

Maj-Gen Tha Aye inspects construction of MTU

YANGON, 24 Dec— Maj-Gen Tha Aye of the Ministry of Defence, Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of South East Command Maj-Gen Thet Naing Win and officials visited Mawlamyine Technological University on 21 December.

Acting Principal of the University Dr Yan Aung Oo, Project Engineer U Zaw Win of Technological University (Mawlamyine) Construction Project and Dr Nay Chi Leh Leh Thein of the University of Computer Studies (Thaton) reported on construction of the main



Maj-Gen Tha Aye of Ministry of Defence presents cash for faculty members of Technological University in Mawlamyine.—MNA

building of MTU.

Maj-Gen Tha Aye gave instructions and presented K 500,000 for uniforms to faculty members.

He inspected construction of the meeting room and lecture rooms.

The three-storey main building comprises 38 lec-

ture rooms, one meeting room, one laboratory, 12 toilets and one portico.

The building is nearing completion. — MNA

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

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At a time when big nations are meddling in the internal affairs of the nation and the penetration of alien culture and customs is unavoidable, the literati need to create sound literature capable of safeguarding the national culture.

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Significant night temperatures

Haka	(2°C)
Mogok	(3°C)
Pinlaung	(4°C)
Namhsam	(5°C)
Heho	(5°C)

Commander, Minister attend opening of paddy husk-cum-diesel-fired power plant

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec — Chairman of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Commander of Western Command Maj-Gen Maung Shein and Minister for Electric Power No 2 Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint attended 125 KVA paddy husk-cum-diesel-fired power plant in Myoma Alepaing Ward, Minbya Township, Sittway District on 21 December. Com-

memorative pennants were presented to the commander and the minister, and officials formally opened the power plant.

The commander and the minister sprinkled scented water on the power plant. Next, the minister pressed the button to start power supply. Afterwards, the commander and the minister visited the power plant. — MNA



Commander Maj-Gen Maung Shein and Minister Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint inspect paddy husk-cum-diesel fired power plant.—EP-2

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

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 25 December, 2007

Safeguard cultural heritage and national character with national outlook

Literature is the pillar of national culture. Myanmar alphabets and literature have already flourished since more than one thousand years ago. The national prestige and integrity, high capability and firm conviction of Myanmar have been born out of literature.

While striving for development of such fine traditions the literati of today are to try their utmost in uplifting the standard of national culture to be able to keep pace with changes and developments.

The government is making all-out efforts for flourishing of Myanmar literature. Regarding this, handsome literary prizes are presented yearly.

A ceremony to present prizes to winners of National Literary Life Time Achievement Award, National Literary Award and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award for 2006 was held at the Ministry of Information in Nay Pyi Taw on 23 December.

The literati are to try to be highly knowledgeable in imparting literary knowledge to the people. It is incumbent upon the literati to inculcate the people with nationalistic fervour and national outlook, reviewing history and drawing lessons from the past.

At a time when big nations are meddling in the internal affairs of the nation and the penetration of alien culture and customs is unavoidable, the literati need to create sound literature capable of safeguarding the national culture. And they are to continue compiling fine literature in the interest of the State and the people while safeguarding cultural heritage and national character. Only then, will they be able to shoulder the duty of literature.

No interest in political activities

Four resign from Palaw and Dawbon Township NLDs

YANGON, 24 Dec — Member U Min Thu of Palaw Township National League for Democracy of Myeik District, Taninthayi Division, resigned from the party of his own volition on 14 December, sending his resignation letter to local authorities concerned.

Similarly, members U Thein Htwe, U Kyaw Min Htoo and U Aung Tun of Dawbon Township NLD resigned from the party of their own volition on 17 December, sending their resignation letters to local authorities concerned.

In their resignation letters sent to Palaw and Dawbon Township Multi-party Democracy General Election Subcommissions, they said that they took no interest in NLD's activities and political movement. That was why they resigned from the party of their own wishes, they said. — 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



Sale of Ultralube engine oil promoted

YANGON, 24 Dec — Sale promotion of Ultralube engine oil was held in conjunction with new year eve dinner at Parkroyal Hotel yesterday.

Sale Manager Mr Richard Peh and Managing Director U Patrick Sain Yin of Top Three Co Ltd made welcome speeches on the occasion.

Ultralube engine oil is manufactured based on American Technology in Singapore and it is being distributed to Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia and Vietnam. Top Three Co Ltd, the sole distributor, began distributing its product in Myanmar starting last year.

Those interested to distribute or utilize Ultralube may contact Top Three Co Ltd (Tel-09-5012981, Tel-09-5113149, Tel-09-5003365). — MNA

Mr Richard Peh speaks at sales promotion of Ultralube engine oil of Top Three Co, Ltd.— MNA



Eastern Command Commander meets secretaries of the state/district/township USDAs

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec — Patron of Shan State (South) USDA Chairman of Shan State (South) PDC Commander of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Thaug Aye met with secretaries and executives of the state/district/township USDAs of Shan State (South) at the meeting hall of the state USDA in Taunggyi on 19 December.

First, the commander made an opening speech.

Next, secretaries and executives of Township USDAs in Taunggyi, Loilem and Langkho Districts gave reports on education, health, social and economic sectors of the local people, transportation, agricultural, livestock breeding, measures taken for the development of the region and organizational tasks.

Upon arrival at Kyaunggyisu Ward in Taunggyi, the commander inspected the ring road of Taunggyi and measures taken for beautifying Kyaunggyisu Ward and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

KPA blames US for tense situation on Korean Peninsula

PYONGYANG, 24 Dec— A senior officer of the Korean People's Army (KPA) on Sunday criticized the United States for causing tension on the Korean Peninsula with its hostile policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

"The situation of the Korean Peninsula still remains tense owing to the US invariable war moves," the official *Korean Central News Agency* quoted Kim Kyok Sik, chief of the General Staff of the KPA as saying.

Kim made the remarks at a national meeting to mark the 16th anniversary of leader Kim Jong Il's take-over of the country's Army.

"All the facts...show that the US is talking about dialogue and negotiation, but it is actually scheming

to destabilize DPRK's system," he said.

Kim reiterated DPRK's determination to fight against the hostile policies of the United States and Japan with more powerful means.

The DPRK renewed its criticism of Washington for its hostile policy after both sides reached an agreement on the nuclear issue on the Peninsula.

MNA/Xinhua

Russia's President Vladimir Putin (R), Valery Zorkin (L), head of Russia's Constitutional Court, First Deputy Prime Minister and presidential candidate Dmitry Medvedev (C) and the Kremlin chief of staff Sergei Sobyenin (2nd L) arrive for a meeting with court judges in their new headquarters in St Petersburg on 23 Dec, 2007.—INTERNET



Study says African giraffes are endangered

NAIROBI, 24 Dec—At least six distinct species of giraffe, the world's tallest land animal, may be in existence and some of them are critically endangered, scientists in the United States and Kenya have found.

It had previously been thought that there was only one species of giraffe

ranging across Africa's golden savannahs. "Some of these giraffe populations number only a few hundred individuals and need immediate protection," said the study's lead author, geneticist David Brown of the US-based Wildlife Conservation Society.

"Lumping all giraffes into one species obscures the

reality that some kinds of giraffe are on the very brink." The most threatened potential species include the reticulated giraffe (currently *Giraffa camelopardalis reticulata*) in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia. Its population was estimated at around 27,000 until the 1990s, when poaching and conflicts slashed numbers to just 3,000 individuals.

In west and central Africa, there are thought to be only 160 Nigerian giraffes (*Giraffa camelopardalis peralta*) left.

MNA/Reuters

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Brazil has over 11,000 seniors aged above 100

RIO DE JANEIRO, 24 Dec—Brazil has a total of 11,422 people aged 100 or above, according to a study released by the Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute (IBGE) on Friday.

Those citizens mainly live in cities of north-eastern Brazil, the study showed. Fifteen of the 20 cities with the largest centennial populations are located in the region. The northeastern city of Bahia

tops the list with 1,877 citizens who were born at the end of the 19th Century or in the beginning of the 20th Century. According to the study, 7,950 of the citizens aged 100 or above are women, more than double the number for men.

The study was carried out in cities with less than 170,000 inhabitants, which represent 97 per cent of all Brazilian municipalities.

MNA/Reuters



A boy sells reindeer horns to be installed at cars' windows prior as a Christmas decoration in Mexico City, Saturday, Dec. 22, 2007.—INTERNET

Tibet forecasts 5 mln tourists in 2008

LHASA, 24 Dec—Tibet is forecasting to receive at least five million tourists in 2008, an official with the region's development and reform commission said.

Jin Shixun, director with the Commission, said Tibet expected a 25-per-cent increase in tourists next year. They would push tourism revenue in the autonomous region to six billion yuan (about 800 million US dollars).

The commission estimated earlier that the region, with a total population of 2.8 million, would receive a record-high 4.02 million tourists in 2007, a 64-per-cent increase year-on-year. Tourism revenues were forecast at 4.8 billion yuan.

Tibet's architectural icon, the Potala Palace, has received more than one million tourists alone so far this year

. Tourism is Tibet's main industry. The region received 2.5 million tourists last year, earning 2.77 billion yuan in total tourism revenue. This accounted for 9.6 per cent of the region's gross domestic product.

Jin attributed the surge in tourists mainly to the operation of the Qinghai-Tibet Railway that was completed in July 2006. — MNA/Reuters

Argentina not to buy "F-16" from US

BUENOS AIRES, 24 Dec—Argentina will not buy *F-16* fighters from the United States as the latter slandered the Argentine Government, said the Defence Ministry on Saturday.

