

Senior General Than Shwe pays homage to pagodas in Bagan, NyaungU

NAYPYITAW, 18 Dec — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, accompanied by Member of SPDC General Thura Shwe Mann and party paid homage to Arnanda Pagoda yesterday morning.

The Senior General paid homage to the Buddha Image on the west-

ern stairways of Arnanda Pagoda and offered 'soon', fruit, flowers and water to the image.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe and party paid homage to the Buddha Images inside the pagoda cave and made cash donations at the pagoda and paid obeisance to Arnanda Pagoda.

Senior General

Than Shwe and party arrived at Lawkananda Swedaw Pagoda on 15 December evening and offered flowers, water and light to the pagoda.

After paying homage to the pagoda anti clock-wise, the Senior General gave guidance on preventive measures to be taken against bank erosion and feasibility study on maintenance of

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Senior General Than Shwe pays obeisance to Kakuthan Buddha Image of Shwezigon Pagoda in NyaungU.

MNA



INSIDE

The dams being implemented along the Mone Creek in Magway Division will contribute towards tasks for development of the regions on the western bank of the Ayeyawady River, extensive cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy and multiple cropping patterns, and greening the regions. Sooner completion of the dam projects meeting the set standards along the Mone Creek will improve the socio-economic life of local people on the western bank of the Ayeyawady River.

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PERSPECTIVES

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

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

PERSPECTIVES

Wednesday, 19 December, 2007

Work hard for completion of dam projects ahead of schedule

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe inspected Upper Buywa, Buywa, Mone and Kyeoehn-Kyeewa dam projects in Magway Division the other day.

During the inspection tour of Kyeoehn-Kyeewa Multi-purpose Dam Project, the Senior General gave guidance to the officials, calling for completion of the projects for progress of the regions on the western bank of the Ayeyawady River ahead of schedule. In the process, it was needed to utilize machinery in combination and effectively to achieve the targets, he said.

With adequate irrigation water supply, Magway Division, a region where water is scarce, will make progress in the agricultural sector. The government is now working hard to utilize all possible water resources to fulfil the requirements of the region.

Now, several dam projects are being implemented along the Mone Creek, including Upper Buywa, Buywa, Mone and Kyeoehn-Kyeewa dam projects upstream of the Mone Creek. The projects are also designed to generate electricity.

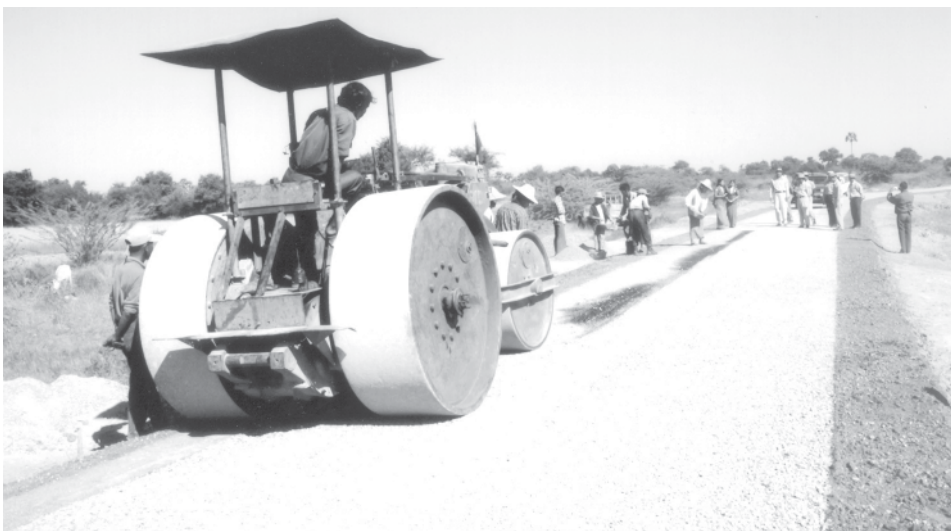
Of them, Mone Creek Multi-purpose Dam Project has been completed. It generates 75 megawatts and supports water to Kyeoehn-Kyeewa Dam downstream the former.

The dams being implemented along the Mone Creek in Magway Division will contribute towards tasks for development of the regions on the western bank of the Ayeyawady River, extensive cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy and multiple cropping patterns, and greening the regions. Sooner completion of the dam projects meeting the set standards along the Mone Creek will improve the socio-economic life of local people on the western bank of the Ayeyawady River.

Hlawga Park to keep open on Bakari Idd and Christmas Days

YANGON, 18 Dec—The Forest Department keeps open Hlawga park from 8 am to 4 pm daily.

With a view to providing relaxation of the public in peace, the park will open to the public on 21 December (Bakari Idd Day) and 25 December (Christmas Day) from 8 am to 5 pm.—MNA



Officials of Development Affairs Department supervise construction of district-to-district road in TadaU Township. — MNA

People's Desire

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

Deputy Foreign Minister back from India

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec — The Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu arrived back by air this evening after paying an official visit to the Republic of India from 9 to 15 December 2007 at the invitation of Mr Shivshankar Menon, Foreign Secretary of the Republic of India.

During his visit to New Delhi, the Deputy Minister paid a courtesy call on Mr Pranab Mukharjee, Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India.

The Myanmar Delegation attended the Eighth Annual Consultation between Myanmar and India held at the State Guest House in New Delhi on 11 December 2007. At the Annual Consultation, Deputy Minister U Kyaw Thu and his counterpart Foreign Secretary of India Mr Shivshankar Menon discussed matters on further strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries.

On 12 December the Deputy Minister and Foreign Secretary of External Affairs of India Mr Shivshankar Menon signed the Agreed Minutes of the Eighth Foreign Offices Consultation Meeting held on 11 December and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Union of Myanmar and the Government of the Republic of India for Establishing India-Myanmar Centre for Enhancement of Information Technology Skills (IMCEITS) at Yangon.

The Deputy Minister and party left New Delhi for Kolkata on 12 December. The Deputy Minister paid a courtesy call on Sri Gopalkrishna Gandhi,



Deputy Minister U Kyaw Thu and Mr Shivshankar Menon, Foreign Secretary of India, exchange notes on IMCEITS. — MNA

Governor of West Bengal on 13 December and exchanged views on promotion of bilateral trade and economic relations between countries. —MNA

Mandalay Division USDA donates provisions to Mandalay Ohbo (Central) Jail



Personnel of Mandalay Division USDA presents provisions to an official of Ohbo Central Jail in Mandalay. — MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec— Mandalay Division Union Solidarity and Development Association and wellwishers on 5 December provided provisions worth about K 900,000 to inmates of Mandalay Ohbo (Central) Jail. Mandalay Division USDA executive committee U Myint Thein and U Aung Kyaw Tha and members, journalists and wellwishers donated western medicines, biscuits and breads, four whiteboards and related items, journals, apples and others.

Next, the Mandalay Division EC and members viewed prisoners at work at carpenter, sculptural and painting workshops and spoke words of encouragement to them. It is the 12th donation made by Mandalay Division USDA to the jail. The donations made by Mandalay Division USDA including today's donation are worth over K 9 million. The whole Mandalay Division including Myingyan, Meiktila, Kyaukse, NyaungU, PyinOoLwin, Yamethin Districts made donations to the jail 39 times that are valued at K 15 million.—MNA

Roads under construction in Mandalay Division inspected

NAY PYI TAW, 16 Dec — Director-General of Development Affairs Department of the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs U Myo Myint, accompanied by departmental officials, on 15 December inspected tarring of No 1 district-to-district road being undertaken by the Township

Development Committees of Mandalay Division. At the briefing hall of Ngazinyaing Village of TadaU Township, Director U Hla Myo of Mandalay Division Development Committee reported on progress of tarred roads in 2007-2008 financial year to the director-general who gave instructions on timely completion of the work, meeting the set standard and minimizing loss and wastage.

On arrival at the construction sites in TadaU, Meiktila and Mahlaing Townships, he viewed tarring of roads and gave instructions.

No 1 district-to-district road is being constructed to link Mandalay, Magway, Bago (west) and Yangon Divisions. The remaining tasks of the road will be completed in the 2007-2008 fiscal year. — MNA



Workers of the No one oil extracting unit of the Changqing oilfield inspect oil tanks in an'an, northwest China's Shaanxi province on 16 Dec, 2007. XINHUA

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Iran says US report a "declaration of surrender"

TEHERAN, 17 Dec—Iran's President said on Sunday the publication of a US intelligence report saying Iran had halted a nuclear weapons programme in 2003 amounted to a "declaration of surrender" by Washington in its row with Teheran. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also dismissed in an interview with state television the prospect of new UN sanctions against Iran over its refusal to halt sensitive atomic work.

"It is too far-fetched," he said when asked whether he expected the

UN Security Council to impose fresh sanctions on Iran following two such resolutions since last December.

Ahmadinejad, who often rails against the West, told a rally earlier this month that the 3 December publication of the US National Intelligence Estimate was a "victory" for Iran.

He said on Sunday: "It was in fact a declaration of surrender... It was a positive action by the US Administration to change their attitude and it was a correct move."

MNA/Reuters



This image released by the Sotheby's auction house shows "The Guennol Lioness," a Mesopotamian sculpture dated to 3,000 BC. The sculpture sold for 57.2 million dollars in New York on Wednesday, smashing records for both sculpture and antiquities.—INTERNET

Russia test-fires intercontinental missile

MOSCOW, 18 Dec—Russia successfully conducted a test launch on Monday of a new intercontinental ballistic missile, the Navy said.

A statement said the missile was launched from the Tula nuclear powered submarine in the Barents Sea in the Arctic and hit a designated area in the

Kura testing ground on the Kamchatka Peninsula on Russia's Pacific coast. "The launch was conducted from an underwater position as a part of training to test the readiness of the marine strategic nuclear forces," the statement said.

