Union Spirit

The existence of the Union today can be attributed to the strength of the nation; if the nation is torn asunder, the strength of the nation will no longer be as it is now. To keep the Union together, the people are to be organized and led in conceptual and moral terms. If the people become more and more patriotic and their love of the nation becomes more and more dynamic, the Union Spirit will flourish all the more.

Senior General Than Shwe,
State Peace and Development Council Chairman,
Defence Services Commander-in-Chief
(From address delivered at the conclusion of the course of the Union Solidarity and Development Association on 4 August 2000.)

State Peace and Development Council Chairman
Senior General Than Shwe sends message of felicitations to Japan

YANGON, 23 Dec — On the occasion of the birthday of His Majesty Akihito, Emperor of Japan, which falls on 23 December 2003, Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Majesty Akihito, Emperor of Japan. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe sends message of sympathy to President of Republic of the Philippines

YANGON, 22 Dec — Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of sympathy to Her Excellency Madame Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines for loss of lives and damages caused by the recent landslides in the central Philippines.—MNA

Senior General Than Shwe and party inspect No 2 Hsinmin Cement Plant — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe inspects Yeywa hydro electric power project site, factories in Kyaukse

YANGON, 22 Dec — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services General Than Shwe together with member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Li-Gen Thein Sein, members of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Ye Myint, Li-Gen Tha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and Li-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Kyi Min, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Hein, Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, senior military officers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and heads of departments went by helicopter to the site of Yeywa hydro electric power project near Yeyamann Village, 31 miles South-east of Mandalay on 20 December.

Senior General Than Shwe and party were welcomed by Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Myo Myint and officials.

Minister for Electric Power Maj-Gen Tin Htut reported on construction of No 1 and No 2 diversion tunnels, concrete works, construction of the separation wall and ring bund and 20 per cent completed work of the project, production of natural pozolan to be used in construction of the main dam, test for mixture of natural pozolan and cement, arrangements for construction of power lines and estimated cost of the project. Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung reported on supply of cement.

Senior General Than Shwe then gave guidance. He said projects are to be implemented day and night as scheduled in accord with the set standard. He spoke of the need for other ministries concerned to fulfill the requirements for the project. Senior General Than Shwe also spoke on the use of pozolan in other construction works, production of pozolan on commercial scale and compilation of records on the project.

(See page 8)

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
The 57th Anniversary Union Day objectives
— for all national races to safeguard the national policy— non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty
— to keep the Union spirit ever alive and dynamic among the national people
— for all national people to defend and safeguard the Union for its perpetual existence
— to prevent, through national solidarity, the danger of internal and external destructive elements undermining peace and stability of the State and national development, and
— for all national races to make concerted efforts for successful implementation of the seven-point future policy programme.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt sends message of felicitations to Japan
YANGON, 23 Dec — On the occasion of the birthday of His Majesty Akihito, Emperor of Japan, which falls on 23 December 2003, General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister of Japan. — MNA

General Khin Nyunt sends message of sympathy to President of Republic of the Philippines
YANGON, 22 Dec — General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of sympathy to Her Excellency Madame Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President of the Republic of the Philippines for loss of lives and damages caused by the recent landslides in the central Philippines. — MNA

User’s Workshop on Human Resources Development Indicators opened
YANGON, 22 Dec — The User’s Workshop on Human Resources Development Indicators jointly sponsored by Labour Department under the Ministry of Labour and UNFPA was opened at the Traders’ Hotel on Sule Pa-goda Road here this morning. Present on the occasion were ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, deputy ministers, ambassadors of the ASEAN nations and officials, heads of department under the Ministry of Labour, representatives of UNFPA and officials, representatives of Myanmar/Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar National Working Committee for Women’s Affairs and Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Association and guests.
First, Minister for Labour U Tin Win made a speech. Next, representative of UNFPA Mr Najib Assi spoke and the opening ceremony ended. Afterwards, the workshop started at 9 am. Professor Dr Than Toe of Institute of Economics presided over it. Those present discussed measures undertaken for regular compilation and issue of human resources development indicators, followed by a general round of discussions.
After that, the afternoon session of the workshop took place. Professor (Retd) Dr Thet Lwin of Institute of Economics chaired it. Those present discussed matters related to extended and practi-cal use of human resources development indicators.
The workshop ended with the concluding remarks by Director-General U Soe Nyunt of Labour Department.—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

56th Anniversary Independence Day Exhibition
Date — 3rd to 11th January 2004
Time — 9 am to 5 pm
Place — Tatmadaw Hall on U Wisara Road, Yangon.
(Free entrance)

Labour Minister U Tin Win makes an address at the opening ceremony of the User’s Workshop on Human Resources Development Indicators. — MNA

Minister for Cooperatives Maj-Gen Huy Oo, and Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office Maj-Gen Thein Soe inspect a booth after the conclusion of the Myanmar industrial producers meeting at Sedona Hotel on 20 December. — MNA

Premier League soccer
YANGON, 22 Dec — The Premier League soccer tournament, sponsored by Myanmar Football Federation, continued at Aung San Stadium here this afternoon.

Ministry of Mines Team beat Padamy Naga Team 2-0. The man of the match award went to Ko Ko Naing of Ministry of Mines Team. — MNA
Gulf states urged not to enact reforms on US orders

KUWAIT, 22 Dec—A leading Kuwaiti Islamist parliamentarian on Saturday urged six Gulf Arab states with close ties to Washington not to enact educational reforms on US orders as part of a drive to fight terror.

Lawmaker Waleed al-Tabtabae said the Gulf governments not to bow to pressure from the West on education reform, an issue high on the agenda of a Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) summit meeting in Kuwait on Sunday and Monday.

"The amendment and development of the curricula should stem from the Gulf’s needs, not from external pressures," said Tabtabae in a statement.

Tabtabae leads the four-member Salafi-Islamist bloc in Kuwait’s Parliament, a powerful body controlled by conservative tribal leaders and Islamists. The latter hold 15 seats in the 50-member recently elected house.

After the September 11, 2001 attacks on the United States, Washington pressured regional kingpin Saudi Arabia—home to 15 of the September 11 suicide hijackers— to change school curricula.

Saudi reformists say the country has removed from textbook intolerant or offensive chapters on Christians and Jews, which had depicted them as infidels and enemies of Islam.

Tabtabae said it was US Zionists and right-wing institutions who were pushing changes in school curricula in Islamic countries.

They "want to capitalize on the post-September 11 atmosphere to impose unacceptable changes—that contradict with clear verses in the Holy Koran and the Sunna (sayings of the Prophet)," he said.

They were doing this "in order to impose normalization with the Zionist entity (Israel)," Tabtabae added.

The December 21-22 annual GCC summit will discuss a Gulf agreement on fighting terror attacks, and GCC officials said concrete proposals on changing curricula will be presented to the summit for approval.

