA (Saudi Arabia), 23 Jan — Muslim pilgrims performed final rites of the haj on Saturday, with many praising its safety following fears of stampedes or al-Qaeda strikes.
 More than 2.5 million people took part in this year's haj, which was marred last year by a stampede that killed 250 people at a stoning ritual in the narrow Mena valley near Mecca. But new measures by the Saudi authorities have managed to avert deadly crushes, although unseasonable heavy rains caused unexpected crowding at the Jamarat stoning site on the last day of the pilgrimage. Muslims throw pebbles at stone walls representing the devil — an act aimed at purifying the soul and rejecting temptation — before heading to Mecca for a final circling of the Kaaba, which Muslims believe is the house of God. Pilgrims will start heading home late on Sunday.
 "I'm happy and relieved," said Mehmet Cevik, a civil servant from Turkey doing haj with his wife and child. "This has been my great wish for several years now."
 "I feel great, everything has been great. Thank God for our safety," added Saudi pilgrim Hussein Ahmed.
 Saudi Arabia has revamped the Jamarat area, expanding the stoning tar-

gets and deploying thousands of security forces.
 Newly installed cameras helped thwart a potential disaster on Saturday by alerting police to obstacles that were blocking the path of the pilgrims.
 "There were some people moving in a strange way, so we had to control the area. We found chairs, wheelchairs and luggage. If we had left it, it could have changed to a disaster," Interior Ministry spokesman Mansour al-Turki said.
 Pilgrims, in white robes meant to eradicate differences in race and class between Muslims, have poured into the Jamarat area since Thursday, the first day of the stoning ritual and the start of Eid al-Adha. This year's pilgrimage is being held under the threat of al-Qaeda-linked violence in the kingdom, which has been battling the group for nearly two years.
MNA/Reuters



Chinese auto sales are likely to continue to slow in 2005 and the high growth seen early in the decade will probably never return, state media said, citing a leading industry analyst. —INTERNET

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Malaysia urges US to furnish evidence on allegation against Iran

KUALA LUMPUR, 23 Jan — Malaysia Saturday urged the United States to furnish a "hard and irrefutable evidence" to backup its allegation that Teheran's nuclear capabilities are a threat to the world.
 "At this time, we don't know what kind of information they (United States) have on Iran's nuclear capabilities.
 What the world wants and must insist is hard and irrefutable evidence if at all Iran is a threat to the world," Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak told reporters after meeting the state liaison committee members of the ruling United Malays

National Organization in southern state of Johor. "I don't think that anyone is convinced at this stage, that Iran is a threat to the world," he said.
 In his inaugural speech, US President George W Bush, who won the US presidential election to lead the country for a second term, had indicated that the United States might attack Iran if Teheran did not abort its nuclear programme.
 Najib, who is also defence minister, said it was clear that any action must be based on international law and the United Nations Charter.
MNA/Xinhua

ပညာရေးနှင့် ဓာတ်မိပ္ပံဖြိုးတိုးတတ်လာ နိုင်ငံတော်ကြီး တည်ဆောက်ဖို့

“Blue” band wins top honour at France’s music awards

CANNES (France), 24 Jan—British boy band Blue pipped Irish rock group U2 to a top honour at France’s biggest music awards on Saturday night, with hip-hop group Black Eyed Peas and pop band Maroon 5 scooping awards of their own.

The award show, hosted by European radio group NRJ, featured performances from R&B star Usher and Jennifer Lopez, who performed her new song “Get Right” accompanied by dancers clad in schoolgirl outfits.

Blue won the award for best international group, beating U2 who received a special achievement award that was presented to lead singer Bono by supermodel Naomi Campbell.

“I’m not from this

country but I’ll make a little confession to you — it’s at the Cote d’Azur I feel at home,” Bono said in French.

Several members of U2 own homes a stone’s throw from the awards venue in Cannes.