A Navy spokesman would not say what

type of missile was tested. *ITAR-TASS* news agency said the Tula submarine carried *Sineva* missiles commissioned by a decree from President Vladimir Putin in July. Missile tests have become regular occurrences in the Russian Armed Forces in the past few years.

MNA/Reuters

US lawmakers say will not be deterred on CIA probe

WASHINGTON, 17 Dec—US Congress members vowed on Sunday to investigate the CIA's destruction of interrogation videotapes despite Justice Department advice that the agency not cooperate.

The top Republican member of the House of Representatives Intelligence Committee and a leading Democratic voice on security joined in a blistering attack on the CIA and on the complex network of US intelligence agencies in general, which they described as arrogant, incompetent and unaccountable.

"We want to hold the (intelligence) community accountable for what's happened to these tapes," Republican US Representative Pete Hoekstra of Michigan said on "Fox

News Sunday." "We will issue subpoenas. Our investigation should move forward.

"I have high confidence that the community is broken. I'm talking about the leadership in general."

Hoekstra said CIA Director General Michael Hayden should be held accountable for what he

called misleading statements by the agency during his term, which began in 2006 after the tapes had been destroyed.

It is believed that the tapes, destroyed in 2005, depicted the use of a simulated drowning technique called waterboarding.

MNA/Reuters

A JetBlue aircraft makes its way from the terminal at JFK International Airport in New York on 19 Feb, 2007. —INTERNET



New PM wants Polish troops out of Iraq by October

WARSAW, 17 Dec—Poland's new Prime Minister Donald Tusk said on Saturday he wanted the last Polish troops out of Iraq by October 2008.

"The government is submitting a motion to terminate our military mission in Iraq by October 2008," Polish TV news channels showed Tusk telling reporters.

"Although President Lech Kaczynski holds a somewhat different view, I believe we shall

reach an understanding and he will not block the withdrawal of the Polish military mission." The liberal Prime Minister added he was planning a pre-Christmas visit to Iraq, where 900 Polish troops are stationed, but gave no details.

Tusk, who heads the business-friendly Civic Platform party, had pledged to withdraw the Polish forces in 2008 in his inaugural address to Parliament last month without giving a date.

President Kaczynski did not immediately comment on Tusk's statement, but his twin brother Jaroslaw, the former prime minister swept out of office in October's election, called the move "a mistake".

"Since we have been there so many years and suffered losses, it is not worth making moves that cast doubt on those efforts and may deprive us of any political advantage," Kaczynski told a news conference.—MNA/Reuters

Winter storm pounds N-E United States

BOSTON, 17 Dec—A snowstorm that blanketed parts of the Midwestern United States barreled into New England on Sunday, bringing snow, freezing rain and high winds that grounded flights and made driving treacherous. Roads were slick with snow and ice, and local airports reported hundreds of flights canceled across New England. Upstate New York received as much as a foot (30 centimetres) of snow, while the storm spared New York City, leaving only a coating of icy slush. Thousands of people were without power in New Jersey, Long Island and parts of Connecticut.

In New England, about 8 inches (20 centimetres) of snow fell around Boston, though the precipitation changed to rain across coastal areas by afternoon, according to the National Weather Service.

MNA/Reuters



A woman looks over the ashes of the home she lost during recent wildfires in Jamul, Calif, on 6 Dec, 2007.—INTERNET

Zawahri says British “fleeing” from Iraq

DUBAI, 17 Dec—Al-Qaeda’s second-in-command, Ayman al-Zawahri, has said Britain’s handover of security in southern Iraq shows that insurgents are gaining the upper hand there.

“Reports from Iraq point to the increasing power of the mujahideen (holy war fighters) and the deteriorating condition of the Americans,” Zawahri told an off-camera interviewer from As-Sahab, al-Qaeda’s media arm, in a video posted on the Internet on Sunday.

“And the decision of the British to flee is sufficient (proof of this),” he said, sitting beside shelves full of books.

The video, carried by Islamic Web sites, was issued as Britain handed

over security to Iraqi forces in the last of four provinces it once patrolled, effectively marking the end of nearly five years of British control of southern Iraq.

“Iraq is the most important of the fields (in which Islamic

militants are fighting),” Zawahri said on the video, which carried English subtitles.

The Web sites invited sympathizers to send in questions during the next month for Zawahri to answer in an “open interview”. —MNA/Reuters

Spanish police arrest 63 in child pornography snoop

MADRID, 17 Dec—Spanish police said on Sunday they had arrested 63 people across the country in five investigations into child pornography being posted, viewed and paid for on the Internet.

It is the second huge snoop this year after police arrested 66 people on charges of child pornography in July. Last year, the state attorney said the number of under-

age pornography investigations had risen 48.4 per cent. The police said some of the people they arrested this time had produced child pornography material that was then posted on the web.

They also arrested four Russians who had made about 200,000 euros (290,600 US dollars) from selling access to pictures.

In one of the investigations, police found footage of a 10-year-old being

ISLAMABAD, 17 Dec—A Pakistani-British man suspected of involvement in an al-Qaeda plot to blow up US-bound airliners over the Atlantic has escaped from custody in the Pakistani capital, a senior official said on Sunday.

Rashid Rauf escaped on Saturday from outside an Islamabad court where police had escorted him for an extradition hearing.

“We’re trying our best to re-arrest him,” said Interior Ministry spokesman, Brigadier Javed Iqbal Cheema, speaking more than 20 hours after Rauf’s disappearance.

Cheema gave no details on how Rauf escaped but he said the government had set up an inquiry to investigate the incident and report back within 48 hours.

“This has to be sorted out, how it happened and who were involved in it,”

he said.

Rauf’s lawyer said his client’s flight was a mystery.

“What made him do that when there was no major case against him and secondly, how did he manage this as 10 or 12 armed policemen were guarding him.

It is a mystery,” lawyer Hasmat Habib told Reuters.

Arrested in Pakistan in August 2006, Rauf was identified by Pakistani

officials as a key figure in a plot to blow up airliners travelling from London to the United States.

But his case ran into a legal quagmire and was being handled by higher and lower courts simultaneously.

An anti-terrorism court dropped terrorism charges against him, citing a lack of evidence, and referred lesser charges, including the possession of explosives, to the civil court.

MNA/Reuters

Measles deaths in Africa plunge by 91%

GENEVA, 17 Dec—Measles deaths in Africa fell by 91 per cent between the years 2000 and 2006, from an estimated 396,000 to 36,000 reaching the United Nations 2010 goal to cut measles deaths by 90 per cent four years early. The spectacular gains achieved in Africa helped generate a strong decline in global measles deaths which fell 68 per cent worldwide—from an estimated 757,000 to 242,000—during this period.

“The clear message from this achievement is that the strategy works” said CDC (US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention) Director Dr Julie Gerberding. “The next step is to fully implement this strategy in South Asia where measles disease burden is now the highest in the world.”—MNA/Reuters

Bolton criticizes Bush foreign policy

BERLIN, 17 Dec—US President George W Bush’s foreign policy is in free fall and puts the nation’s security at risk, former ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton told a German magazine on Sunday.

Bolton, who was a leading hawk in the US Administration and favoured a tough stance against Iran, North Korea and Iraq, told the *Der Spiegel* weekly that Bush needed to rein in Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

“His foreign policy is in free fall.

“The president is acting against his own judgment and instincts (and is) under the influence of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice,” he was quoted as telling the magazine.

Bolton said Rice’s was

the dominant voice on foreign policy and that she was a channel for the views of liberal career bureaucrats in the foreign ministry.

“(Bush) does not supervise her enough.”

That is a mistake,” he was quoted as saying, adding that a moderate

foreign policy was a threat to US security.

“North Korea will, for example, now keep its nuclear weapons. And the Iranians have got a signal from our own intelligence services that they can do whatever they want.

MNA/Reuters

Two die after light aircraft collide

LONDON, 17 Dec—Two people died when their light aircraft crashed in central England on Sunday after a mid-air collision with another small plane, crash investigators and police said.

The victims’ two-seater *Luscombe Silvaire* plane came down in a fireball in a rural part of Staffordshire, while the second light aircraft made an emergency landing at East Midlands Airport.

Paramedics found the bodies of two people at the scene of the crash near the village of Admaston, about 20 miles north of Birmingham.

The owner of the farmland where the plane crashed said he drove to the scene, but could do nothing to help.

MNA/Reuters



Clown fish in a fish tank. Animal activists and pet shop owners Monday called for a ban on a tiny fish tank designed to be hooked up to a music player such as an iPod and used as a speaker.—INTERNET

Chinese envoy hails energy cooperation with Russia

Moscow, 17 Dec—There are broad prospects for energy cooperation between China and Russia, Chinese Ambassador Liu Guchang has said. "Important progress has been made in China-Russia energy cooperation, typically in oil and gas sectors, and the modalities of cooperation have become more diversified," Liu said at a New Year party at a Russian international energy club Thursday.

"There are broad prospects for energy cooperation between China and Russia that has been reciprocal, mutual beneficial and marked

with a win-win solution," he told some 40 representatives from major Russian and Chinese oil companies, as well as cultural figures.

The ambassador also spoke highly of the national theme years held in the two countries respectively in the last two years, saying they were instrumental in promoting the bilateral friendship and boosting cooperation between the two nations and peoples. Russia has become an important energy supplier for China. It is building a 4,000-kilometres oil pipeline running from the eastern Siberia to the Pacific

Ocean.

Moscow also plans to pipe 30 billion cubic metres of natural gas to China each year via two pipelines, according to media reports. Leading Chinese oil and gas producers and refiners PetroChina and Sinopec are also striving to expand cooperation with their Russian counterparts.