The GCC, a political alliance, includes Saudi Arabia, which is fighting a surge in militant violence linked to Saudi-born Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda group. Other members are Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

MNA/Reuters

Abdullah says research should serve agriculture

Kuala Lumpur, 22 Dec—Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said here that the country’s science and technology research findings should be utilized to boost the agricultural sector.

These research findings should be utilized not only to spur the development of industries in the urban areas but also agricultural activities in the rural areas, the Prime Minister said when opening the 30th general meeting of the National Farmers’ Association (NAFAS) here.

“We do not wish to have a situation that when Malaysia attains developed nation status in 2020, the gap between the progress of the industrial sector in the urban areas as a result of the application of science and technology and the rural areas involved in agricultural activities is extremely wide," he said.

Abdullah said that the growth of the rural areas should be linked with science and technology capability and capacity.

“The application of science and technology can help enhance the development of the agricultural sector and boost the income of farmers,” he said.

Abdullah said that agriculture was a viable activity and the various fields of science and technology including biotechnology could contribute towards the development of the sector. The Prime Minister said that information and communications technology (ICT) also had a role to play in the field of agriculture as a means to obtain quick information and to establish a commercial network.

Meanwhile, Abdullah said that farmers themselves should be confident in the sector they had embarked on to ensure success.— MNA/Xinhua

Thaksin threatens revenge for EU high tariff on Thai shrimp

Bangkok, 22 Dec—Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra threatens to stop buying Airbus from the European Union if there is no solution to the two sides’ trade dispute on shrimp, local Press reported on Saturday.

The Thai Government blamed the EU for discriminating its seafood by imposing tariffs as high as 12 per cent on shrimp products.

The tariff levied by the EU on neighbouring Malaysian products was only 4 per cent under the Generalized System of Preferences.

“State enterprise purchasing plans will be adjusted until we get fairness,” Thaksin was quoted by Bangkok Post as saying.—MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia, Singapore to strengthen cooperation in anti-terrorism

Jakarta, 22 Dec—Indonesian Police Chief General Da’i Rachmadi and Vice-Prime Minister of Singapore Tony Tan here Friday agreed to strengthen cooperation in fighting against terrorism, said the deputy spokesman of the Indonesian police.

Chief of detectives of the Indonesian police, Erwin Mapasseng, and other Indonesian police senior officials also attended the meeting, said Brigadier-General Soenarko. Soenarko said that the two countries would work hand in hand to prevent these crimes which could potentially create terrorist acts.

He added that exchanging information was also included in the agreement.— MNA/Xinhua

Paul Bremer, the top US civil administrator in Iraq, said he had narrowly escaped an assassination bid recently.

Internet

High-level Iraqi delegation begins arriving in Moscow for talks with Russian leaders

MOSCOW, 22 Dec—A high-level Iraqi delegation began arriving Sunday in Moscow for talks expected to address Russian contracts signed with Saddam’s regime that have been left in limbo after the US-led war.

Jalal Talabani, a member of the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council, said the Iraqis would meet President Vladimir Putin and representatives of Russian companies at the talks expected Monday.

"Our main goal of our visit is to strengthen relations between Iraq and Russia," he said. "We want to have better understanding between Moscow and Baghdad."

The Iraqi delegation is to be headed by Abdel-Azziz al-Hakim, who holds the rotating presidency of the council and was to arrive separately.

On Thursday, Putin told visiting US envoy James A Baker III that Russia, Iraq’s largest creditor, was ready to start talks on forgiving some $8 billion in debt. But he stressed Moscow would negotiate on the issue “taking into account the economic interests of Russia and Russian companies in Iraq.”

As a strong opponent of the war, Russia has been excluded from bidding on $18.6 billion in reconstruction contracts under Pentagon plans only to allow coalition members to be involved.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov said Friday that the debt talks could be linked to Russian companies’ participation in Iraqi reconstruction.

Internet
GCC leaders warned of return of colonialism to the Gulf

Baghdad, 22 Dec — Islamic groups have urged Gulf Arab leaders meeting in Kuwait to introduce drastic political reforms and oppose the presence of US military bases in the region.

Amid tight security, leaders of the oil-rich Gulf Cooperation Council opened their annual summit in Kuwait on Sunday for the first time in three days of the new year.

“Our view on reforms calls for up-grading the pace of popular participation in the government and resources without delay, to achieve a real Shura (consultati-on) system that guarantees peaceful ro-tation of power,” the Kuwaiti-based Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) said.

“Serious reform can be achieved ... by combating political, moral and financial corruption in government agencies and society without discrimination,” the ICM said in a statement.

The Salaf Movement, another Islamic group, warned the leaders of the six-nation GCC of the return of colonialism to the region, in reference to the presence of US troops in Iraq.

“The worst matter faced by states and people of the region is the return of colonialism, and losing their inden- dence and sovereignty under the pre-text of providing protection,” the move- ment’s secretary general Hakim al-Mutairi said.

“The most serious aspect of this colonialism is the presence of perma-nent foreign military bases which now encircle the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf from all sides,” Mutairi added in a statement.

Peaceful political reforms

He urged the oil-rich states to strengthen their military capabilities to be able to protect their nations to rid the region of the foreign military presence.

Islamic Constitutional Movement

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

The ICM also called on GCC lead- ers to help Iraq become a factor for stability and progress in the Gulf re-gion, and to help speed up the creation of an Iraqi government to ensure a swift withdrawal of foreign troops.

In addition, Mutairi called for “peaceful political reforms” to allow the Gulf people to govern themselves and elect their representatives freely under constitutional states.

Kuwaiti Islamic MP Walid al-Talabani warned Gulf leaders against bowing to Western pressure to change school textbooks and enforce Western concepts of fighting terrorism. — Internet

China pledges to further eco, trade cooperation with Israel

Beijing, 22 Dec — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said that as long as China and Israel grab opportu-nity, trade and economic coopera-tion will be upgraded to new heights.

Wen made the remarks in a meeting with Israeli President Moshe Katsav here Friday.

He said trade volume between China and Israel currently was as 13 times greater than when the two countries forged diplomatic ties.

Some projects such as a demonstration farm and the cooperative research on water resources, biology, and nano-technology have become good examples of Sino-Israeli cooperation.

MNA/Xinhua

Costa Rica takes precautions against SARS

San Jose, 22 Dec — The health authorities of Costa Rica have urged every sanitary institution to adopt preventive measures against the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

Health Minister Maria Sacristan reported the local Press on Saturday that there had been no documented cases of possible SARS cases follow- ing the World Health Orga-nization’s alert to every county after the recent decla-ration of a SARS case in Chinese (Taipei).

MNA/Xinhua

Doctors study hereditary cancer in Chinese family

Xi’an, 22 Dec — Doctors say genetic factors have caused several generations of a family in the northwestern China province of Shaanxi to suffer from cancer.

The family of Li Kuanchang in Shennu County aroused the attention of medical experts earlier this year with eight cancer patients among three generations, five of whom died. They were diagnosed as suffering from malignant tumors in the bone, stomach, liver, breast and colon,” said Li Qiang, a physician from Xiijing Hospital based in the provincial capital Xi’an.