The negotiation between Argentina and the United States on the purchase of fighters was suspended, said a spokesman for the ministry.

Argentina will rely mainly on its own efforts to improve the Air Force's fighting capacity through strengthening the maintenance and repair of its current fighters, said the spokesman.—MNA/Xinhua

Snow avalanche kills 16 in Tajikistan, more trapped

DUSHANBE, 23 Dec—An avalanche killed at least 16 people in the mountains of Tajikistan on Saturday while more people remained trapped under snow, an Interior Ministry official said.

The avalanche occurred after several days of heavy snowfall and hit a road that connects the Central Asian state's capital Dushanbe with another

city, Khudjand.

Pictures shown on Russia's Vesti-24 news channel showed heavy tractors clearing snow from a narrow mountain road and trucks trapped at the site, 70 kilometres (45 miles) north of Dushanbe.

Mountains occupy 93 per cent of Tajikistan's territory.

"Our report from the

site says 16 bodies have been dug out," colonel Khaidar Makhmediyev from the Interior Ministry said.

The Emergency Ministry said three people were killed and many more were still trapped under snow. "There are still people under snow, we cannot say how many at the moment.

MNA/Reuters

Man accused of bus killer detained in London

LONDON, 23 Dec—A paranoid schizophrenic was ordered to be detained indefinitely on Friday for killing a bus passenger who had tried to stop him throwing chips at his girlfriend.

Anthony Joseph, 23, from Islington, north London, admitted manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility last month.

He had been formally acquitted of murder after two Old Bailey juries failed to agree a verdict.

Events manager Richard Whelan, 28, from

Kentish Town, was stabbed seven times, including once through the heart, on the top of a double-decker in Holloway, north London, in July 2005.

Joseph, who had been taking drink and drugs before the attack, should have been in custody but was released by mistake, it emerged later.

The government announced an investigation into "a number of failings" in the justice system as a whole following the case.

MNA/Reuters

France, India seek closer ties

NEW DELHI, 23 Dec—French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said here Friday his country is interested in forging civil nuclear cooperation with India but it will await the outcome of talks between India and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on a safeguards agreement.

"We are in favour of initialing a sort of strategic agreement but we have to wait for the (International Atomic Energy) Agency," Kouchner said after meeting Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. —MNA/Xinhua



A 1.8 kilometre Olympic gallery lit up in the bund area in Shanghai, on 20 Dec 2007. —INTERNET

Singapore receives year's 10 millionth foreign tourist

SINGAPORE, 23 Dec—Singapore on Saturday welcomed its 10 millionth foreign tourist of the year, celebrating a milestone for the tourism sector as it is seeking to achieve its tourism 2015 targets for

receiving 17 million tourist arrivals and increasing tourism receipts to 30 billion Singapore dollars (about 20.68 billion US dollars).

According to Channel NewsAsia reports on

Saturday night, the lucky tourist was a 36-year-old Indian, who arrived in the Changi Airport with his wife and two children to celebrate the coming Christmas Day in the city state. —MNA/Xinhua

Poland detects new deadly bird flu case

WARSAW, 23 Dec—A new outbreak of the deadly H5N1 bird flu has been detected in northern Poland, the PAP news agency reported on Saturday.

Tests conducted by the State Veterinary Institute discovered the H5N1 virus in dead chickens in an egg-producing farm in Zuromin region, where bird flu cases have been reported earlier this month, the PAP cited a statement from Poland's Chief Veterinary Office as saying.

About 200,000 chickens from four farms will be slaughtered, the statement said. This is the country's 8th outbreak of bird flu in the month.

On 1 December, the country's first reported case of the deadly virus

in domestic birds was confirmed in a poultry farm in Poland's central area. After that, several new cases of bird flu were detected in the

country.

Neighbouring countries have banned fowl imports from the infected regions of Poland.

MNA/Xinhua

Iran says no information on missing ex-FBI agent

TEHERAN, 23 Dec—Iran said on Saturday it did not have any information about a former FBI agent who reportedly went missing in the country nine months ago, comments likely to disappoint the American's visiting family members.

The wife and son of Robert Levinson say he disappeared in March after he travelled to Iran's Gulf resort island of Kish to investigate cigarette smuggling for a client. They arrived in the Islamic Republic on

Tuesday to search for him.

Accompanied by Swiss diplomats, who represent US interests in Teheran because the two old foes have not had diplomatic ties since shortly after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, Christine and Daniel Levinson met Iranian officials and also went to Kish.

But government spokesman Gholamhossein Elham suggested they had not been able to find out more about his fate.

MNA/Reuters

Baby panda goes on public display

LOS ANGELES, 24 Dec—Zhen Zhen, the newest charismatic baby panda went on display on Saturday at the San Diego Zoo, about 80 miles (about 108 kilometres) south of Los Angeles, zoo officials said.

Since birth four months ago, the panda had been visible only on the zoo's website.

Only four US zoos have pandas: San Diego, Memphis, Atlanta and the National Zoo in Washington and DC San Diego has the most pandas, with four.

There are many small things not known about pandas, but there is one large thing that is well-documented: Giant pandas are the most popular animals ever displayed in US zoos.

Under a complex loan agreement with the Chinese Government, Zhen Zhen, born in August at the zoo, will someday go to live in China. But that day is years away.

MNA/Xinhua

Moderate quake jolts eastern Indonesia

JAKARTA, 24 Dec—An earthquake with magnitude of 5.6 rocked eastern parts of Indonesia on Sunday evening, no report of damage or casualty, meteorology agency said here.

The quake struck at 20:10 Jakarta Time (1310 GMT) with epicentre at 104 kilometres northeast Kupang of East Nusa Tenggara province and at 128 kilometres beneath the earth, an official of the agency Novita Hendrastuti told Xinhua. Twenty-three people were killed and thousands of buildings were destroyed in September 2007 after a 7.9 Richter Scale quake rocked Bengkulu Province in Sumatra Island of western Indonesia.

MNA/Xinhua

Fatal fire shuts Mitsubishi ethylene unit

TOKYO, 23 Dec—A fire killed two workers at Japan's biggest ethylene plant on Friday, forcing operator Mitsubishi Chemical Corp to shut one of two units at the facility in Kashima, near Tokyo.

Two more workers were missing. Japan's top petrochemicals firm said it will investigate the cause of the fire at the plant, which accounts for more than one-tenth of Japan's capacity to make ethylene, the building block of the petrochemicals industry.

By Friday evening, fire fighters had brought the fire under control after the blaze broke out near a furnace. Television footage had shown a blackened plant with small flames still flickering.

After hours of searching for four missing workers, the fire department retrieved two bodies. The four workers were the employees of two other companies.

It was not immediately clear how long the 516,000 ton-per-year No 2 unit will be shut.

MNA/Reuters



A bear dressed in a Santa Claus costume is trained to applaud at a zoo in Nanning, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 21 Dec, 2007. The bear will perform at the zoo during the Christmas period. —INTERNET

ECONOMIC NEWS

Analysis: US credit card defaults high

BEIJING, 24 Dec— An *Associated Press* analysis of financial data from the country's largest card issuers shows that Americans are falling behind on their payments at an alarming rate.

It results in a surge of delinquencies and defaults by double-digit percentages in the last year, indicating that the problems are about to get a lot worse.

The analysis also found that the greatest rise was among accounts more than 90 days in arrears.

Experts said these signs of the deterioration of finances of many households are partly a byproduct of the subprime mortgage crisis and could spell more trouble ahead

for an already sputtering economy.

"Debt eventually leaks into other areas, whether it starts with the mortgage and goes to the credit card or vice versa," said Cliff Tan, a visiting scholar at Stanford University and an expert on credit risk.

"We're starting to see leaks now."

The value of credit card accounts at least 30 days late jumped 26 percent to 17.3 billion US dollars in October from a year earlier at 17 large credit card trusts examined by AP.

Meanwhile, defaults rose 18 percent to almost 961 million dollars in October, according to filings made by the trusts with the Securities and

Exchange Commission.

The analyzed data represents about 325 million individual accounts held in trusts, similar to how many banks packaged and sold subprime mortgage loans.

Together, they represent about 45 percent of the 920 billion dollars the Federal Reserve counts as credit card debt owed by Americans.

Many economists expect delinquencies and defaults to rise further after the holiday shopping season.

"Credit card quality will continue to erode throughout next year," said Mark Zandi, chief economist and co-founder of Moody's Economycom Inc. —*Internet*

Cuba and Venezuela sign 14 oil agreements



Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez (2nd R) and Cuban acting President Raul Castro.—INTERNET

HAVANA, 24 Dec— Visiting Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and acting Cuban President Raul Castro signed agreements on Saturday in the energy, mining and oil sectors, including a 170-million-dollar deal to build a new power plant.

The agreements, closing a four-day visit by Chavez to Cuba, also include a 122-million-dollar loan to build a new power plant in north-eastern Holguin and expand the existing power

Two agreements will almost double the new southeastern Cienfuegos oil refinery's capacity from 65,000 to 150,000 barrels per day, and reopen an oil pipeline between the eastern Matanzas and the refinery, located 260 kilometres (160 miles) south of Havana.

Two agreements provide a 170-million-dollar loan to build a new power plant in north-eastern Holguin and expand the existing power

network supplying Havana.

During his visit, Chavez met with ailing Cuban leader Fidel Castro, inaugurated the Cienfuegos refinery and attended the fourth summit of Petrocaribe, a Venezuelan initiative to provide oil to Caribbean neighbours at preferential prices. —*Internet*

China grain output exceeds 500 mln tons this year

BEIJING, 22 Dec— China's grain output, which includes rice, wheat, corn and soybean, exceeded 500 million tons this year, making it the fourth consecutive year of output increase since 2004.