MNA/Xinhua



An employee shows silver bullions with design of rat and emblems with images of Mickey mouse in Beijing, capital of China, on 17 Dec, 2007. The two ornaments will put into market on 22 Dec in Beijing. As the Year of Rat of the Chinese lunar calendar falls on 7 Feb, 2008, ornaments in the shape of rat have become popular. —XINHUA

ECONOMIC NEWS

Malaysia exports more green commodities in 1st nine months

KUALA LUMPUR, 17 Dec—Malaysia exported 63.16 billion ringgit (18.58 billion US dollars) worth of green commodities for the first nine months of this year, exceeding the value of oil and gas which reached 55.24 billion ringgit (16.25 billion dollars), local media reported on Monday.

Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Peter Chin Fah Kui predicted that the export of green commodities in 2007 could reach 85 billion ringgit (25 billion dollars), an increase of 10

percent over 76.05 billion ringgit (22.37 billion dollars) in 2006, according to the daily *New Straits Times*.

Palm oil, timber, rubber, cocoa, tobacco and pepper are considered green commodities because they can be replanted and renewable. Oil and gas, while also categorized as commodities, is a depleting resource.

The best performing and biggest contributor to the rise of export is palm oil. According to the data of the Malaysian Palm Oil Board, from January to November, the country

shipped out 39.89 billion ringgit (11.73 billion US dollars) of palm oil.

"Palm oil exports have been expanding by more than 35 per cent," Chin said.

MNA/Xinhua

EU, Caribbean strike new trade deal

BRUSSELS, 18 Dec—The European Commission and a group of countries in the Caribbean have agreed on a wide-ranging new trade deal, only days before an end-of-year deadline, the EU executive said on Sunday.

Brussels has been pressing nearly 80 countries in the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of former European colonies to back the new deals, called Economic Partnership Agreements, before 31 December.

The Caribbean agreement covered not only trade in goods but also services, rules on trade-related issues and development cooperation, the European Commission said in a statement.

The countries included Jamaica and the Dominican Republic.

MNA/Reuters

Vietnam opens additional border gate with Cambodia

HANOI, 17 Dec—Vietnam has opened an international border gate in central highlands Gia Lai Province, bordering Cambodia's Ratanakiri Province, local newspaper *Vietnam News* reported Monday.

The border gate, coming into operational last weekend, is expected to facilitate trade activities in the two countries' border areas and cement the ties of their residents.

The gate's establishment is also expected to help create a breakthrough for the stronger growth of a development triangle which encompasses some localities of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, said the newspaper.

Ten out of Vietnam's 64 cities and provinces border nine localities of Cambodia.

Trade between the Vietnam and Cambodia, increasing to 900 million US dollars in 2006 from 117 million US dollars in 1998, is expected to reach two billion US dollars in 2010, according to the Vietnamese Ministry of Industry and Trade.—MNA/Xinhua



The 57-year-old surfing coach Michael Pless, dressed up as Santa Claus, surfs at the Seal Beach in California, the United States, on 16 Dec, 2007. Californians welcome in various ways the approaching Christmas and the New Year. —XINHUA

Vietnam may export 4.5m tons of rice in 2008

HANOI, 17 Dec—Vietnam is expected to export 4.5 million tons of rice next year, compared with estimated 4.53 million tons this year, local newspaper *Youth* reported Monday.

Export prices of the local commodity will stand high next year, at 320 US dollars upwards for a ton of the 25-per-cent broken rice, and 340 dollars upwards for the 5-per-cent one, the paper quoted Chairman of the Vietnam Food Association Truong Thanh Phong as saying.

Vietnam's paddy rice output is estimated at 35.9 million tons in 2007, equaling to 2006, according to the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.—MNA/Xinhua

Indonesian carriers order for top 129 new planes

JAKARTA, 17 Dec—Indonesian air carriers have sealed orders for 129 new planes of various types worth five billion US dollars this year, with *Boeing 737* series sharing the bulk.

Flag carrier Garuda Indonesia topped the list with 50 B737-800NGs, followed by budget carrier Lion Air that bought 22 B737-900ERs. Lion has in the previous years signed purchase deals of 100 B737-900ERs.

Bhakti Investama also signed a deal for 16 B737-800s, while Adam Air bought 25 Bombardier CRJ900s and Batavia Air purchased 16 Q-400 Dash propeller planes, leading economic daily *Bisnis Indonesia* reported Monday.

MNA/Xinhua

Russia expels journalist critical of Kremlin

MOSCOW, 17 Dec—Russia expelled a journalist on Sunday who had alleged Kremlin malpractice in this month's parliamentary election and tracked funds flowing from Kremlin officials to foreign banks. Natalia Morar, a Moldovan national who works in Moscow for the small Russian magazine *New Times*, said she had been told at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport that she was being refused entry to Russia on the orders of the FSB security service.

Having returned from

a Press trip to Israel, she found herself put on a plane to the Moldovan capital Chisinau.

"I am more than confident that the reason for my expulsion is my occupation," she told *Reuters* from Domodedovo before boarding her flight.

"The final straw, I think, was my article on 'black money' in the Kremlin, which has been financing parties during the election campaign."

New Times's political editor, Ilya Barabanov, said Morar may have been expelled for an article

about the murder of the deputy central bank governor, Andrey Kozlov, in September 2006.

"Morar wrote some material about the inquiry into the death of Kozlov that described the withdrawal of large sums of money by senior Russian officials through Discount Bank and Raiffeisen Bank," Barabanov said. —MNA/Reuters

Top official says Iraq plans mass detainee pardon

BASRA (Iraq), 17 Dec—Iraq's Government is planning to release thousands of detainees from custody as part of efforts to forge national reconciliation between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, a top Iraqi official said on Sunday.

National Security Adviser Mowaffaq al-Rubaie said Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's "Pardon and Safety" plan

would "secure the release of thousands of detainees in Iraqi Government prisons".

"We believe this will contribute a great deal to improving the security situation in the country," Rubaie said in Basra after Britain formally handed over responsibility for security in Iraq's second-largest city to Iraqi forces.

The issue of detainees

in both US and Iraqi jails is one of the most sensitive in the country, especially as detentions have soared since military operations were stepped up this year.

Rubaie said the Iraqi Government was now holding 24,000 detainees and US forces are holding 26,000.

Most are held without charge.

MNA/Reuters

Broken hose causes oil spill in North Sea

STOCKHOLM, 17 Dec—The oil spill from a platform operated by Norwegian oil company StatoilHydro in North Sea Wednesday was the result of a broken underwater hose, the Norwegian broadcaster NRK reported on Saturday.

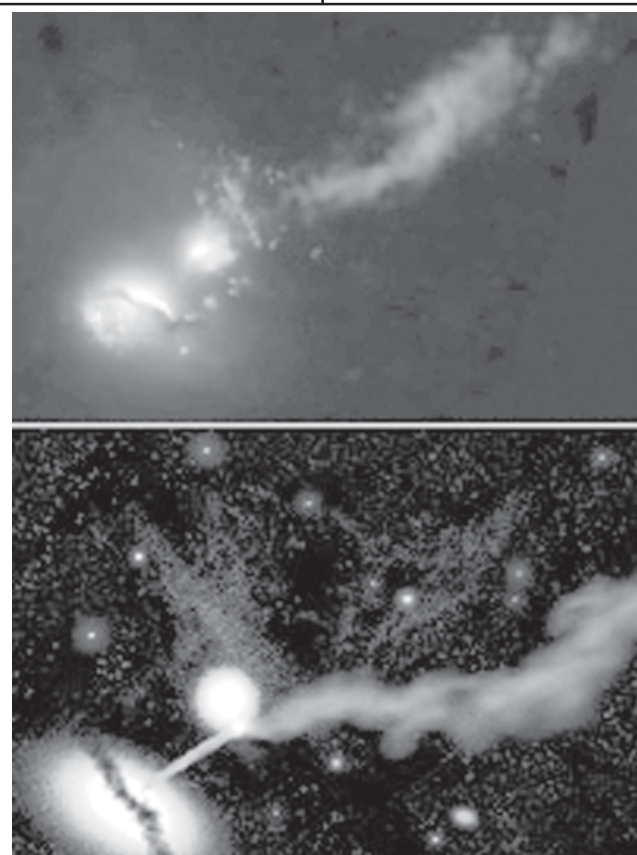
This was determined when a mini-sub was sent down to try to find the cause of the leak by StatoilHydro.

The hose, which is used to bring the crude oil from the buoy to the tanker, is a 19-inch steel reinforced rubber hose, but the cause of break was not immediately determined, it added.

About 4,000 standard cubic metres of crude oil was spilled into the sea Wednesday, when a tanker was loading oil from the platform, about 200 kilometres west of the Norwegian second largest city Bergen, StatoilHydro said.

So far, the spilled oil has been forced northward by the wind, and no oil has reached the coast. The spill was the second worst in Norway's offshore history.

The Norwegian Institute for Nature Research has been assigned to investigate the environmental impact by means of water column samples and mapping of bird life in the area.—MNA/Xinhua



A composite image (top) shows a never-before-seen spectacle: a "Death Star" galaxy blasting a nearby neighbour with a powerful jet from a supermassive black hole.—INTERNET

Moderate quake hits N Chile, cuts power

SANTIAGO, 17 Dec—A moderately strong earthquake of 6.7 magnitude shook Chile's mineral-rich northern region early on Sunday, setting off rock slides and cutting power but causing no injuries.

The quake struck at 5:09 am (0809 GMT) and had an epicentre 68 miles (109 kilometres) west of Calama, 81 miles (130 kilometres) north northeast of Antofagasta, and 160 miles (257 kilometres) south of Iquique, the heart of Chile's mining region.

Authorities said there were no immediate reports of injuries, although power still was being restored at midmorning.

There were no immediate reports of damages from key mines in the region.