Li is a member of an experts’ panel sent to Shennu County in late November to investigate the family and probe the causes for their diseases.

“We have found 10 more cases in their closest relations, including two of Li Kuanchang’s sisters,” said Li.

According to Li, incidence of cancer within the Li family had reached 41.8 per cent — with 18 patients among 43 people. “We can confirm it’s a hereditary problem,” he said.

The doctor and his colleagues are carrying out further research to identify the reason for the family’s genetic predilection in order to protect future generations from the same problem.

The experts had requested Xiijing Hospital to set up a special group to track the family, said Gao Tianwen, a dermatologist with the panel.

MNA/Xinhua

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MNA/Xinhua

China, Spain forum boosts cooperation

Beijing, 22 Dec — The first session of a forum between China and Spain concluded here recently after two days of discussions on a wide range of issues, including politics, economics, culture and sports.

The forum is a cooperative project decided by the government heads of the two countries in 2000. It is intended to boost bilateral exchanges and to commemorate the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties. Annual meetings will be held to discuss issues of common concern.

Hu Qili, former vice-chairman of the National Commit-tee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Confer-ence, and Juan Antonio Samaranch, former president of the International Olympic Committee, act as chairmen of the forum. Participants at the first meeting were from govern-mental organs, non-governmental organizations and social groups.

They were divided into four committees of politics, economics, culture and sports to discuss issues, including their foreign policies, trade and investment, cultural ex-changes and Barcelona’s experience for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. — MNA/Xinhua

Bolivia seizes 21 tons of drugs in 2003

Lima, 22 Dec — The Special Anti-narcotics Force of Bolivia (FELCN) has seized a total of 21 tons of drugs in 2003, 7.4 tons more than last year, said a report released by the government on Saturday.

During the outgoing year, the Bolivian authorities have carried out 3,590 operations to fight drug-trafficking. Two police agents and five soldiers were killed in the actions, half of which were conducted in the Cochabamba Tropics, also known as the Chapare, the major coca leaf producing region in the country.

A US soldier stands next to a car hit by a rocket-propelled grenade in Mosul, 400 kilometres (250 miles) north of Baghdad, Iraq, on Sunday, 21 December, 2003. — Internet

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MNA/Xinhua
Iraq says Syria offers help to improve security

DAMASCUS, 22 Dec—The head of Iraq’s US-appointed Governing Council said on Sunday Syria had offered help to improve security by providing intelligence, tightening borders and extraditing suspects involved in crime in Iraq.

We asked for three things: cooperation in intelligence, securing the border and the extradition of criminals who carry out any criminal acts in Iraq,” Abdul Aziz al-Hakim told Reuters after meeting Syrian President Bashar al- Assad.

Hakim said his hosts promised to cooperate with Iraq on security. The United States has repeatedly accused Syria of not doing enough to prevent Islamist militants slipping into Iraq across the long desert border between them, to attack US-led forces occupying the country.

Hakim told a news conference the Governing Council wanted a security pact with Syria, whose government has said the frontier is difficult to control fully.

The security issue that Iraq suffers, Syria could suffer,” he said. “Therefore it is necessary that we cooperate to prevent terrorist acts and infiltrators.”

Syria does not officially recognize the Governing Council, but has said it is willing to cooperate with Iraq until it elects a government.

Turkey to open border trade centres with Iran

ANKARA, 22 Dec—The border trade centres set up in the three gates bordering Iran will start working as of January 2004, Turkish Customs Undersecretary Nevzat Saygilioglu said recently.

The semi-official Anatolia news Agency quoted Saygilioglu as saying that the establishment of border trade centres aims to contribute to the economic development in the region, to make people in the region benefit from cheap goods and to legalize the goods carried by passengers.

He added that three border trade centres have been set up in Saruisu, Kapikoy and Esendere and will be operational as of January.

China’s cinemas open wider to foreign investment

BEIJING, 22 Dec—Foreign investment may run up to 75 per cent of a Sino-foreign joint venture cinema in certain Chinese cities starting from January 1, 2004, according to new rules.

The treatment is granted to Beijing, Shang- hai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Xi’an, Wuhan and Nanjing. In other places, foreign investment is allowed a 49-per-cent stake at most, according to the interim rules on foreign investment in cinemas issued by the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television. The rules set the maximum term of a Sino-foreign joint-venture cinema at 30 years.

Until now, foreign enterprises were allowed to invest in Chinese cinemas only as minority partners.

Saturday’s China Daily quoted Mao Yu, a senior official at the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television, as saying that about 100 new joint-venture cinemas would open soon. Analysts here said introducing foreign capital to fund film production as minority partners, and allowing non-state funds in film production, is a step forward in realizing direct mail, transport and trade so as to promote cross-strait Co-operation and reunify the country.

The administration has issued rules to realize the “Three Direct Links” in mail, transport and trade so as to boost cross-strait Co-operation and reunify the country at an early date, said the official of the ministry’s Hong Kong-Macao-China Affairs Office.

Thanks to efforts made by departments on both sides, some cross-Strait postal and telecommunications businesses had been launched.

Last year, mail sent between the two sides totalled 9.83 million tons, 320 per cent higher than 1989.

Since 1989, phone calls made by Mainlanders to Tai- wan have increased by 10 per cent every year, totaling 340 million minutes and ranking second for calls made by Mainlanders to overseas last year.

Meanwhile, Taiwan’s phone calls to the Mainland also accounted for 30 per cent of its calls to overseas, ranking first in its overseas business.

“Rwanda is very grateful for being part of the new AIDS initiative. Rwanda owns a 13.7 per cent of infected population and we should take serious measures in stopping the rise of this number,” he added.

The new AIDS initiative was unveiled on Friday in Kagali by WHO Africa Director Ibrahim Samba. Under the initiative, Rwanda will get the drugs worth 3.5 million US dollars. The director called on Rwandans to take the advice given in fighting the world number one disaster.

Rwanda was also selected among other sub-Saharan African countries to host the HIV vaccine trial early next year.
Kuomintang, with estimated strength of some 200, entered Mongyang in January 1950 and stationed there. In March the same year, No 8 Infantry Division, No 26 Infantry Division and No 93 Infantry Division of KMT, with the strength of some 1,500, also entered Kengtung. In June 1950, the Myanmar Tatmadaw sent an ultimatum to them to surrender or leave the country. However, they did not pay any heed to the ultimatum. Instead, they intruded Kengtung and Tachilek and occupied them. In the first week of June 1950, the Myanmar Tatmadaw launched counter-attacks on the KMT intruders and recaptured Kengtung and Tachilek on 21 July. KMT General Limi made an immediate withdrawal from Myanmar soil. The KMT with the strength of 7,000 withdrew from Myanmar following the UN resolution. However, there existed remnants of KMT operating in border areas of Myanmar.