The announcement by China's Minister of Agriculture Sun Zhengcai on Saturday came as the country hoped a bumper grain output would help slow current price rises.

Huge rises in food prices lifted the nation's consumer price index (CPI) to an 11-year high

UAE bank eyes 25% stake in Malaysia's RHB Capital

DUBAI, 24 Dec— Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB) is negotiating to buy a 25 percent stake in RHB Capital, the fourth largest banking group in Malaysia, the official WAM news agency said on Sunday.

"ADCB has confirmed that exclusive negotiations are under way to snap up a 25 percent holding in RHB Capital," owned by the state-run Employees Provident Fund, WAM reported without indicating how much the stake would be worth.

It said the bank had sent a memorandum to the Abu Dhabi Securities Market informing it of the talks.

ADCB announced in January that it made a record net profit of 2.147



The headquarters of RHB in Kuala Lumpur.

INTERNET

billion dirhams (then 584.7 million dollars) in 2006, up 12 percent on the previous year.

Last month, the state-run Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) became one of Citigroup's biggest share-

holders in a 7.5-billion-dollar deal that was designed to help shore up the ailing US bank's coffers. Malaysia's Employees Provident Fund holds a 82.23 percent stake in RHB Capital, the agency said. —*Internet*

ECB president Trichet pledges to focus on eurozone inflation



A fan of euros.

LONDON, 24 Dec— European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet pledged, in an interview published Monday, to focus on eurozone inflation, and not let interest-rate cuts in the

United States and Britain distract the bank from tightening monetary policy.

Speaking to the *Financial Times* from Frankfurt, in an interview conducted on 13 December, Trichet said any evidence of "second-round effects" leading to an acceleration in inflation would be "decisive".

"Other colleagues are in a different situation," Trichet told the business daily, while noting that the

ECB was in contact with other major central banks to co-ordinate a response to the global credit crunch.

"I was very clear on behalf of the governing council (of the ECB); we would not let those second-round effects materialise," he added, referring to effects such as demands for wage increases among eurozone workers.

The ECB's main interest rate currently stands at 4.0 per cent.

Eurozone inflation hit 3.1 per cent in November, the highest level in six and a half years owing to rising costs of energy and food products.

ECB directors have a mandate to keep inflation slightly below 2.0 per cent.

Trichet, whom the FT named as its "Person of the Year", downplayed the impact of the global credit crunch on the 13-nation eurozone economy, telling the paper that "is not our baseline scenario." He noted, though, that risks were inevitable in any market economy, and it would be wrong "to say, now we want to eliminate creativity." —*Internet*

Farmer Yin Xixiu of Guizhou Province, southwest China smiles before her harvested corns.

XINHUA



of 6.9 percent in November. Prices of food, which has a 33 percent weighting in CPI, soared 18.2 percent last month.

The high inflation had become a major concern of the government for fear it could worsen in the

future and make the lives of poor people much more difficult.

However, Sun said the output still fell short of demand this year, without giving the exact figure for grain demand.

Internet

Russia still willing to sign N-agreement with India

NEW DELHI, 23 Dec — Russia is willing as always to sign a nuclear agreement with India, if it stated clearly the reactors would be supplied after the lifting of international restrictions, the influential *Hindu* newspaper reported on Friday.

The signing of a deal for supply of four additional reactors to the Koodankulam power project, where two Russian reactors are being set up, was expected to become a highlight of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Moscow last month, but the signing was called off at the last minute.

New Delhi later said

no bilateral deals could be signed before India got a waiver from the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which signed an India-specific safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

However, the newspaper quoted a well-placed Russian official source familiar with the situation as saying that nothing could prevent India and Russia from signing a four-reactor

accord, provided it stated clearly that reactors would be supplied after the lifting of the international restrictions on technology transfers to New Delhi.

The source claimed that the signing of the pact got derailed because India inserted in the agreed draft a clause on the deal being "irrevocable". The Indian side said there was nothing wrong with the clause as "any legally binding agreement is irrevocable".

MNA/Xinhua

Children play in a flooded street after rising sea levels in Penjaringan subdistrict, North Jakarta, on 23 Dec, 2007. High tide flooded the area since early Saturday, local media reported.

INTERNET



Czech airports to introduce special measures

PRAGUE, 23 Dec — Czech international airports will introduce special measures in connection with Czech's Schengen entry at midnight on Thursday although police controls have disappeared from ground border crossings, a government official said on Friday.

As of Friday, the Czech international airports are the only place where citizens from non-Schengen countries can enter Czech territory directly, Jiri Celikovsky, who is head of the Interior Ministry department coordination Schengen cooperation, said.

The Czech Republic only borders with other

Schengen area member states and it has no external borders with non-Schengen countries, the Czech news agency *CTK* quoted Celikovsky as saying.

A special code defines the rules of the airport operation and under it passengers will be directed towards their own corridors and will not be allowed to mix in any place, he said.

"The term of 'waterproof separation' is being used," Celikovsky said, adding that such measures required extensive reconstruction of the airports to prevent people from shifting from one corridor to another.

MNA/Xinhua

An 11 day-old female Malayan tapir cub is seen beside its mother at the Tama Zoo Park in suburban Tokyo on 23 Dec, 2007.

XINHUA



Hem Thon, a 68-year-old Cambodian woman, far right, disembarks a plane used as flying eye hospital in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on 18 Dec, 2007. The ORBIS Flying Eye Hospital, the world's only airborne ophthalmic surgical and training facility housed inside a converted DC-10 aircraft, is currently on a two-week intensive medical training programme in Cambodia.

INTERNET

UN approves \$4.17b budget despite US objections

UNITED NATIONS, 23 Dec—The General Assembly on Saturday approved a two-year UN budget of 4.17 billion US dollars despite the only rejection from the United States.

The budget, proposed by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, was approved by a vote of 142 to one. Ban welcomed the approval and also expressed his regret that the

budget was not adopted by consensus, marking a break with tradition after 20 years, the UN spokesman's office said in a statement.

The Secretary-General urges all member states to return to consensus decision-making and to demonstrate a greater sense of flexibility and compromise, beyond individual national interests and in common

cause of multilateralism for the good of humankind. The US negative vote was due to a special fund of 6.7 million US dollars in the budget for a follow-up to the 2001 World Conference Against Racism. Developing countries insisted that the 6.7 million should be funded from the regular UN budget rather than by voluntary contributions.

MNA/Xinhua

Garuda to revise incorrect tourism slogan

JAKARTA, 23 Dec — Indonesian flag carrier Garuda Indonesia is willing to rectify the Visit Indonesia Year 2008 slogan painted on its 10 planes serving international routes.

The slogan, "Celebrating 100 Years of Nation's

Awakening", has been criticized as "grammatically incorrect" and "awkward". The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has said it would accommodate critics by revising the slogan to "Celebrating 100 Years of National Awakening".

"We haven't gotten orders to change the slogan on our aircraft, but we will make a revision soon after we get a request from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism," Garuda spokesman Pujobroto was quoted Saturday by English-language newspaper *The Jakarta Post* as saying.

Pujobroto added that Garuda would foot the bill and would not complain to the ministry.

"We used the tag line as part of our responsibility to support the tourism industry. If there is any change to the tag line, we will pay." The replacement is estimated to cost up to 20 million rupiah (about 2,139 US dollars) per plane.

MNA/Xinhua



The castle at Tokyo Disneyland is colourfully lighted as part of Christmas show in Tokyo. Disney characters performed for visitors as Christmas approaching.—XINHUA

China imports soybean at higher cost

BEIJING, 24 Dec — China imported 21.7 million tons of soybean in the first three quarters of this year, a growth of 2.1 per cent over the year-earlier level.

Customs sources said the arrivals were valued at 7.36 billion US dollars, up 32.5 per cent.

The import price averaged 339.8 US dollars per ton, up 29.8 per cent.

The higher import cost was due largely to mounting demand, production decrease and rising transport charges worldwide, the sources said.

Of the total imports,

99.1 per cent came from Brazil, the United States and Argentina.

Between January and September, China bought 8.43 million tons of soybean from Brazil, down 10.1 per cent, and 4.85 million tons from Argentina, down 0.1 per cent. The imports from the United States amounted to 8.22 million tons, up 23.4 per cent.

Of the total arrivals, foreign-funded companies made up 13.66 million tons, up 11.3 per cent, state-owned enterprises, 4.73 million tons, down 20.1 per cent, and private businesses, 2.64 million tons, up 2 per cent.

MNA/Xinhua

Uzbekistan wants equality in ties with others

TASHKENT, 24 Dec — Uzbek President Islam Karimov said on Sunday the principles of equality and non-interference in others' internal affairs should be the basic norms governing Uzbekistan's relations with other countries.

Karimov spoke as Uzbeks began to cast their ballots in the Central Asian country's presidential election, in which he is seeking a new term in office against three other candidates.

Karimov, who cast his ballot at a polling station in the capital Tashkent, told reporters there that Uzbekistan always maintains that any countries, big or small, rich

or poor, should develop relations on the basis of mutual respect and benefit.

Every nation has its own tradition and its own pride and Uzbekistan wishes to develop ties with other countries on an equal footing, Karimov said.

Any attempt to impose its ideas on Uzbekistan by exerting pressure is "unacceptable", the Uzbek leader said. The 69-year-old Karimov, if re-elected, will lead the country for another seven years.

Karimov was elected president of Uzbekistan in 1991, when Uzbekistan declared independence from the former Soviet Union. He won re-election in 2000.—MNA/Xinhua

World's first electric plane test-flied in France

PARIS, 24 Dec — A team of French engineers has for the first time ever successfully test-flied an electric plane, Anne Lavrand, who has been at the helm of the project dubbed Electra, said on Sunday.

