Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, heads of State/Government of ASEAN nations attend Japan-ASEAN Exchange Year 2003 reception

YANGON, 14 Dec — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt met with Prime Minister of Japan Mr Junichiro Koizumi and high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. They cordially exchanged views on cooperation in Myanmar-Japan relationship and promoting mutual interests. Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt praised the Japanese Prime Minister for organizing the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit successfully. He said that Myanmar and Japan have been friendly countries in the history. Next, General Khin Nyunt expressed his thanks for getting a chance to discuss the situation in Myanmar. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt continued to say that technology and grassroot assistance provided by Japan contributes towards development of Myanmar to some extent. Then, he said that he would like to see promotion of relationship between the two countries. In addition, he wished flourishing of economic cooperation between them, he added.

Then, the General explained in detail the seven future policy programme of Myanmar, preparations for convening the National Convention and endeavours for national reconciliation in the country. In his address, Japanese Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi said that people of Japan have an attachment to people of Myanmar. They are always thinking to enhance relationship between the two countries, he added. Then, the Japanese Prime Minister said that he thanked so much for discussions on the situation in Myanmar at Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt meets Japanese Prime Minister Mr Junichiro Koizumi at the Prime Minister’s Office in Tokyo on 12-12-2003. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt meets Japanese counterpart Mr Junichiro Koizumi

Miyamoto and high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. The two Prime Ministers cordially exchanged views on cooperation in Myanmar-Japan relationship and promoting mutual interests. Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt praised the Japanese Prime Minister for organizing the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit successfully. He said that Myanmar and Japan have been friendly countries in the history. Next, General Khin Nyunt expressed his thanks for getting a chance to discuss the situation in Myanmar. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt continued to say that technology and grassroot assistance provided by Japan contributes towards development of Myanmar to some extent. Then, he said that he would like to see promotion of relationship between the two countries. In addition, he wished flourishing of economic cooperation between them, he added.

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Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives members of House of Representatives and Councillors, Japanese friends

YANGON, 14 Dec.—Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Myanmar Economic & Management Institute President Mr Tomo Takahara at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo at 8 am on 11 December. At the call, they discussed enhancement of Myanmar-Japan friendly ties that have existed for a long time throughout the history, cooperation in development of ICT in Myanmar, successful organizing of 6th Myanmar-Japan Chamber of Commerce Meeting, cooperation in education sector of Myanmar and holding of World Buddhism Summit in Myanmar in 2004. At 8.30 am, the Prime Minister received member of House of Councillors Mr Hideo Watanabe at the hall of Imperial Hotel. They discussed promotion of Myanmar-Japan friendly relations and cooperation in economic and health sectors. (See page 8)

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

Independent Day commemorative features on pages 6, 7 and 11.

National Duty

Today, in guarding against the independence, which has been regained, it must always be borne in mind of all nationalities that it is their inborn national duty to shoulder tasks with the convictions for vitalization of the spirit of national unity, nationalism and the Union Spirit and safeguarding of independence and sovereignty at the risk of their lives.

(Message sent to the 53rd Anniversary of Independence Day on 4-1-2001 by Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe)

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt meets Malaysian counterpart

YANGON, 14 Dec.—Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt met Malaysian Prime Minister Dato Sri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at the Imperial Hotel, Tokyo at 10.30 pm on 11 December. Together with the Malaysian Prime Minister were Minister of Foreign Affairs Datin Seri Syed Hamid Syed Jaafar Albar, Minister of Trade Dato Sri Rafidah Aziz and high-ranking officials. During the call, they cordially discussed matters on enhancing cooperation between the two countries. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt meets Malaysian Prime Minister Dato Sri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at Imperial Hotel in Tokyo on 11-12-2003. — MNA

Samananancia dassanam, to visit the monks; this is the way to auspiciousness.
General Khin Nyunt attends birthday ceremony of Thiri Lanka Rama Monastery Presiding Sayadaw

YANGON, 14 Dec—The 89th birthday ceremony of State Ovadacarya Agga Maha Pandita Lokanat and Sayadaw was held at the Sayadaw’s residence. The Sayadaw’s wife, Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, and Dr Kyaw Myint then delivered a sermon. The Sayadaw gave presents to the Sayadaw’s wife and Dr Kyaw Myint.

Regional National Immunization Days launched in Sagaing

YANGON, 14 Dec—A ceremony to open the Regional National Immunization Days was held at the city hall in Sagaing at 9 am today, attended by Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Yangon Mayor, deputy ministers, the Sri Lankan Ambassador, officials of the State Peace and Development Council, Office, departmental heads, wellwishers, lay persons and guests. The ceremony was opened with the three-time recitation of Namo Tassa, and Sayadaw Bhaddanta Naninda invested the congregation with the Five Precepts. The Sayadaws and members of the Sangha re-elected the puritas.

The Prime Minister and wife offered ‘soon’ to the Sayadaws and members of the Sangha.—MNA

Chinese Assistant Minister of Commerce calls on Minister U Soe Tha

YANGON, 14 Dec—Visiting Assistant Minister of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China Mr Cheng Jangs, together with Chinese Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun, called on Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha at the Ministers’ Office this evening. Present at the ceremony were officials of the State Peace and Development Council, Office, departmental heads, wellwishers, lay persons and guests. The ceremony was opened with the three-time recitation of Namo Tassa, and Sayadaw Bhaddanta Naninda invested the congregation with the Five Precepts. The Sayadaws and members of the Sangha re-elected the puritas.

The Prime Minister and wife offered ‘soon’ to the Sayadaws and members of the Sangha — MNA

For promoting cooperation between ASEAN and Japan

At the invitation of His Excellency Mr Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt, together with the Heads of State/Government of ASEAN countries and Japan, attended the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo, Japan, on 11 and 12 December.

The opening of ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit and the first session of the summit were held at the Geihinkan State Guest House in Tokyo on 11 December afternoont, attended by Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt.

In his opening address, Prime Minister of Japan Mr Junichiro Koizumi said that the summit will have to be put on historic record as it was the first of its kind held outside the ASEAN region. He added that Japan wishes to further strengthen Japan-ASEAN relations.

Alternate Chairperson of ASEAN nations President of Indonesia Madame Megawati Soekarnoputri said that the ASEAN-Japan relation strengthened during the past 30 years and the ASEAN was grateful to the Japanese government for its assistance to ensure development of ASEAN region.

