Senior General Than Shwe gives guidance to officials on construction of the Traditional Medicine University. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe inspects construction of Traditional Medicine University, Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon)

YANGON, 23 Dec—Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, accompanied by members of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Thura Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Hein, Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, the ministers, the Mandalay mayor, senior military officers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and heads of departments arrived at the project site of Traditional Medicine University in Mandalay on 21 December.

Senior General Than Shwe and party were welcomed by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, heads of departments, the rector of Traditional Medicine University, the proctor, professors, lecturers and students.

Senior General Than Shwe inspects Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) Construction Project. — MNA

Independence and modern Tatmadaw

When we study the history of mankind, we will see that there emerged organized groups for defence purpose because of the requirement to safeguard their own families and collectively defend their own communities. Hence, the armed forces have been indispensable for every independent people and nation since early history.

If we look at the current world affairs, we will see that there still exists the use of force in solving problems. This being so, all the countries of the world are striving to defend themselves.

In our history, the independence was lost easily due to the lack of modern standing Armed Forces. The independence and sovereignty should always be safeguarded with full awareness. We are in the process of building a strong and brilliant modern Tatmadaw to fully safeguard our independence and sovereignty. Modernization and development of the Tatmadaw should be on a par with the progress of the nation.

Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services (From address at the graduation parade of the 40th Intake of Defence Services Academy)
Towards industrial and agricultural development

On self-reliant basis, the State Peace and Development Council is striving for the nation to be on a par with nations of the world. In the process, arrangements are being made in line with the national policy to turn out national forces in political, economic and social sectors.

As industrial development is vital for the emergence of a modern and developed nation, the Government is making all the possible arrangements for the development of its industrial sector that will lead the nation into an industrialized one.

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe and party, on 20 December, inspected Hsinmin Cement Plant in Kyaukse Township, Sewing Machine Factory of the Ministry of Industry-1 in Kyaukse industrial zone and Pharmaceutical Factory (Inyaung) of Myanma Pharmaceutical Industries.

New factories are under construction for regional development in Kyaukse industrial zone and production of import-substitute machinery. Emphasis is also being placed on development of technical know-how, possessing strong economy and increasing productivity.

The opening of Myanma Farm Machinery Factory of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation was held at the factory near Ingon Village in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Division, on 20 December. State Peace and Development Council Chairman Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Than Shwe graced the ceremony by attending it and unveiled the stone inscriptions of the factory.

As regards the industries, the Head of State gave guidance to officials on production of effective, user-friendly and durable farm machinery for farmers and production of threshers in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry-2 for greater efficiency.

Construction of the Myanma Farm Machinery Factory began in June, 2001. The tests—runs were made from April to November 2003. The target of the factory is to produce 10,000 power tillers including 16 hp engines and 5,000 reapers including six hp engines a year.

Production of farm machinery is one of the projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to fulfil the needs of the agriculture sector. In the process, factories and workshops under the Agriculture Mechanization Department are producing various kinds of machinery to be used in farming.

At a time when efforts are being made for industrial development and extension of import-substitute industries, the opening of Myanma Farm Machinery Factory will surely contribute much towards the agriculture sector.

In producing farm machinery, officials of the factories are urged to produce effective, user-friendly and durable ones for farmers.
**Gulf Arab leaders welcome power transfer in Iraq**

KUWAIT CITY, 23 Dec — Oil-rich Gulf Arab monarchies, adopted steps to speed up economic unity and welcomed US plans to transfer power to Iraqis, at the end of their annual summit.

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

In a number of moves aimed at accelerating the pace of economic integration, the Gulf leaders approved legislation to outlaw dumping practices, a key obstacle to the smooth implementation of the customs union launched in January 2003.

They reaffirmed their commitment to set up a monetary union and a single currency in 2005 and, respectively.

The summit decided to set up an information centre in Riyadh to link the GCC customs departments, another important step to promote the implementation of the customs union, seen as a major step toward establishing a Gulf common market.

The leaders ordered that all measures be taken to facilitate the free flow of goods between their countries and that all obstacles blocking that be removed immediately.

They also ordered facilitating the movement of GCC nationals and agreed to issue a single GCC passport but after completing "technical details."

The Gulf leaders welcomed US plans to speed up the transfer of power in Iraq, saying this was a positive step on the road to allowing Iraqis to run their own affairs, but remained silent on Baghdad’s desire to join the regional bloc.

"The summit welcomes the US policy of speeding the transfer of power in Iraq ... and believes it is a step in the right path for the Iraqi people to run their own affairs," said the communiqué.

The Kuwaiti minister said the GCC states would resume diplomatic ties with Baghdad once a provisional Iraqi government was formed next summer.

They called for the Middle East to be rid of weapons of mass destruction.

**US troops casualty in Iraq climbs to 463**

BAGHDAD, 23 Dec — As of Monday, December 22, 463 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq according to the Department of Defence.

Of those, 317 died as a result of hostile action and 146 died of non-hostile causes, the department said.

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, 325 US soldiers have died — 202 as a result of hostile action and 123 of non-hostile causes, according to the Defence Department’s figures.

Since the start of military operations, 2,110 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

- Two 1st Armoured Division soldiers were killed Monday by a roadside bomb in Baghdad.

**Blast kills two troops, translator in Iraq**

BAGHDAD, 23 Dec — A roadside bomb exploded near a US military convoy Monday, killing two American soldiers and an Iraqi translator, the military said.

"L. Paul Bremer, the US administrator of Iraq, told NBC’s “Today” show that there’s been a suggestion of high terror threats” in Iraq in the last weeks unrelated to Saddam Hussein capture on 13 December.

"Two other soldiers from the 1st Armoured Division were wounded in the attack at about 11-45 am in Baghdad. The soldiers’ names were being withheld pending notification of next of kin."

"Three American soldiers have now been killed in combat in the past week, raising the toll to 317 soldiers killed in combat since military operations began in March."

"In other towns, troops in tanks, Humvees and Bradley armored vehicles imposed curfews and roadblocks and went house to house, smashing through doors in the search for guerrillas and weapons."

"Among targeted towns are Fallujah, a centre of resistance west of Baghdad; Samarra, 75 miles north of Baghdad; Jalalib, north-west of the capital; and Radwan near the western border with Syria, where troops dodged the rains to open Samra River."

"In Samarra, a 70-year-old man died when US troops put a bag over his head and prepared to detain him Sunday night, Iraqis said. Neighbours said Mehdi al-Jamal died of a heart attack. A 60-year-old woman was killed Sunday when soldiers blasted open the reinforced steel door of her home, said Lt Coll Henry Kienvena, who was directing the Army’s 3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment in raids in Rawah.

**Thai PM inaugurates “OTOP City” fair**

BANGKOK, 23 Dec — A grand trade fair, “OTOP City,” aimed at showcasing locally-made products under the Thai Government’s one Tambon (district), one product (OTOP) scheme, was inaugurated Sunday, the Thai News Agency reported.

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra opened the 8-day event amid hundreds of distinguished guests and visitors, including Cabinet members, foreign ambassadors, Thai and foreign celebrities, media representatives, local producers and the general public.

"The OTOP City event is scheduled to be held at the Impact Exhibition Centre in Muang Thong Thani of Nonthaburi Province which close with Bangkok on December 21-28, with community-based products from across the country to be showcased."