The aircraft, an "Electra F-WMDJ, equipped with a 25 HP

electric motor and lithium-polymer batteries, conducted a flight of 48 minutes from an airport in Hautes-Alpes, Lavrand said, adding that this flight had been authorized by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the reports reaching here said.

The plane, created by

engineers as part of the Association for the Advancement of Electric Motor-powered Aircraft (APAME), was a single-sitter with an unmanned weight of 155 kilos and a wingspan measuring nine metres.

"This exceptional technological breakthrough in the luxury aviation sector is capable of providing an alternative to the current unprecedented use of heat engines on aircraft that require between 15 and 50 HP," the engineers, who are working on the project, said in a statement.

MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia sends medical team to flood-stricken area

JAKARTA, 23 Dec — The Indonesian Health Ministry has dispatched a medical team to flood-stricken Gorontalo Province in northern Sulawesi Island, national Antara news agency reported on Saturday.

Head of the Health Ministry's Crisis Control Centre (PPK) Dr Rustam S Pakaya said here the PPK's regional office in Manado, capital of north Sulawesi Province, had sent the relief aid to Gorontalo.

The team included six surgeons, eight internists, four pediatricians and three nurses, he said.

According to Pakaya, the floodwaters in Gorontalo had already started to subside but the health ministry was anticipating the outbreak of

water-borne diseases in the floods aftermath.

Flooding in Gorontalo Province had inundated thousands of houses over the past few days. In Gorontalo city, four sub-districts were submerged in flood waters reaching a

height of up to 70 centimetres.

In Bone Bolango District, at least three sub-districts and 15 neighbourhoods were flooded following incessant rains over the past week.—MNA/Xinhua

Report says NHS Trusts lose patients' data

LONDON, 24 Dec — Nine National Health Service have lost the records of hundreds of thousands of adults and children in the latest embarrassing loss of data by government bodies, the Sunday Mirror reported.

The paper said patient details were lost in 10 incidents at the NHS Trusts.

A CD with the names and addresses of 160,000 children was lost by the City and Hackney trust in east London and records of 244 cancer patients had been misplaced by the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells Health Trust in Kent, it said.

The Department of Health said affected patients had been told and there was no evidence the information had fallen into the wrong hands.

"Since the recent heightened concern about data protection a small number of trusts have reported breaches of their own security rules," the department told media.

"There are strict guidelines and procedures for dealing with such breaches. Investigations are under way in all the trusts involved and action will be taken against anyone who has failed to fulfil their legal responsibilities."

MNA/Reuters

Jakarta beefs up security ahead of Christmas

JAKARTA, 24 Dec — The Indonesian capital of Jakarta is increasing its security profile to

anticipate militant attacks ahead of Christmas, police said on Saturday.

The police will deploy 15,000 personnel who will be stationed in churches and other public places during the celebrations, Jakarta Police Chief Adang Firman told reporters here.

"The terror threat remains potent. We have collected reports (on terror plots) although none can be considered seriously at the meantime," he said.

He reminded that several terror suspects were still at large. That includes Malaysian Noordin Moh Top who is accused of masterminding deadly bombings in Bali and Jakarta between 2002 and 2005.—MNA/Xinhua



An Indonesian man zips down a water slide at an amusement park in Jakarta, Indonesia.—INTERNET

13th graduation of State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon, Mandalay) held

YANGON, 24 Dec — The 13th graduation of State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon, Mandalay) was held at the convocation hall of the State Pariyatti Sasana University (Yangon) in Mayangon Township today.

Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win attended the graduation ceremony and supplicated matters on religious affairs.

First, the graduation was opened with three times recitation of *Namo Tassa* and the congregation led by the commander received the Five-Precepts from Secretary of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhaddanta Osada Bhivamsa.

On behalf of the chancellor of the State Pariyatti Sasana universities, Vice-Chancellor Bhaddanta Osada Bhivamsa and Vice-Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Chairman of the central management committee of the State Pariyatti Sasana universities Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Kondala Joti delivered an Ovadakatha.

Afterwards, Commander Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win and Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung supplicated on matters related to the religious affairs and the 13th graduation.

Thirteen monks received Taxila Maha Dhammacariya degree and 53 monks Sasana Taxila Dhammacariya degree from Rector of the State Pariyatti Sasana University (Mandalay) Agga Maha Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Pandita Vara Bhivamsa.

Sixteen monks received Sasana Taxila Maha Dhammacariya degree and 51 Sasana Taxila Dhammacariya from Rector of State Pariyatti Sasana



Rector of the State Pariyatti Sasana University (Mandalay) gives Taxila Maha Dhammacariya degree to a Sayadaw.—MNA

University (Yangon) Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Kumara.

Afterwards, Commander Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win, Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Deputy Mayor Col Maung Pa and officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs presented offertories to Sayadaws.

Vice-Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhaddanta Kondala Joti delivered a sermon and the congregation shared merits gained. The graduation ceremony concluded with three times recitation of *Buddha Sasanam Ciram Tithatu*.

After the ceremony, Commander Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win and wife, Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Deputy Mayor Col Maung Pa and wellwishers donated provisions to Buddhist monks who graduated from the universities this year. — MNA

Commander inspects road works in Myitkyina

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec — Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Commander of Northern Command Maj-Gen Ohn Myint on 19 December inspected tarring of No-2 ring road of Shwe road section linking Pammati and Tatkon wards in Myitkyina.

The commander also visited Myitkyina University and met with the rector, professors and faculty members. During the visit, the commander viewed the students sitting for the examination of University of Distance Education.

Afterwards, the commander met with committee members of organizing Manaw Festival to mark the Kachin State's Day and inspected the preparations for the festival. — MNA

Mongphyat-Mongkhok, Mongphyat-Mongyawng and Panle-Bushi-Tachilek roads inspected

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec — Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander of Triangle Region Command Maj-Gen Min Aung Hlaing attended the coordination meeting on the work sector of Mongphyat-Mongkhok road, Mongphyat-Mongyawng road and Panle-Bushi-Tachilek road at the briefing hall of the local battalion on 19 December.

He heard reports by State Superintending Engineer U Thuang Htay and officials on completion of 56-mile Mongphyat-Mongkhok road and 45/2-mile Mongphyat-Mongyawng road and future programmes to be carried out, and gave necessary instructions.

Upon arrival at 2007-08 Summer Paddy Modal Plantation and collective ploughing ceremony in Mongphyat, the commander heard reports by township chairman U Thein Tun on acres of land put under plantation of summer paddy and per acre yields, and inspected ploughed fields.

At the ceremony to hand over computers at Mongphyat Township BEHS the commander made a speech after the township education officer had reported facts on education sector.

The commander presented three computers for the school to Headmistress Daw San Yi. Afterwards, he greeted and gave an encouragement to students who will sit for the matriculation examination.

In meeting with departmental officials and local residents at Mongphyat Township USDA, he gave necessary instructions on the report by the township chairman on facts about the township.

MNA

Yogi Phwa Ein Pyae celebrates 103rd birthday

YANGON, 24 Dec — Yogi Phwa Ein Pyae, a native of Welaung Kyaukka Village of Taungtha Township in Myingyan District, celebrated her 103rd birthday on a grand scale at Kyaukkon Kyaunggyi Pariyati Monastery, 14 Ward, Yankin, this morning.

A total of 108 monks were invited to the ceremony.

Daw Khin Khin Yi, wife of Minister of Industry-1 U Aung Thaung, and families, relatives, departmental staff and families and guests were also present on the occasion.

The congregation received the Five Precepts from Sayadaw of Lanmadaw Township Thetyattaw Monastery Bhaddanta Panna Jotika. Yogi Phwa Ein Pyae and

families donated robes, requisites and offertories to the members of the Sangha.

Next, the yogi presented K 10.3 million for supplying water to pagodas, monasteries, Pariyati Sarthintaiks and schools across the nation through U Kyaw Thaung, Chairman of Wai Nay Ya Thukha Yay Chansin Association. The chairman presented the

yogi certificate of honour.

The monks were offered 'soon' and later, the guests were served with lunch. — MNA

First Inter-ministry men's Volleyball Tournament continues

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec — The second semi-final of the 1st Inter-ministry men's Volleyball Tournament was held at the Volleyball Ground-4 in Nay Pyi Taw this morning. In the event, Ministry of Sports won over Ministry of Home Affairs with 3-2 and reached to the final.

On 27 December, Ministry of Industry-1 and Ministry of Home Affairs will compete for the third place. For the final match, Ministry of Sports will play against Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs on 29 December. — MNA



Ministry of Home Affairs team playing against Ministry of Sports.—SPORTS



Yogi Phwa Ein Pyae donates K 10.3 million for supplying water to pagodas, monasteries, Pariyati Sarthintaiks and schools.—MNA

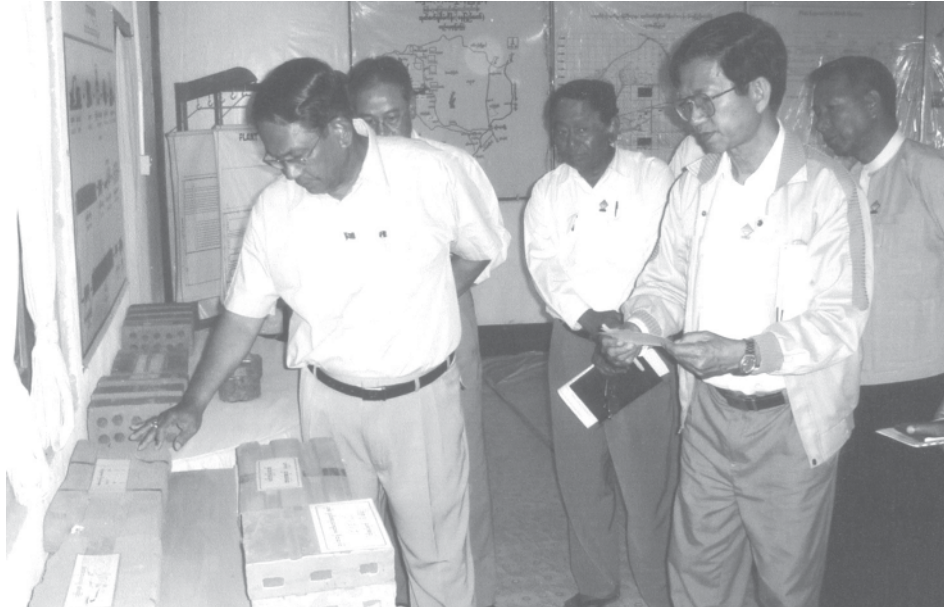
Industry-1 Minister inspects Brick Factory Project

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec— Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung inspected the brick factory project in Mingon (Nay Pyi Taw) of Myanmar Ceramics Industries yesterday afternoon.