Leaders of ASEAN nations and governments also expressed their views on ASEAN-Japan relations.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said that it was encouraging to witness the development of ASEAN-Japan relations during the past 30 years that Japan remained as a main trade partner of ASEAN and ASEAN was also a main trade partner of Japan; that Japan remains as the investor of the ASEAN region; and that he hoped that Japan will further widen its cooperation in economic alliance and development with ASEAN in the years to come.

The pledge to provide assistance for development of infrastructures and information and communication technology and human resource development of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam by Japan will contribute to the whole ASEAN region.

As the ASEAN and Japan were actively cooperating in dealing with the problems of terrorism, trafficking in narcotic drugs, armament and transborder crimes, they will further strengthen their cooperation owing to latest international developments and challenges.

There were many sectors of possible cooperation between ASEAN and Japan. The livelies of people will be enriched through enhancing cooperation in economy and development undertakings. Human resource development is of paramount importance for ASEAN nations. It is hoped that Japan will offer more scholarships.

Myanmar has made a resolve to eliminate narcotic drugs in the country. Cultivation of poppy-substitute crops are very important in the fight against narcotic drugs. Myanmar is paying serious attention to cultivation of poppy-substitute crops. It is learnt that Japan will cooperate in the tasks.

Japan remains not only a major trade partner of ASEAN but also the biggest investor of the ASEAN region, we firmly believe that ASEAN and Japan will be able to cooperate more actively in international affairs.

Myanmar BEHS to mark its golden jubilee

YANGON, 14 Dec—The golden jubilee of the respect-paying ceremony of Okkan Basic Education High School will be held at the school on 28 December (Sunday). Old students and retired teachers are invited to attend the ceremony.

Contact for information and donation to the schoolhead Ph-651363/107, Dr Aye The (Okkan) Ph-651363/43, Kaung Thant Library in Okkan, Kaung Thant Publishing House Ph-722555 and U Myint Soe (Yangon) Ph-548331.—NLM Source
**German Minister says US troops in Iraq ill-prepared**

BEIRUT, 14 Dec — German Defence Minister Peter Struck said on Saturday American soldiers were inadequately prepared for their current Iraq mission and need “nation building” training to help the country on the road to democracy.

“While lauding the battlefield abilities of the US military in Iraq, Struck said in an interview with Welt am Sonntag newspaper that American forces in Iraq did not have the training and were not doing enough to prepare the country for democracy. The US soldiers are good combat troops but are not sufficiently prepared for the tasks associated with ‘nation-building’ — setting up democratic and economic structures,” Struck said.

He said German soldiers sent to Afghanistan on a peacekeeping mission get special training. There are about 2,000 German soldiers in the 5,700-strong International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

“Clearly they are prepared for ‘nation-building’,” Struck said. “Our soldiers that go to Kabul are schooled about the mentality and history of the country, and also know the differences between the different population groups.”

A total of 312 US soldiers have been killed in action since US-led forces invaded Iraq in March to oust Saddam Hussein, 197 of them in guerrilla attacks since President Bush declared major combat over on May 1. Washington blames the attacks on Saddam supporters and foreign Islamic militants.

Struck also said German troops would probably stay in Afghanistan beyond the scheduled end of the mission. “We will not be able to leave next year — there is no end in sight.”

He also criticized a US move to bar Iraq war opponents from reconstruction contracts while asking them to write off its debts. European leaders have urged the U.S. to reconsider the decision which opened a new transatlantic rift on Iraq.

“This was not a wise decision,” Struck said. He said he was optimistic a resolution could be found and welcomed Bush’s move to dispatch former Secretary of State James Baker to Europe to discuss Iraq and restructuring its $120 billion of foreign debt.

**US officer relieved of command, fined for assaulting Iraqi detainee**

TIKRIT, 14 Dec — A senior US officer was relieved of his command and fined 5,000 dollars after being found guilty of assaulting and threatening an Iraqi detainee, but will not face a full court martial, the US military revealed.

“While his crimes could merit a court martial, mitigating factors involved were considered, including the stressful environment and our leaders and soldiers face daily,” the US Army’s 4th Infantry Division (ID) said in a statement issued Saturday at its Iraq headquarters in Tikrit. 180 kilometres (110 miles) north of Baghdad.

During a hearing last month Lieutenant-Colonel Allen West admitted to firing a gun near the man’s head, allowing soldiers to beat the detainee, and threatening him but said he did it for the safety of the troops he commanded. The 4th ID’s commander, Major-General Raymond Odierno on Friday evening ordered West to forfeit 2,500 dollars a month from his salary for two months, according to the statement.

The general also relieved West of his command of about 700 troops and forwarded his request to retire in the spring of 2004.

West, the most senior officer reported to have faced a military judicial hearing in Iraq, was found guilty on three counts of aggravated assault and one count of communicating a threat during interrogation of a detainee on August 20 in Taji, near Baghdad.

“The incident reflects a brief lapse in judgment by an officer with an otherwise good record and performance,” the statement said, adding that West had “disobeyed laws, ignored orders, and disregarded values for which we fight.”

“Frustration and anger overcame his professional ethics and personal values, and he performed what he knew to be illegal and immoral acts,” the statement said.

During his hearing on 19 November, West said he was trying at the time to get information about an alleged plot to kill him and some of the men he commanded and which he believed the detainee, Yahya Jhodri Hamoodi, was involved in.

**Flu vaccine frenzy continues in Singapore**

SINGAPORE, 14 Dec — Hundreds of Singaporeans flocked to hospitals and clinics to take flu vaccine jabs as a new shipment of vaccines arrived on Friday, a local TV report said.

No one seemed to mind that the new vaccines are 30 per cent more expensive, said Channel Newsasia, a local English language TV station, on its web site. Some 130 people turned up at the local Tan Tock Seng Hospital’s Travellers’ Clinic for the shot, it said.

**Saddam Hussein arrested in Tikrit**

TIKRIT, 14 Dec — Former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has been arrested in his home town of Tikrit, according to Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the official IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.

The news agency report was from Qas-e Shirin in Iran. There was no independent confirmation of the report.
452 US service members killed since beginning of military operations in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 14 Dec— As of Friday, 12 Dec, 452 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, according to the Department of Defence. Of those, 311 died as a result of hostile action and 141 died of non-hostile causes, the department said. The department did not provide an update Saturday.

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

On or since 1 May, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 314 US soldiers have died — 196 as a result of hostile action and 118 of non-hostile causes, according to the Defence Department’s figures.

Since the start of military operations, 2,231 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department’s figures as of Friday. Non-hostile injured numbered 360.