The quake was felt strongest in the same cities that suffered from a 7.7 magnitude quake on 14 November and which collapsed homes and buildings, killing two people and injuring 115, and there have been a number of aftershocks since then. —MNA/Reuters

Mystery death of Chinese teenager triggers panic

KUNMING, 17 Dec — More than 80 teenagers from a southwest China school have been hospitalized after the mystery death of a fellow student in what a senior doctor described as a case of mass hysteria.

Zhou Yuankun, chief of the hospital where the students were treated, said Thursday's incident was caused by panic, fear and anxiety.

Zhou said most of the students were discharged from the hospital late on Thursday or Friday.

Those whose parents requested further observation at the hospital, including three students with fever, were showing no abnormal symptoms and were discharged on

Saturday.

The students at the No 2 Middle School, in Dongshan town of Qilin District in Qijing City, Yunnan Province, com-

plained of stomach-aches and headaches following the mysterious death of a seventh grader on Thursday.

MNA/Xinhua

Dubai Film Festival unveils awards for Arab films

DUBAI, 17 Dec—The ongoing fourth edition of Dubai International Film Festival unveiled on Saturday the winners of the second annual Muhr Awards for Arab films.

The competition for Muhr Awards, which was launched at the third edition of the festival in 2006, included films from all over the Middle East this year.

The Gold Muhr for Feature was won by

"Under the Bombs" directed by Phillippe Aractingi, which explores interfaith love in southern Lebanon between a Shi'a woman and a Christian man. It also won a Best Actress Muhr for Nada Abou Fahat, who played the Lebanese Shi'a woman rushing into the war zone to save her son.

The comedic "Making Of" by Tunisian director Nouri Bouzid won Silver.

The film also took

away the Best Composer award for Nejib Charradi.

The Bronze Muhr was won by "The Secret of the Grain" by Abdellatif Kechiche of Tunis.

Best Actor went to Britain-based Jordanian actor Nadim Sawalha for his role in "Captain Abu Raed", in which he plays an airport janitor who befriends a group of children in his poor neighbourhood.

MNA/Xinhua

Seven killed as bus hits mine in N-E India

GUWAHATI (India), 17 Dec—Seven civilians, including five women, were killed when the bus in which they were travelling hit a landmine in northeast India's Manipur State on Sunday, police said.

The blast took place near a military camp at Lamlai, about 15 kilometres (10 miles) east of the state capital, Imphal.

More than two dozen people were wounded in the explosion, and many were in critical condition.

Three died instantly and the other four later in hospital.

MNA/Reuters



Maj-Gen Soe Maung, Member of the Commission for Drafting the State Constitution, discusses matters related to drafting the State Constitution.
(News on Page 16)

MNA

Dr Myo Thant Tin, Member of the Commission for Drafting State Constitution, discusses matters related to drafting the State Constitution.

(News on Page 16)

MNA



CEC Member meets township members



CEC Member of USDA Minister Maj-Gen Thein Swe meeting with secretary and executives of Sangyoung Township USDA. — TRANSPORT

YANGON, 18 Dec— CEC Member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Thein Swe met with Secretary of Sangyoung Township USDA U Htay Aung and township executives at

Transport Department (Yangon Branch) on Merchant Street, here, on yesterday afternoon.

They discussed matters on aims and objectives of the association, cooperating with respective departments and NGOs

in a drive to implement the future programmes, raising the momentum of the community progress, active participation in social activities with local people and stepping up organizational tasks.

MNA

Second Inter-School Cricket Challenge Shield continues

YANGON, 18 Dec — The Second Inter-School Cricket Challenge Shield for 2007-2008 academic year, jointly organized by Myanmar Cricket Federation and No 3 Basic Education Department, continued at designated venues

this morning.

In the men's event, Lanmadaw No 1 BEHS beat Pabetan No 2 BEHS by 8 wickets while Botahtaung No 6 BEHS beat Tamway No 3 BEHS by 6-Runs. In the women's event, Ahlon No 4 BEHS beat Tamway No 3 BEHS by 9 wickets

whereas Bahan No 1 BEHS beat Dagon No 2 BEHS by 4 Runs.

Among the spectators were MCF President Actor U Nyunt Win and executives and sports enthusiasts. The tournament continues tomorrow.

MNA

Cash, provisions donated to Buddha Pujaniya ceremonies

YANGON, 18 Dec — Wellwishers participated in a ceremony to present donations for Buddha Pujaniya of Shwezigon Pagoda in NyaungU, Seintamani Pagoda, Shwegupyaik Pagoda in Singu and for donation of provisions to monks and nuns today.

At the ceremony held at No-2 Basic Education High School in Dagon Township, Chairman of the committee for

organizing the lights offering ceremony, U Soe Win (Singu Soe Win), Principal U Tin Maung Tun of the school and U Bo Kyi (Dr Bothanmani-Taungdwingyi) delivered addresses and accepted the donations presented by wellwishers.

Today's donation includes cash, rice, traditional medicine and candles.

Similarly, the cash donation ceremony was

also held at No-1 Basic Education High School in Insein on 13 December. U Myo Swe of Insein Township Education Officer, the school heads, teachers and students of the township of basic education schools in Insein Township donated cash and rice to the association for 9,900 oil lamp offering and organizing Buddha Pujaniya.—MNA

Prize distribution for Best Painting of Year 2007 held

YANGON, 18 Dec— The prize distribution ceremony for the Best Painting of the Year 2007 Painting Exhibition and Contest sponsored by Tun Foundation with the support of Myanmar Artists and Artisans Asiayon (Central) took place at the Myanmar Banks Association building on Sibin Street, Yankin Township here at 3 pm today, attended by the Chairman of Tun Foundation, the Chairman of MAAA (Central) and members, responsible personnel of the respective banks, those from literary, movies, thabin and music fields and others.

U Kyi Win of MAAA (Central) acted as mater of ceremonies and Chairman of Tun Foundation U Thein Tun made a speech on the occasion.

Next, Vice-Chairman of Myanmar Artistes and Artisans Asiayon (Central) U Thant Sin (Arts Hla Tin Tun), on



U Thein Tun, Chairman of Tun Foundation, awards a third prize winner of Best Painting of the Year 2007. — MNA

behalf of the Chairman of MAAA (Central) spoke words of thanks.

Afterwards, Chairman U Thein Tun presented K 3 million to U Win Myint Moe (Win Myint) who stood first in the painting contest, K 2.5 million to Ma Maw Maw Hlaing (Maw Maw) who came in second, K 2 million to U Kyaw Min Lwin (Dawei Lay) who stood third and K 1 million

each to six consolation prize winners.

Next, Chairman of Tun Foundation U Thein Tun accepted a painting as a gift presented by MAAA (Central) and the ceremony ended.

Altogether 572 paintings are on display at the exhibition, of which 52 paintings have already been sold. The exhibition continues tomorrow.

MNA

Senior General Than Shwe pays homage to pagodas in Bagan, NyaungU

(from page 1)
the pagoda for durability.

The Senior General and party made cash donations at the pagoda

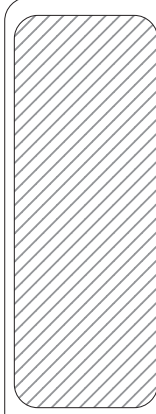
and inspected development of Bagan Myothit in a motorcade.

Upon arrival at Shwezigon Pagoda in NyaungU, they paid

obeisance to Kakuthan Buddha Image on the eastern stairways of the pagoda. Next, they made cash donations at the pagoda and paid

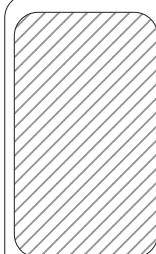
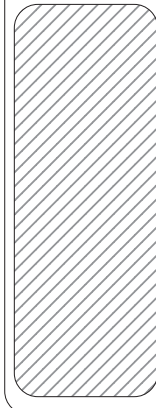


Shwezigon Pagoda in Bagan NyaungU. — MNA



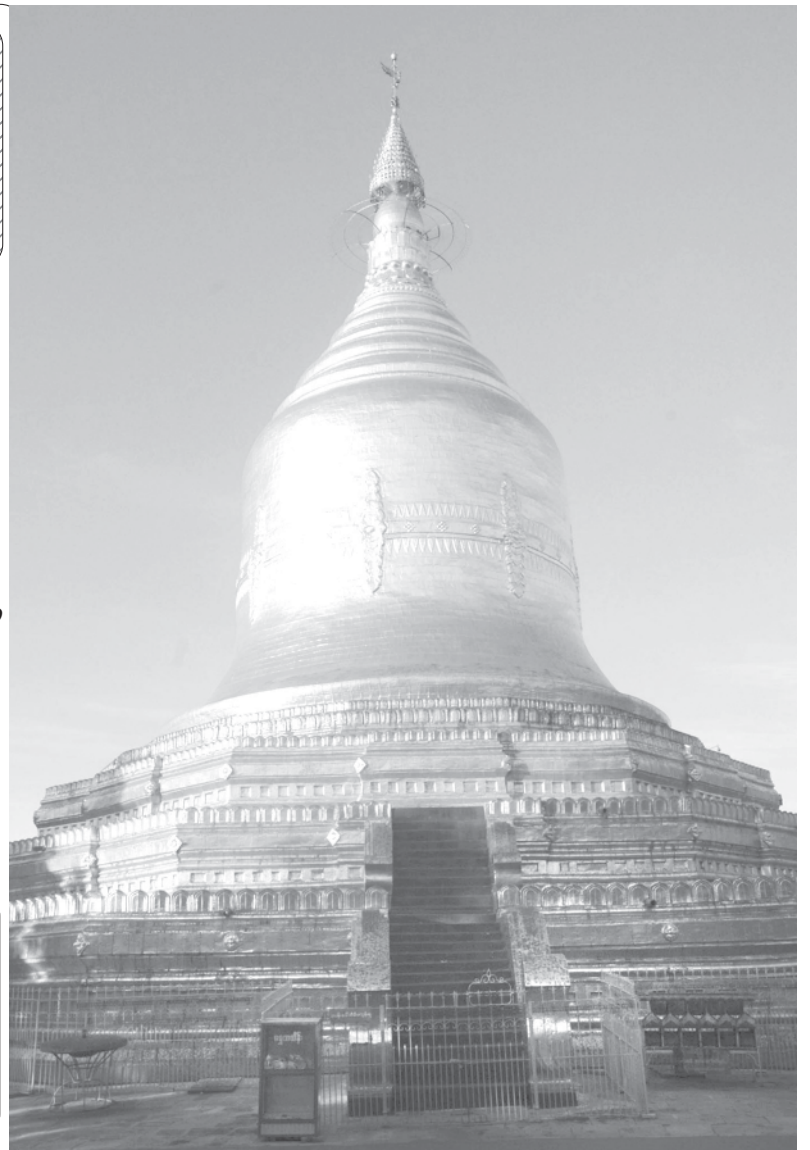
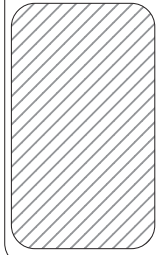
Hsinmyarshin Buddha Image.