Thus, the invasion of the KMT came to a temporary halt after the Myanmar Tatmadaw had driven them out of the country. It was in 1954-55 that the KMT opened their headquarters in Mongmaw region his estimated strength of some 6,000 in March 1955. The Tatmadaw launched Operation in 1954 against the Kuomintang troops invading Mongyang in eastern Shan State, with a strength of 500. The Kuomintang also stationed 950 troops at Kenglatt east of the airfield; and another 112 sacrificed their lives for the nation during the Yangyi Aung. The military operation had reduced number of the Kuomintang strength to 3,000.

Moreover, the Tatmadaw launched major military offensives — Kengtung Operation and Pharaw, Maw and Panlong Operation in 1950; Moegyo/ Special Operation in 1952; Maha and Naganag Operation in 1953; and Yuzana Operation in 1954 against the Kuomintang troops, sacrificing many lives, much blood and sweat to ward off the alien intrusion, there occurred power struggles within the political parties leading to breaking up of the unity. The factions of the political parties were vying against each other for political superiority and for grabbing power. They tried to reinforce strength by forming pocket armies. The internal insurgencies taking advantage of the then government’s weakness were launching armed opposition against the State. During the time the people had to live in fear as they were afraid of the pocket armies of the then government, and also the insurgents. In the various places of the countryside, there were mass murders, robberies, abductions and looting and torching of villages. Because of the uncontrollable situation, the nation then was on the brink of disintegration.

As regards these situations, the Myanmar Government lodged a complaint with the United Nations on 25 March 1953, asking the world body to take actions against the KMT’s invasion into Myanmar. Later on, the United Nations decided that the KMT should make a temporary halt after the Myanmar Tatmadaw seized Kungmoo camp on 19 April 1955, Lweshsanhsu region on 23 April, Mongyon region on 25 April, and Tachilek mountain peak on 7 May. When the Tatmadaw atta-cked and seized Hsintaung camp at the foot of Mong-ma Mountain, Lwemongyiand Mongoton regions on 11, 14 and 15 May, 1,517 Kuomintang troops surrendered. Forty-four officers, rankers and privates of the Kuomintang sacrified lives for the nation and another 112 sacrificed limbs. The Operation Yangyi Aung concluded at the end of May in 1955. The military operation had reduced number of the Kuomintang strength to 3,000.

Kuomintang troops intruded the Myanmar territory again. The Kuomintang reinforced troops and arms and ammunition, built a military air field and stationed its troops at Mongpahylo in eastern Shan State, with a strength of 500. The Kuomintang stationed 950 troops at Kenglatt east of the airfield; and 600 at Monglin located at a place between Mongpahylo and Tarle. The total strength of the Kuomintang was about 2,100. The Tatmadaw launched Operation Mekong against the Kuomintang troops on 30 December 1960. The Tatmadaw captured the Kuomintang fortied based at Monglin.

During the time, the Tatmadaw was launching major military operations, and sacrificing many lives and much blood and sweat to ward off the alien intrusions threatening to break up the Union. At present also, the Tatmadaw has taken over the State duties for perpetuation of the sovereignty.

In other words, the Tatmadaw has saved the nation from losing her independence for the second time.

(Translation: KTY+TMT)
Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Endeavours to safeguard independence

Myanma Tatmadaw fought the Kuomintang intruders during the Operation Yangyi Aung. During the operation, 1517 Kuomintang troops surrendered. The photo shows Tatmadawmen marching to fight against the intruders.

As Myanma Tatmadaw repelled the Kuomintang intruders who encroached upon Myanmar’s soil, remnant of Kuomintang troops of No 93 Infantry Brigade preparing to leave via Chengmai.

The Tatmadaw captured four Kuomintang military bases with a combined strength of over 6,000 in 1955 during the Operation Yangyi Aung. With the help of the Air Force, the Tatmadaw columns attacked Hsin Oogaung camp on 19 April 1955, Lwehsanhsu region on 23 April, Mongyon region on 25 April, and Tachilek mountain peak on 7 May. When the Tatmadaw attacked and seized Hsintaung camp at the foot of Mongma Mountain, Lwehongyi and Mongkon regions on 11, 14 and 15 May, 1,571 Kuomintang troops surrendered.

Fighter Pilot
Lieutenant Peter
of Myanma
Air Force.

Fighter UB 466 which engaged in a dogfight with a plane of the intruders.

The Tatmadaw seized heavy machineguns and a large cache of arms and ammunition of Kuomintang during the Operation Mekong.
Senior General Than Shwe inspects Yeywa ... (from page 1)

Senior General Than Shwe and party observed concrete blocks mixed with cement, sand and pozolan to be used in construction of the main dam.

Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected construction of the separation wall and the site for the main dam and work.

On completion of the project, it will generate 790 mecca watts. The dam of Yeywa hydro electric power project is the Roller Compacted Concrete one and it will be the largest RCC dam like those built in Thailand and China.

Senior General Than Shwe and party went by helicopter to Hsinmin Cement Plant of the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd near the foot of Nwarlekauktaung, east of Kyaukse. They inspected No 1 and No 2 Hsinmin Cement Plants. Chairman of the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd Lt-Gen Tin Aye reported on the cement plants. Senior General Than Shwe gave necessary instructions and greeted technicians from the People’s Republic of China.

No 1 Hsinmin Cement Plant was opened one year ago and produces 400 ton a day with the use of wet process. No 2 Hsinmin Cement Plant produces 700 ton a day with the use of dry process. It will open in early 2004.

Senior General Than Shwe and party arrived at the sewing machine factory of the Ministry of Industry-1 in Kyaukse industrial zone. They were welcomed by Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Thein Tun and officials.

Minister U Aung Thaung reported on the objective of the factory and production of disposable syringes and injections. Senior General Than Shwe then gave necessary instructions.

Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected production of disposable syringes. They also inspected renovation of three ancient pagodas near Pharmaceutical Factory (In-yaung) and visited Lawka Manaung Shwegugyi Pagoda near In-yaung Village. Senior General Than Shwe then gave necessary instructions.

Senior General Than Shwe and party left for Mandalay and inspected construction of six-lane Yangon-Mandalay Highway.

— MNA
Regional development measures inspected in Myeik

YANGON, 22 Dec — Members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council and Commander of Coastal Region Command Brig-Gen Ohn Myint and departmental officials, went to the construction site of Maha Theikdizaya Pagoda on Sandawady Hill, Myeik, on 20 December morning. At the Dhamayagun of the construction site, Lt-Gen Maung Bo asked Sayadaw of Shwethuwun Monastery Agga Maha Saddhammajotikadhaja Bhaddanta Candhiya about the requirements for construction of the pagoda.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo gave instructions to the commander, responsible engineers and architects on construction of the pagoda with traditional handwork and attended to the requirements.

Yesterday morning, Lt-Gen Maung Bo went to the People’s Hospital in Myeik, where he met with officials of the hospital and gave instructions on effective implementation of health care services, educational campaigns and prevention work. Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo made a donation of cash to the hospital through officials. Later, Lt-Gen Maung Bo arrived at the Myanmar International Fish Auction Market at Myeik Industrial Zone, where he inspected fish and prawn purchasing centres and their sale conditions. He also gave instructions to officials on strict supervision for fish and prawn sales.