The latest identifications reported by the military and family members:

Army Sgt. Marshall Edgeton, 26, Dalton Georgia, died Thursday in an attack by suicide bombers on the headquarters of the 22nd Airborne Division west of Baghdad; assigned to the 22nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Army Sgt. Jarrod Black, 26, Peru, Indiana; died Friday when a bomb exploded alongside a US military convoy in Ramadi, about 60 miles west of Baghdad; assigned to 1st Battalion, 34th Armored Regiment, 1st Infantry Division; Fort Riley, Kansas.

Police did not attempt to break up the demonstration, which was largely peaceful. Hardy has a weekend passed without anti-war protests since South Korea decided to accept a controversial US request to send more troops to Iraq in addition to some 460 military engineers and medics who are already there.

Divided public opinion over the deployment was further polarized after a deadly ambush in northern Iraq a week earlier in which two South Korean construction workers were killed and two others injured.

Despite the first fatal attack by Iraqi insurgents against South Koreans, South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun vowed to honor his promise to comply with the US request to send troops.

He said he would consider sending around 3,000 troops, mostly non-combatants, to Iraq — far fewer than the United States requested. — Internet

South Koreans protest against sending troops to Iraq

SEOUL, 14 Dec— Hundreds of activists took to the streets to protest against South Korea’s plan to send troops to Iraq.

Some 500 protestors, most of them student radicals, marched Saturday from a public park to another public park some two kilometers away, chanting “no troop dispatch, no war” and carrying banners.

Use tigers as umbrella to protect forest, save eco-system

MUMBAI, 14 Dec— Terming the tiger as a “rival predator” to humans, Save Tiger Movement protagonist Billy Arjan Singh said the wild beast should be used as an umbrella to protect the forest and save eco-system.

“Using tigers as an umbrella will help to save the forest, which will further lead to maintaining of water levels and prevention of soil erosion,” Singh, who would be presented the ABN-Amro Sanctuary Lifetime Service Award for protecting the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in western Indian region and its wildlife, said here.

The 86-year-old activist, responsible for closing down 26 hunting companies four decades ago, said the biggest predator was the human being and hence tiger was a rival predator. So the mountain ranges have to be saved for these tigers, he added.

International fund for Iraq becomes operational

UNITED NATIONS, 14 Dec— The International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, a combination of two trust funds and other inflows, was inaugurated Thursday by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.

“The joint UN/World Bank fund for Iraq is operational today,” UN spokesman Fred Eckhard told a Press briefing at the UN headquarters in New York. “The fund, which will go by the official name of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, is being inaugurated by the UN Development Group and the World Bank.”

“Now that its up and running, interested governments can contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq, was inaugurated Thursday by the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.

The Iraqi Strategic Review Board will guide donors and transition activities,” he said.

Finance. The Iraqi Ministry of Planning will serve as the Interim Iraqi Administration’s primary link to the facility and will ensure that funds are equitably distributed.

China receives 550,000 exchange students by 2002

BEIJING, 14 Dec— China received about 550,000 foreign students from 170 countries and regions around the world from 1950 to 2002, with 108,800 gaining scholarships granted by the Chinese Government, according to the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE).

This revealed to more than 240 foreign exchange students from nearly 80 countries and regions, and foreign ambassadors to China from over 70 countries and regions who attended an evening ball for exchange students held by the MOE and the Beijing municipal government, here Friday.

According to the organizers, educational exchanges and cooperation have seen rapid progress in the past decade, with a big increase in the number of exchange students. So far, nearly 500 higher education institutes in China have been given permission to receive foreign exchange students.

Statistics show that in 2002 China received 86,000 exchange students from 170 countries and regions, among whom students from North Korea, Japan, the United States, Indonesia and Vietnam ranked first to fifth largest in number, respectively.

An Iraqi youth chants anti-American slogans during a demonstration calling the release of his relatives held by US forces, during a march at Baghdad, Iraq, on 12 Dec, 2003. — Internet
IRAQ UNDER US OCCUPATION

A soldier of US Army’s 4th Infantry Division guards a suspected guerrilla in Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit, north of Baghdad, early on 13 December 2003. One person was killed and another arrested in a shootout with US troops that patrol and secure Saddam Hussein’s volatile hometown.

INTERNET

A US soldier guards outside the Convention Centre during a protest by former employees of Iraqi government in Baghdad on 13 December, 2003.

INTERNET

An Iraqi policeman aims his handgun at a driver who did not stop his car on first warning, while a US soldier looks on at a checkpoint in Baghdad, on 13 December, 2003. A US soldier and an Iraqi were killed and the fortified headquarters of the US-led coalition in Baghdad was attacked on Friday, as Britain’s top envoy to Iraq warned more major suicide bombings were inevitable.

INTERNET

Retired officers of the Iraqi army set fire to barricades at the entrance of the British army headquarters during a protest in the southern city of Basra on 13 December, 2003.

INTERNET

Families of Iraqis detained by the US authorities protest in front of Abu Ghraib prison, 20 kms north of Baghdad. The placard in Arabic reads, ‘US army where did you bring our men?’

INTERNET

US soldiers secure the perimeter of Baghdad’s Zoo during a search for weapons recently.

INTERNET

Families of Iraqis detained by the US authorities protest in front of Abu Ghraib prison, 20 kms north of Baghdad. The placard in Arabic reads, ‘US army where did you bring our men?’

INTERNET

An Iraqi policeman aims his handgun at a driver who did not stop his car on first warning, while a US soldier looks on at a checkpoint in Baghdad, on 13 December, 2003. A US soldier and an Iraqi were killed and the fortified headquarters of the US-led coalition in Baghdad was attacked on Friday, as Britain’s top envoy to Iraq warned more major suicide bombings were inevitable.
Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Myanmar, sovereign nation with own historical cultural heritage

Than Tun (IPRD)

The nation where we live is named the Union of Myanmar. Altogether over 100 national races such as Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan have been living in the Union. The national races have settled down in the land since the time immemorial. According to the anthropological research done, the evidence confirmed that the people in the stone age, the ancestors of the present generation national races, lived in the motherland aeons ago.

Fossils of Myanmar primitive men were excavated in Pondaung region in the Upper Myanmar. It can be said that the earliest human beings were from Myanmar according to Pondaungia and Amphipithecus unearthed in the region. Moreover, successive historical linkages indicate that Myanmars have lived in the land ever since. Primitive men of early and late stone age, bronze age and iron age were found successively in Myanmar. Based on these facts, we can say that successive ancestors of we Myanmar lived in this land and they handed down the historical and cultural heritage and territorial heritage to later generations. It inculcates us with the awareness that those who lived in this land at that time were Myanmars.