□MNA



Senior General Than Shwe pays homage to Lawkanda Pagoda.

□MNA



homage to the pagoda walking around anti clock-wise.

On arrival at Hsinmyarshin Pagoda, they paid homage to the pagoda and donated

cash for the pagoda through the pagoda board of trustees.

On 16 December evening, they viewed main booth, Bagan era social life booth, archi-

tecture booth, handicraft and fine arts booth, literature booth and Bagan palace booth at Bagan Archaeological Museum.

MNA

Senior General Than Shwe makes cash donation at Lawkananda

Swedaw Pagoda. (News on page 1) — MNA



Senior General Than Shwe visits Bagan

Archaeological Museum.

(News on page 1) — MNA



Citizens with high intellectual power can remove outside instigation and attempt to influence the nation

Special Refresher Course No 29 for basic education teachers concludes in PyinOoLwin

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec — The conclusion of Special Refresher Course No 29 for basic education teachers was held at Yadana Hall of the Central Institute of Civil Service (Upper Myanmar) in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Division yesterday morning.

On behalf of Chairman of the Myanmar Education Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Minister for Science and Technology U Thaug delivered a speech.

The minister said he hoped that the teachers would discharge their educational duties effectively applying knowledge and good habits gained at the course.

He said the teachers are nurturing younger generation to become the ones with high qualification and spirit in accord with the requirements for the future of the nation. By doing so, efficiency of the teachers would become effective.

He said duties and responsibilities which are very serious and noble shape the future of the nation and the people.

He spoke of the need to apply new technologies, thoughts and ideas in conformity with the region and the nation and these new technologies and ideas will bring about national interests, he said.

He also spoke of the need to nurture the youth to respect and cherish culture, customs and social norms of the nation and the people. Only when there is good morale

will they be able to serve the national interest, he added.

At the same time, the government is creating good educational environment and opportunities for success of the future of the students. The minister urged teachers to cultivate the students to possess qualification of choosing better opportunities.

He said all the teachers are responsible for creating peaceful pursuit of education essential for students. Only citizens with high intellectual power are able to make the nation develop and to safeguard it.

Today knowledge is wide and spreads rapidly due to new technology. There are a lot of opportunities for big nations that have technological superiority to serve their interest. He pointed out that citizens with high intellect are able to remove outside instigation and attempt to influence the nation, he said.

If the people do not possess high intellect, it is difficult for a nation to ensure perpetuation of its sovereignty. After realizing this, the teachers are to make concerted efforts for uplift of their intellect, he added.

Next, Minister U Thaug presented prizes to outstanding trainee teachers and certificates to the trainee leaders. The minister cordially greeted the teachers. The five-week course was attended by 1,082 teachers.

Present were Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and for Immigration and Population Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe, Chairman of Civil Service

Selection and Training Board Dr Than Nyun, the deputy ministers, Deputy Chief Justice U Khin Maung Latt, Chairman of Mandalay City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Phone Zaw Han, members of CSSTB, departmental heads and officials, Rector of Central Institute for Civil Service (Upper Myanmar) U Aung San Win, pro-rectors, associate professors, lecturers, assistant lecturers and course instructors.—MNA



Minister U Thaug presents model hostel award to No 5 hostel, No 1 company . — MNA

Lt-Gen Myint Swe inspects tax-free markets



Lt-Gen Myint Swe inspects tax-free market in Tamway Township. — MNA

YANGON, 18 Dec — Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence inspected tax-free markets and gave instructions on keeping alive aims of opening tax-free markets this morning.

Lt-Gen Myint Swe together with Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win, Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Secretary U Aung Than Win and officials looked into tax-free markets in Dagon Myothit (North), Dagon Myothit (South), Thakayta, Tamway and Yankin Townships.

Officials concerned conducted them round the tax-free markets and they inspected sales of meat, fish, vegetables, eggs, rice and others in the tax-free markets. Lt-Gen Myint Swe gave instructions on sales of fresh vegetables, meat and fish at reasonable prices, production of a wide range of goods and supervision on sale of goods for the satisfaction of the consumers. — MNA

Minister inspects natural gas pipe lines

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi went on an inspection tour of the site for laying of Magway-Pyawbwe-Taunggyi-Pinpet natural gas pipe lines carried out by Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise in Pyawbwe Township, Mandalay Division on 17 December.

At the briefing hall of pipe line station, Director of MOGE U Than Htut explained matters relating to laying of pipe lines and the



Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi inspects laying gas pipe line linking Magway, Pyawbwe, Taunggyi and Pinpet. — MNA

minister fulfilled the requirements. Next, the minister and officials concerned inspected progress of work in Pyawbwe, Hlinet and Yinmabin sessions by

the use of heavy machinery.

The total length of Magway-Pyawbwe-Taunggyi-Pinpet natural gas pipeline is 192 miles. Upon completion natural

gas will be supplied to new cement factories to be built in the near future to contribute toward the nation-building endeavours.

MNA

Measures on tourism industry discussed

YANGON, 18 Dec—Minister for Hotels and Tourism Maj-Gen Soe Naing had a meeting with Director-General of the Directorate of Hotels and Tourism U Htay Aung, Chairman of the Myanmar Hoteliers Association Dr Khin Shwe, Chairman of Union of Myanmar Travel

Association U Khin Zaw, Chairman of the Committee for Promoting Myanmar Market U Aung Myat Kyaw and officials at the Mya Yeik Nyo Royal Hotel, here, on 16 December.

The minister dealt with tourist arrivals and plans under way to

promote Myanmar tourism industry. Director-General U Htay Aung gave a supplementary report.

The chairmen of the associations and the committee reported on work progress. The minister attended to the needs.—MNA

FMI Co Ltd holds AGM Financial Statement

YANGON, 18 Dec — The 15th Annual General Meeting of the First Myanmar Investment Co Ltd was held at Sedona

Hotel here this afternoon.

Chairman of Advisory Board Col Win Maung (Retd) of FMI Co Ltd made an opening speech on the occasion. Chairman of FMI Co Ltd Managing Agent U Thein Wai extended greetings and explained progress of work of the company by projector.

Regarding the reports, officials concerned replied to the queries raised by

share holders and guests. Financial Statement and annual reports were submitted, executive directors were elected for 2007-2008 and the audit was appointed during the meeting.

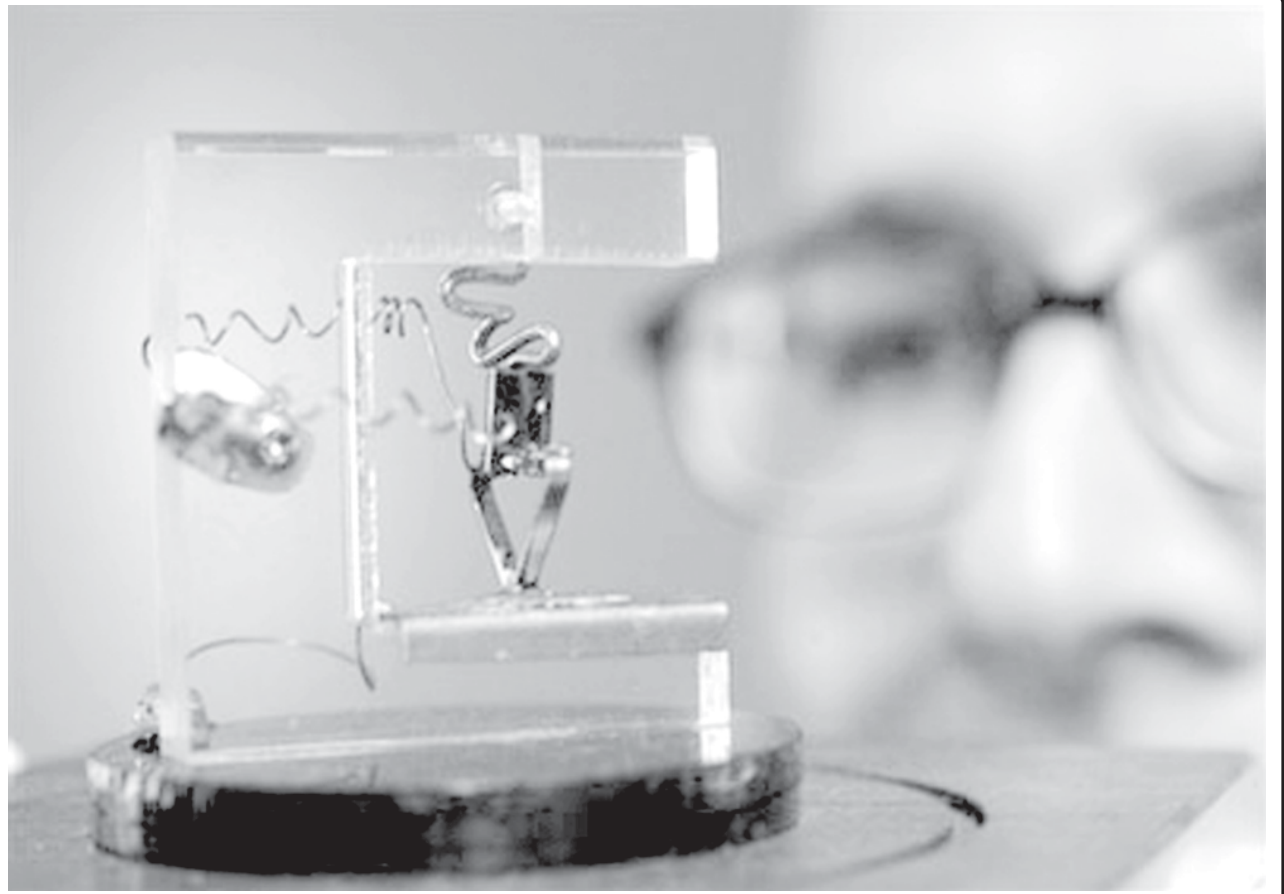
The FMI is private-owned company and it invested a large sum of money in banking, construction, auto and industrial and agricultural sectors. — MNA