At the briefing hall of the project, officials concerned explained the production process of the factory.

Next, the minister looked into bricks produced for Uppata Thanti Pagoda and sample bricks produced by the factory.

After that, the minister also inspected functions of the factory, the site



Minister U Aung Thaung inspects Brick Factory Project in Mingon, Nay Pyi Taw.—INDUSTRY-1

chosen for construction of the factory and staff quarters. And he gave

instructions on increased production of the bricks in the open season and

swift implementation for the projects.

MNA

Ceremony to provide health care, donate offertories to nuns held



Dr Daw Nyunt Nyunt Oo of MAAF and members provide health care for nuns in Shwepyitha.—MNA

YANGON, 24 Dec — Organized by Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, a ceremony to provide health care and to donate offertories to the nuns was held at Aungtawtha Nunnery in Shwepyitha Township this morning.

Present also at the ceremony were Head of Organizing Department of MAAF Dr Daw Nyunt Nyunt Oo, Secretariat Member of MAAF Dr Thet Thet Zin and members of Organizing Department, Insein Township Medical Superintendent Dr Daw Tin Aye Myint and specialists and members of WAOs from Yangon Division and Yangon North District.

Dr Daw Nyunt Nyunt Oo and families donated rice, edible oil, salt and robes worth K 450,000 and Physician of Hman Cho Medicine Store U Hla Htay and wife Daw Tin Ngwe Oo traditional medicines worth K 450,000.

Later, the doctors team led by Insein People's Hospital Dr Daw Tin Aye Myint gave free medical care to 94 nuns from Aungtawtha Nunnery and near by 30 nunneries.— MNA

Vietnamese delegation calls on Foreign Minister

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec — Mr Dao Viet Trung, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and party paid a courtesy call on U Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, at Ministry of Foreign Affairs here today.

Mr Dao Viet Trung and party arrived in Myanmar this morning to participate in the 3rd Policy Consultation between Myanmar and Vietnam.

During the call, U Nyan Win and Mr Dao Viet



Trang frankly exchanged views on a wide range of issues.—MNA

Minister U Nyan Win meets with Mr Dao Viet Trung, Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam.—MNA



Director U Soe Lwin of Bago Division (West) Development Affairs Committee inspecting construction of rural and village roads and bridges and water supply and greening tasks being implemented by Padaung Township DAC for fiscal 2007-2008 on 23 November.

District News in Brief

Executive officer U Phone Lwin and the engineer in charge of Sittway Township Development Affairs Committee supervising measures for the maintenance and cleaning of the pipeline and supply of water in the township on 10 December.



Executive Officer U Nay Myo Lin of Kayan Township Development Affairs Committee briefing Yangon Division DAC Director U Khin Maung Cho and officials on sinking of a two-inch tube-well and setting up of a water tank in Ward-3 in Kayan Township on 9 December.

Britons seek greener Christmas, New Year

LONDON, 24 Dec – A series of studies show that Britain is embarking on its greenest Christmas, according to a report of the Independent on Sunday.

Four separate surveys show that most British people are promising to make their celebrations more environmentally friendly to reduce the impact of what are traditionally the most polluting three days of the year and to make green resolutions for the new year, the Independent reported.

Three-quarters say that they are actively trying to reduce the amount of waste they generate over the holiday, four in five mean to dispose of their Christmas trees in an environmentally responsible way, and nine out of 10 intend to recycle their Christmas cards and wrapping paper, the report said.

More than 80 per cent say they have decided to live greener lives in 2008, it said.—MNA/Xinhua

Alitalia board picks Air France-KLM's bid

ROME, 24 Dec—The Board of Directors of Alitalia has decided to choose Air France-KLM as its preferred bidder and considered its offer the best guarantee for the national carrier's future, Italian media reported Saturday.

The decision came after a board meeting, which lasted almost seven hours and saw Air France-KLM win out over a rival offer presented by the AP Holding, the parent

company of Italy's biggest private carrier Air One.

The board's decision is, in fact, only a suggestion to the government which has the final word on the sale of the Treasury Ministry's controlling 49.9 per cent stake in Alitalia.

The Italian Government said earlier this week that it would make a decision on the board's recommendation by the middle of January.

The French-Dutch carrier said it is a top priority to renew Alitalia's fleet and that the combination of the three European brands "will be able to offer clients an unparalleled international network."

MNA/Xinhua

Eight killed in storm across central US states

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec —At least eight people have been killed and tens of thousands of people left without electricity as a major storm continues to sweep the US states of Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin on Sunday.

The storm causing the heavy snow and howling wind left in the dark about 74,000 people in Michigan, about 58,000 in Chicago metro area and 5,500 others in southern and central Wisconsin, said a CNN report.

So far, at least eight deaths had been blamed for the storm, including three people in Minnesota, three in Wyoming and one person each in Texas and Kansas, who were killed

in traffic accidents according to the report.

The one fatality in Texas came in a car pileup involving more than 50 vehicles on Saturday, including several tractor-trailer rigs, on Interstate 40, police said. At least 16 people were taken to hospitals, two of whom were with life-threatening injuries, police said.

Authorities said they believe the pileup was caused by very poor visibility in blowing snow and slippery pavement.

Winter storm warnings were posted for parts of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan on Sunday as the core of the storm headed north across the Great Lakes.

MNA/Xinhua



A muskrat with frozen water drops on its whiskers scampers on the ice of the Missouri River near Great Falls, Mont.— INTERNET

Ecuador sees 2.65% economic growth in 2007

QUITO, 24 Dec—Ecuador's gross domestic product will grow 2.65 percent this year, less than previously expected due to weakness in the oil sector, the Central Bank said on Saturday.

However, the bank expects the oil-producing country's economy to climb 4.25 per cent in 2008 thanks to a rise in private and public investment and an increase in oil exports.

Ecuador's economy grew 4 per cent in 2006.

Government officials have repeatedly revised the country's economic growth forecast this year because falling state and private investment in the oil sector and violent protests in the oil-rich Amazon jungle have lowered oil output. The bank expects the oil sector to decline 9.8 per cent in 2007.

The bank's last projection for 2007 GDP growth, made in August, was 3.4 per cent.—MNA/Reuters

Japan to review "GX" rocket plan

TOKYO, 24 Dec — Japan will review plans to produce a rocket to launch satellites that is being jointly developed by the government and the private sector, partly due to increased costs, the daily *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported on Sunday.

The daily said the rocket, known as the GX, was due to be launched in the financial year starting April 2011, five years behind an initial plan. Private investors were forced to look for a new engine manufacturer after a US company that was initially due to provide the part stopped production, the daily said. The move is expected to add another 45 billion yen (394.6 million US dollars) in costs.—MNA/Reuters

Turkey to rely on own satellite system

ANKARA, 24 Dec— Turkish Armed Forces would soon be able to gather intelligence through surveillance by Gokturk, a Reconnaissance and Surveillance Satellite System, the semi-official *Anatolia* news

agency reported on Sunday. The Gokturk project, which was expected to cost around 200 million US dollars, would be concluded in three months, said the report.

The project would provide high resolution imagery for military intelligence from any place in the world without any geographical restriction, it added.

Gokturk, which would be capable of detecting the movements of objects smaller than one

square meter, would help to prevent the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) rebels from infiltrating into Turkish borders, said Murad Bayar, Undersecretary of Defence Industries.

Meanwhile, Gokturk could also be used for monitoring civilian activities, such as control of forest land, determination of damage after natural disasters within a short time, and geographical map data production.

MNA/Xinhua



A new born male African giraffe plays with his mother at the Delhi Zoo in India in March 2007. Man and mother nature are threatening at least six distinct species of African giraffe, which are highly endangered and could face extinction if not protected, a study warned Saturday.— INTERNET

French tourism service urged to improve reception

PARIS, 24 Dec— French Finance Minister Christine Lagarde and the State Secretary for Tourism Luc Chatel have called on private and public service providers to improve the reception of foreign tourists in France.

Addressing a Press conference Thursday, the minister launched an appeal for the improvement of tourist reception, particularly of

foreign tourists, to public and private service providers, including the state railway company, SNCF, and major shopping malls like Galerie Lafayette.

"France, world leader in tourist arrivals, must focus on excellence in all domains, including tourist reception," she said, describing reception as "the first and last image of the country."