At the Graduation Parade of the 40th Intake of the Defence Services Academy on 7 April 1999, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe delivered a speech, saying that Union Spirit is the spirit that binds all citizens in unity no matter in which section, which region they may reside. Union Spirit is built on the spirit of nationalism that engenders nationals to love, cherish and value a single motherland, our mother nation, and work for its prosperity. In a way, Union Spirit is that oneness and unity of nationals who have descended from kin who have lived together with affection, in weal and woe on the same land, drinking the water from the same source for a very long time.

So, Union Spirit is the spirit that the people consistently regard the Union as a single family or home. It is also the spirit that one is willing to safeguard and serve the interest of one’s national people, with attachment to the lineage and regions.

The Union Spirit is based on the spirit that the citizens help each other, provide assistance for those in need and build up understanding, patience and forgiveness among the nationals.

In retrospect, in the Union of Myanmar, there were a great deal of historic incidents that reflected Union Spirit. In the course of Myanmar’s history, it can be distinctly seen that Myanmar was very powerful during the periods of the First Myanmar Empire, the Second Myanmar Empire and the Third Myanmar Empire.

If one makes a review of why Myanmar was very strong in the past, one can be aware of the fact that it was the period in which Myanmar nationals were united. In other words, at that time, Myanmar national races such as Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan were united by friendship and there flourished patriotism and nationalist spirit among the national brethren. At the time when Union Spirit flourished, the nation was prosperous and the people enjoyed fruitful results of food and clothing in abundance.

The study of the periods of the collapse of the First, Second and Third Myanmar Empires will reveal the lack of patriotism and Union Spirit. It was also the time when Myanmars were in disunity.

More apparent was rivalry for gaining power among themselves. At that time, there also existed alien intrusion, resulting in falling into the servitude of the colonialists in Konbaung Era.

Therefore, it is important to draw lessons from the past history so that the Union of Myanmar we cherish cannot relapse into alien domination. Thus, the flourishing of patriotism and Union Spirit must last as long as the world exists.

The older generation must continuously hand down the practice of upholding Union Spirit to the new generation.

In this regard, a question as to whether Union Spirit needs to be implanted in the new generation has to be raised.

The answer to the question is crystal clear. It is necessary to constantly kindle Union Spirit. It is essential to make sustainable efforts for perpetuity of the independence with the might of Union Spirit.

(Translation: MS)
Conducting research is one of the most effective ways to make Myanmar known to the world. Thanks to the research, the argument on the origin of man has ceased. Myanmar had been able to present the fact that Myanmar was the origin of man. In consequence of it, Myanmar received an invitation from the United States of America to hold a seminar concerning the matter. The revelation about the finding of the fossils in Myanmar made her stand proud among the international community. The findings therefore prove to be something in which Myanmar can take pride.

Myanmar civilization has existed for years countable by the thousand. Since the dawn of the Earth, there have been historical evidences identifying the existence of primitive men. Myanmars have lived on their own soil with own style and own literature and culture. The era of Myanmar was established with firm evidence. It may be acknowledged that the fossils excavated in the Pondaung region indicated the higher stage of man. So, they may be described as the fossils of the primates. They have been classified as Bahinia which were over 40 million years old. In fact, they are historical evidences that can trace the early history of man.
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt meets...

(See page 10)

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt meets with Malaysian Prime Minister Dato Sri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.— MNA

Delegation of Malaysian armed forces arrives

YANGON, 14 Dec—The Malaysian delegation led by Under-Secretary Dr Hj. Ismail bin Hj. Ahmad of Policy Division of Malaysian Armed Forces arrived here by air this morning.

They were welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Deputy Commandant of National Defence College Brig-Gen Than Maung of the Ministry of Defence, senior military officers and Malaysian Defence Adviser Col Hj Abbas Hj Mar. At 1.45 pm, the Malaysian delegation called on Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Aung Kyi at the hall of NDC. Also present at the call were Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Brig-Gen Nyan Win, Deputy Commandant of NDC Brig-Gen Than Maung and senior military officers. Malaysian Defence Adviser Col Hj Abbas Hj Mar and officials.

After the call, senior Myanmar military officers and the guests discussed matters related to military training courses between the two countries.

Next, Commandant Maj-Moe Hein of NDC extended greetings and expressed the history of the college.

Afterwards, the commandant and the Malaysian Under-Secretary exchanged souvenirs. Then, the leader of the Malaysian delegation spoke words of thanks.

The guests then visited the college. In the evening, Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Aung Kyi hosted a dinner in honour of the guests at the Karaweik Palace. — MNA

Workshop on establishment of model forest villages held

YANGON, 14 Dec—Workshop on setting up of model forest villages for rural area development took place on 12 December at Mingala Garden Hall in Pyay, Bago Division (West).

It was attended by Deputy Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, Pyay District and Thayawady District Peace and Development Council Chairman, officials of the Forest Department and local people.

At the workshop, three papers were submitted. Next, those present grouped in three and made discussion.

The deputy minister went to the forest village in Bawhin Forest Reserve in Nantalin Township yesterday and inspected the school library and clinic in the village. At the briefing hall of the teak special plantation, an official of the Forest Department reported on preparation for teak plantation for 2003-2004 and extraction of timber.— MNA
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attends…

(from page 16)

Prime Minister on arrangements and upgrading tasks of hotels and restaurants in the park. Afterwards, Deputy Minister for Science and Technology U Nyi Hla Ngwe reported to the Prime Minister on formation of a committee for completion of the upgrading tasks of the park and gardens and requirements.

Next, Managing Director U Win Aung of the Wood Land Co Ltd reported to the Prime Minister on landscaping tasks, construction of a convention hall, arrangements for cable car and landscaping tasks in the Central Forest Zone.

Those present also reported to the Prime Minister on cooperation of departments concerned in upgrading the park and the gardens. After hearing the reports, the Prime Minister fulfilled the requirements and made a speech. He said as Myanmar is a country with abundant natural resources, it is required for the government to develop these national resources with innovation and diligence. By doing so in every sector, economic life and living standard of the people can be raised. The Prime Minister, pointing out some countries of the world that stand shoulder to shoulder with others and enjoying prosperity due to the making best use of resources of their countries, urged personnel at different levels to make efforts with the determination to realize the goals of the respective departments based on their technological know-how, experience, goodwill and diligence. The key to success and prosperity is the efforts with innovation and diligence, the Prime Minister said.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister urged the committees responsible for upgrading Yangon City into international standard one, to exert efforts with goodwill and duty consciousness for the success of the respective sectors.