Thaksin said on the opening that the government wanted the OTOP City event to be a golden opportunity for local producers to showcase and sell their products to exporters and the general public, and to be also a golden opportunity for exporters and the general public to have their personal touch on the amazred community-based products produced from the “Thai innovative wisdom and knowledge.”

"Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, who heads the National OTOP Board, said at the opening ceremony that about one million 3-5 star selected OTOP items would be showcased during the eight-day trade fair."

He reported that sale of community-based products under the OTOP scheme this year, both domestically and internationally, has jumped up to around 33 billion baht (835.443 million US dollars), far greater than the government’s earlier target of around 20 billion baht (506.325 million US dollars). — MNA/Xinhua

**Chinese plan of 10 big coal firms to ensure supplies**

BEIJING, 23 Dec — The Chinese Government unveiled plans Saturday to form eight to 10 large coal mining firms capable of producing more than 50 million tons of coal annually to ensure supplies meet China’s rising demand.

The Chinese Society of the Coal Industry, formerly the Ministry of the Coal Industry, announced at the ongoing national reform and development conference for the coal sector that four or five of the planned firms will be expected to turn out 100 million tons each on a yearly basis.

"Those large merged firms are expected to control 60 per cent of the domestic coal market."

"The plan was formed after the government found that a lack of large coal firms made it hard to relieve serious coal shortages earlier this year."

**Crocodile kills Australian man, stalks his friends**

SYDNEY, 23 Dec — A large saltwater crocodile dragged a young Australian man to his death in an outward river and then stalked his two companions as they swum into the tree in the middle of the river for 22 hours, police said.

Brett Mann, 22, and his two friends had ridden their quad bikes 50 miles south-west of Darwin in the Northern Territory on Sunday when they stopped on the banks of the flooded Finniss River to wash mud off their bodies and bikes.

Mann was swept into the river by a strong current and as his two-year-old friends swam after him, a 13 feet crocodile grabbed him by the shoulder and dragged him underwater.

"They had gone to the river to cool off,” police sergeant Gary Casey told reporters in Darwin. — MNA/Reuters

**Ice-lantern show opens in E China City**

HARBIN, 23 Dec — The 30th ice-lantern festival opened Saturday in China’s “ice city” Harbin, capital of northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province.

More than 2,000 ice sculptures, using a total 30,000 cubic metres of ice, are showing at Zhacholin Park, where the festival is held each year.

The works include a high Mount Qomolangma (Mount Everest), colourful springs and a large full-screen film. The public can make their own sculptures with ice provided by the park.

"It is the first time I have ever seen ice sculptures and lanterns, and they are really very beautiful,” said Zhao Yu, a seven-year-old boy from Taiwan.

The first annual ice-lantern festival was in 1963. It has become a part of the city’s culture and won international fame. It is known as the oldest outside ice show in the world. — MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

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**A US soldier runs in the street during a large patrol in downtown Tikrit on 22 December. — Internet**
US security in Iraq during holidays

BAKHRAH, 23 Dec—The US Army’s 1st Armored Division has increased security in Bakhra, ahead of possible rebel attacks over the Christmas season, a top US military official said Monday.

Brig Gen Mark Hertling, one of two deputy commanders of the division that is responsible for security in the Iraqi capital, said US forces have received information that shows security needs to be tightened over the holidays.

There has been some intelligence—throughout the month—that it would be wise to check our precautions during the period of mid December to January,” Hertling wrote in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

“We are doing that, and we in fact will go on the offensive against anyone who threatens the Iraqis or the coalition forces.”

Meanwhile, US troops continue their pursuit of guerrillas.

In Tikrit, north of Baghdad, Maj Josslyn Aberle of the 1st Armored Division was ready to receive Iraq’s requests to help its troops. “As far as a forces are concerned, this problem was obviously also discussed. We are ready to consider this issue constructively. Understanding the importance of easing the debt burden which the Iraqi people now faces,” he said. “Contacts over these issues will continue,” Hertlan added.

The negotiation on the debt are expected to continue through the Paris Club of mainly Western creditor nations. An unidentified Kremlin source told the Interfax news agency that the final size of Russia’s writeoff depended on how Iraq takes “Russian economic interests into account” —a direct reference to participation in the country’s reconstruction and right to future oil contracts.

Some analysts speculate that it is possible that Russia will write off Iraqi debt in exchange for winning back rights to Iraqi oil fields. —Internet

Usain Bolt is ready to return to action

BRUSSELS, 23 Dec—Usain Bolt is ready to return to action and will probably run again before the end of the year.

He will make his first appearance in nine months at the Brussels Golden League meeting on December 29.

Bolt has been out of action since spraining his knee in the 4x100m relay at the World Championships in August. —AP

Russia willing to write off part of Iraq’s debt in return for contracts

Moscow, 23 Dec—The head of the Iraqi Governing Council said after talks with President Vladimir Putin that Moscow has agreed to write off a large portion of Iraq’s debt in return for favourable treatment for Russian oil and other companies.

The two sides “discussed the question of writing off Iraq’s debt and we received a generous promise to write off the debt, or at least a part of it,” Abdul Aziz al-Hakim told reporters after meeting Putin for the first time in the Kremlin.

In return “we will be open to all Russian companies,” he added. Officials in the Iraqi delegation said the debt owed by Iraq would be reduced to 3.5 billion dollars.

The sum represents debts owed by Baghdad to Moscow from the Soviet era and means that Russia has agreed to write off interest payments that reach at least five more billion dollars according to various estimates.

“Russia is willing to consider the write-off of the rest of the debt if it received beneficial treatment in terms of oil contracts,” said Kurdistan leader Jalal Talabani.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Saltanov said earlier that Moscow was ready to consider easing Iraq’s debt to Russia. “As far as a forces are concerned, this problem was obviously also discussed. We are ready to consider this issue constructively, understanding the importance of easing the debt burden which the Iraqi people now faces,” he said. “Contacts over these issues will continue,” Saltanov added.

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Some analysts speculate that it is possible that Russia will write off Iraqi debt in exchange for winning back rights to Iraqi oil fields. —Internet

Syria says terror charge a pretext to target Arabs

DAMASCUS, 23 Dec—Syria said at the start of regular regional talks with Egypt on Monday that the West was using the pretexts of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction to intervene in the domestic politics of Arab nations.

“There are false pretexts and accusations are used to intervene in their internal affairs and infringe on their independence to serve Israel’s interests,” Syrian Prime Minister Najib al-Otari said at the start of regular talks with Egyptian counterpart Atef Obeid on trade and commerce.

Syria is under mounting US pressure over accusations that it supports anti-Israel “terror” groups and is developing chemical weapons. Damascus denies the charges.

Otari did not mention nearby oil-rich Libya, which said last week it was abandoning plans to build an atomic bomb and other banned weapons. Libya has long been on the official US list of sponsors of terrorism.

Instead, the Syrian Prime Minister accused Israel of stockpiling an arsenal of mass destruction which constituted “a threat to the region’s security”.

The US did not mention Syria’s own strong military, although some analysts speculate that one possibility is that Russia is looking to sell a portion of its weapons in return for a share of Iraq’s lucrative oil revenues.