Chairman of FMI Co Ltd Managing Agent U Thein Wai extends greetings at 15th annual meeting of First Myanmar Investment Co Ltd.

MNA



Images of the Day



Computer History Museum senior curator Dag Spicer looks at a replica of the first transistor at the museum in Mountain View, Calif, on 12 Dec, 2007. The first transistor was built 60 years ago on 16 Dec, 1947.—INTERNET

An archaeologist examines a bronze willow sword unearthed on 14 Dec, 2007 in Chongqing. —INTERNET

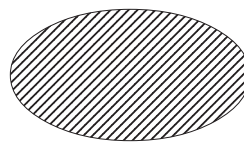


*Century-Old Fish Caught in Alaska .
INTERNET*

Wood turner Uwe Uhlig looks at crafted small wooden trees in the traditional Erz Mountain village Lengefeld, about 70km (44 miles) south of the eastern German town Dresden December 13, 2007. They are used as Christmas decoration and specifically as Christmas tree for the trouser pocket. —XINHUA



An undated handout photo shows a cat and a brown mouse within an inch of each other. Fear may be linked to the sense of smell, and can be switched off simply by shutting down certain receptors in the brain, Japanese scientists have found. In an experiment with mice, the researchers identified and removed certain receptors on the olfactory bulb of their brains — and the result was a batch of fearless rodents. — INTERNET





A farm tractor evacuates flood victims near Kuantan, central Pahang state recently. Flooding in Malaysia have killed 21 people and left over 29,000 homeless as rising waters seal off major roads in the country. —INTERNET

Bali climate deal paves way for hotter US debate

WASHINGTON, 17 Dec — A breakthrough deal forged by delegates from 190 countries has revived world efforts to fight global warming and may help push the debate to the front and centre of the US political debate.

The United States joined the deal reached on the Indonesian island of Bali in a dramatic U-turn.

But significantly, the accord sets late 2009 as the target for a climate treaty, months after US

President George W Bush leaves office.

Senator Barbara Boxer, a California Democrat who heads the Senate's environment committee, noted the Bush Administration's lonely position after the Bali deal was reached on Saturday.

"In Bali, the president tried to treat the world the way he treats Congress — 'my way or the highway,'" Boxer said in a statement. "The difference is that in Congress he has

supporters but in Bali he had no supporters."

The debate is largely over for the American public, according to Karlyn Bowman, a polling expert at the American Enterprise Institute. Americans view climate change as the world's top environmental problem, although few followed the Bali debate.

Americans are relying on policymakers, including the next president, to tackle climate change, Bowman said. —MNA/Reuters

Japan Tamiflu study inconclusive, will probe more

TOKYO, 17 Dec — Over half of influenza patients in Japan showing abnormal behaviour had taken the drug Tamiflu, but it is not clear if there was a causal link between the drug and their actions, a government report showed on Monday.

Japan is investigating whether there is any link between Tamiflu, made by Roche Holding AG, and neuropsychiatric problems after more than 100 people, mostly young, showed erratic behaviour such as jumping from buildings after taking the drug.

There have been eight cases of deaths after

abnormal or possibly abnormal behaviour.

Tamiflu can treat symptoms of regular seasonal influenza and is seen as one of the best defences against a possible bird flu pandemic.

The Health Ministry report said that of 137 patients who had shown abnormal behaviour, 82 had taken Tamiflu, while 52 had not.

But the report, compiled by a group of doctors and other health experts, said their figures were difficult to assess because it was not clear what percentage of all influenza patients had been prescribed Tamiflu.

The report also said that the number of patients showing abnormal behaviour did not drop after the government warned in March against prescribing Tamiflu to those aged 10 to 19. —MNA/Reuters

British scientists pinpoint key to ovarian cancer drug use

LONDON, 17 Dec — British scientists have discovered why a treatment for ovarian cancer only works in half of the patients who have it, according to BBC on Sunday.

Paclitaxel, part of a

family of drugs called taxanes, originally derived from yew trees, shrinks ovarian tumors, but Cambridge University researchers found that patients lacking a specific type of protein tend to be immune. The researchers

examined ovarian cancer cells and data from 20 patients and found those who did not respond to paclitaxel had lower levels of a protein called TGFBI in their pre-treatment samples.

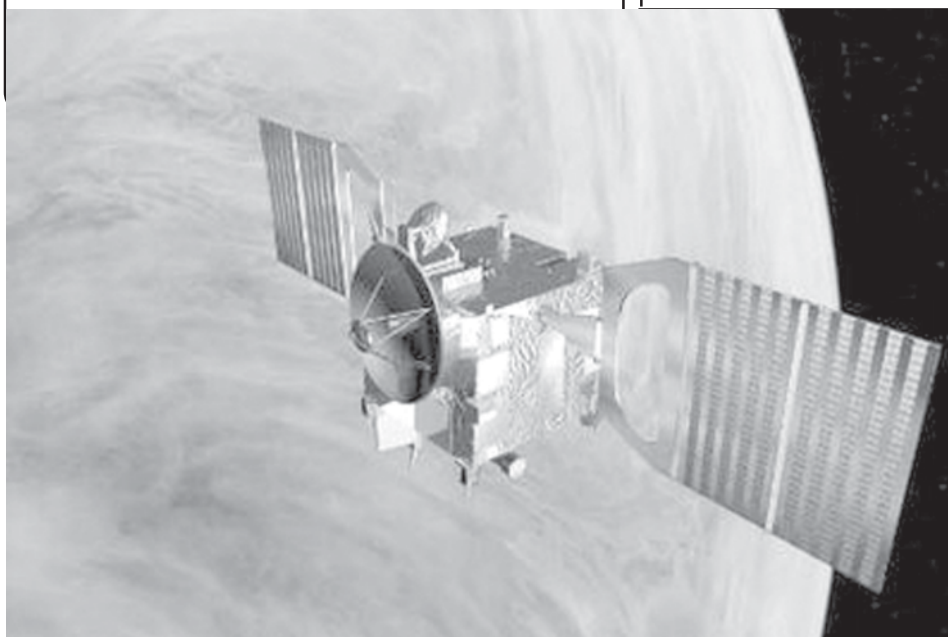
Further analysis revealed that cancer cell death rate was higher following treatment where levels of TGFBI were high. "TGFBI is lost in one third of primary ovarian cancers and it is possible that this protein could be used as a biomarker for selecting patients likely to respond to this class of drug," lead researcher James Brenton said. The researchers said their work reveals that some proteins that surround cancer cells such as TGFBI send messages to microtubules, the backbone of the cell, sensitizing them to paclitaxel.

MNA/Xinhua



Pedestrians brave the blowing snow as they cross the main street of Chagrin Falls, Ohio on 16 Dec, 2007. —INTERNET

An artist's impression of the Venus Express orbiting Venus is provided by the European Space Agency on 28 November, 2007. Scientists unveiled a series of findings from the Venus Express mission to the planet closest to Earth not just in distance, but also in size. —INTERNET



Canada reopens nuclear reactor

OTTAWA, 17 Dec — Canada's state-owned nuclear company announced Sunday that it had reopened the only nuclear reactor in North America to supply radioactive isotopes worldwide.

"The National Research Reactor (NRR) was safely returned to service at 3:44 am on Sunday," said Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) in a statement. Medical

isotopes will start being collected from the reactor for processing and distribution "within four days," added the statement.

The reactor, the only one in North America on Chalk River, Ontario, produces half of the world's medical isotopes for cancer diagnosing and treatment.

It was shut down for maintenance on 18 November and was ordered

by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission for an indefinite stoppage, after the organization found out the reactor had been running for a year without the emergency power system being connected to two cooling pumps.

The closure caused a severe shortage of medical isotopes, resulting in postponement of treating cancer patients in many countries.

MNA/Xinhua

SPORTS

Ribery wins French Player of the Year Award

PARIS, 18 Dec — France forward Franck Ribery received the 2007 French Player of the Year award on Sunday.

The Bayern Munich player came first in the vote by former award winners organized by France Football magazine.

Barcelona striker Thierry Henry, who had won the award for the last four years, came second and Olympique Lyon forward Karim Benzema finished third.

Ribery, 24, joined Bayern Munich from Olympique Marseille in June. He was a member of the France team who reached the final of the 2006 World Cup in Germany. —MNA/Reuters

Liverpool rethink stadium plans

LONDON, 18 Dec — Liverpool's new stadium in Stanley Park will not be "as dramatic" as first planned, the Premier League club said on Monday.