MNA/Xinhua



The fish-shaped main tower of the Linjiang Bridge in Wuhu city, east China's Anhui Province. The 433.5-meter-long Linjiang Bridge locates at the infall of the Qingyi River and Yangtse.—INTERNET



School children gather near a Santa Clause sand sculpture, created by sand artist Sudarshan Patnaik on the eve of Christmas at the golden sea beach of Puri, about 67 kilometers (42 miles) away from the southeastern Indian temple city Bhubaneswar, India, on 24 Dec, 2007.— INTERNET



South Koreans, dressed in Santa Clause costumes, participate in the 2007 Santa Clause marathon, in Seoul, on 22 Dec. — INTERNET

Images of the Day



A 40-meter-tall tower named 'Sacred Tower of Olympics' serves as a highlight of the Ninth Harbin Ice and Snow World in Harbin, northeastern China's Heilongjiang Province, on 22 Dec, 2007. The annual festival marks the peak of tourism to the cold northern region of China.— INTERNET



A mahout in traditional costume gets his elephant to stand on its hind legs for tourists at the Surin Elephant Round-up festival in northeast Thailand.—INTERNET

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China, India hold strategic dialogue

BEIJING, 24 Dec—China and India finished a strategic dialogue here Friday. Vice-Foreign Minister Wu Dawei and Indian Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon exchanged views on bilateral relations and international and regional issues of common concern.

This is the third time for the two nations to hold strategic dialogue. The two sides reached wide consensus during the two-day dialogue.

Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi met

with Menon on Friday. Yang said China and India enjoy rapid growth and great potential of bilateral relations. The enhancement of China-Indian cooperation will be of great influence for international situation.

Yang said the two countries should increase exchanges in various fields and properly solve disputes, in an effort to push for bilateral relations.

Menon said India gives priority to the relations with China, and India-China relation was important for safeguarding regional and world stability.

India was confident for the development of India-China ties, Menon said.

MNA/Xinhua

Eight dead, 24 hurt in Egypt bus crash

CAIRO, 24 Dec—At least eight Egyptians were killed and 24 others injured when a bus collided head-on with another vehicle early on Friday on an intercity road south of Cairo, security and ambulance sources said.

The sources said the bus was trying to overtake a passenger car when it collided with another vehicle, either a truck or a minibus, near the oasis town of Fayoum. Several children were among the

BEIJING, 24 Dec—Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao told visiting Micronesian President Emanuel Mori Friday that China is ready to strengthen cooperation with Micronesia in various fields.

Wen said in a meeting with Mori that the Chinese Government attaches great importance to China-Micronesia relationship and see Micronesia as a good friend and good partner.

He said China is ready to make joint efforts to deepen bilateral cooperation in various fields including economy and trade, culture, education and health, in a bid to continuously promote the development

China ready to deepen cooperation with Micronesia

of China-Micronesia friendly and cooperative ties featuring lasting stability and mutual benefits.

"Facts have shown the friendly ties between China and Micronesia are in the common interests of both peoples and also conducive to peace and prosperity in the region of the Pacific islands," Wen added.

He expressed his appreciation of the Micronesian Government's long adherence

to the one-China policy and opposition to "Taiwan independence".

Mori said the friendly relationship between Micronesia and China has developed smoothly, and the two sides have developed successful cooperation in the fields of communication, energy, agriculture, fishery, trade and tourism, which has helped strengthen Micronesia's ability of national construction.

MNA/Xinhua

Turkish planes bomb Kurds in northern Iraq

TUNCELI (Turkey), 23 Dec—Turkish warplanes bombed Kurdish guerilla targets in northern Iraq on Saturday in a new cross-border offensive, the General Staff said.

The Turkish military said the offensive against outlawed separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerillas inside Turkey and across the border in northern Iraq would continue.

"Turkish Air Force warplanes struck important targets of the PKK/KONGRA-GEL terror group in northern Iraq ... between the hours of 14:25-15:00 (1225-1300 GMT)," the General Staff statement, posted on its website, said.

"The PKK will understand through experience that northern Iraq is not a safe place and they will understand once again that they have no chance against the Turkish military," it said.

Turkey says it has the right to use force to combat separatist rebels who shelter in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq and mount attacks in which they have killed dozens of Turkish troops in recent months.

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters



An Ariane-5 rocket blasts off from French Guiana, on 21 Dec, 2007.—INTERNET

French top chef opens Eiffel Tower restaurant

PARIS, 24 Dec—French top chef Alain Ducasse takes his cooking to new heights on Saturday as he opens a restaurant on the second floor of the Eiffel Tower, at 125 metres (410 feet) above ground.

The Jules Verne restaurant was refurbished over four months by architect Patrick Jouin. Special glass was used to enable diners to see the view even when dark and

the lights were on in the room. Ducasse, who heads a range of restaurants around the world and has garnered a record 14 Michelin stars, created an underground 'cooking laboratory' nearby to prepare some of the dishes and keep a large wine cellar because the 45 square metre (484.4 square feet) tower kitchen was too small to serve 120 guests.

But the dishes are completed by a team of 17 headed by Pascal Feraud in the tower.

Ducasse told French television he aimed to make the restaurant a shop window for French cuisine. But he said the Jules Verne would not become a luxury restaurant such as his three-star flagships Plaza Athenee in Paris and Louis XV in Monaco.

MNA/Reuters



This photo provided by the North Slope Borough shows a young male walrus resting on the beach in Barrow, Alaska, on 28 Sept, 2007. Lack of ice in the Chukchi Sea over the summer forced a large number of walrus to haul out on shore until ice reformed in October.—INTERNET

US scientists find embryonic stem cells from skin

BEIJING, 24 Dec — US scientists reported on Sunday that they have found a way to convert an ordinary skin cell into valued embryonic-like stem cells, with the potential to grow batches of cells that can be directed to form any kind of tissue.

The study, carried out by a team led by Dr George Daley of Harvard Medical School and Children's Hospital Boston, Massachusetts, was published in the journal *Nature*. Daley said his team have been able to use the same four genes that Japanese scientists used to derive the so-called induced pluripotent stem (or iPS) cell from fetal lung and

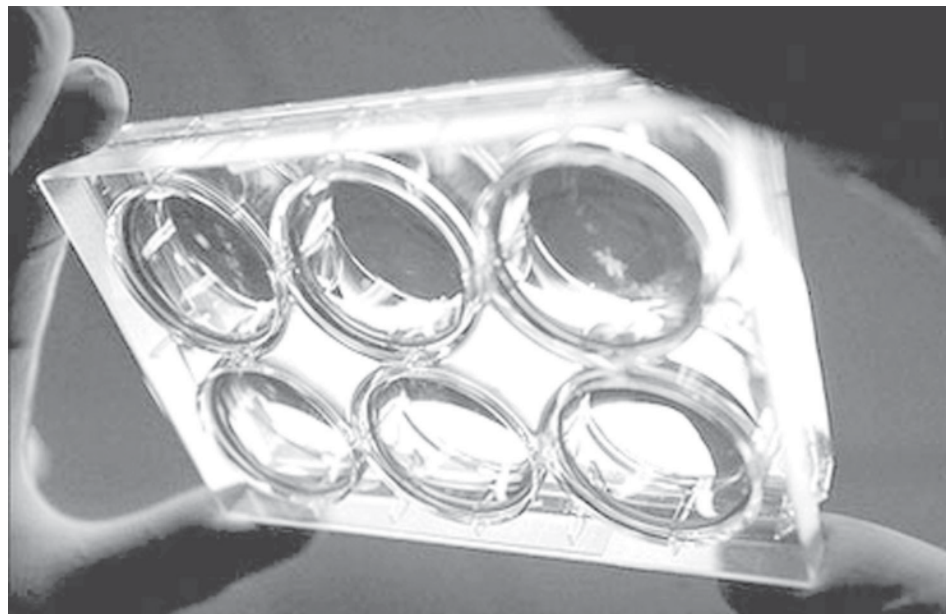
skin cells, from neo-natal skin cells as well as from skin samples taken from a healthy human volunteer. In November, Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University and colleagues announced they had reprogrammed human skin cells to have the multiple potency of stem cells culled from human embryos

Yamanaka's team used a retrovirus to deliver four genes into skin cells taken from a mouse and an

adult human, this turned the clock back so that these cells lost their differentiated profile and became iPS cells.

However, the work of Daley's team marks a step forward to "patient-specific" stem cells — in other words, transplanted stem cells that carry the same genetic code as the patient and thus cannot be rejected as alien by the body's immune system.

Internet



A team of American scientists reported on Sunday that they had widened the scope of a Japanese breakthrough in stem cells that many experts have hailed as the greatest medical achievement of 2007. —INTERNET



This file photo shows an Asiatic lioness playing with her new-born cubs inside their enclosure at the Assam State Zoo, in Guwahati. Success in saving the rare Asiatic lion in India has in turn created new challenges to the king of the jungle in its last natural habitat, as problems with human encroachment and poaching mount. — INTERNET

UK's Royal Mail loses millions of X'mas parcels, letters

LONDON, 24 Dec — Britain's Royal Mail faces an angry consumer backlash this weekend over more than two million parcels and letters lost or delayed in the Christmas post, according to a report of the *Sunday Times*.

Customers across the country are in danger of being left without their

presents, the report said. The backlog has allegedly been compounded by postal workers deliberately failing to deliver presents to save time on their rounds.

On Saturday, at depots around the country, customers were being forced to brave the winter chill and wait in long queues to reclaim their Christmas parcels, the paper reported.

About 1.2 million letters and parcels are already estimated to have been lost in the Christmas post, it said.

Hundreds of thousands of other items are delayed or awaiting collection at depots where queues of up to two hours have formed.

The chaos disrupted the last weekend before Christmas for thousands as they were forced to queue up to collect undelivered packages, it said. At mid-morning there was a two-hour queue outside Tottenham depot in Bristol and long waits at depots in Brighton and London.