After the meeting, the Prime Minister inspected the tasks being carried out in the park including construction of the Water Plaza and water fountains, laying of granite in Khemadepa Island, landscaping tasks in Pale and Maha Myaing islands, and earth works for construction of an aquarium for sharks in Myaypadetha island and fulfilled the requirements. The Prime Minister left the park in the afternoon. — MNA

Myanmar sports contingent arrives back

YANGON, 14 Dec — Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint and leader of the Myanmar sports contingent Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu and members arrived back here by air this morning. They were welcomed back at the airport by Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Vietnamese Ambassador Mr Pham Quang Khon and officials.

The Myanmar sports contingent bagged 16 gold, 43 silver and 50 bronze in the XXII SEA Games. The Myanmar sports committee explained the purpose of holding the exhibition will continue up to 14 December.

At the exhibition, Bagan Cybertech and Computer Companies of Yangon and Mandalay Divisions displayed hardware and software in 53 booths on technology. — MNA

Commander opens 2nd Computer Technology Exhibition in Mandalay

YANGON, 14 Dec — Jointly-organized by Mandalay Division Computer Scientists Association and Computer Industry Association, the 2nd Computer Technology Exhibition was opened at the city hall of Mandalay City Development Committee in Chanayetazar Township on 12 December morning.

Present at the ceremony were Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Mandalay City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Yan Thein, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Nay Win, Deputy Chief Justice of Supreme Court (Upper Myanmar) U Khin Maung Latt, Secretary of Mandalay Division Lt-Col Tin Oo and departmental heads. Chairman of the Mandalay Division Computer Scientists Association U Thein Htun and members and guests.

Under the programme, U Thein Htun of the MDCSA explained the purposes of holding the exhibition.

Next, the commander and the mayor formally opened the exhibition and viewed round it and attended to the needs. The exhibition will continue up to 14 December.

At the exhibition, Bagan Cybertech and Computer Companies of Yangon and Mandalay Divisions displayed hardware and software in 53 booths on technology. — MNA

Eighth Thailand Exhibition concludes

YANGON, 14 Dec — The Eighth Thailand Exhibition, organized by the Ministry of Commerce of Thailand and the Trade Section of the Thai Embassy, concluded at Yangon Trade Centre on Upper Pazunduang Road in Mingala Taungnyunt Township yesterday evening.

Altogether 150 companies opened 180 showrooms from 10 to 13 December. More Thailand exhibitions will be held here in coming years. — MNA
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives…

(from page 8)

of foreign opportunities for them.
On arrival at Haneda Airport where they are going to depart, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party were seen off by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan Mr. Shogo Arai, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr. Yuji Miyamoto and members, Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Saw Hla Min, Military Attaché Col Hla Myint, embassy staff and their families. Next, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party arrived at Chak Lap Kok International Airport in Hong Kong where they were welcomed by Senior Consultant Ms. Luiz Tan of Protocol Department of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and members. Consul-General U Myo Chit of Consulate-General of Hong Kong and staff. Next, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party took a break at the special lounge of the airport. Afterwards, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party left Hong Kong and arrived back here

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt being seen off at the airport by staff of Myanmar Embassy in Japan. — MNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung meets with Japanese Foreign Minister of Ms Yoriko Kawagushi at the Imperial Hotel. (News on page 16)—MNA

Mayor inspects construction of pump station

YANGON, 14 Dec — Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, together with committee member Col Tin Soe, yesterday morning arrived at the construction site of the pump station for Gyobyu pipeline near Pyawbwe Village in Hmawby Township.
An official reported to the mayor that more 12 to 15 million gallons of water would be distributed to the Yangon City, especially the townships of South Oakkalapa, North Oakkalapa, Thingangyun, Thauwoma and Thakaryta in addition to regular supplies of water on completion of the pump station construction. He said the construction would complete in March 2004. The mayor and party inspected the maintenance of Phogyi pipeline near the construction site. — MNA

Guna Visiththa Puja for Nyaungganaye Sayadaw held

YANGON, 14 Dec — The Agga Maha Kamma-thanacariya Guna Visiththa Puja for Nyaungganaye Sayadaw Bhaddanta Indaka was held at Nyaungganaye Sasana Yeikha in Insein Township this morning, attended by Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung.

Also present were members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhanamatoka Mapway Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara administered the Five Precepts.

Then, Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, officials and wellwishers donated provisions to the Sayadaws. Next, the minister and officials accepted cash donations totalling K 30,584,940 for construction of Sasana Sitala Dhamma Beikmandaw donated by wellwishers. Later, the Guna Visiththa Puja for the Nyaungganaye Sayadaw followed. — MNA

Efficient use of electricity

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

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

Efficient use of fuel

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

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

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appealed
Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Images of irrigation projects

Hinywet Dam in An Township, Rakhine State.

Mone Creek Dam Project being constructed two miles south of Sedoktara Township, Minbu District in Magway Division.

Nankathu Dam constructed at a cost of K 1,422 million in Ingapu Township, Ayeyawady Division, was inaugurated as the first dam of the division on 29 November, 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Before 1988</th>
<th>From 1988 to November 2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation facilities</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Water Pumping Projects</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated acreage</td>
<td>1,336,199</td>
<td>over 2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation facilities under construction</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Irrigation networks</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds spent on irrigation facilities</td>
<td>K 1,454 million</td>
<td>over K 80,000 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chinese Premier arrives in Mexico

Mexco City, 14 Dec—

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao arrived here Friday on his first official visit to Mexico since he took office in March.

In a written statement issued upon his arrival, Wen said the purpose of his visit is to enhance trust, expand understanding, deepen cooperation and seek mutual development of the two countries.

Wen expressed his confidence that his visit would help further promote the friendship between the two peoples and boost the development of all-around friendly and cooperative ties in the new century.

During his two-day visit, Wen is to hold talks with Mexican President Vicente Fox and meet Mexico's congressional leaders.

Wen arrived in Mexico City after a five-hour flight from Canada. Mexico is the third leg of his four-nation tour, which also took him to the United States early this week. The Chinese Premier will set out for Addis Ababa to pay a visit to Ethiopia. In the Ethiopian capital, he will also attend the opening ceremony of the second ministerial meeting of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum.

Wen was greeted at the airport by Mexican Vice-Foreign Minister Enrique Berruga and Chinese Ambassador to Mexico Ren Jingyu. —MNA/Xinhua

Indonesian Vice-President urges free education for poor

Jakarta, 14 Dec—Indonesian Vice-President Hamzah Haz said in South Sulawesi Province here that the country's school-age children should be spared from paying money to their schools.