The five-time European champions unveiled plans in July for a futuristic 70,000-seater home, complete with an 18,000 single-tier Kop to replicate the famous end at their existing Anfield Stadium.

Chief executive Rick

Parry said two new schemes were now being considered but told fans it would still be a 70,000-seater arena and that the Kop would be retained.

"The new stadium will be a significant improvement on the original plans," Parry said on the club's Web site (www.liverpoolfc.tv).

"It will be a massive improvement on where we were 12 months ago, if not quite as dramatic as

Colo awarded win after Chilean derby halted by riot

SANTIAGO, 18 Dec — Colo Colo reached the Chilean championship final on Monday after the league ruled the result of their derby with Universidad de Chile would stand, despite the game being abandoned due to crowd violence in the second half.

Colo Colo, 2-0 ahead from the first leg of their semi-final tie, were winning Sunday's return 1-0 when Universidad de Chile supporters hurled stones, plastic seats and

parts of a torn-down fence onto the field.

"The league absolutely agrees with the referee's decision ... to suspend the game in the 22nd minute of the second half due to the seriousness of the incidents," said the league in a statement.

The trouble was blamed on a hardcore group of Universidad de Chile supporters known as Los de Abajo (The Ones from Below).

Police said 38 people were arrested following Sunday's trouble, in addition to the 21 detained during the first leg. On Saturday, Colo Colo said forward Eduardo Rubio's car was hit by stones hurled by Universidad de Chile fans while he was driving. The player was not hurt. —MNA/Reuters

Federer, Henin named ITF World Champions

LONDON, 18 Dec — World number ones Roger Federer and Justine Henin were named 2007 ITF World Champions, the governing body announced on Monday.

Federer, who won eight titles during the season, became only the second player after Pete Sampras to receive the accolade for the fourth successive year.

The 26-year-old reached all four major finals for the second successive year, winning the Australian Open, Wimbledon and US Open. He also became the first player to earn over 10 million US dollars in annual prize money.

"Each year brings new challenges, and I am proud that I have been able to raise the level of my game when needed. It gives me great satisfaction to have won another three grand slam titles and maintained the number one ranking," said Federer. —MNA/Reuters

Rijkaard given touchline ban for Lyon rant

ZURICH (Switzerland), 18 Dec — Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard will sit out his team's first Champions League knockout stage match after being handed a touch-

line ban by UEFA.

European soccer's ruling body said on Monday that Rijkaard would serve a two-match touchline ban after being sent off for arguing with the referee during their group game against Olympique Lyon on 27 Nov.

He has already sat out the first match of the ban with an automatic suspension during Barcelona's final group match against VfB Stuttgart last week.

MNA/Reuters

Bolivian President raps FIFA's new altitude ban

LAPAZ, 18 Dec — Bolivian President Evo Morales has criticized FIFA's decision to introduce a ban on international soccer matches over 2,750 me-

tres above sea level without acclimatisation.

"I want to express my surprise at this decision by FIFA. It's discrimination ... against people who live at high altitude," Morales told state news agency ABI after a kickabout with police officers in La Paz, which lies 3,600 metres above sea level.

"It's not right that they don't understand the situation of Potosi, Oruro or La Paz," he added, referring to two other Andean

cities with leading national teams.

World soccer's governing body announced its latest altitude ruling on Saturday in Japan. It said players would need sufficient time to acclimatise if playing above 2,750 metres, though it did not say how much.

Earlier this year, FIFA banned matches at over 2,500 metres, a decision which caused an outcry in Bolivia and elsewhere in South America.

MNA/Reuters

Kaka named FIFA's World Player of Year

ZURICH, 18 Dec — AC Milan playmaker Kaka added to his remarkable haul of trophies and titles on Monday when he was named FIFA World Player 2007.

The 25-year-old Brazilian international beat Barcelona forward Lionel Messi and Manchester United winger Cristiano Ronaldo in the annual poll of national team coaches and captains.

Kaka collected more points than the

combined total of the other two nominees, world soccer's governing body FIFA said after the ceremony here. He won 1,047 votes while Argentine Messi gained 504 and Portuguese Ronaldo picked up 426. Chelsea and Ivory Coast striker Didier Drogba was fourth on 209. Barcelona and Brazil playmaker Ronaldinho, winner of the award in 2004 and 2005, came fifth.

"Tonight is really special for me," said Kaka, who helped Milan to their seventh European Cup title in May and was also inspirational in Sunday's 4-2 Club World Cup final victory over Argentina's Boca Juniors. —MNA/Reuters

Terry out for up to six weeks with broken foot

LONDON, 18 Dec — Chelsea centre back John Terry will be out of action for up to six weeks after a scan showed he had broken three bones in his right foot, the club said on Monday.

The Chelsea and England captain sustained the injury after being caught by Emmanuel Eboué in the first half of Sunday's 1-0 defeat at Arsenal.

"Terry has fractured three bones, including his third metatarsal," a club statement said. "He will start his rehabilitation immediately." —MNA/Reuters

Ferguson says beating Liverpool big step in title race

LIVERPOOL (England), 18 Dec — Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson hailed the team's 1-0 win over Liverpool at Anfield on Sunday as a significant step towards retaining the Premier League title.

"It was a massive win. I said beforehand, the games between the top sides would be significant and that is one today," Ferguson told MUTV.

"If we are around the top in the first part of January we will have a real chance of winning the league. We will know we have a chance and we will know who our challengers are going to be."

Carlos Tevez scored in the 43rd minute to move United nine points clear of Liverpool, who are fifth in the table. Arsenal, who beat third-placed Chelsea 1-0 on Sunday, top the Premier League on 40 points, one ahead of United.

"It wasn't a smash and grab victory at all. We played the better stuff," said Ferguson.

MNA/Reuters

Wenger delighted by jubilant Arsenal's perfect response

LONDON, 18 Dec — Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger praised his side for their 1-0 victory over Chelsea on Sunday, saying it was the ideal way to recover from last week's first Premier League defeat of the season at Middlesbrough.

"It was very important, the perfect response. If you lose a match and then lose the next match at home, it can undermine your confidence, so I am delighted with the spirit we showed."

"The first half was a bit locked tactically but the goal from William Gallas changed the game. "We had four or five counter-attacks and opportunities to score after that but when you don't do that, it gets harder. But in the end I think we deserved the three points." —MNA/Reuters



Kaka of Brazil raises the FIFA World Player 2007 award during the FIFA World Player of the Year awards ceremony in Zurich on 17 Dec, 2007.

XINHUA

Accident-prone 100-old Japanese driver caught again

TOKYO, 18 Dec — A 100-year-old Japanese man who was arrested after his car hit an umbrella held by a child said driving was his ticket to avoiding senility.

“Driving helps me from going senile because it keeps me alert,” police in Sendai, northern Japan, quoted the driver, Masaru Hori, as saying.

The incident marked the second time Hori had been caught for driving without a licence since it was revoked after a hit-and-run accident in August, police said. He was also involved in a similar accident last month, they said. Hori was arrested on Friday after a policeman saw him hit an umbrella that a seven-year-old child on the street was holding. The child was unhurt.

Police told the man’s family to get rid of the car, media said, and Hori swore his days of illegal driving were over.—MNA/Reuters

Russia warns Kosovo can become “uncontrollable crisis”

Moscow, 18 Dec — Russia has on Monday warned that the Kosovo situation was at a critical point and could become an “uncontrollable crisis.”

“The situation in the Kosovo settlement has approached a critical point,” the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

“The current situation is the direct consequence of serious slants in the Kosovo settlement process, which the Russian side constantly paid

attention to... The situation could evolve in an uncontrollable crisis, if the settlement is not preserved within the international legal framework,” it said.

Kosovo, the independence-seeking province of Serbia, has been under UN administration since 1999. Its 90-per-cent Albanians majority insist

on independence, but Serbia only agrees to offer substantial autonomy.

A four-month negotiations mediated by the troika of United States, European Union and Russian envoys officially ended earlier this month without any result on the future status of Kosovo.

Kosovo Albanian leaders said there is no point in talking further with Serbia and they are ready to declare independence before May next year in coordination with US and EU backers.

Russia has repeated opposition to Kosovo’s independence.

MNA/Xinhua

Five killed by land mine in C Afghanistan

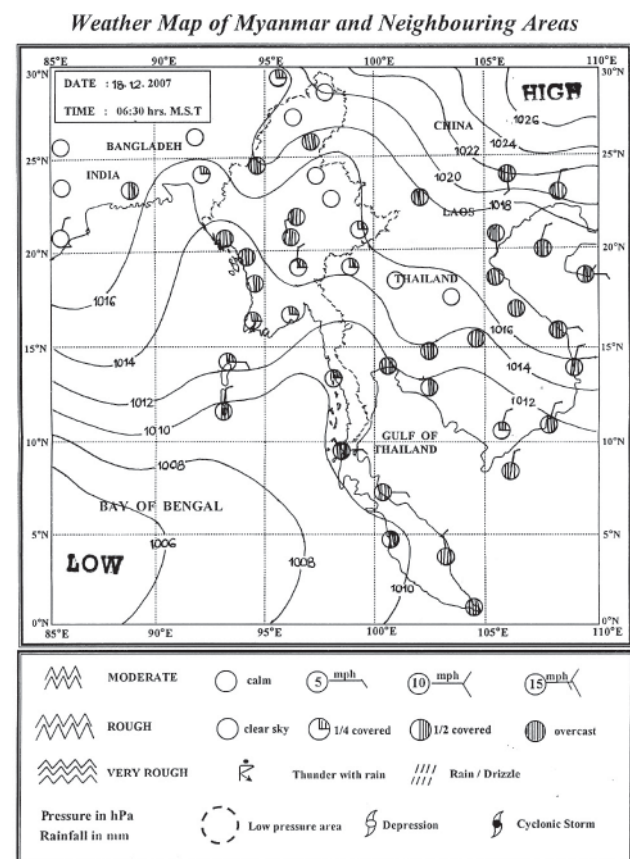
KABUL, 18 Dec — A family of five was killed on Sunday when their vehicle hit land mines supposed to be planted by Taleban insurgents in central Afghan province of Uruzgan, said a local police official on Monday.