MNA/Xinhua

Psychologists to ease pressures for China's police

BEIJING, 24 Dec — China's Ministry of Public Security has set up a team of 13 psychologists to provide crisis intervention counselling to police who handle serious emergency or highly violent cases.

The ministry planned to provide all police nationwide with such service within two years, Saturday's *Legal Daily* reported.

The team planned to draft a manual to the local police authority on how to help individuals out of psycho-crisis after undergoing extreme conditions such as shooting criminals dead or witnessing colleagues killed, the Beijing-based newspaper quoted a ministry source.

They would also offer counselling to police in selected big cases. The

issue of how to keep police mentally healthy was not previously properly addressed due to insufficient professionals and a lack of attention from the authority. But some measures have been tried in the past few years.

As of last year, nine psychological centres have been set up at Chinese People's Public Security University, as well as in seven provinces and Shanghai municipality. To date, they have provided counselling for about 11,000 police.

Police authorities in three cities — Shanghai, Dalian and Hangzhou — have adopted crisis intervention counselling for their members who handle shooting and explosive cases or negotiate hostage rescue.

MNA/Xinhua

Study says green tea may reduce prostate cancer risk

BEIJING, 24 Dec — Men who drink five or more cups of green tea a day might reduce the risk of advanced prostate cancer by up to 50 percent compared to those who drink one cup a day, according to a study by researchers at Japan's National Cancer Centre.

"This does not mean that people who drink green tea are guaranteed to have reduced risk of advanced prostate cancer," said Norie Kurahashi, a scientist who took part in the study. "We are just presenting our results. But the study does point to the hope that green tea reduces the risk of advanced prostate cancer."

Prostate cancer is much less common among Asian men than Western

men, and that may be partly due to the effects of the high consumption of green tea in Asia, the study suggested.

But it said further studies are needed to confirm the preventive effects of green tea on prostate cancer, including well-designed clinical trials.

The study, published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology*, compiled

data from 50,000 men aged 40-69 over a period of up to 14 years from 1990.

British charity Cancer Research UK says on its website that a study of almost 20,000 Japanese men published in the *British Journal of Cancer* in 2006 found no relationship between green tea and prostate cancer. —Internet



Green tea

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SPORTS

Inter beat Milan to extend lead at top

ROME, 24 Dec — Serie A leaders Inter Milan came from behind to beat city rivals AC Milan 2-1 on Sunday and extend their advantage over AS Roma to seven points.

Argentine duo Julio Cruz and Esteban Cambiasso scored in either half to cancel out Andrea Pirlo's 18th minute opener.

Unbeaten Inter's sixth consecutive league win gives them 43 points from 17 games, while Roma are on 36 after beating Sampdoria 2-0 on Saturday thanks to captain Francesco Totti's brace.

Defeat means Milan have still not won against Italian opposition at the San Siro this season and are 25 points behind Inter in 12th place, but with three games in hand.

Third-placed Juventus have 35 points after beating Siena 2-0 in Turin on Sunday.

"I think we played a good match and deserved to win," Inter coach Roberto Mancini told Sky television.

"They didn't have too many chances, except at the end. It's important that we have finished (the year) with a seven-point lead despite all the (injury) problems we have had."

At the San Siro, Inter's Sweden striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic volleyed the first chance over after being set up by Maicon in the fourth minute.—MNA/Reuters



Andreas Kuettel of Switzerland soars through the air at the FIS Ski jumping World Cup in Engelberg, Switzerland. Kuettel wins the event. —INTERNET

Schuster plays down personal importance of "clasico"

MADRID, 24 Dec — Real Madrid coach Bernd Schuster played down the personal importance of returning to the Nou Camp to face his former club Barcelona in Sunday's "clasico" and said he is just out to enjoy the occasion.

"For a lot of people it is an extra special match but for me it is not that special,

it is just a great occasion for everyone who knows about Spanish football," he told a news conference after training on Saturday.

"Of course everyone wants to be involved in matches like this as I have first as a player and then as a coach. You have to enjoy the game and everything that surrounds it, understand its importance but not lose your head.

Schuster, who took charge of Real at the start of this season, joined Barcelona in 1980 but became one of the select band of players to join the arch-rivals when he defected to the Bernabeu in 1988.

But the former German international, who is celebrating his 48th birthday on Saturday, said he was not too concerned about the renewal of the rivalry.

MNA/Reuters

Baptista sinks Barca as Real go seven clear

MADRID, 24 Dec — Leaders Real Madrid beat their arch-rivals and closest challengers Barcelona 1-0 at the Nou Camp to take a vice-like hold on the Primera Liga title race on Sunday.

Julio Baptista's well-taken first-half goal secured the Spanish champions only their second league victory in 24 years at Barca's ground, ended the Catalans' 100 per cent home record this season, and sent them seven points clear at the top.

Real looked sharper throughout while Barcelona appeared paralysed with nerves and offered little once their visitors had edged ahead.

Bernd Schuster, after his first 'clasico' as coach, goes into the mid-season break sitting pretty with 41 points. Barca are second with 34. Barca coach Frank Rijkaard sprung something of a surprise when he aligned Ronaldinho and Deco in his starting 11 after a week of heated speculation.

Although Barca dominated the ball early on, they were given little space to work their passes and Real had the first clear effort when Pepe headed straight at Victor Valdes from a Wesley Sneijder freekick.

Andres Iniesta sent Samuel Eto'o scampering into the area after 29 minutes but Iker Casillas was quick off his line to smother the danger and then poke the ball off the foot of Iniesta in the follow up. —MNA/Reuters



Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos (obscured, C) jumps for the ball against Barcelona's goalkeeper Victor Valdes during their Spanish first division soccer match at Nou Camp in Barcelona on 23 Dec, 2007. Julio Baptista scored to give Real Madrid a 1-0 win over Barcelona on Sunday and a seven-point edge at midseason in the Spanish La Liga. —XINHUA

FA official says UK managers not good enough for England

LONDON, 24 Dec — No English managers were good enough to be appointed head coach of the national side, FA chief executive Brian Barwick has said.

Italian Fabio Capello, 61, was handed a four-and-a-half year contract by the FA earlier this month, an appointment that has divided opinion among fans, managers and players in England.

Capello, the second overseas coach to manage England following

Sven-Goran Eriksson (2001-06), succeeds Steve McClaren who was dismissed after the team failed to qualify for Euro 2008.

"A month ago, I sat in my hotel bedroom in South Africa and tried to work out what makes an England manager," Barwick told Sunday's News of the World.

"I wrote out a template and put it against our current crop of England managers and not one of them ticked all the boxes.

"So the reality is we can't find a suitable English candidate at present.

"It has to be our ambition to have an English boss, but we have to be realistic. This time around we had to get the right man regardless of nationality. And we believe we have done that."

MNA/Reuters

Ligue 1 bottom club Metz sack coach

METZ (France), 24 Dec — Metz coach Francis De Taddeo has been sacked following a string of poor results, the Ligue 1 side said on their Web site (www.fcmetz.com) on Sunday.

"Considering that the situation has got worse, Metz have decided to part ways with Francis De Taddeo," Metz said in a statement.

Metz are bottom of Ligue 1 with seven points from 19 matches.

The club said they would name a new coach in the coming days.

MNA/Reuters

Italian Serie A reports

ROME, 24 Dec — Brief reports from Serie A matches played on Sunday:

Fiorentina 5 Cagliari 1

Fiorentina struck in the third minute with a Riccardo Montolivo effort from outside the area. Michele Fini equalized three minutes later.

The home side then went on a rampage with midfielder Mario Santana and Romania striker Adrian Mutu scoring two each. Basement club Cagliari, who had to reject coach Nedo Sonetti's resignation last week after former boss Marco Giampaolo turned down an offer to return, have not won since September.

Juventus 2 Siena 0

Bosnian midfielder Hasan Salihamidzic tapped Juve in front in the 32nd minute after a Pavel Nedved cross caused panic in the Siena defence.

France forward David Trezeguet claimed his 13th goal of season with a right-footed shot from the edge of the

area in the second half.

Livorno 1 Atalanta 1

Fernando Tissone's splendid free kick quickly cancelled out Livorno defender Fabio Galante's 26th-minute opening goal.

Napoli 1 Torino 1

Alessandro Rosina scored with a spot kick for Torino in the 36th minute although TV replays suggested the penalty was unjust as Napoli's Maurizio Domizzi had not handled the ball.

Torino's Australian defender Vincenzo Grella was sent off shortly before the break for a second yellow card.

In the second half Domizzi missed a penalty before substitute Marek Hamsyk earned Napoli a point.

Palermo 2 Lazio 2

Goals from Fabio Firmani and Igli Tare earned the Romans a draw after Brazilian duo Fabio Simplicio and Amauri had put Palermo in control.

MNA/Reuters



Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo scores from the penalty spot against Everton during the English Premier League soccer match at Old Trafford on 23 Dec, 2007. Manchester won 2-1.—INTERNET

Indian Air Force plane crashes, pilot safe

NEW DELHI, 24 Dec—An Indian Air Force plane caught fire and crashed during take off in eastern India on Saturday but its pilot escaped with minor burns, local newspaper The Hindu reported Sunday. The *Surya Kiran* aircraft caught fire when it skidded off the runway and crashed into a ditch during take off after refueling at the airport.

The entire aircraft was burnt and parts were spread over an area of 30 to 40 metres radius at the Biju Patnaik Airport in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, said the report. The plane was among the four IAF aircraft which had landed for refuelling on their way from Kalaikund to Visha khapat-nam.