"We should dare to free people from paying financial contributions to schools so that we can improve the quality of the people's education," he was quoted as saying by the official Antara news agency.

Hamzah said he made the suggestion because most Indonesians have quite low incomes and the quality of education in the country is still poor.

Most children in Indonesia, such as those in the provinces of West Java, East Java and South Sulawesi, only finish junior high school, he said.

Hamzah asked concerned parties to help improve the quality of education in the country so that Indonesia's human resources would not lag further behind their counterparts in neighbouring countries, such as Malaysia.

Governors, mayors and district heads should help improve the curriculum of elementary, junior high and senior high schools, he said, adding that the curriculum should consist of 50 percent theory and 50 percent practice.

Separately in Jakarta, Sri Reajes Sumaryoto, Minister for Women's Empowerment, told reporters that Indonesian girls need wider access to the country's education system, implying that illiteracy rate among girls is three times as high as that of boys.

"Neglecting girls' right for education would put them at the risk of poverty, violence, harassment and other kind of human rights abuses," the minister said.

To overcome the problems, she said, the government needs to build more schools, grant more subsidies and protect schoolchildren from threats of violence.

—MNA/Xinhua

Beijing urban rail line to be put into trial operation

Beijing, 14 Dec—The No. 4 rail line between Sihui and Tongzhou in eastern Beijing will be put into operation on a trial basis December 28, officials with the Beijing subway company said here on Friday. The rail line is connected with the No. 1 rail line, which runs under Tiansannan Square, at Sihui. With an investment of 3.4 billion yuan (about 410 million US dollars), the double-track, 19-kilometre rail line is an overground extension of the current subway to form a major west-east artery in the city.

The provisional price for a single ticket on the new rail line is three yuan (36 US cents), and for the passengers who wish to change to the No. 1 or No. 2 rail lines, five yuan (60 US cents), according to the officials.

Beijing now has 95 kilometres of urban rail transport in operation, of which subways make up 54.15 kilometres. In addition, the No. 5 rail line is now under construction, and the government will launch the construction of another two new rail lines by the end of this year.

By 2008, when Beijing is to host the Olympic Games, the length of the city's urban rail transport is expected to reach 300 kilometres.—MNA/Xinhua

TRADE MARK

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M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L.,
fr Mundipharma AG
P.O. Box No. 60, Yangon.
Dated: 15 December, 2003

China’s biggest freight airline company established

Brussels, 14 Dec—With a total investment of 3.5 billion yuan (about 44 million US dollars), China's biggest cargo airline company, AirChina Cargo, was established here Friday.

The new company was jointly organized by AirChina, CITIC Taifu and Beijing Capital Airport, which respectively supplied 51, 25 and 24 per cent of the total investment. AirChina Cargo has plenty of cargo capacity and it will have a high-quality route network and skilled personnel.

The establishment of the new company reflected the demands of China's growing economy and trade volume. AirChina Cargo aims to become a comprehensive cargo airline company which can compete with foreign airlines.

In recent years, China has become renowned as a major trading nation. In 2002, China's gross domestic product surpassed 10 trillion yuan (about 1.25 trillion US dollars), with the export and import value ranks fourth and fifth in the world. Experts said that a big trading nation should have a matchable transport system and cargo company.

The establishment of the new company also accords with the trend of “aviation globalization” and “open skies”. —MNA/Xinhua
Vietnam opens up telecommunication market for US firms

HANOI, 14 Dec—Vietnam is gradually opening up its posts and telecommunications market to US companies from 12 December, pursuant to the country’s commitments in the Vietnam-US Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA).

Joint ventures will be able to operate in the value-added services sector from December 2003, in addition to the 24 services from December 2004, and basic communications and mobile phone services from December 2005. Deputy Minister of Vietnam’s Posts and Telecommunications Ministry Mai Liem Truc was quoted as saying by Friday’s local newspaper Investment.

Despite the limited access, US investors would create better competition, reducing market shares of local enterprises, experts said. The requirement in the BTA that all companies compete for tenders or supply contracts on an equal footing is a major threat, directors of local companies said. However, no US firms have so far registered to set up joint ventures in the value-added services, although the ministry is making documents on offering them guidelines to do so, the paper said. Foreign companies are operating in the telecommunications industry in Vietnam via business cooperation contracts, the ministry said.

Taking effect from December 2001, the BTA has created a great leap in trade turnovers between the United States and Vietnam. Thanks to lowered tariffs and removal of other trade barriers, local exports to the United States increased 127.6 percent to 2.39 billion US dollars last year. Vietnam’s Trade Ministry estimates export turnovers to the market will increase to 3.4-3.9 billion US dollars this year, with key items being seafood, garments, textiles and footwear.

Hearing, smelling differ in people, chimps

WASHINGTON, 14 Dec—Genes that fine-tune the sense of hearing and smelling in people may be important in separating humans from chimpanzees, US researchers reported on Thursday.

A comparison of the gene maps of humans and chimpanzees suggests the idea that language, a key characteristic of humans, may have emerged at a very early point in human evolution, according to the researchers.

The team additionally found differences in genes that control production of receptors—molecular doorways—into cells involved in smell. “It seems likely that the different lifestyles of chimps and humans might have led to different sensory systems,” they wrote.

Genes involved in fertilization and pregnancy were different as well, they found. Scientists think chimps and humans diverged from a common ancestor 5 million years ago. Humans and chimps share more than 99 percent of their genes, and scientists are eager to find out how tiny differences can be so important.

US, China launch market-based programme to control acid rain

BEIJING, 14 Dec—The lesson and the challenge for both the United States and China are to harness our respective entrepreneurial energies for the benefit of the environment, rather than against it,” US environmental economist Daniel Dudek said here.

Dudek made this remark at a seminar of the China-US emissions trading pilot programme.

This programme is designed to reduce sulphur dioxide released by China’s coal-based power plants.

Dudek’s organization, Environmental Defence, a US-based non-profit environmental non-governmental organization (NGO), is its major sponsor. According to Zhang Lijun, director of the pollution control office of China’s State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA), these plants are the No 1 contributor to China’s sulphur dioxide emission, which has eroded one third of the country’s land.

Dudek, who convinced Chinese environment officials three years ago that allowing the plants to trade their emission rights would ultimately lower the total cleaning cost. The programme started in March 2001. It has covered 727 plants so far in the worst places for acid rain, such as Shandong and Jilin provinces, and Shanghai.