The two officials voiced hope that Iraq will regain its sovereignty as soon as possible. Syria vehemently opposed Western sanctions which are “illegal”. —AP/Reuters

New Chinese regional jet goes into production

SHANGHAI, 23 Dec—Production of an entirely Chinese-developed regional jet aircraft was launched Saturday in the cities of Shanghai, Shenyang, Chengdu and Xi’an in China.

The ARJ21 turbofan aircraft was designed to fly distances up to 1,200 to 2,000 nautical miles at a cruising speed of 833 kilometres per hour in the country’s western regions, but its speed can reach as high as 854 kilometres per hour at times.

It could carry 85 to 100 passengers across regions like the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and the Sichuan Basin and would be able to take off from any airport. It has a cruising speed of 833 kilometres per hour in the country’s western regions.

Its running costs were estimated at five to 10 per cent below similar aircraft, Tang said. —MNA/Xinhua

Steady eco growth urged to bridge China’s income gap

SHANGHAI, 23 Dec—A leading economist has called for promoting steady economic growth to bridge China’s widening income gap rather than unduly relying on the current social security system.

Fan Gang, director of a Beijing-based national economy research centre, said at the third economic annual conference Sunday that the government should focus on economic issues such as jobs for peasants pouring into cities.

“China’s economy is not strong enough to endure a full-fledged social security system that is based on high expense,” said Fan, noting a widening income gap is inevitable at the current stage when the agriculture-based Chinese economy faces globalisation and the country is in the process of modernization.

He said Chinese peasants’ income from agriculture had given way to manual work in cities as the major source for income increase, and enough jobs for them might be of great importance to narrow the income gap between the rich and poor and between the employed and unemployed.

More peasants in China prefer to embark on jobs in cities like washing cars, waiting table and serving as porters rather than working the fields back home. —MNA/Xinhua

India, Pakistan to resume Samjhauta Express

NEW DELHI, 23 Dec—Taking another step towards improving people-to-people contacts and enhancing trade ties, India and Pakistan on Friday decided to resume the Samjhauta Express from Attari to Lahore twice a week as also freight services from January 15, after a gap of two years.

“Samjhauta Express and freight services will resume with effect from January 15, 2004 as per the earlier timetable. The fare structure will be announced shortly,” a joint statement issued at the end of two days’ extensive parleys between top railway officials of the two countries here said.

An Indian team of officials will be visiting Pakistan to work out the modalities relating to the fare structure, number and type of coaches as also discuss the feasibility of extending the service to Delhi.

The agreement to restore the services after a gap of two years was signed by S. B. Ghosh Dastidar, Additional Member (Traffic) in the Railway Board and Muhammad Iqbal Khatri, Additional General Manager (passenger operations), Pakistan Railways.

The fares that existed before the service was suspended would be applicable till the fare structure was worked out. Dastidar and Khatri said at a joint Press conference here.

The existing agreement relating to rail communication between India and Pakistan valid till January 20, 2004, has been extended to a further period of three years till January 20, 2007, the statement said.

Dastidar, who led a four-member Indian team at the talks, said the decision would help enhance people-to-people contacts as also give a fillip to bilateral trade and commerce. —MNA/PTI

A protester shouts a slogan during a rally to protest the government’s decision to send South Korean troops to Iraq near the National Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, on Tuesday, 23 December, 2003. —INTERNET

Internet
CONTINUING RESISTANCE AGAINST US TROOPS

A US soldier watches the road during a daily patrol in Tikrit, Iraq, on Monday, 22 December, 2003. — Internet

An arrested Iraqi man is seated handcuffed on the ground in front of a US armored vehicle while an Iraqi boy plays nearby in Baghdad. Two US soldiers and an Iraqi interpreter died as Russia signaled readiness to forgive much of Iraq’s debt in exchange for favorable treatment of Russia’s oil and other businesses. — Internet

Iraqi police officers stand by a burning car in Baghdad, on Monday 22 December, 2003. — Internet

A military helicopter flies over a column of smoke near a pipeline about 40 km (25 miles) north of the refining town of Baiji, or about 230 km (143 miles) northwest of Baghdad, on 22 December, 2003. — Internet

An Iraqi man drags branches along a street to his home for heating and cooking fuel in Baghdad, on 20 December, 2003. — Internet

Iraqi children visit a wounded woman, who was shot while walking to work in the city of Najaf on 21 December, 2003. — Internet
Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Independence was thus safeguarded

The Tatmadaw, after forming the Caretaker Government which would play a leadership role in carrying out the responsibilities of the State, exposed hidden weapons all over the country and seized them with the aim of enforcing the rule of law and stabilizing the country. The Tatmadaw also had to repulse the gangs of kidnappers and robbers in areas around Yangon and Suburban areas. In the time of the Tatmadaw, a national evil legacy handed down by the British colonialists. It was on 21 April 1959 that Sawbwas and Sawphyas entered into a contract with the government announcing that they would renounce their rights enjoyed under the feudal system. In particular, the Caretaker Government successfully reached an agreement with the Chinese side on the long-drawn-out negotiation concerning the delineation of the Myanmar-China borderline after coordinations between the two governments.

The Caretaker Government could carry out tasks for reconstruction of the nation, enforcement of the rule of law, and prevalence of peace and stability, and at the same time had launched military operations to put an end to internal conflicts. During those military operations, there were 368 major battles and 2,743 skirmishes in which the Tatmadaw engaged with the enemies. Altogether 314 members of the Tatmadaw including officers and other ranks sacrificed their lives and 453 were wounded. A total of 1,872 enemies including nationalist Chinese, BCP, Red Flag, and other armed insurgents were killed, 1,959 injured, and 1,238 arrested. With the victories won in the military operations launched by the Tatmadaw, the insurgents got demoralized on account of the diversity of ideology among themselves and loss of confidence in the armed struggles. In consequence of it, a total of 3,618 insurgents surrendered. And there were 2,201 sorts of arms seized in the battles and 2,466 sorts of arms handed over by the insurgents who surrendered. These are historical evidences standing witness to the military, political and organizational national efforts the Tatmadaw had made to end the internal strife.

The Caretaker Government could thus solve the problem of the internal conflicts during its 14-month period and also could bring to the country prevalence of peace and tranquility and stability and enforcement of law and order successfully to a certain degree. Later on, the Caretaker Government managed to hold successfully free and fair elections for the chamber of Deputies on 6 February 1960 and chamber of Nationalities elections on 29 February. In the wake of the holding of elections, State Power was returned to the AFPFL (Clean) (Pa-ha-tsa), winner of the elections, on 4 April 1960. Unfortunately, election pledges made by the Pa-ha-tsa government turned out to be the driving of wedge among national races and occurrence of racial issues among national races and ensuing unrest, posing an enormous political issue to the Pa-ha-tsa government.