Maroon 5 — actually Maroon 2 for the night, with the rest of the band’s members unable to attend — won two awards, for best new international artist and best international song.

Guitarist Jesse Car-

michael said the band, which has been without bassist Ryan Dusick due to a shoulder injury, hopes to be back at full strength soon.

“We’ve been touring so intensely... hopefully he’ll be back in the spring,” Carmichael said.

Black Eyed Peas picked up the best international album gong for “Elephunk”. French singer Jenifer also took home two awards, for best French female singer and best French album.

MNA/Reuters

SPORTS

Arsenal keep faint title hopes with tense 1-0 win over Newcastle

LONDON, 24 Jan — Arsenal kept their faint Premier League title hopes flickering with a tense 1-0 victory over an off-colour Newcastle United at Highbury on Sunday.

Arsenal’s 35-year-old Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp scored the winner after 19 minutes to lift the champions back above Manchester United into second place, although they still trail runaway leaders Chelsea by a mammoth 10 points.

With 14 games to go Chelsea, who beat Portsmouth 3-0 on Saturday, have 61 points, with Arsenal on 51 and United, 3-1 winners over Aston Villa on Saturday, on 50.

Bergkamp finished neatly after 19 minutes to settle a bad-tempered match and only some fine goalkeeping by Newcastle’s Shay Given and some wasteful Arsenal finishing kept the score down.

Newcastle manager Graeme Souness, who left out Welsh international Craig Bellamy after a midweek training row, warned Chelsea that Arsenal were not out of the title race yet.

“They are still very much in the hunt,” he told reporters. “You would be

a fool to write them off. Until it’s mathematically impossible, you’ve got to believe that.

“Arsenal blew up big style a couple of years ago. Anything is possible.”

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was delighted with Bergkamp, whose goal ended a 17-game barren run.

“He gave us his vision and his technical ability. It was a big goal today,” said the Frenchman.

“Physically he cannot be like he was when he was 27 or 28 but he has super class. He has the science of knowing where to stand on the pitch and of course when he gets the ball he knows what to do with it.

“For us it was important to win today. We have dropped many points at home. The focus was better today. We take the position of Chelsea as a challenge. They are in a very strong position, I don’t deny that but we want to go as far as we can.—MNA/Reuters

Foreign trade recorded \$200m in Tibet last year

LHASA, 24 Jan — Southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region posted a record high 223 million US dollars of foreign trade in 2004, posing a 38.7-per-cent rise over the previous year.

The autonomous region did 130 million US dollars of exports and 93 million US dollars of imports throughout the year, climbing 6.9 percent and 136.7 percent respectively over the 2003 figures, said Tan Yungao, director of the regional commerce department.

General trade totalled 132 million US dollars, including 44 million US dollars of exports and 88 million US dollars of imports, Tan told an ongoing meeting on the region’s commerce work in the re-

gional capital Lhasa.

In 2004, Tibet did 90.66 million US dollars of border trade, up 17 percent over the previous year. This includes 85.6 million US dollars of exports and 5.06 million US dollars of imports.

The autonomous region also exported 27.72 million US dollars of homegrown products, up 110.47 percent year-on-year and accounting for 21.3 percent of the region’s total export volume of the year.

MNA/Xinhua

China lowers stamp tax imposed on securities transaction

BEIJING, 24 Jan — The Ministry of Finance announced Sunday it will lower the stamp tax from two to one per thousand beginning Monday.

An official with the ministry said the tax cut, which has been approved by the State Council, or the Chinese central government, is intended to help promote the growth of the securities markets.

Experts say the move will help reduce stamp tax revenues by billions of yuan per year, but the decision is good news for the country’s bearish stock markets, which slumped to record lows in nearly six years during the past week.

Chinese stockmarkets have been bearish, and investment sentiment has been quite weak for the past several years, owing to irregularities by listed firms, securities firms and structural problems of the stock market system.