In this programme, plants which do not use up their emission quota can sell it to those who need it. However, all the trades have to be done on condition that the total emission volume remains under SEPA’s control and will not threaten the local environment.

That’s the way we unleash powerful market forces for environmental protection,” said Dudek.

Dudek said the US’ experience in integrated management and enforcement might help China to achieve its goal. “It took the United States more than 13 years to cap national sulphur dioxide emission in the acid rain programme.”

Princess Stephanie of Monaco, right, and Clown Frankie greet the children of southern France, on 13 Dec, 2003, in Monaco before taking part in the traditional handing-out of Christmas gifts.—AFP

Chinese Vice-Premier urges int’l cooperation on environment

BEIJING, 14 Dec—Chinese Vice-Premier Zeng Peiyuan Saturday called for a further tripartite cooperation in the environmental sector among China, Japan and South Korea.

China attaches great importance to ecological construction and environmental protection, and hopes that the cooperation can help improve regional environmental situations and realize the harmonious coexistence between man and nature, Zeng said, when meeting with Japanese Environment Minister Kokie Yuriko and South Korean Environment Minister Han Myung-sook.

The two ministers were here in Beijing attending the fifth environmental ministerial meeting for China, Japan and the South Korea.

Zeng said in recent years China has basically curbed the deteriorating tendency of its national environment while maintaining rapid economic growth. He said China will get rid of the old developing model, which was built on mass consumption of natural resources and sacrifice of the environment, and look for a new scientific and economical industrialization model which can produce less consumption and pollution, and make full use of human resources.

Zeng said Chinese, Japanese and South Korean leaders signed a joint declaration at the fifth cooperation meeting last October, and reached broad consensus on cooperation on environmental protection.

The Chinese Government is willing to actively join in international environmental cooperation based on mutual respect, mutual benefit and enhanced communication, Zeng said.

He said China, Japan and the South Korea have achieved fruitful results in research and storm, the monitoring of acid rain, environmental education and human resources development.

He said he hopes that the environmental departments of the three countries will even more cooperation areas, and improve consultation and exchanges, so as to improve the regional environment and make greater contributions to worldwide sustainable development.

Singapore researchers design cheaper fuel cell

SINGAPORE, 14 Dec—Singapore researchers have developed a fuel cell which costs less than half the usual price, local Press reported on Friday.

The researchers from Singapore’s Institute of Materials Research and Engineering began working on fuel cells three year’s ago, said Channelnewsasia, an English-language television on its web-site.

In developing the fuel cell, they used a special kind of membrane called Proton Exchange Membrane, which it said, like a gas lens, is also developed in Singapore, it cited a researcher as saying.

With the membrane, “the price (of the fuel cell) will be much cheaper than that available on the market”, said Professor Gan Leong Ming, principal research fellow of the institute.

Singapore’s research focus is on providing a viable alternative power source for small appliances like pedal scooters, said Channelnewsasia.

In the future, it is hoped that fuel cells will be able to power household items like televisions, radios, laptops and even mobile phones, it said.

Unlike engines that run on fossil-fuels like petrol or diesel, the only by-products of fuel cell are heat and pure water.

AT&T to expand Internet telephone service

LOS ANGELES, 14 Dec— AT&T, the No 1 US long-distance phone company, announced Thursday that it will sell Internet telephone service (VoIP) to consumers at a lower cost than conventional phone service next year.

The company has already provided phone services using Internet technology to businesses. Now it plans to expand the service and offer a consumer equivalent in the top 100 US markets next quarter.

AT&T CEO David Dorman, speaking at an investor conference on Thursday, gave some details on its new plan. It comes days after Chief Time Warner, the No 2 US cable operator, said it would offer a VoIP on its cable system.

The moves highlight the sudden embrace by telecommunication companies in the United States of an advanced technology that they now say is destined to shake the competitive foundations of an industry that generates hundreds of billions of dollars. For consumers, the shift is likely to mean lower prices and enhanced telephone features with about the same quality of voice delivery.

Princess Stephanie of Monaco, right, and Clown Frankie greet the children of southern France, on 13 Dec, 2003, in Monaco before taking part in the traditional handing-out of Christmas gifts.—AFP
Ferguson dismisses contract problems

Manchester (England), 14 Dec—Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson has dismissed as "nonsense" claims that the Old Trafford board is split over his new contract.

A newspaper report on Friday said the negotiations over Ferguson's new deal had run into problems.

"I spoke to (communications director) Paddy (Harverson) and (chief executive) David Gill about that and of course it's absolutely rubbish," Ferguson told a news conference on Friday. "It's apparently emanating out of Ireland. I don't know why, but it's nonsense."

"David assured me of that this morning. There is no split in the board and things are going along fine." United later released a statement that also quashed the claims.

"There is no division within the board on the manager's contract," the statement said.

"We would like to point out that no-one from the board of Manchester United spoke to The (Daily) Mirror. "Discussions over terms and conditions of the deal are progressing well and no problems are foreseen."

Ferguson remains confident that a new long-term contract will be signed shortly and is concentrating his efforts on winning Saturday's Manchester derby.

Victory over Manchester City would take United back to the top of the Premier League, for a few hours at least.

Ferguson's in-form Liverpool are now third in the table and Ferguson has not ruled out a title challenge.

"Last year they lost to Wigan before they beat us, so we're taking nothing for granted," he said.

"The important thing for us is to make sure our form is good enough to win the match."

"I know what it means to our fans and I know what it means to Manchester City. This the real stuff of what history is made of, two great clubs from the one city coming against each other."

"I have always said over the years that Liverpool has been our most important fixture, historically, and I don't change that. But the Manchester City derby is a special day."

Captain Roy Keane and goalkepper Tim Howard are set to return after missing Tuesday's Champions League win over VfB Stuttgart and Ferguson admits that with only striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer unavailable he faces a tough job to select his side.

"I don't relish the job picking the team for tomorrow," he said. "I could play six different teams and different formations in midfield and up front. Just hope I pick the right one."

Meanwhile, Ferguson believes United face a difficult last-16 Champions League tie after being paired with UEFA Cup winners Porto in Friday's draw.

"I think it could be one of the more difficult draws," he said. "They are a good side. Their home record is very impressive."

"It won't be an easy one but if you want to progress in this cup you've got to beat the best teams, I think they are one of the best teams."

Liverpool inconsistency down to injury crisis

Liverpool (England), 14 Dec—Liverpool assistant manager Phil Thompson has defended the club's failure to keep pace with the Premier League's top three by blaming their inconsistency on an injury crisis at Anfield.