Li-Gen Maung Bo and party later proceeded to Assung Kaung Co Ltd., where he inspected the construction of factories and roads and left instructions to officials. Afterwards, he attended to the requirements.— MNA

National Convention Convening Work Committee meets

YANGON, 22 Dec — The National Convention Convening Work Committee held its coordination meeting at the meeting hall of the Ministry of the National Convention Convening Work Committee in Kyaikkasun Grounds this morning. Present were Chairman of the National Convention Convening Work Committee Chief Justice U Aung Toe, Vice-Chairman Attorney-General U Aye Maung, Secretary U Thaung Nyunt, Joint-Secretary-1 U Khin Maung Myint, Joint-Secretary-2 Dr Thaung Myint and members.

Chairman of the National Convention Convening Work Committee Chief Justice U Aung Toe delivered an opening speech and explained the history of the National Convention.

The meeting came to a close in the afternoon.— MNA

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Chairman of the National Convention Convening Work Committee Chief Justice U Aung Toe delivered an opening speech and explained the history of the National Convention.

The meeting came to a close in the afternoon.— MNA

English courses available at MRA

YANGON, 22 Dec — Courses on English ranging from intermediate level to general English, GCE English, and medical English, and other courses for those intending to visit foreign nations or work there are now available at MRA (Myanmar Royal Academy) English Language Centre, and they are taught by MRA Principal Dr Myint Hlaing himself.

At the end of this month, English in business studies, accounting, finance, marketing, management, and writing for business, and TOEFL special courses will also be conducted along with special courses on Chinese language. For further information, please contact MRA, No 57, ground floor, 9th Street, Lamadaw, Yangon or dial the phone number 222121.— MNA

2nd Myanmar-Vietnam trade meeting held

YANGON, 22 Dec — The 2nd meeting of the Joint committee for Myanmar-Vietnam trade was held this morning at Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel on Signal Road here. Present were Chairman of the National Convention Convening Work Committee Chief Justice U Aung Toe, Vice-Chairman Attorney-General U Aye Maung, Secretary U Thaung Nyunt, Joint-Secretary-1 U Khin Maung Myint, Joint-Secretary-2 Dr Thaung Myint and members.

At the meeting, two sides discussed matters on prevention of occurrence of crimes in Naff river, maintenance and inspection of border stone pillars. The conference came to a close in the afternoon.— MNA

Border conference between Myanmar and Bangladesh held

YANGON, 22 Dec — The Border Conference (Director-General Level Border Coordination Conference IND Myanmar and BDR Bangladesh) was held at Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel on Signal Road here this morning.

Present on the occasion were Myanmar delegation leader Director-General U Maung Huy of Immigration and National Registration Department of the Ministry of Immigration and Population and delegates, Bangladesh delegation leader Maj-Gen Md Jahangir Alam Choudhury ndc Psc and delegates and Bangladeshi charges d’ affaires Md Eusuf Ali.

At the conference, delegation leaders and members discussed matters on tranquility and prevalence of law, prevention of occurrence of crimes in Naff river, maintenance and inspection of border stone pillars. The conference came to a close in the afternoon.— MNA

Director-General level Border Coordination Conference IND Myanmar and BDR Bangladesh on progress at Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel in Yangon.— MNA
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt honours SEA ...  

YANGON, 22 Dec — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Minister of Trade of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Mr. Tran Do Quan and Director-General of Protocol Department Thu Trang Dinh Tuyen and numbers at Zeyakhina Beikman hall on Konmyinttha this evening. Present together with the Prime Minister were Minister Mr. Truong Dinh Tuyen and other participant nations. The victorious athletes were to be honoured and Myanmar women should take endless pride in them. 📣

He said every nation in the world is attempting in promotion to compete dignity of the nation and its people and to keep abreast with other nations with strong nationalist spirit in economic, social, cultural and sports sectors. Similarly, the Union of Myanmar is making endeavors for progress of the nation and the people in all sectors. The athletes have shown the government’s efforts to raise Myanmar sports standard, he said.

Uplifting of national sports standard and winning victories in the international sports competitions indicate dignity of the nation and its people and cultural standard. With the encouragement of the government, Myanmar sports standard has gradually improved but it is still under progress. He said he was very pleased with the encouragement of the government and the people and manpower, financial assistance, advice and management of national entrepreneurs who take charge of the sports federations.

Considering the encouragement of the government and sports enthusiasts, he said, it is true that success of Myanmar sports has not reached the level that deserves the victory. At the XXII SEA Games the position of Myanmar sports contingent was not higher than that of the previous year. Athletes from twenty-nine sports categories out of 32 won medals. The total number of medals gained was higher than that of the XXI SEA Games. The number of silver medals increased more and the number of gold medals dropped comparing with the previous games, he said. It is encouraging to note that victorious athletes who won gold medals at the games are those who won medals in SEA Games, Asian and world level competitions.

Win Zaw Oo who won bronze in 75-kilo event of physical culture contest at the XIV SEA Games now won gold in 80-kilo event at the XXII SEA Games. Canoe-rowing sport is also a sport activity that has met with success in South East Asia. And Myanmar rowing team secured three gold medals in this competition. In the rowing competition, the men’s team as well as the women’s team fetched gold in the 1000-m rowing competition.

Likewise, the chances of winning many gold medals were with the Myanmar shooting team, the athletes could won only one gold in the shooting competition.

In particular, Myanmar athletes in the weightlifting and Wushu competitions keep winning medals not only at Southeast Asia level but also at the world level. These achievements deserve to be honoured and Myanmar women should take endless pride in them. 📣

Kyi Thi Win, Khin Min Nwe, Mya Sanda Oo, and Cho Cho Win won gold medals in the weightlifting competition just as Khine Khine Maw and Swe Swe Thant won gold medals in Wushu competition. Myanmar athletes have set milestone of success not only for themselves but also for their respective sport federations and the State by winning medals in almost every international-level competition held in recent years.

Despite their young experience, the athletes of weightlifting, Wushu and canoe-rowing have made remarkable achievements in so short a time on account of the combined efforts exerted by sport federations concerned the athletes themselves. In this context, the assistance enthusiastically offered by private entrepreneurs taking charge of the federations concerned cannot be left out. Still in need however are the harmonious and united efforts of all responsible persons, all sport federations and all athletes to ensure success in every sport activity and competition. Moreover, continued efforts are to be made to systematically develop the techniques of sports with bright prospects of success as well as produce outstanding athletes for all sport activities.

Athletes of sport activities which missed gold medals but fetched only silver and bronze medals although they should have won gold, should strive, without losing any hopes, for winning gold medals in the competitions to come by undergoing intensified training and making systematic arrangements. When compared with other participating nations, the success achieved was not encouraging. However, the athletes who won gold medals as desired by the country and the entire people and brought credit to the country should deserve due honour.