China imposed a six per thousand stamp tax on stock transactions when its stock markets were created since 1990. The tax rate was later readjusted a couple of times. China has collected more than 100 billion yuan (some 12 billion US dollars) in stamp tax on stock transactions since then.

MNA/Xinhua



Arsenal’s Mathieu Flamini (16) hugs Denis Bergkamp after he scored against Newcastle during their Premiership football match at Highbury Stadium in London.—INTERNET

Real keep in touch with Barca

MADRID, 24 Jan—Real Madrid clawed back to within seven points of Primera Liga leaders Barcelona after a hard won 3-1 home win over relegation prospects Real Mallorca on Sunday.

A Luis Figo penalty, a tap-in by defender Walter Samuel and a brilliant shot from substitute Santiago Solari in injury time secured the victory that puts Madrid on 41 points from 20 games.

Their battling display keeps Real’s slim title hopes alive after Barcelona beat Racing Santander 3-0 on Saturday.

Third-placed Valencia fell further off the pace after losing 3-1 at Villarreal thanks to a hat-trick from Argentine playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme who put on an inspired performance.

Madrid took the lead at the Bernabeu in the 36th minute with a Luis Figo penalty but, despite dominating possession, failed to capitalize on a string of free kicks and corners.

A series of penetrating crosses from David Beckham were not exploited

by Brazilian striker Ronaldo and captain Raul, who has scored only four league goals so far this season.

Madrid began to look anxious when Mallorca, languishing second from bottom of the table, equalized with a free kick from midfielder Alejandro Campano that curled around the wall and caught out goalkeeper Iker Casillas at his near post.

However, with French playmaker Zinedine Zidane looking more dangerous than he has for most of the season, Real were always favourites to go in front again.

The goal came in the 80th minute, after Mallorca were reduced to 10 men by the dismissal of new signing Mark Iuliano, when Samuel poked home in a goalmouth scramble after a corner.

MNA/Reuters



Asian actor Stephen Chow arrives for the screening of his directorial debut film ‘Kung Fu Hustle’ which is screening at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah, on 23 Jan, 2005.—INTERNET

Drive safely

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Federer serves: Top seed Roger Federer of Switzerland serves against Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus in their men's singles fourth round match at the 2005 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne.—INTERNET

Australian open tennis Tourney

MELBOURNE, 24 Jan — Sixth seed Guillermo Coria continued Argentina's good showing at the Australian Open when he crushed former French Open champion Juan Carlos Ferrero 6-3, 6-2, 6-1 to reach the fourth round on Saturday.

The baseliners got off to a nervous start as they swapped four service breaks in the opening six games on Rod Laver Arena centre court before the 23-year-old Coria gradually began to assert himself against the 31st seeded Spaniard.

Coria grew in confidence against Ferrero, a semifinalist here last year and 2003 Roland Garros champion, and quickly shut his opponent out in what had been expected to be a long baseline battle.

Last year's French Open runner-up, Coria broke three times in the final set to finish off the match in a little over two hours, matching his best performance in Melbourne.

He now faces a possible meeting with compatriot and ninth seed David Nalbandian, who plays Chilean 23rd seed Fernando Gonzalez in a third round match.

Earlier, 12th seeded Argentine Guillermo Canas joined Coria in the last 16 when he saw off Czech Radek Stepanek in straight sets.

Later in the day, 25th seed Juan Ignacio Chela will bid to join his compatriots in the fourth round when he plays third seed and local hope Lleyton Hewitt.

French Open champion Anastasia

Myskina was handed an easy passage into the fourth round of the Australian Open when 25th seed Lisa Raymond withdrew from their match with a stomach muscle injury.

The American thrashed Czech Klara Koukalova to reach the third round but injured a left stomach muscle after only one game of a second-round doubles match on Friday. She and partner Rennae Stubbs were forced to retire from that match.

Raymond announced her withdrawal from the match against third seed Myskina before play on Saturday.