Juma Himat, provincial police chief, said the tragedy occurred at 2

pm (GMT 0930) Sunday when a couple with their three children were riding a motorbike on the highway of Uruzgan Province.

“The land mines were supposed to be planted by Taleban insurgents for attacking Afghan Army and NATO force,” Himat said.

MNA/Xinhua



WEATHER

Tuesday, 18 December, 2007

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Shan State, lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Divisions and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) below December average temperatures in upper Sagaing Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above December average temperatures in Mon State, lower Sagaing, Magway, Bago, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Divisions, (5°C) to (6°C) above December average temperatures in Shan and Kayah States and about December average temperatures in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were Haka (6°C).

Maximum temperature on 17-12-2007 was 96°F. Minimum temperature on 18-12-2007 was 68°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hours MST on 18-12-2007 was 83%. Total sunshine hours on 17-12-2007 was (7.8) hours approx.

Rainfall on 18-12-2007 was (nil) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2007 was (136.57) inches at Mingaladon, (141.38) inches at Kaba-Aye and (144.29) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (4) mph from Southeast at (12:30) hours MST on 17-12-2007.

Bay inference: According to the observations at (06:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area over Southwest Bay still persists. Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 19-12-2007: Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States, Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

State of thesea: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight rain or thundershowers in the Central Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 19-12-2007: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 19-12-2007: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 19-12-2007: Partly cloudy.



Wednesday, 19 December

Tune in today

- 8:30 am Brief news
- 8:35 am Music: -The answer to your life
- 8:40 am Perspectives
- 8:45 am Music -If only you were here
- 8:50 am National news/Slogan
- 9:00 am Music: -Sweet kisses
- 9:05 am International news
- 9:10 am Music -The way to my heart
- 1:30 pm News/Slogan
- 1:40pm Lunch time music
- We belong
- Day after day
- 9:00pm Variations on a tune
- Three coins in a fountain
- 9:10pm Article
- 9:30 pm Music at your request
- Sweet heart
- Hello darling
- 9:45 pm News/Slogan
- 10:00 pm PEL



Wednesday, 19 December

View on today

- 7:00 am
 1. ကျေးဇူးရှင်မင်းကွန်းဆရာတော် ဘုရားကြီး နိုင်ငံတော်သံဃမဟာနာယကအဖွဲ့အကျိုးတော်ဆောင်ရွက်အဘိဓမ္မာမဟာရဋ္ဌဂုရုအဘိဓမ္မာအဂ္ဂမဟာသဒ္ဓမ္မဇောတိက၊ တိပိဋကဓရ၊ ဓမ္မဘဏ္ဍာဂါရိက ဆရာတော် ဘဒ္ဒန္တဝိစိတ္တသာရာဘိဝံသ၏ ပရိတ်တရားတော်
- 7:25 am
 2. To be healthy exercise
- 7:30 am
 3. Morning news
- 7:40 am
 4. Nice and sweet song
- 7:55 am
 5. မြူးမြူးကြွကြွယဉ်ကျေးမှုအက

- 8:05 am
 6. အတီးပြိုင်ပွဲ
- 8:20 am
 7. လယ်ယာစီးပွားမြှင့်တင်ရေးရန် ပဲခူး ရေလှောင်တံခံ
- 8:30 am
 8. International news
- 8:45 am
 9. Let's Go
- 2:50 pm
 1. ၂၀၀၇ခုနှစ်(၄၆)ကြိမ်မြောက် တပ်မတော် ကာကွယ်ရေးဦးစီးချုပ်ဖလား တပ်မတော် (ကြည်း၊ ရေလေ) ဘောလုံးပြိုင်ပွဲ တိုက်ရိုက်ထုတ်လွှင့်မှုအစီအစဉ် (ဒုတိယအကြိမ်ပိုလ်လွှဲ)
- 4:45 pm
 2. Song to uphold National Spirit
- 5:00 pm
 3. အဝေးသင်တက္ကသိုလ် ပညာရေးရုပ်မြင်သံကြား သင်ခန်းစာ-တတိယနှစ် (စီးပွားရေးပညာ အထူးပြု) (စီးပွားရေးပညာ)
- 5:10 pm
 4. Classical song
- 5:20 pm
 5. ရှုဖွယ်စုံလင်အာဆီယံအစီအစဉ်

- 5:30 pm
 6. ရသပေါ်လွင် သရုပ်ဆောင် လွှင့်ပြင်
- 6:00 pm
 7. Evening news
- 6:30 pm
 8. Weather report
- 6:35 pm
 9. မြန်မာ့ဓလေ့ရိုးရာလက်ရာ
- 7:00 pm
 10. “မပြောမပြီးမတီးမမြည်” (နေရဲလင်း၊ မောင်မောင်မြင့်၊ ရှင်ဖုန်းအိမ်ချယ်၊ မိုးဇော်၊ နိုင်ဆူသွယ်) (ဒါရိုက်တာ-မောင်မောင်မြင့်)
- 7:20 pm
 11. ထက်မြက်ပျော်ရွှင်အိမ်ထောင်ရှင်
- 7:45 pm
 12. The mirror images of the musical oldies
- 8:00 pm
 13. News
- 14. International news
- 15. Weather report
- 16. Franz fararay’s magic planet
- 17. Myanmar video feature: “လိုတိုင်းတ - တတိုင်းရစေ” (နိုင်နိုင်၊ နန္ဒာလှိုင်) (ဒါရိုက်တာ-မောင်မောင်ဦး) (စန်းရီဂတ်)
- 18. The next day’s programme

People's Desire

- ★ We favour stability.
- ★ We favour peace.
- ★ We oppose unrest and violence.

Commission for Drafting State Constitution meets



Chief Justice U Aung Toe delivers an address at meeting No 2/2007 of the Commission for Drafting the State Constitution.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 18 Dec—The meeting (2/2007) of the Commission for Drafting the State Constitution was held at the meeting hall of Office Building No 22, here, this afternoon.

Chairman of the commission Chief Justice U Aung Toe, Vice-Chairman of the commission Attorney-General U Aye Maung, the secretary, the joint-secretary and members of the commission attended the meeting.

The Chief Justice chaired the meeting with Secretary Dr Thaug Myint acting as MC.

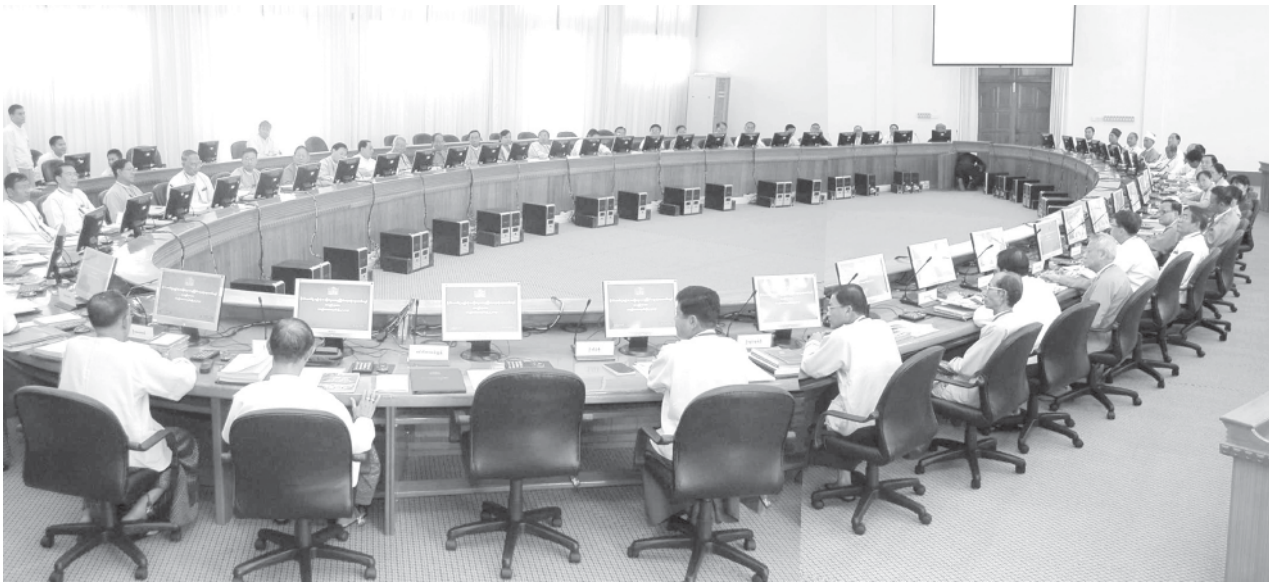
The chairman made an opening speech on the occasion.

Next, the group leaders and the deputy group leaders explained progress in drafting the state constitution and members of the commission made thorough discussions on the draft constitution.

The meeting ended with the concluding remarks by Chairman Chief Justice U Aung Toe.—MNA



U Tin Aye, member of the Commission for Drafting State Constitution, discusses matters on drafting the State Constitution. — MNA



U Myat Thu, member of the Commission for Drafting State Constitution, discusses matters on drafting the State Constitution. — MNA

- ★ Skyful liars attempting to destroy nation
- ★ BBC lying
- ★ VOA deceiving
- ★ RFA setting up hostilities
- ★ Beware! Don't be bought by those ill-wishers