More problems surfaced as there occurred power struggles between the two factions — the U-Bo group and Thakin group — inside the Pa-ha-tsa. The functions of the government were marred by the factional conflicts of the ruling party. As it was busy trying to solve the inner-party conflicts, the Pa-ha-tsa government was not able to keep its election promises such as internal peace, community peace and tranquility, the rule of law, the economy and the food, clothing and shelter of the people, and development undertakings. Thus, the people lost confidence in the Pa-ha-tsa. The newspapers began to criticize the government that the votes which came from the genuine wish of the people became worthless. The general hardships of the Pa-ha-tsa had led to deteriorating peace and stability of the State, and the government announcing that they would renounce their rights enjoyed under the feudal system. In particular, the Caretaker Government successfully reached an agreement with the Chinese side on the long-drawn-out negotiation concerning the delineation of the Myanmar-China borderline after coordinations between the two governments.
Resulting from the weakness of the Pa-hta-sa government in leading the nation, the danger of the Union disintegration and the loss of independence was looming large. As the duty to save the nation from those dangers was the national task, the Tatmadaw, a national force, took over the State duties on 2 March 1962.

In other words, the Tatmadaw saved the nation for the third time from losing her independence and sovereignty.

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Endeavours to safeguard independence

Myanma Tatmadawmen seen undergoing military training at the Central Military Training School in Mingaladon in 1951.

Myanma Tatmadawmen seen on a march during the Operation Min Yan Aung which was designed to quell the internal insurgency from 1 May 1957 to 31 May 1958.

Myanma Tatmadawmen seen after the capture of a camp of the insurgents in 1956.

People encouraged Myanma Tatmadawmen who were on a march to quell the internal insurgency at Kokkai, Yangon, in January, 1956.

People in Kyaiklat of delta region welcoming Myanma Tatmadawmen who were going to defeat the internal insurgency in January 1956.
Senior General Than Shwe inspection…

(From page 1)

Only when the qualifications of the teachers and standard of the curriculum are high, will students at the university become well-versed in their respective subjects. Hence, the university will be perfect in form and essence, he said.

The government will fulfill requirements in accord with the status of the university, he added.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected scale model of the university and the construction of the university. Shwe met heads of departments, medical superintendents, professors, physicians, specialists and sisters.

Minister Dr Kyaw Myint reported on health care services after opening of hospitals and health centres in Mandalay Division, installation of modern equipment in Mandalay General Hospital like the one in Yangon, and modern X-ray machines. Senior General Than Shwe met heads of departments, medical superintendents, professors, physicians, specialists and sisters.

Minister Dr Kyaw Myint reported on health care services after opening of hospitals and health centres in Mandalay Division, installation of modern equipment in Mandalay General Hospital like the one in Yangon, and modern X-ray machines. Senior General Than Shwe met heads of departments, medical superintendents, professors, physicians, specialists and sisters.

At the same time, hospitals were upgraded, specialists were appointed and modern equipment was installed in 24 development regions for national development. Healthcare services have become wider and effective, he said.

At the same time, the government is producing necessary scholars after opening more institutes and schools on health in order to keep a proper ratio between the population and health personnel.

As the State has been fulfilling the requirements, the doctors also should give effective health care services with their qualification and skill.

Brilliant and healthy human resources are required for long-term national development. In this regard, the State has been giving priority to the health and qualification of the human resources. The health staff will have to strive to save the lives, to keep peoplefree from diseases and to enable them enjoy a longer life, using experience and qualification as an effective tool.

The Senior General then cordially greeted the medical superintendents, medical professors, specialist surgeons, doctors and nurses.

The Senior General and party held a meeting with members of development committees of Mandalay Industrial Zone 1 and 2 and officials at Kanaung Hall later in the morning.

On the occasion, Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint reported on realization of the guidance given by the Senior General during his inspection tour of Mandalay Industrial Zone the previous December, manufacturing of import-substitute products, use of modern machines, manufacturing conditions and the growth rate of per capita income of Aungmyethazan Township.

In connection with the reports, the Senior General gave guidance, saying that whenever he made a tour of Mandalay, he dropped into the industrial zone and looked into the improvement on the quality of goods, boosting production and manufacturing processes.

According to these inspections, the industrial zone is developing cumulatively, and it is important for the industrial zone to accelerate the development growth year by year.

The world is gaining a rapid development thanks to the science and the industrial zone are to exert efforts to make greater progress.

In the process, emphasis is to be placed on extending manufacturing of new items as well as boosting production in accordance with the requirement of the State.

In manufacturing the products, endeavours are to be made to boost production of import-substitute items by putting less reliance on the imported items using locally-made machines.

With the use of modern machines and the application of modern production methods, it is needed to lay down the target to place no reliance on imported machines. As Myanmar is an agro-based nation, it is important to establish industries that produce farm machinery.

Moreover, it is also needed to establish more industries that produce personal goods and machinery so as to ensure increased manufacturing of quality products.

(See page 9)
Senior General Than Shwe
inspect... (from page 8)

Only then, will Myanmar can transform itself into an industrialized nation and the people’s living standard improve and will there emerge a modern developed nation.

The Senior General and party viewed finished wooden products, textiles, household items, bicycle tyres and tubes and machines round Kanaung Hall.

Senior General Than Shwe and party headed for Mandalay power tiller factory of Good Brother’s Machineries Co Ltd in the industrial zone 1, where Director of the company U Maung Aye conducted them round the production site. The Senior General and party viewed the power tillers and vehicles used for agricultural purpose.

Next, the Senior General and party looked into Myitnge-Htonbo Road and progress of Mandalay-Pyin Oo Lwin road and agricultural purpose.

On 21 December, morning inspected Mandalay and Sagaing started... (Yadanabon) to link Mandalay Kandawgyi and the eight-lane strand road.

Next, they proceeded to the construction project site of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon). At the briefing hall, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun reported on construction of the bridge and progress of work.

Next, Deputy Superintendent Engineer U Hsan Win reported on installation of steel beams. In response to the reports, Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance. Afterwards, Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected construction of the bridge.

Construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) to link Mandalay and Sagaing started on 30-10-2001. The four-lane bridge will be 5,614 feet long and 49 feet wide. Out of 36 piles to be placed for the main bridge and approach structures on either side, 15 piles have already been placed. Another 17 piles are being placed and there are only four piles left to be placed.

After inspecting the bridge, Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected progress in construction of the entrance to Mandalay International Airport and construction of Panhsa Creek Bridge in TadaU Township by car.

At the briefing hall, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun reported on construction of the bridge and progress of work.

Next, Deputy Superintendent Engineer U Hsan Win reported on installation of steel beams. In response to the reports, Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance. Afterwards, Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected construction of the bridge. Construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) to link Mandalay and Sagaing started on 30-10-2001. The four-lane bridge will be 5,614 feet long and 49 feet wide. Out of 36 piles to be placed for the main bridge and approach structures on either side, 15 piles have already been placed. Another 17 piles are being placed and there are only four piles left to be placed.

Next, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein unsealed the signboard of the factory and gave necessary instructions.

ACWF delegation arrives

Yangon, 23 Dec — At the invitation of President of the Myanmar National Women’s Affairs Federation Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, a four-member delegation led by Vice-President of the All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF) Madame Chen Xiurong arrived here by air this evening.

The delegation was welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Vice-President of MNWAF Prof Dr Daw May May Yi, Secretary General Prof Dr Daw Khin Aye Win, Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to Myanmar Mr Li Jinjun and officials.

Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung and Managing Director U Naw Aung of the Tagun Wood Based Industrial Co Ltd formally opened the factory.