Myskina will play either 14th seed Francesca Schiavone of Italy or Frenchwoman Nathalie Dechy, the 19th seed, in a bid for her third successive appearance in the Melbourne quarterfinals.

Myskina becomes the sixth Russian woman to reach the round of 16, with sixth seed Elena Dementieva, 18th seed Elena Likhovtseva and unseeded Tatiana Panova bidding to join them.

Croatia's Karolina Sprem reached the fourth round of the Australian Open after brushing aside 18th seed Elena Likhovtseva of Russia 6-4, 6-3 on Saturday.—MNA/Reuters

Buick invitational golf tournament

NEW YORK, 24 Jan — Tiger Woods closed the final hole of his fog-delayed second round at the 4.5 million US dollars Buick Invitational in style on Saturday, carding a birdie to finish at nine-under 63, three strokes behind leader Tom Lehman.

Woods, a twice former winner at California's Torrey Pines Country Club, completed a brilliant round that was disrupted after fog caused play to be suspended on Friday and pushed back tee times two and a half hours on Saturday.

The world number two scorched the North course in near record fashion, carding 10 birdies with his only blemish a bogey on the par four seventh.

Australia's Peter Lonard also needed to complete one hole to close out a bogey-free round at seven-under 65 to move into a tie with Woods at 12-under.

Americans Kevin Sutherland and Dudley Hart will begin the third round five shots behind the leader at 10-under with Britain's Luke Donald and Pat Perez of the US one shot further adrift.

Ernie Els, one of those to complete their second round on Friday, shot an

uninspiring one-under 71 but the big South African remains in the thick of the title hunt lurking among a large pack seven shots back at eight-under.

Three-time winner Phil Mickelson, who is making his season debut here, shot a five-under 67 but the US Masters champion still has plenty of work to do to notch a fourth title, sitting 10 shots off the pace alongside Spain's Sergio Garcia.

Like Woods, world number one Vijay Singh completed his second round with a birdie but the Fijian has yet to show the form that carried him to victory at last week's Sony Open in Hawaii and sits 11 shots back after finishing with a three-under 69.

Defending champion John Daly, who won last year in a playoff to capture his first event in nine years, carded a second round 70 to just make the cut of two-under.—MNA/Reuters

Brief reports of Bundesliga matches

FRANKFURT, 24 Jan — Reports of matches played in the Bundesliga on Saturday:

Borussia Moenchengladbach 1 Arminia Bielefeld 0

Australian international Craig Moore made a match-winning debut for Moenchengladbach. Moore, signed from Scottish club Rangers in the transfer window, powered in a header from a corner in the 52nd minute to give his side a valuable win that lifts them away from the basement.

Hansa Rostock 0 SC Freiburg 0

Bottom club Freiburg will feel aggrieved not to have beaten their fellow relegation candidates after dominating the second half. Soumalia Coulibaly smacked a shot against the bar in the 62nd minute and Samuel Koejoe had a goal disallowed when he bundled the ball over the line only for referee Markus Merk to blow for a foul on the keeper.

PSV Mainz 2 VfB Stuttgart 3

Stuttgart fell behind early on but worked hard to come back for a victory that keeps them within three points of the leaders.

Fabian Gerber got the first for Mainz in the 13th minute, lifting the ball over Timo Hildebrand after taking a sweet pass from Antonio da Silva.

A Dimo Wache own goal got Stuttgart back into the game early in the second half. Aliaksandr Hleb added a second in the 54th minute and powered through

the defence to set up Cacau for the third with 66 minutes gone. Christoph Teinert pulled one back for Mainz in injury-time.

FC Nuremberg 1 FC Kaiserslautern 3

Kaiserslautern moved up three places to 10th with this comprehensive win. Herve Lembi opened the scoring six minutes after the break and Stefan Blank, signed this week from Alemmania Aachen, side-footed in for the second on the hour.