As for the victorious athletes, they should continue to raise the dignity of the country in international-level sport competitions, after winning the due respect of the country and the people.

This year’s women’s football team, although they missed the championship award, should be praised for their industry and football skills. Efforts are to be made continuously under intense practice to win gold. Furthermore, responsible officials of the Ministry of Sports are to make assessment of their management, techniques, spiritual eagerness, diligence and perseverance.

He concluded that efforts are to be made to further raise the national sport standard and to write success stories in competitions at Asian level as well as at world level. Next, Leader of Myanmar Sports Contingent Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu reported on the participation of Myanmar Sports Contingent in XXII SEA Games.

Afterwards, prizes were presented to gold medalists, First, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win presented to gold medalists—Khine Khine Maw and Swe Swe Thant who won gold in shooting. Kyi Thi Win, Khin Min Nwe, Mya Sanda Oo and Cho Cho Win who won gold in weightlifting, and Ha Hone who won gold in wushu competition.

Next, Medalist Khine Khine Maw, on behalf of selected Myanmar athletes, spoke words of thanks. Next, dinner was hosted to the athletes who brought glory to the nation. 📣
Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:
Progress the Ministry of Information has made in the time of
the State Peace and Development Council

Mass media tasks carried out by the Ministry of Information from 1988 to 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Myanmar Radio and Television</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of daily radio broadcast</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TV broadcast</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Completed retransmission stations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Hours of daily TV broadcast</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Population of viewers</td>
<td>25.1 million</td>
<td>44.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Townships that can receive programmes</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) MRTV Channel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) Countries that can receive MRTV-3 programmes</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>126</td>
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<td>(g) e-Newspaper</td>
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<td>(All over the world through the Internet)</td>
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<td>(a) IPRD offices and libraries</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>360</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Libraries (self-reliant)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) e-Libraries</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) The Kyemon</td>
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<td>197,174</td>
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<td>(c) The New Light of Myanmar</td>
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<td>(a) Mandalay</td>
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<td>(b) Taunggyi</td>
<td>(1-10-2001)</td>
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<td>(c) Magway</td>
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</tr>
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<td>(d) Kengtung</td>
<td>(27-3-2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(e) Kale</td>
<td>(15-6-2002)</td>
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<td>(f) Myitkyina</td>
<td>(24-3-2003)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) Sittway</td>
<td>(26-8-2003)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Myitkyina subprinting house publishes newspapers to enable the local people to read newspapers in time.

An IPRD office was constructed in Kokogyun, Yangon Division, with the aim of widening the scope of knowledge of the public.

Primary school children in Nyaungpin village seen reading periodicals with interest thanks to the mobile library of Monywa District IPRD.
THOUSANDS OF BOOKS ARE WAITING TO GIVE YOU KNOWLEDGE FREE OF CHARGE

ADVERTISEMENTS

MIN KYAW MIN’S
SPOKEN ENGLISH CLASS
นักเรียนสามารถศึกษาภาษาอังกฤษได้ในเวลา 9.00 am to 11.30 am
classroom with audio-visual aids

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Philippines to implement Tobacco Regulation Act in 2004

MANILA, 22 Dec — The Philippine Government will begin implementing the Tobacco Regulation Act of 2003 on January 1, 2004 to protect public health by regulating sale and use of tobacco products nationwide, the Philippines News Agency reported.

The act, signed by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on June 23, 2003, designates all public places as non-smoking areas.

This includes elevators, stairwells, transport terminals, dining and food preparation areas as well as educational, recreational and medical facilities.

While the laws banning smoking in public places, authorities may designate smoking areas identified by conspicuously posted signs in these zones. However, such places should be open spaces or enclosed areas with adequate ventilation.

According to the act, “Smoking Area” signs must also bear warnings about the ill effects of direct and second-hand smoke.

The act prohibits sale of tobacco within 100 meters of schools, playgrounds and other facilities used by minors. It also requires retailers to demand documents like identification cards from cigarette buyers, particularly when they appear to be underage.

Similarly, tobacco sellers must post prominent signs in their stores which state that both selling and distribution of tobacco products to persons under 18 years old is unlawful.

— MNA/Inthar

Thai police clarifies killings in war on drugs

BANGKOK, 22 Dec — Thai police only killed 57 people among 1,329 deaths related to drug in the country’s war on drugs, Police Chief Sant Sarutanont on Saturday was quoted by local Press as saying.

There were 2,596 murder cases in which 2,499 people died during the first stage of the government-launched war on drugs, which last from February 1 to April 30, according to the investigation report declared on Friday.

Around half of the total killings were related to drugs, while only 57 killings were carried out by police when cracking drug-related crimes.

“No policeman wanted to kill anyone unless it was absolutely necessary,” Sant was quoted by Bangkok Post as saying.

He said most of the deaths related to drugs were caused by killings among drug gangs, especially when drug dealers pocketed the income of selling drugs.

“Most of them were killed because they took the drugs to sell and failed to pay the people they took them from,” he said.

As to the other half of murders having nothing to do with drugs, Sant said an average of 450 to 500 murder cases occurred each month in the kingdom.

During the 10-month clampdown on drugs, police seized some 40 million amphetamine tablets and a total of about 88.24 million US-dollar drug traffickers’ assets, according to the statistics issued by the Interior Ministry.

However, the large number of killings occurred during the first stage of the drug war raised public concerns over extra judicial killings and human rights violation.

— MNA/Inthar

China strives to bolster human resources development

BEIJING, 22 Dec — Chinese President Hu Jintao has said the nation’s revitalization strategy based on human resources development should be taken as a major and pressing task of the state and the Communist Party of China (CPC).

Hu, also General Secretary of the CPC Central Committee, made the appeal at a national conference on human resources development, which was held in Beijing on Friday and Saturday.

He said the human resources development strategy is vital for upgrading China’s competitiveness and improving comprehensive national strength, and for the ambitious plan of building a well-off society in China.

— MNA/Inthar
Chinese Mainland, HK sign tourism agreement

Hong Kong, 22 Dec — The Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong closer tourism cooperation agreement was signed here Friday, signifying their closer tourism cooperation and exchange.

The documents were signed by the Director of the China National Tourism Administration and Hong Kong’s Secretary for Economic Development and Labour, Stephen Ip. After the signing ceremony, Ip said the agreement marked a milestone in the growth of the tourism industries for both the Mainland and Hong Kong.

According to the agreement, both parties agreed to encourage more travel between the two places; to support the tourism industry via mutual tourism trade and promotion; to step up tourism publication overseas to draw more tourists to the Mainland and Hong Kong; and to take measures to protect tourist rights.

It is expected that the agreement will bring more business opportunities for the tourism industry in both the Mainland and Hong Kong. Both sides will strengthen cooperation to promote tourism development and products more actively, said Ip. He Guangwei said that Hong Kong has become the largest overseas destination of Mainland tourists. Over the past six years, more than 32 million Mainland tourists have visited Hong Kong. At the same time, Hong Kong is the major source of overseas tourists visiting Chinese Mainland. The newly signed agreement will benefit both sides, said He Guangwei.