Next, Chairman of the Central Organizing Committee of Myanmar War Veterans Organization Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein unsealed the signboard of the factory and inspected round the factory.

Next, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein met with officials and staff of the factory and gave necessary instructions.

MNA

MNA
Trade between Zhuhai, Macao rising

ZHOUHAI, 23 Dec— A 15.8 per cent annual growth was reported in trade between Macao and Zhuhai when people celebrated the fourth anniversary of Macao’s return to China.

Zhuhai is the nearest city to Macao on the Chinese Mainland. Trade between the two cities was 230 million US dollars in 1999, but shot to 310 million US dollars in 2002. For the first 11 months of this year, according to Zhuhai Customs statistics, the trade volume climbed to 350 million US dollars, an increase of 24.9 per cent from the same period last year, with Zhuhai’s imports up 5 per cent to 48.86 million US dollars. Garments, machine and electronic products comprised most of the goods shipped to Macao, while Zhuhai imported textile raw materials and garments.

Zhuhai under jurisdiction of Guangdong Province is also one of the country’s five special economic zones.

Parmalat scandal widens as founder named in probe

ROMA, 23 Dec— A four billion euro accounting scandal at Parmalat deepened on Monday when the Italian food group’s founder and three former finance directors were targeted in a criminal probe.

As prosecutors sought to unravel a complex web of financial transactions, they have led Parmalat to be called Europe’s Enron, a rescue management was weighing up the best option for bankruptcy protection. Parmalat exploded into one of Europe’s worst corporate scandals last week when the firm said a document showing 3.95 billion euros held by a Cayman Islands unit, Bonal Finacing Corp, had been declared false by Bank of America. Prosecutors launched a fraud probe, and on Monday named in their investigation Parmalat’s founder Calisto Tanzi, who resigned last week as chairman and CEO of Italy’s biggest food group, a judicial source said. Also targeted in the probe into possible false accounting, fraud and market rigging were former chief financial officers Fausto Tonna, Angelo Ferrari and Luciano Del Soldato, all of whom held the post during 2003, other judicial sources said.

Ferrari and Del Soldato were questioned on Monday. They admitted providing false information but said the plan had been thought up by Tanzi and Tonna, one of the sources told Reuters.

Japan, South Korea launch FTA talks

TOKYO, 23 Dec— Japan and South Korea began Monday their first round of government-level negotiations to conclude a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA).

About 70 officials from various ministries of the two countries, such as finance, economy, commerce, agriculture and energy, are attending the closed-door talks at Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry in Seoul. Japan’s Kyodo News reported. Deputy Minister for Trade Kim Hyun-Jong heads the South Korean team, while the Japanese mission is led by Ichiro Fujisaki, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Affairs. In the first stage, the officials — about 40 from South Korea and 30 from Japan — are expected to finalize the composition of the negotiation groups, the timetable for future negotiations, and basic guidelines for a free trade pact, Kyodo said.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and South Korean President Roh Moo-Hyun agreed in Bangkok in October to launch formal talks by the end of this year on a bilateral FTA, which would be concluded in 2005. Japan has an FTA with Singapore and a nonagricultural nation. Tokyo has also agreed to start FTA negotiations with Malaysia, and basic guidelines for a free trade pact were agreed in 2002. In addition, the Japanese Government is preparing to start FTA talks with members of Association of Southeast Asian Nations as a whole in early 2005 so as to create a regional FTA in 2012. — MNA/Reuters

Water shortage in Tanzanian capital to last until next year

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 23 Dec— Water shortage will continue in Dar-es-Salaam, capital of Tanzania, until major rehabilitation of the supply network finishes next year, local newspaper The Guardian reported on Monday. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of City Water Services Limited Mike O’Leary was quoted as saying on Sunday that the weeklong water crisis in Dar-es-Salaam was caused by weakness in pipes due to corrosion.

The company intends to replace all old pipes in six months with a total cost of about 1.2 million US dollars and the work will begin in January next year, O’Leary said. Water rationing will be carried out in the capital. Every part in the city may have water two or three days from morning to evening in a week, the CEO said.

The CEO urged local people not to wash vehicles and water gardens. The company has ordered to stop all water distribution until the crisis is over.

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Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Progress in basic and higher education sector of national races in border areas in the time of the State Peace and Development Council

Education campaigns launched in border areas from 1988 to 2003 for development of local national races

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>2003</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth development training schools</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage industrial training schools</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Higher education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Skill development degree colleges for nationalities</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic education schools</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>88,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training schools and workshops</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parahita schools</td>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The basic education high school in Myawady, constructed by the State to enable youth nationalities residing in border areas of Kayin State to have access to basic education.

The youth development training school in Kengtung, Shan State (East) is built for the development of nationalities in border areas.
NEWS OF THE WORLD

Malaysian PM urges youths to take up technical subjects

KUALA LUMPUR, 23 Dec—Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Monday urged the youths to take up technical subjects as technology and technical skills were much needed in the country.

It was clear that the technical field had vast potential for growth and offered much opportunity for quality employment for Malaysian youths, Abdullah said when officially opened the Japan-Malaysia Technical Institute in Pinang, north Malaysia.

The foundation of the institute is one of manpower training cooperation programmes between Malaysia and Japan.

"However, this field may not be popular among youths in this country compared to the other disciplines because of the perception that the industry requires highly educated workers who are skilled in the field of science, technology, as well as having technical skills," he said.

He said close links between technical institutes and the industry were crucial to ensure that the courses and training provided were always relevant and of high quality.—MNA/Xinhua

Thai labour market faces up to future

The Bangkok Post, 23 Dec—The Board of Investment of Thailand (BOI) is confident that investment trends for 2004 will be bright for the country.

A-Frame Institute director Khunasawat, predicted that industries, and the construction of new production plants.

More interesting to seismologists was a smaller quake in the Pacific plate being “pushed under” the Australian plate, which was part of a “very long-term” event, Gledhill said.

That quake and other smaller ripples were the result of the building of the grottoes began around 460 AD in the Northern Wei Dynasty. Within four decades, 1,000 grottoes and 100,000 Buddha statues were completed together with large numbers of niches and colourful decorations.

The infrastructure construction and improvement project will cover the building of a water purification plant with a capacity of 300 tons of drinking water daily, a sewage treatment plant with a daily capacity of 1,400 tons and power, water and heating supply facilities.

The project is expected to be completed at the end of July next year, a source with the grottoes administration said.

The Yungang Grottoes have been extensively damaged over the centuries. At least 1,400 Buddha statues were stolen and shipped out of the country.

World Heritage Yungang Grottoes site to be upgraded

TAYYUAN, 23 Dec—North China’s Shanxi Province is investing 100 million yuan ($12.09 million US dollars) to improve infrastructure and environment around the Yungang Grottoes, built more than 1,500 years ago.

The Yungang Grottoes were included in the World Heritage List in 2001. The improvement project consists of three phases: construction and improvement of infrastructure; demolition and removal of unsightly buildings from scenic areas; and tree-planting at the scenic site.

The Yungang Grottoes, 16 kilometres west of the city of Datong, were hewn from the cliffs in a honeycomb pattern and stretch for a kilometre from east to west.