Its pilot Wing Commander Rajat Tyagi, who came out of the aircraft on his own, sustained minor burn injuries on both legs and was given medical treatment, additional

The photo shows a Siberian tiger holding a tree branch at the zoo in Beijing. — INTERNET

superintendent of police B.N. Guru said, adding that two fire tenders were pressed to douse the fire.

The three other planes flew safely.

The sky was clear when the mishap occurred and though preliminary findings indicate that the accident could have occurred due to technical snag, a probe has been ordered to find the exact reason, the report said.

MNA/Xinhua

Missing Madeleine's parents issue Christmas plea

LONDON, 24 Dec—The parents of missing British girl Madeleine McCann issued a video on Saturday with a new plea for information about her whereabouts and a special Christmas message to their daughter to "be brave".

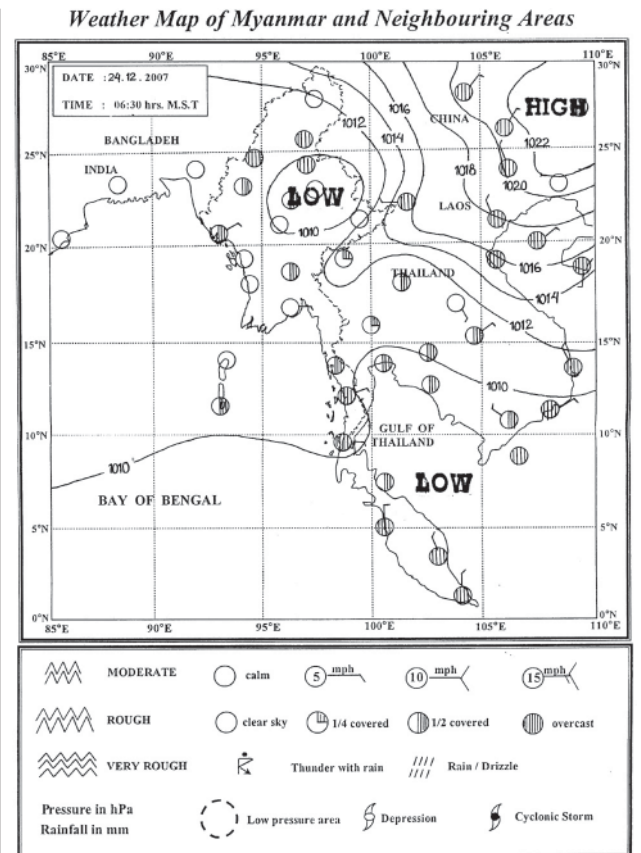
McCann disappeared more than seven months ago shortly before her fourth birthday during a family holiday in the Portuguese beach resort of Praia da Luz.

Her parents, who Portuguese police have named as formal suspects, believe she was abducted from their holiday apartment as they had dinner with friends at a nearby restaurant.

"Madeleine it seems unlikely that you'll hear this, but just in case it's mummy and daddy here," her mother Kate, said in the appeal which included footage of Madeleine opening her Christmas presents from last year.

"Just know how much we love you Madeleine. We all miss you so much. We are doing everything we can Madeleine to find you. Be brave sweetheart, our only Christmas wish is for you to be back with us again."

MNA/Reuters



WEATHER

Monday, 24 December, 2007

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Taninthayi Division and generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below December average temperatures in Chin and Kayin States, lower Sagaing and Ayeyawady Divisions, (5°C) below December average temperatures in Rakhine State, Magway and Yangon Divisions and about December average temperatures in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant night temperatures were Haka (2°C), Mogok (3°C), Pinlaung (4°C), Namhsam and Heho (5°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 23-12-2007 was 89°F. Minimum temperature on 24-12-2007 was 56°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hours MST on 24-12-2007 was 73%. Total sunshine hours on 23-12-2007 was (8.0) hours approx.

Rainfall on 24-12-2007 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 (6) mph from West at (21:30) hours MST on 23-12-2007.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the Southwest Bay and generally fair in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 25-12-2007: Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Division and generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions.

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in the whole Country.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 25-12-2007: Generally fair weather.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 25-12-2007: Fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 25-12-2007: Generally fair weather.

Radio Myanmar

Tuesday, 25 December
Tune in today

- 8:30 am Brief news
- 8:35 am Music:
-Feliz Nauida
- 8:40 am Perspectives
- 8:45 am Music
-Merry X'mas
- 8:50 am National news/
Slogan
- 9:00 am Music:
-Wonderful X'mas time
- 9:05 am International news
- 9:10 am Music
-Rock N'roll X'mas
- 1:30 pm News/ Slogan
- 1:40pm Lunch time music
-We wish you a merry X'mas
-The very 1st X'mas day
- 9:00pm English speaking Course
- 9:10pm Article
- 9:20 pm Weekly sports reel
- 9:30 pm Listening Pleasure
-Merry X'mas happy holidays
-This gift
- 9:45 pm News /Slogan
- 10:00 pm PEL



Tuesday, 25 December
View on today

- 7:00 am 1. ကျေးဇူးရှင်မင်းကွန်းဆရာတော် ဘုရားကြီးနိုင်ငံတော် သံဃာ့မဟာနာယက အဖွဲ့ အကျိုးတော်ဆောင်ချုပ်အဘိဓဇ မဟာရဋ္ဌဂုရု၊ အဘိဓဇအဂ္ဂမဟာ သဒ္ဓမ္မဇောတိက၊ တိပိဋကဓရ၊ ဓမ္မဘဏ္ဍာဂါရိက ဆရာတော်ဘဒ္ဒန္တဝိစိတ္တ သာရာဘိဝံသ၏ပရိတ်တရားတော်
- 7:15 am 2. တိပိဋကဓရ၊ ဓမ္မဘဏ္ဍာဂါရိက၊ အဂ္ဂမဟာပဏ္ဍိတ၊ ဘဒ္ဒန္တ သိရိန္ဒာဘိဝံသ(ယောဆရာတော်) ဟောကြားတော်မူအပ်သော ဥပ္ပါတသန္တိပဋိတော်
- 7:25 am 3. To be healthy exercise
- 7:30 am 4. Morning news
- 7:40 am 5. Nice and sweet song
- 7:55 am 6. ကဗျာပန်းခွဲယျာဉ်
- 8:10 am 7. အတီးပြိုင်ပွဲ
- 8:15 am 8. Song of national races
- 8:20 am 9. အကပြိုင်ပွဲ
- 8:30 am 10. International news
- 8:45 am 11. Let's Go
- 4:00 pm 1. Martial song
- 4:15 pm 2. Song to uphold National Spirit
- 4:30 pm 3. အဝေးသင်တက္ကသိုလ် ပညာရေးရုပ်မြင်သံကြား သင်ခန်းစာ -တတိယနှစ် (ဥပဒေပညာအထူးပြု) (ဥပဒေပညာ)
- 4:45 pm 4. Dance of national races
- 5:00 pm 5. ခံစားနားဆင်တေးဇာတ်ဝင်
- 5:15 pm 6. Sing and Enjoy
- 6:00 pm 7. Evening news
- 6:30 pm 8. Weather report
- 6:35 pm 9. ကြယ်ပွင့်များရဲ့ရင်ခုန်သံ
- 6:50 pm 10. သုတစုံလင်ရွှေညာဏ်ရှင်
- 7:15 pm 11. နိုင်ငံခြား ဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ "မြူးနိုးဝေဝေချစ်သက်တည်" (အပိုင်း-၉)
- 8:00 pm 12. News
- 13. International news
- 14. Weather report
- 15. နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ "အချစ်ခေတမန်" (အပိုင်း-၁၁)
- 16. The next day's programme

People's Desire

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

95-mile Katha-Bhamo Railroad under construction



Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min inspects earth works of Katha-Bhamo railroad section.
RAILWAY

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec — Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min, Deputy Minister U Pe Than and officials inspected construction of Katha-Bhamo Railroad on 21 December.

Altogether 55 big and small bridges including the one across Ayeyawady River will be built along the 95-mile railroad.

The minister met officials at the briefing hall. He said the railroad that contributes toward the regional development is being built in accord with the guidance of the Head of State. Commodities can be transported to eastern and western parts of the country through Bhamo-Katha-KhinU-ChaungU Road and up to Kalay, he said.

The minister and party inspected earth works near Pawmamaing, Mehin and Katetchaung Villages and land preparation for Minle Station. They cordially met local people there.

The minister explained the benefits of the construction of the railroad and nation-building endeavours to them. In meeting with secretaries and executives of District and Township Union Solidarity and Development Association, the minister clarified salient points on national development.

On 22 December, the minister and party visited the site for construction of a bridge across Ayeyawady River near Sinkhan Village in Bhamo Township.

MNA

Objectives of the 60th Anniversary Independence Day

- (a) All the national people to constantly join hands for safeguarding the perpetuation of independence and sovereignty of the State;
- (b) All the national people to collectively strive for non-disintegration of the Union and non-disintegration of national solidarity;
- (c) To ensure emergence of an enduring constitution in line with the fundamental principles and detailed basic principles adopted by the National Convention that has been completed successfully;
- (d) All the national people to harmoniously make all-out efforts for building of a modern, developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation;
- (e) All the national people to cooperate in realizing the State's seven-step Road Map with Union Spirit, patriotic spirit and the spirit of sacrifice.

Weather Forecast for 25-12-2007

Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area
Generally fair weather.

Yangon and neighbouring area
Fair weather.

Mandalay and neighbouring area
Generally fair weather.

- ★ RFA, VOA and BBC airing skyful of lies
- ★ RFA, VOA and BBC saboteurs, watch your step!
- ★ The public be warned of killers in the air waves — RFA, VOA and BBC