India tests short range surface-to-air missile

New Delhi, 22 Dec — India is carrying out a series of tests off its eastern coast to perfect the Trishul short-range surface-to-air missile, a government official said on Saturday. The Trishul named after a trident carried by a Hindu god of destruction is part of India’s 15-year-old indigenous missile development programme.

“Tests on the Trishul are being carried out. They will continue for a few days. They are routine tests and the missile is being perfected,” a spokesman for the Ministry of Defence told Reuters.

The Trishul can carry a 33-pound warhead up to a range of 31 miles and can be used by the Army and Navy.

India is developing a range of missiles as a deterrent against nuclear-armed neighbours Pakistan and China. India’s Armed Forces were in a state of alert over most of 2002 following growing tensions with Pakistan. MNA/Reuters

Drug offence cases on rise in Nepal

Kathmandu, 22 Dec — The number of drug-related offence cases increased significantly this year in Nepal compared with that of last year, the Rising Nepal newspaper reported Saturday.

A total of 90 foreigners, including seven women, were arrested for trying to smuggle in drugs by November, an increase of 32 from 2002 and 35 in 2001, the state-run English daily quoted a high-ranking police officer as saying.

There were 302 Nepali people, including 45 women arrested in the year, while the number was 284 in 2002, the officer said.

The police have seized 4,870 kilos of cannabis, 864 kilos of hashish and 22.5 kilos of heroin by last month, while the figures in last year were 3,320 kilos, 850 kilos and 3.7 kilos respectively.

Police said that 450 cannabis plants were planted on 159 hectares and opium on 19.5 hectares.

According to Nepal’s law, refusal related to abuse of, cultivation, production, trans- action and trafficking of drugs are punishable by two years to life imprisonment and 27 to 33,800 US dollars in fine.

MNA/Xinhua

33rd wedding expo opens in Hong Kong

Hong Kong, 22 Dec — Hong Kong hosted the 33rd Christmas wedding expo on Friday at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

More than 70 booths have been set up by companies to promote and exhibit various kinds of wedding services, products and accessories. A couple of wedding service companies also organized fashion shows to provide visitors with the latest trend of and idea about wedding gown and evening dress.

Apart from those commonly known services, visitors will also have the chance to come upon a brand new service at this year’s wedding expo. A booth named “speaking roses” has introduced “praying roses” — writing words on flowers from America.

The three-day expo is expected to attract a total of 15,000 visitors, the organizer said — MNA/Xinhua

Who issues alert against SARS after Chinese (Taipei) tests positive

New York, 22 Dec — The US health agency has issued an alert against SARS virus and urged countries to follow correct biosafety norms to prevent its spread after a Chinese (Taipei) scientist was tested positive.

Though details of the case are still under investigation, local health experts reported to agency that the researcher was probably exposed to the virus in the laboratory on 5 December.

The scientist then travelled to Singapore to attend a conference from 7 to 10 December, returning on 10 December. He began to feel unwell later that day and placed himself in home quarantine. For the moment, the positive test of a 44-year-old laboratory worker for the SARS coronavirus appears to be an isolated incident, the World Health Organization (WHO) said. — MNA/PTI

Drug offences in Nepal on the rise

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Arroyo names new trade secretary

MANILA, 22 Dec — Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Friday appointed Mar Roxas, Philippine senatorial Speaker Ignacio Bunye made this announcement at a Press briefing. Philippine Star on-line news re- ports.

Roxas was chairman of one of the Philippines’ most prominent accounting firms. Roxas resigned last week to campaign for a senatorial seat in next year’s general elections.

MNA/Xinhua
**Parma sink to second straight defeat**

**ROME, 22 Dec**— A last-minute goal by midfielder Francesco Cozza condemned Parma to their second consecutive Serie A defeat on Saturday, when they lost 2-1 to lowly Reggiana.

Unlike last weekend’s 4-0 rout by Juventus, Parma dominated the match but failed to break down the southerners, who had not won a league match for more than two months.

Striker David di Cebbe put the visitors ahead in the 27th minute, when he broke the offside trap, hoisted the ball over advancing goalkeeper Sebastian Frey and finished into an empty net.

Parma, however, continued to create the better chances and drew level in the 85th minute, when di Michele handled in his own area and Italy Under-21 striker Alberto Gialdino fired home from the penalty spot.

With 90 minutes on the clock the game seemed to be heading for a draw, but Frey’s short clearance allowed Reggina midfielder Giacomo Tedesco to cross the ball into the six-yard box, where it was hooked into the net by Cozza.

The result left Parma in sixth place, while Reggiana climbed to 12th. —MNA/Reuters

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**Chelsea go joint top as Bolton hold Arsenal**

**LONDON, Dec. 22**— Chelsea joined Arsenal at the top of the Premier League after Hernan Crespo earned them the 1-0 victory at west London rivals Fulham on Saturday to beat Leicester City 3-2 at Goodison Park — Tomasz Radzimski scoring the winner after Wayne Rooney had equalized.

Aston Villa, who reached the semifinal of the League Cup by beating Chelsea on Wednesday, completed a good week with a 2-0 win at Blackburn Rovers — their first away win since January. Bottom club Wolverhampton Wanderers had their home game against Liverpool postponed because of a waterlogged pitch, while Birmingham City’s match against Middlesbrough was also the victim of torrential rain that swept the country.

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**Eriksson feels sorry for Ferdinand**

**LONDON, Dec. 22**— England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson said he felt ‘sorry’ for Rio Ferdinand on Saturday but respected the decision to ban the Manchester United defender for eight months for missing a drugs test.

Eriksson will be without one of his first-choice centre backs for the Euro 2004 finals unless Ferdinand manages to reduce his ban and 50,000-pound (88,310-US-dollars) fine on appeal.

‘With regard to Rio, I’m sorry for him. I’m sure he will be disappointed to miss the rest of the domestic season, but I’m sure he will see it as a blow to miss Euro 2004,’ Eriksson said in a statement on the English Football Association’s web site on Saturday.

‘But I must respect the disciplinary commission’s decision.’

Eriksson had been critical of the drawn-out process that led up to this week’s two-day hearing in front of an independent disciplinary panel in Bolton.

On Saturday he was more conciliatory, saying: ‘I have already made clear my thoughts that the process must be improved and I am satisfied that the various reviews are moving forward rapidly to ensure this happens.’

Eriksson concluded by saying: ‘I cannot make any further comment at this time as Manchester United have said they will be appealing against the decision.’

Ferdinand was punished for failing to turn up for a drugs test at United’s Carrington training ground on September 23. His ban is due to start on January 12. —MNA/Reuters

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**Real Sociedad slip further into relegation mire**

**MADRID, Dec. 22**— Real Sociedad slipped further into relegation danger on Saturday when they were beaten 3-1 at home to Valladolid.