US singer Britney Spears performs at a Christmas event in Tokyo, on 14 December, 2003. Spears was in Tokyo to promote her new album ‘In the Zone’. —INTERNET

Indonesia needs $72bn in infrastructure investment

JAKARTA, 23 Dec—The Indonesian Government will need much more assistance from the private sector to help finance the development of the country’s sub-standard infrastructure, which is seen as crucial to boosting economic growth, an agency has said.

The Committee on Policy for the Acceleration of Infrastructure Development (KPKPI) predicted that Indonesia would require tens of billions of dollars to build key facilities over the next six years.

"Indonesia will need around 613 trillion rupiah (72 billion US dollars) in infrastructure investment between 2005 and 2009," Bambang Susantono, the KPKPI secretariat chairman, was quoted Monday by The Jakarta Post as saying.

"The government will incur a 31.34-billion-dollar financing gap even if macroeconomic conditions improve and debts are better managed," he added.

Bambang expressed the need for the government to raise infrastructure management standards in order to better maintain and improve existing facilities. Management reform and new financing schemes are crucial in attracting the private sector to back a host of projects stalled since the late 1990s economic crisis.—MNA/Xinhua

Thousands of books are waiting to give you knowledge free of charge.
Putin anticipates Russian participation in rebuilding Iraq

Moscow, 23 Dec—Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday expressed the desire that his country may attend reconstruction in the postwar Iraq, pledging a huge investment from Russian companies in the near future.

Putin made the statement while meeting in the Kremlin with Abdel Aziz Al-Hakim, head of the Iraqi Interim Governing Council, noting that “Russian companies are ready to be active in Iraq,” the Interfax news agency reported.

The President estimated that investments from Russian companies may soon total four billion US dollars.

Moscow, which has had historically good relations with Baghdad, expects to maintain such ties with the new Iraqi authorities on the basis of developing relations with the Iraqi people, Putin told the Iraqi official, whose delegation arrived here Sunday night. “We wish the people of Iraq the soonest possible solution of their problems, as we know how hard life is for the Iraqi people now,” Putin noted, expressing his belief that Iraq’s current difficulties will soon be resolved.

Talks between the Iraqi delegation and Russian leaders are expected to cover the issues of postwar settlement in Iraq, the prospects of the participation of Russian companies in the economic reconstruction of the war-torn nation, and the Iraqi debt payments.

Among the 120-billion-dollar foreign debt, Iraq owes Russia some eight billion US dollars.

Oil price falls after nine-month highs

London, 23 Dec—Oil prices tumbled further from nine-month highs on Monday as OPEC’s incoming president voiced concerns over sustained high prices.

Traders were also prompted to lock in profits from this month’s $70 per barrel, extending Friday’s 75-cent fall. In overnight New York trade, US crude futures were down 39 cents at 32.63 US dollars a barrel, sliding away from Friday’s post-Iraq high of 33.93 US dollars a barrel.

Activity was limited by the approaching holidays, which brokers said was also encouraging some speculative dealers to lock in profits gained on the 10 per cent or three US Dollars rally from the start of December.

“There’s a bit of momentum carrying on from Friday’s close. The uptrend has been broken so there’s a most certainly some profit-taking contributing to slightly weaker prices,” said oil markets analyst Kevin Norrish of Barclays Capital.

Forecasts for milder weather in the northeast United States during coming days was also expected to soften demand for heat- ing fuel, but traders remained cautious on the level of winter oil stocks cover for the world’s biggest energy consumer.

OPEC’s incoming president added to the more bear- ish tone by expressing concern over high prices, echoing outgoing president Abdullah al-Antiyah’s comments last week.

“Currently the oil prices is too high, especially the OPEC basket. We hope the oil price will fall in January. However, the price de- velopments will depend on the weather and also depend on developments in Iraq,” Indonesian Oil Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro, due to take office on January 1, told Reuters on Monday.

“I will see developments through early January. If oil prices stay high, I will consult other OPEC ministers to discuss the price development,” he said.

Caretel kingpin Saudi Arabia and other members have said that prices above the group’s $22-28-US dollar price band would be “right” day-to-day, but that the US oil market’s weakness relative to other currencies is “This is perhaps a sign that OPEC is looking at prices with a bit of con- cern,” Norrish said of Yusgiantoro’s comments.

US judge blocks forced military anthrax shots

Washington, 23 Dec—A federal judge ruled on Monday that the US military cannot force troops to be vaccinated against anthrax against their will without a special order from US President George W Bush.

US District Judge Emmet Sullivan issued an order barring the forced vaccinations, agreeing with six service members and contractors who filed suit arguing the practice violated federal law.

“Absent an informed consent or presidential waiver, the United States cannot demand that members of the Armed Forces also serve as guinea pigs for experimental drugs.” Sullivan wrote in a 33-page opinion.

The Pentagon declined comment. Justice Depart- ment spokesman Charles Miller said: “All we’re say- ing is that we’re reviewing (the judge’s order) at this stage and no determination has been made as to what our next step will be.”

In his ruling, the judge rejected the Defence Depart- ment’s argument that the re- fusion of Armed Forces per- sonnel to be vaccinated un- dermined US military readi- ness and hampered its abil- ity to protect troops if bio- logical weapons were used in battle.

The judge said he was “not convinced that requir- ing the (Defence Depart- ment) to obtain informed consent will interfere with the smooth functioning of the military.”

At issue is a law passed by Congress in 1998 that bars the military from giving troops experimental, or “investigational,” drugs without their consent.

In an executive order the following year, President Bill Clinton required the Penta- gon to get permission from individual service members before giving them an ex- perimental drug.

Waivers of the consent requirement can be granted only by the President and only “when absolutely nec- essary,” Sullivan said in his ruling.

Mark Zaid, an attorney representing the six plain- tiffs, said hundreds of troops had been disciplined for re- fusing to take the anthrax shots since the Pentagon be- gan its mass vaccination pro- gramme in 1998.

Anthrax is a deadly bac- terial disease. Airborne an- thrax spores are inhaled and lodge in the lungs, then multiply and produce tox- ins that spread through the body.

Iran calls for fight against terrorism, unilateralism

Tehran, 23 Dec—Iranian President Mohammad Khatami Sunday called for campaign against terrorism and unilateralism at the international level.

In a meeting with his visiting Kyrgyz counterpart Askar Akayev, Khatami said the two countries share similar stance on development and progress as well as fight against terrorism and establishment of security and stability in the world.

Khatami stressed the importance of efforts to establish stability and security in the region, and strengthen eco- nomic, scientific and technical ties among the regional states.

Referring to the establishment of a popular government in Iraq, Khatami said it would be a step towards the interests of the Iraqi nation and even the occupiers.

“We should all try to establish stability in Iraq and allow the Iraqis to decide their own fate. Teheran is ready to cooperate with the global community in this regard,” the President said...

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Anderlecht well clear ahead of winter break

BRUSSELS, 23 Dec — Anderlecht won 4-1 at Louvioure on Sunday to take an eight-point lead into the Belgian league’s First Division four-week winter break.

The leaders are on 46 points with Standard Liege, 2-1 winners over Gent, in second on 38, seven clear of third-placed Genk.

The league resumes on January 17 but fans may not witness a more unusual goal than the one at Mon-Beorgen on Saturday when the home side drew 2-2 with fellow strugglers Charleroi.