Sven Mueller's flick header from a corner in the 66th minute gave Nuremberg brief hope of a comeback but Dimitris Grammozis clinched the points for the visitors with a free kick that squeezed through the wall.

VfL Wolfsburg 1 Borussia Dortmund 2

Dortmund eased their relegation fears with a fine victory. New signing Ebi Smolarek scored with a left-foot shot to open the scoring after 55 minutes and five minutes later Jan Koller took a through ball from Lars Ricken, held off the covering defender and tucked it past the keeper.

Facundo Quiroga pulled one back with eight minutes to go after being set up by Martin Petrov.

MNA/Reuters

USSF reaches agreement with national team's player union

NEW YORK, 24 Jan — The US Soccer Federation (USFF) reached an agreement with the national team's player union on Friday, ending a threat by senior squad members to take strike action for next month's World Cup qualifiers.

Without a contract since December 2002 and demanding increase appearance fees and bonuses, US men's national team players association (USMNTPA) accepted a 38-per-cent pay increase in exchange for a no strike, no lockout provision through to the end of this year.

"We're very pleased the union has accepted our latest proposal and given us the assurance that there will be no strikes for any US soccer activity through the duration of the year," US Soccer president Dr. S. Robert Contiguglia said in statement. "This certainty allows us to confidently begin calling players into camp and to continue preparing for our

participation in the final round of World Cup qualifying play.

"This is a clear win for both the fans and the sport of soccer in the US."

The 11th-hour agreement avoids a potential World Cup disaster for the US, which opens the final round of CONCACAF regional qualification away to Trinidad and Tobago on February 9.

Without an agreement in place the USSF said it was prepared to use replacement players in qualifying matches and had already called up stand-ins for US coach Bruce Arena's training camp in Carson, California last week.

MNA/Reuters



Japan's Tomomi Okazaki takes a turn in the 500m women's World Sprint Speed Skating Championships Sunday, Jan. 23, 2005, at the Utah Olympic Oval in Kearns, Utah. She finished in second place.—INTERNET

Endangered owl found in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 24 Jan — A new kind of bird has been sighted in the trans-Himalayan region of Upper Mustang in Nepal, the leader of a scientific survey team said.

"This is a new subspecies of *Bubo bubo* species to be recorded from Nepal," Madhu Chhetri, leader of King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation (KMTNC), told reporters here on Saturday.

Eurasian eagle owl (*Bubo bubo hema-chalana*), an endangered nocturnal flier, was discovered at an altitude of 4,900 metres near the Dhalung River in Upper Mustang, some 450 kilometres northwest of Kathmandu, he said.

The finding was confirmed after investigations and analysis by Carol Inskipp and Tim Inskipp, renowned bird scientists

affiliated with the Nepal Rare Bird Committee, he added.

According to Chhetri, Eurasian eagle owl is a bird endangered by habitat destruction and careless use of pesticide. The bird is mainly killed on roads, on railway tracks and through collision with power lines.

Before this, the bird was sighted at an elevation of 4,300 metres in India. And in Pakistan, the bird has been recorded from an altitude of 3,200 metres. The recorded altitude in Upper Mustang is the highest so far in which Eurasian eagle owl has been found. Chhetri disclosed.— *MNA/Xinhua*

1892 book that predicted bullet trains sold at auction

LONDON, 24 Jan — An 1892 book that predicted bullet trains, driverless golf carts, televisions and digital watches sold for 1,200 pounds (2,240 US dollars) at auction on Saturday.

Its author, Scottish professional golfer Jack McCulloch, also predicted women would start dressing like men and do all the work while the menfolk took to the golf courses full-time. His little-known book, *Golf in the Year 2000* or *What Are We Coming To* by McCulloch under the pseudonym J.A.C.K., was bought by James Espinola, an American collector of golf memorabilia.

"This book is a cross between Nostradamus and the tale of Rip van Winkle because the main charac-

ter goes to sleep on March 24, 1892, and wakes up on March 25, 2000, to find all these amazing changes," spokesman Philip Gregory of auction house Lyon & Turnbull in Edinburgh said before the sale.