"We have offensive players like Harry Kewell, Michael Owen and Milan Baros out injured," he told reporters on Friday.

"How would Manchester United do without the likes of (Rudolf) van Nistelroy, Ryan Giggs and (Paul) Scholes for a period of time?"

"The same could be said of Arsenal if you took Thierry Henry, Dennis Bergkamp and Robert Pires away."

"We only had 17 players to take to Newcastle last week (where they drew 1-1) and our current position is only down to the players we have out there digging in."

"Fifth-placed Liverpool, who play Southampton at home on Saturday, are 12 points adrift of the leaders Manchester United and 14 behind leaders Chelsea and appear set to fight it out for fourth place and a Champions League qualification spot."

Beijing, Shanghai into national women's soccer final

Yiwu (East China), 14 Dec—Beijing Changjian and Shanghai SVA defeated their semifinal opponents here on Friday to qualify for the final of China's national women's soccer championships.

Beijing outplayed Xuzhou Teachers' University 5-0 while Shanghai managed to fend off fierce offensives by Dalian Shide to win by a sole goal.

The championship final is set for Sunday evening. Friday also witnessed six play-off matches.

Enyimba survive brawls to win African Champions League

Cairo, 14 Dec—Enyimba became the first Nigerian club to win Africa's top club prize after brawling marred the second leg of the African Champions League final against Ismaili on Friday.

The Egyptian side won the second leg 1-0 at their home ground in a tempestuous match, twice held up for clashes between the players, but Enyimba held on to win 2-1 on aggregate.

The club from the provincial town of Aba, near Port Harcourt, entered a 35-year drought for Nigeria in the competition and denied Egypt a hat-trick of Champions League titles after the successes of Cairo clubs Al Ahli in 2001 and Zamalek last year.

Ismaili, who made four changes after the first leg, were handed a 276-minute penalty in controversial circumstances when Ugah Okpara challenged Mohamed Mohsen Abougreisha and looked to have taken the ball away before the Egyptian striker tumbled over his leg.

The decision was furiously disputed by the Nigerians, who held up for several minutes before Hosni Abd Rabbou netted.

Abd Rabbou started the match after returning to his club on Tuesday after playing for Egypt's Under-20 side at the world youth championships in the United Arab Emirates.

Enyimba's Vincent Eyenyea, who played in the World Cup finals for Nigeria against England last year, kept Ismaili in with a chance of a second goal.

But a combination of solid defending and poor options by the attackers kept Ismaili at bay.

The match deteriorated in the final minutes with several punches and kicks from both sides, sparking off a brawl which stopped play for some six minutes. Referee Eddy Maillett from the Seychelles booked five players without resorting to a red card.

The first leg was played in Nigeria on November 30.
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt meets with Myanmar Ambassador to Japan U Saw Hla Min, Military Attaché Col Hla Myint and embassy staff at Haneda Airport, Japan, on 15 December (News on page 16).—mna.

WEATHER

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST:

During the past 24 hours, weather has been cloudy in the whole country. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Rakhine State, upper Sagaing, Ayeyawady and Yangon Divisions, (5°C) to (6°C) below normal in Chin State, Mandalay, Bago and Taninthayi Divisions, (7°C) below normal in Shan State and lower Sagaing Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant night temperature was (-1°C) in Haktin.

Maximum temperature on 13-12-2003 was 34.0°C (93.2°F). Minimum temperature on 14-12-2003 was 17.5°C (64°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 14-12-2003 was 76%. Total sunshine hours on 13-12-2003 was (8.8) hours approx. Rainfall on 14-12-2003 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2003 was 2211 mm (87.05 inches) at Yangon Airport, 2315 mm (91.14 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 2394 mm (94.25 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 14 mph from Northeast at (13:30) hours MST on 13-12-2003.

Bay inference: According to the observations at 06:30 hrs M.S.T today, yesterday’s low pressure area over Southwest Bay and adjoining West Central Bay has intensified further into a depression and it is centered at about (350) miles Southeast of CHNNEI (India). It is forecast to move towards Northwards. Weather is partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 15-12-2003: Likelihood of isolated rain in Kachin, Rakhine States, Taninthayi Division and weather will be cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

State of the sea: Temporary strong easterly wind with (35) mph and moderate to rough seas are likely off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coast. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Rakhine State.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attends coordination meeting on upgrading of Kandawgyi Park and environs and Zoological Gardens (Yangon)

YANGON, 14 Dec — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attended the work coordination meeting on upgrading of Kandawgyi Park and environs and Zoological Gardens (Yangon) held at the Central Symbol Zone in Kandawgyi Park at 11.45 am today and made a speech.

Also present were Chairmen of the Work Committee and Environmental and Zoological Gardens (Yangon), Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Major General Myint Swe, ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads, members of the work committee and responsible officials.

First, Commander Major General Myint Swe reported to the Prime Minister on tasks being carried out simultaneously by division of four zones in the park, phase by phase upgrading tasks in the respective zones, progress of work and future tasks.

Next, Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung reported to the Prime Minister on landscaping, filling of earth, arrangements for planting trees, driving of piles and installation of beams in construction of the Water Plaza, and timber decking in the Central Symbol Zone and construction of cages and cleaning and upgrading tasks in Zoological Gardens (Yangon).

Afterwards, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Major General Nyunt Tin reported to the Prime Minister on completion of landscaping tasks, erecting of fences, construction of shops, construction of retaining wall, arrangement for booths of 9 educational and plantation of vegetables, herbal plants, spices and orchards and cleaning task of water being carried out by the ministry in the Education Zone of the park. Next, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Tin reported to the Prime Minister on construction of a modern aquarium for fresh water and sea fishes in the Education Zone.

Afterwards, Mayor of Yangon Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin reported to the Prime Minister on landscaping tasks, erecting modern fences, construction of bridges linking islands in the lake and construction of a car parking in the Relaxation Zone.

Next, Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Zaw reported to the Prime Minister on tasks of construction of bridges linking islands in the lake and construction of a car parking in the Relaxation Zone.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Madame Sadako Ogata and the Japanese Ambassador Mr Yuji Miyamoto at Imperial Hotel on 12-12-2003. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Japanese Ambassador Mr Yuji Miyamoto at Imperial Hotel on 12-12-2003. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects progress of all-round upgrading of environs of Kandawgyi Park and Zoological Gardens (Yangon). — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives President of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) President Madame Sadako Ogata together with Japanese Ambassador Mr Yuji Miyamoto at Imperial Hotel on 12-12-2003. — MNA