Beattie, on loan from Anfield, scored two minutes when the wind caught his clearance and bounced once after the head of opposing keeper Kris van de Putte and into the net.

Remarkably, it was the second time in his career Laquait, who has yet to play in his native France, had scored such a goal.

He said: “It was four or five years ago with the reserve team of Nancy in a game in Calais... where the wind was also blowing hard. It’s just a pity that my goal was not enough for Charleroi to win.”

Charleroi remain bottom on 11 points from 17 games. On Sunday, Standard Liege keeper Fabian Carini also scored but his goal came from the penalty spot in the victory over Beerschot.—MNA/Reuters

AC Milan lose unbeatenn record

ROME, 23 Dec — AC Milan, who had not been beaten in Serie A this season, slumped to a 2-1 home defeat to in-form Udinese on Sunday.

Barcelona’s big guns Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Xavi hit back in the second half to dent Milan’s hopes of the title, with defender John O’Shea getting his toe to a low corner and make it 2-0 in the 23rd with a defender Nestor Sensini nodding Vincenzo Borretono’s powerful free kick past Dida.

Milan’s Brazilian winger Buffon. In the 24th minute Cédric Kondé nodded across past Buffon to put the home side ahead.

On the stroke of halftime Leccce keeper Vukasin Poleksic put off two reflex saves to deny Juve striker Fabrizio Miccoli and Alessandro del Piero.

With half an hour left, Juve’s clearest chance looked even slimmer when defender Mark Iuliano was sent off for a second bookable offence.

MNA/Reuters

Real beat Mallorca to finish year as leaders

MADRID, 23 Dec — Real Madrid recovered from a shaky start to win 3-1 away to Real Mallorca on Sunday and secure the league leadership in Spain going into the New Year.

Fernando Correca took advantage of a dreadful mistake from Francisco Pavón in the Real defence to put Mallorca ahead early on but Raul headed the visitors back level in the first minute of injury-time.

Ronaldo struck 10 minutes after the break with an eye-catching solo goal and Luis Figo wrapped up the win from the penalty spot after the Brazilian had been brought down in the box on another run towards goal. Victory for Real gave them 39 points from 17 games and took them back two points ahead of Valencia, who had gone top overnight thanks to their 1-0 win over Sevilla on Saturday.

With the next round of league games scheduled for the weekend of January 3 and 4, Real will go into 2004 as Primera Liga leaders.

Deportivo Coruna stayed within striking distance of the top two with a 2-1 win at home to Espanyol that left them third on 33 points. Osasuna lost ground with a 1-0 defeat at home to Real Zaragoza but they at least remain fourth with 37 points, ahead of Villarreal and Atletico Madrid on goal difference.

Real Madrid had an exhausting extra-time victory over Leganes in the King’s Cup on Thursday and they looked to be feeling the effects as Mallorca took an early lead.

Pavón, looking to make a straightforward clearance on the edge of the box, somehow miscontrolled the ball and Michel Salgado, in an attempt to tidy up, managed only to poke the ball straight to Correca to tuck a shot past Iker Casillas.

Samuel Eto’o missed good chances to increase the Mallorca lead and Real punished them with their equalizer in first-half injury-time.

MNA/Reuters

Man Utd go top after 2-1 win at Spurs

LONDON, 23 Dec — Manchester United swept to the top of the English Premier League with a 2-1 away win over Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

United manager Alex Ferguson opted to includeRio Ferdinand two days after he was sent off to an eight-month ban for missing a drugs test, beginning in January, but the England defender had little to do in a game dominated by the champions, at least for the first half.

They went ahead in 16th minute when defenderNester Senesi nodded Vincenzo Borretono’s powerful free kick past Dida.

Manchester United’s strikeFilippo Inzaghi reacts after missing a chance against Udinese, during their Serie A soccer match at San Siro Stadium in Milan, on 21 December, 2003. Udinese won the match 2-1.—Reuters

AC Milan’s strikerFilippo Inzaghi reacts after missing a chance against Udinese, during their Serie A soccer match at San Siro Stadium in Milan, on 21 December, 2003. Udinese won the match 2-1.—Reuters

Nedved Voted European Footballer of the Year

ROMA, 23 Dec — Juventus midfielder Pavel Nedved has been named European Footballer of the Year, France Football magazine confirmed Monday.

Czech international Nedved was rewarded with the Golden Ball after a series of outstanding performances for Juventus as they retained the Italian league title and reached the Champions League final in May.

The 31-year-old was named ahead of Arsenal striker Thierry Henry and AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini in a poll of European soccer journalists from 52 countries published by France Football magazine.

“I did not even dream of winning such an award. I’m very happy to receive such an important, such an extraordinary honour,” Nedved said.

“I heard about the nominees and being among them. But I did not believe in my chances too much.

“Lots of players had good results like Paolo Maldini, (Real Madrid striker) Raul (Zinedine) Zidane. All of them deserved to win,” he added.

Nedved missed the Champions League final through suspension after being booked in the semi-final, when his spectacular performance was a major factor in the defeat of competition favorites Real Madrid.

Juventus, already Serie A winners for the second year running earlier in May, lost the Champions League final on penalties to AC Milan.

Nedved joined Juventus from Lazio in 2001, replacing French playmaker Zidane, named last week as FIFA’s player of the year, who left the Italian club to join Real Madrid.

“Hey Juve and he stepped into worked wonders,” said Zidane.

“I’m happy for him because he’s a good guy or so I was told at Juventus. The result speaks itself. The golden ball is rarely wrong,” the Frenchman added.


Nedved, who was also voted player of the year by the magazine World Soccer, is the second Czech to win the prestigious Golden Ball after Josef Masopust in 1962.

It is the eighth time a Juventus player has been crowned.

The Czech earned 190 points. France’s Henry was second with 128 points and Maldini third on 123 points.

Milan’s Ukrainian strikerAndrei Shevchenko was fourth on 67 points with Zidane on 64 points. “It was definitely my best year. I had lots of luck as well. Luck is part of a player’s career,” Nedved added.—Internet

Chilean soccer star Ivan Zamorano acknowledges fans after his farewell match at the National Stadium in Santiago, on 22 December, 2003. Zamorano, 36, bid farewell to fans as a player after a professional career that began when he was just 17-years-old.—INTERNET
Wednesday, December 24

View today:

7:00 am
1. Recitation of Parittas by Missionary Sayadaw U Ottamatha.
7:25 am
2. To be healthy exercise
7:40 am
3. Morning news
7:40 am
4. Nice and sweet song
7:50 am
5. [Missing information]
7:55 am
6. [Missing information]
8:05 am
7. [Missing information]
8:15 am
8. [Missing information]
8:30 am
9. International news
8:45 am
10. Learning English the easy and happy way for children and learners
4:00 pm

Wednesday, December 24

View today:

6:30 pm
1. "Song to Uphold National Spirit"
4:15 pm
2. "Love Boat"
4:30 pm
3. "Practice in Reading"
4:45 pm
4. "Musical Programme"
5:00 pm
5. [Missing information]
5:15 pm
6. "Songs for Uphold National Spirit"
5:30 pm
7. "Classical Song"
5:45 pm
8. [Missing information]
6:00 pm
9. "Waterfall of Myanmar"
6:10 pm
10. "Discovery"
15:40 Headline News
15:42 "Catches of Fish by cooperation of Fisherman & Dolphin"
15:45 National News
15:46 National News
15:49 National News
15:50 Myanmar Royal Regalia (I)
15:55 Brave Youth Showing His Strength & Ability
16:00 National News
16:05 "Unique Biodiversity of Indawgyi Lake (I)"
16:10 Song "Ngwe Haung Beach Resort"
16:15 National News
16:20 Biological Expedition to Hpon Kan Razi Region (II)
16:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights "Myanmar Panorama & Myanmar Sentiment"
16:30 National News
16:35 Local Marketable Products
16:40 Myanmar Cuisine "Stir Fried Prawn Curry"
16:46 National News
16:50 Hill Resort Town (Thandaw)
16:55 National Dance "Waratah Dance"
16:58 Inlay Wild Bird Sanctuary
17:00 National News
17:05 "Extravagant Evidence of Myanmar Culture (II)"
17:10 Song "Creating of a love-like song"
17:15 National News
17:20 All Lives under the Sky "Catch of Fish by cooperation of Fisherman & Dolphin"
17:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights "Come and See Myanmar"
18:00 National News
18:05 "Extravagant Evidence of Myanmar Culture (II)"
18:10 Song "Creating of a love-like song"
19:00 National News
19:05 "Extravagant Evidence of Myanmar Culture (II)"
19:10 Song "Creating of a love-like song"
19:15 National News
19:20 All Lives under the Sky "Catch of Fish by cooperation of Fisherman & Dolphin"
19:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights "Come and See Myanmar"
19:30 National News
19:35 "Extravagant Evidence of Myanmar Culture (II)"
20:25 Song "Creating of a love-like song"
20:45 National News
20:50 "Golden Plumb of Central Myanmar"
20:55 The "Haung Yang Nay" "Classical Male Dance"
21:00 National News
21:05 Kayin Traditional Vegetable Curry (Tarlabaw)
21:10 Myanmar Modern Song "Love Boat"
21:15 National News
21:20 "Extravagant Evidence of Myanmar Culture (II)"
21:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights "Come and See Myanmar"
22:00 National News
22:05 "Extravagant Evidence of Myanmar Culture (II)"
22:10 Song "Creating of a love-like song"
22:25 National News
22:30 All Lives under the Sky "Catch of Fish by cooperation of Fisherman & Dolphin"
23:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights "Come and See Myanmar"

WEATHER

Tuesday, December 23, 2003

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy to cloudy in the whole country.

Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Rakhine State, Mandalay, lower Sagain, Magway and Bago Divisions, (5°C-6°C) above normal in Kachin State, (5°C-6°C) below normal in Kayin, Mon States, upper Sagain and Tanintharyi Divisions and about normal in the remaining.

Maximum temperature on 22-12-2003 was 27.8°C (82°F). Minimum temperature on 23-12-2003 was 16.0°C (61°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 23-12-2003 was 83%. Total sunshine hours on 22-12-2003 was (04) hours approx.

Rainfall on 23-12-2003 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 11 mph from north at (11.50) hours MST on 22-12-2003.

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

The weather valid until evening of 24-12-2003: Weather will be partly cloudy in Kachin, Rakhine States, upper Sagain, Ayeyawady, Yangon and Tanintharyi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas.

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Generally fair in the whole country.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 24-12-2003: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 24-12-2003: Partly cloudy.

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**Prime Minister attends pile-driving for Hledan Centre**

YANGON, 23 Dec — The bore pile-driving ceremony for Hledan Centre, jointly-constructed by the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development of the Ministry of Construction and Asia World Co Ltd was held at the construction site at the junction of Pyay Road and Hledan Road in Kamayut Township, here, this morning, attended by City Planning Supervisory Committee Chairman Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Yangon mayor, deputy ministers, officials from the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads, the managing director of Asia World Co Ltd, officials and invited guests.

At the auspicious time, Prime Minister formally opened the ceremony. After the CPSC Chairman had sprinkled scented water on the bore pile, the ceremony came to a close. The Prime Minister performed rituals of silver and golden showers to mark the success of the ceremony.

At the briefing hall, Managing Director U Tun Myint Naing reported to the Prime Minister on data relating to the project including location and area of the centre, ground-testing, pile designing tasks, architectural design that can bear earthquake, structures of floors, sewerage system, arrangements for electricity and communication, construction tasks.

After giving necessary instructions, the General inspected the scale model of Hledan Centre. The centre on an area of 1.5 acres of land will be a 28-storey building. Two underground floors will have a car park which can accommodate 270 cars. Eight escalators will be installed for offices, shops, restaurants, coffee shops and health care centres and garden restaurant on the first five floors.

There will be apartments from the sixth floor to the 25th floor. The building will have special security system, garbage system, fire prevention system, sewerage system and 24-hr electricity system. Three passenger lifts and one freight lift will be installed there.

**Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition goes on**

YANGON, 23 Dec — The Fourth Myanmar Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition continued for the seventh day today at Tatmadaw Convention Centre on U Wisara Road.

On display at the exhibition were the booths of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Industry-1 and Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and 134 booths of private traditional medicine houses.

Today, being a public holiday, more visitors including those from other townships studied the exhibition. It will continue till 26 December from 9 am to 6 pm daily.

**Education Minister attends opening of multimedia classrooms of No 1 BEHS in Lewe**

YANGON, 23 Dec — Minister for Education U Than Aung together with officials concerned attended opening of multimedia classrooms of No 1 Basic Education High School (Myoma School) in Lewe on 21 December morning. Next, the minister, officials and guests viewed round classrooms of the school.

Afterwards, opening of the diamond jubilee commemorative hall of the school was held. Director-General of No 2 Basic Education Department Lt-Col Win Hein, the headmaster, the headmistress and old students formally opened the facility.

Next, old students unveiled the signboard of the facility whereas the minister unveiled the stone inscription of the facility.

In the afternoon, the minister attended the ceremony to hand over the new Shwe Pyi Soe school building worth K 27 million donated by U Soe Tint and Daw Yin Nu for No 3 Basic Education Primary School in Mingalar Ward, Pyinmana and unveiled the signboard of the new building. Director-General Lt-Col Win Hein, wellwisher and the Chairman of the School Board of Trustees U Pyi spoke words of thanks.

Next, the minister accepted K 500,000 donated by three wellwishers for stipends, followed by the respect-paying ceremony.

**Minister inspects development tasks in Shan State (East)**

YANGON, 23 Dec — Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt on 21 December morning inspected opium substitute rubber plantation along Pangshan-Mongpauk Road in Shan State (East). Afterwards, the minister went to the station hospital in Mongpauk and fulfilled the needs. When he arrived at Mongpauk Basic Education High School, he donated school uniforms and exercise books.

Later, the minister and party inspected border areas development office, agricultural office and communication office in Mongpauk and met with staff members of the ministry. During his tour, the minister also inspected the opium substitute plantation in Mongpauk and Mongyan. He also discussed matters on regional development and opium substitute cultivation and breeding.

When he arrived at domestic science vocational training school and rural areas and national races development school in Kengtung, the minister attended to the needs of the schools.

MNA