Driverless golf carts became a reality in the 1980s, Japan's bullet train went into operation in 1964 and digital watches were all the rage in the 1970s. McCulloch even predicted international team golf competitions like the Ryder Cup which was first played in 1927.

MNA/Reuters

Quake warning system to be established in Adriatic Sea

TIRANA, 24 Jan — Littoral countries of the Adriatic Sea agreed late Saturday to establish an electromagnetic wave monitoring and earthquake early-warning system for the region, the Albanian newspaper *Korrier* reported Sunday.

These countries reached the agreement at an international conference on earthquake early warning held in the Italian city of L'aquila.

They also set up a 10-year research programme for the system, which will, through electromagnetic wave monitoring and analysis, study various natural electromagnetic phenomena and the relationship between electromagnetism and global climate change. The programme will also

try to identify possible relations between natural and man-made electromagnetism, and forecast natural and ecological disasters in a scientific way so as to minimize losses caused by earthquakes.

MNA/Xinhua

Guangdong expressway tragedy kills 24, injures 30

BEIJING, 24 Jan — A 13-car pile-up on an expressway in southern China has killed 24 people just before the peak travel season for the Lunar New Year holiday, state media said on Monday.

Nine of the 30 injured in Sunday's crash on the Kaiyang highway in Guangdong Province were in serious condition, *Xinhua* news agency said.

The cause of the accident was under investigation, it said without elaborating.

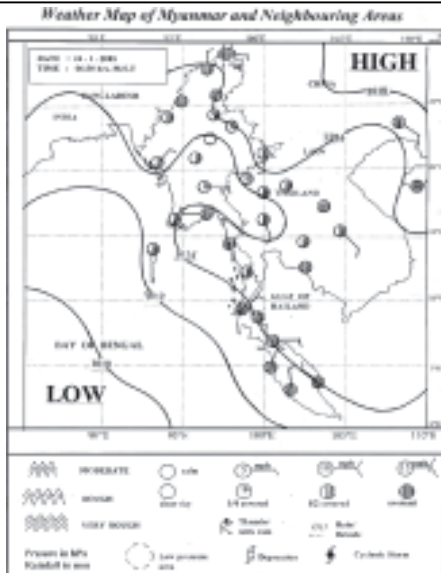
A mass movement of people proceeds the first of the three "golden week" holidays in China — Chinese New Year, May Labour Day and National Day on October 1.

This year, Chinese New Year, when hundreds of millions traditionally head home to be with the family, starts on February 9, with the 40-day peak travel season starting on Tuesday. — *MNA/Reuters*

Asleep in Jesus
Kerry Tin Win
Age (45) years
Master Mariner
Chief Mate

A.S. Moellar Co. (MAERSK LINK) Kerry Tin Win, firstborn son of Lt.Cdr. Soe Win (Rtd) and Daw May Soe Win, of No 2 Padonma Road, Dagon Township, Yangon, beloved husband of Michiko @ Aye Aye Yin, father of Kyaw Tin Win, Tin Win Kyaw and Tin Kyaw Win, son in law of Dr Tin Maung Tun and (Daw Si Win) died suddenly and unexpectedly on 23rd January 2005. Funeral arrangements will be announced later.

The bereaved family



WEATHER

Monday, 24 January, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain has been isolated in Kachin State and upper Sagaing Division and weather has been generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) above normal in Ayeyawady and upper Sagaing Divisions, (6°C) above normal in Shan State and Bago Division, (3°C) below normal in Chin State and Mandalay Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were Pinlaung, Lashio and Moekok (4°C) each, PyinOoLwin (5°C), Kengtong and Hakha (6°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 23-1-2005 was 95°F. Minimum temperature on 24-1-2005 was 58°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 24-1-2005 was 76%. Total sunshine hours on 23-1-2005 was (8.0) hours approx. Rainfalls on 24-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 5 mph from Southwest at (14:20) hours MST on 23-1-2005.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 25-1-2005: Possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin and Shan States, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions, weather will be partly cloudy in Mon State, Ayeyawady, Yangon, Mandalay and Magway Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (40%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Slight increase of night temperatures are likely in upper Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 25-1-2005: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 25-1-2005: Partly cloudy.