Sociedad, champions-runners-up to Real Madrid last term, were whitewashed by their own fans after an eighth defeat of the season left them 18th in the table and in danger of dropping another place if Murcia beat Malaga on Sunday.

Atletico Madrid also had a disappointing home result, as they were held to a 2-2 draw by Racing Santander at the Calderon. Atletico led 2-1 with 10 minutes to go after Vincenzo Boninsegna and Kizito Musampa had both struck on the rebound in response to Sergio Matabuena’s scrappy opener, but Racing clinched a point when Jonathan scored from the penalty spot.

The result left Atletico in fifth place, behind Osasuna with a powerful second-half goal by Bruno Gama as they beat Sociedad 1-0 on Saturday.

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**Ferguson says Ferdinand case could go to court**

**LONDON, Dec. 22**— Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson says defender Rio Ferdinand could fight the eight-month suspension imposed on him by the Football Association (FA) in a civil court.

The England international was handed the ban on Friday for missing a drugs test at United’s training ground on September 23. He is set to miss the rest of the domestic season and next year’s European Championship, though United plan an FA appeal.

‘It won’t be the end of it,’ Ferguson told British newspapers on Sunday. ‘He will go to court if he has to.’

‘He has the right to go to court to protect his reputation. He has every right and the club would back him on that.’

Ferguson said Ferdinand, 25, was certain to be charged from the moment the FA ruled on the suspension on September 23. When they had defender Agustin Arruabarabada sent off in injury-time.

Second-placed Valencia were in action at home to Sevilla late on Saturday, looking for victory to move back to the top of the table for at least one night, with leaders Real Madrid in action away to Real Mallorca on Sunday. —MNA/Reuters
Seized paraphernalia.

Paraphernalia seized in Kuikai Township

YANGON, 22 Dec.—Members of the local intelligence unit and Yangon Special Anti-Drug Squad, acting on a tip-off, on 17 June 2003 searched the house of Johnny Aye on Mandalay Street, Kanika Ward, Mingalar Taungnyunt Township under Section 19 (a) of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law by Mingalar Taungnyunt Police Station. Johnny Aye (a) Than Aye was sentenced to 12 years’ imprisonment under Section 19 (A) by Yangon East District Court on 3 November 2003.

Drug trafficker sentenced

Tun Aye, son of U Maung Aye, of No 107, Mandalay Street, Kanika Ward, Mingalar Taungnyunt Township under Section 19 (a) of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law by Mingalar Taungnyunt Police Station. Johnny Aye (a) Than Aye was sentenced to 12 years’ imprisonment under Section 19 (A) by Yangon East District Court on 3 November 2003.

WEATHER

Monday, 22 December, 2003

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain has been scattered in Shan and Chin States, isolated in Mandalay and Yangon Divisions and weather has been partly cloudy to cloudy in the remaining areas.

Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Kayin State, upper Sagaing, Yangon and Tanintharyi Divisions, (5°C) below normal in Bago Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin, Shan, Chin and Kayah States, Magway and Ayeyawady Divisions and (6°C) above normal in Rakhine State, lower Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions and about normal in Mon State.

Maximum temperature on 22-12-2003 was 31.5°C (89°F). Minimum temperature on 21-12-2003 was 16.0°C (61°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 22-12-2003 was 82%. Total sunshine hours on 21-12-2003 was (7.9) hours approx. Rainfall on 21-12-2003 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 13 mph from Northeast at (10:14) hours MST on 21-12-2003.

Bay influence: Weather is partly cloudy in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 23-12-2003: Isolated rain are likely in Chin, Rakhine and Shan States, isolated in Mandalay and Yangon Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

State of the sea: Strong easterly wind with (35) mph and moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltas, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon Tanintharyi Coast. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of isolated rain in lower Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 22-12-2003: Possibility of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 23-12-2003: Possibility of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (40%).
YANGON, 22 Dec—The opening of Myanmar Farm Machinery Factory of Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation was held at the factory on Yangon-Mandalay Road near Ingon Village in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Division, at 12.45 pm on 20 December.

Defence Services Commander-in-Chief State Peace and Development Council Chairman Senior General Than Shwe graced the ceremony and unveiled the stone inscriptions of Myanmar Farm Machinery Factory in Kyaukse.

Senior General Than Shwe attends opening of Myanmar Farm Machinery Factory in Kyaukse

Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, SPDC members Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Thilha Thura Tin Aung Myint On and Li-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice Admiral Kyi Min, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Win, Mandalay Division PDC Chairman Central Command Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Sagyin Division PDC North-West Command Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye, the ministers, senior military officers, Chinese Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun, officials from SPDC Office, departmental heads, officials from the ministry, staff, division/district/township level officials of Mandalay Division, students, band troupe, pom pom troupe and Kyaukse elephant dance troupe members.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win, SPDC member Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Commander Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin and Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun formally opened the factory.

Senior General Than Shwe then pressed a button to open the stone inscriptions of the factory.

At the briefing hall of factory, Senior General Than Shwe and members were reported by Minister Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin on construction of the factory in accordance with the guidance of Senior General Than Shwe, implementation of construction works, plans for production of power tillers and harvesters, inventing of harvesters and threshers, strength of the workforce, kinds and numbers of machinery in respective plants and arrangements for sale of power tillers to farmers.

Senior General Than Shwe, after hearing the reports, gave guidance on production of effective, comfortable and durable farm machinery for farmers and production of threshers in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry-2 for greater efficiency.

After presenting a souvenir to the ambassador, Senior General Than Shwe and party looked around the No 1 Workshop, No 2 Workshop and No 3 Workshop of the factory and inspected parts for power tillers and threshers and machinery installed in the workshops.

Afterwards, they inspected smelting workshop. The minister and officials reported to Senior General Than Shwe and party on the mini-dozer, the aquatic plant harvester and the sugarcane harvester produced by the factories and workshops under the ministry.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt honours SEA Games gold medallists

YANGON, 22 Dec — A ceremony to honour outstanding athletes who won gold medals in the XXII SEA Games held in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from 5 to 13 December was held at Myayeknyo Royal Hotel here this evening. Chairman of the Myanmar Olympic Council Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt delivered the speech. When the prime minister arrived at the Myayeknyo Royal Hotel, he was welcomed by the gold medallists. At the ceremony, General Khin Nyunt delivered a speech.

The prime minister said success in the international sports competitions can promote national prestige. With this concept, the government is implementing the tasks to uplift Myanmar sports standard as a national duty. The people on their part applaud Myanmar sports contingents with strong desire for gaining success in the international competitions, he said.

On behalf of the government and the people, he praised athletes who brought glory to the nation.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attends the ceremony and presented the prizes to the athletes. It was also attended by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Yangon Division PDC Chairman Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, the ministers, the Yangon mayor, the deputy ministers, members of the Myanmar Olympic Committee, patron of the Myanmar Women Sport Federation, officials of the SPDC Office and responsible officials.

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