Tuesday, 25 January
View on today:

<p>7:00 am 1. Recitation of Parittas by Missionary Sayadaw U Ottamathara</p> <p>7:15 am 2. တစ်ပင်တစ်စွန်း၊ မေ့မရတော့ပါရဲ့၊ အပူပူပူပူ၊ အပူပူပူပူ၊ အပူပူပူပူ၊ အပူပူပူပူ</p> <p>7:25 am 3. To be healthy exercise</p> <p>7:30 am 4. Morning news</p> <p>7:40 am 5. Nice and sweet song</p> <p>7:50 am 6. တရားနိဗ္ဗာန်ပညာ</p>	<p>8:00 am 7. Songs of yesteryear</p> <p>8:15 am 8. သုံးဆယ်စုလှောင်တံခွန်</p> <p>8:30 am 9. International news</p> <p>8:45 am 10. Let's go</p> <p>4:00 pm 1. Martial song</p> <p>4:15 pm 2. Songs to uphold National Spirit</p> <p>4:30 pm 3. English for everyday use</p> <p>4:45 pm 4. Musical programme</p> <p>5:00 pm 5. အစေးသင် တရားသီလံပညာရေး ရုပ်မြင်သံကြား သင်ခန်းစာ - ဝတေဒုန် (အထူးပြုအားထုတ်) (အင်္ဂလိပ်စာ)</p> <p>5:15 pm 6. Dance of national races</p> <p>5:30 pm 7. မိစားနားဆင်စားစာတံခွန်</p>	<p>5:45 pm 8. Sing and Enjoy</p> <p>6:10 pm 9. နိုင်ငံခြားကာတွန်းစာတိုလမ်းကြောင်း (အပိုင်း-၆၂)</p> <p>6:30 pm 10. Evening news</p> <p>7:00 pm 11. Weather report</p> <p>7:05 pm 12. Musical programme</p> <p>7:20 pm 13. သားငါးဖွဲ့ဖြူဖြူအကျိုး</p> <p>7:35 pm 14. The Mirror Images of The Musical Oldies</p> <p>7:45 pm 15. ထူးကဲမြင်မြင် ဖုလေအိပ်မက် သာသနာ့အစောပညာ (အပိုင်း-၁)</p> <p>8:00 pm 16. News</p> <p>8:05 pm 17. International news</p> <p>8:10 pm 18. Weather report</p> <p>8:15 pm 19. နိုင်ငံခြားစာတိုလမ်းကြောင်း "သံစဉ်စုံအသံ" (အပိုင်း-၃၃)</p> <p>8:20 pm 20. The next day's programme</p>
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Tuesday, 25 January
Tune in today:

<p>8.30 am Brief news</p> <p>8.35 am Music: -Love is blind</p> <p>8.40 am Perspectives</p> <p>8.45 am Music: -Gotta tell you</p> <p>8.50 am National news/Slogan</p> <p>9.00 am Music: -No place that far</p> <p>9.05 am International news</p> <p>9.10 am Music: -Wherever you go</p> <p>1.30 pm News/Slogan</p> <p>1.40 pm Lunch Time Music -Ghost town -Down town train -Now and forever -Weekend</p> <p>9.00 pm English Speaking Course Level-II Unit (18)</p> <p>9.15 pm Article/music</p> <p>9.25 pm Weekly sports reel</p> <p>9.35 pm Music for your listening pleasure -Written in the star -If you had my love</p> <p>9.45 pm News/Slogan</p> <p>10.00 pm PEL</p>	<p>9.05 am Music: -Wherever you go</p> <p>9.10 am News/Slogan</p> <p>1.30 pm Lunch Time Music -Ghost town -Down town train -Now and forever -Weekend</p> <p>9.00 pm English Speaking Course Level-II Unit (18)</p> <p>9.15 pm Article/music</p> <p>9.25 pm Weekly sports reel</p> <p>9.35 pm Music for your listening pleasure -Written in the star -If you had my love</p> <p>9.45 pm News/Slogan</p> <p>10.00 pm PEL</p>
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Industry-2 Ministry holds coord meeting

YANGON, 24 Jan — The Ministry of Industry-2 held its work coordination meeting at the meeting hall of the ministry this morning.

Present were Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, Deputy Minister Lt-Col Khin Maung Kyaw, departmental heads and factory managers.

In his speech, the minister pointed out the principal role of the ministry in the industry sector and its commitment to mass production in the 2004-2005 fiscal year. The minister also spoke of the need to exceed the target of productivity.



Minister Maj-Gen Saw Lwin delivering an address at the work coordination meeting. — INDUSTRY-2

Next, the deputy minister reported on measures taken for meeting the targeted sale and production in the same fiscal year. Later, departmental heads presented supplementary reports. Minister Maj-Gen Saw Lwin presented cash awards to departments for their production process through departmental heads. The deputy minister and officials concerned presented cash awards. The meeting came to an end with concluding remarks by the minister. **MNA**

New well produces 5.208m cubic feet of gas daily

YANGON, 24 Jan — Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi inspected a

new well producing about 5.208 million cubic-feet of natural gas daily at

Nyaungdon oil and gas field in Nyaungdon region, Ayeyawady Division, today.

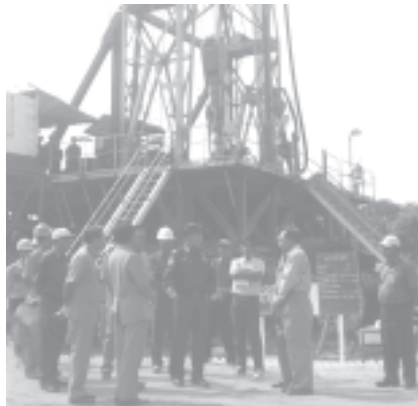
Eighteen wells in the field are producing

over 100 million cubic-feet of gas and about 900 barrels of condensate

everyday.

At the briefing hall of the field, the minister heard a report on current production of well No 24 presented by officials. The minister spoke of the need to drill new wells in the region, and to conduct a seismic survey in Maubin and Dedaye regions, whose geological conditions are similar to the Nyaungdon region. He also laid down the current and future work programmes.

The minister presented bonus to blue and white collar workers of well No 24. — **MNA**



Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi meets officials during his inspection tour of Nyaungdon oil and gas field. — ENERGY



Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) Military Band Competition continues

YANGON, 24 Jan—To mark the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, the 14th Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) Military Band Competition continued at the People's Square here this morning.

Before the competition, the bands comprising students from Dagon Seikkan Township Basic Education High School No 2 and Thakayta Township BEHS No 1 performed their skills demonstration.

This was followed by the competition.

The band representing South-East Command, the band representing Defence Services Technological University, the band representing Central Command and the band representing No 22 Light Infantry Division took part in the competition by playing three songs each.

Afterwards, Chairman of the 14th Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) Military Band Competition Organizing Committee Vice-Adjutant-Gen-

eral Maj-Gen Hla Shwe presented cash awards for bands of Dagon Seikkan Township BEHS No 2 and Thakayta Township BEHS No 1 to leaders of the bands.

Present also on the occasion were senior military officers, members of the panel of judges, guests, officers and other ranks of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) and their families.—**MNA**



Vice-Adjutant-General Maj-Gen Hla Shwe watches the performance of a band at the contest. — PUPR

