Emergence of more academics in respective fields amounts to reinforcing new strength to national development drive

**Doctorate degree holders honoured**

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt delivering a speech at the ceremony to honour academics who got doctorate degrees from the universities under Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Science and Technology. — Photos

**Four political objectives**
- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
- National reconsolidation
- Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

**Four economic objectives**
- Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
- Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
- Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
- The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

**Four social objectives**
- Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
- Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
- Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
- Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Yangon, 8 Jan — The academics who got the doctorate degrees from the universities under the Education Ministry, Health Ministry and Science and Technology Ministry were honoured at the Diamond Jubilee Hall here this morning, with an address delivered by Chairman of the Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present were Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, the Auditor-General, the chairman of the State Peace and Security Commission, the chairman of the President's Office, director-general, chairmen of the respective organisations, rectors, professors, paper publisher professors, faculties, doctors, doctors, holders and guests.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said, at present, self-reliant efforts are being made for the Union of Myanmar to become a modern and developed nation. In doing so, every area of science and technology, and continuous emergence of highly qualified human resources play a key role to reach that end.

Continuous emergence of highly qualified human resources in other words the doctorate degree holders, who have the ability to practically develop the advanced sciences and technologies, is the education sector’s practical efforts to implement the national task — to develop the nation. Moreover, at a time when self-reliant efforts are being made with full confidence in the national forces, emergence of more academics in the respective fields of development amounts to reinforcing new strength to the national development drive.

In this world that is changing and advancing at a high speed, with knowledge as the base, not only the sciences and technologies are advancing with a wide range of subjects, but also the developments in the respective fields of knowledge are benefiting from the areas of development based on common interest, without taking a recess. Instead of concentrating on a single field of knowledge as in the past, the Government is making arrangements in advance for harmonious development of rapidly advancing multi sectors of science and technologies.

The two objectives — to create human resources capable of constructing a peaceful and modern state, and to create an academic environment that is endowed with dynamic knowledge and utilizing the technology that will emerge with the times — are included in the 12 visions of the 30-year long-term education promotion plan.

According to the visions, new universities and colleges are being built in the nation, and the number of the institutions of higher learning in the whole country has reached 154 at present. Institutions of higher learning have been emerging in the fields of arts and science, economics, education, forestry, farming, agriculture, culture and cooperatives. The health sector now has institutions of higher learning in the various fields including medical, science, pharmacy, paramedical sciences, primary health and dental science. Institutions of higher learning in the technological sector, computer, aerospace-engineering and maritime are being built around the nation. Human resources development centres have been opened at the universities and colleges, and the centres have been utilised.

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To totally wipe out scourge of narcotic drugs

The State Peace and Development Council has been fighting against the danger of narcotic drugs as a national duty by laying down the 15-year plan and implementing it with added momentum. According to this plan and the New Destiny Project, altogether 8,221 baskets of seeds of high yield paddy, maize, wheat and gram, 395,706.6 kilos of edible oil, 13,656 viss of kitchen crops, 1,616.6 tons of fertilizer, 765.5 litres of pesticide and 80 kilos of pesticide powder were distributed up to November, 2003. Moreover, 2,175.5 acres of model cultivation plots and 76.5 acres of pilot cultivation were undertaken and 6,017 acres of land were reclaimed for the cultivation of poppy substitute crops.

In the livestock breeding sector, vaccines and treatment were given to animals in the villages in the project area and pedigree pigs were distributed to Mongpyin and Lweyon region, Monghaat and Mongtung townships in Shan State (East), Kunhein and Homein region, Pangsan of Wa region, Nantun, Mongnay, Pangsaung and Dimar region in Shan State (South), spending K 12.5 million disbursed out of the funds of the New Destiny Project. Not only that, under the Kokang Region Livestock Breeding Project, milch cows, sheep and poultry were distributed with the funds of the respective ministries and 0.11 million fingerlings distributed by the Fisheries Department in the year 2003.

Under the SHAPE project cosponsored by the Ministry of Education and the UNICEF, teachers from 40 basic education high schools were given lecture and training on prevention of HIV/AIDS and measures were taken to establish Kawthoung District as a drug-free zone. Moreover, the instructor course on drug education was also opened in Mandalay.

A total of 760 tons of rice were distributed to former poppy growers of Kokang Special Region-1 in Shan State (North) in October and November in 2003.

The measure was jointly undertaken by the World Food Programme and non-governmental organizations, namely, World Vision Care and ADRA. This may be seen that the international organizations have extended assistance to our country in recognition of our determined drug elimination drive.

We believe that, as the Union of Myanmar is fighting the danger of narcotic drugs with the cooperation of international organizations and world nations with added momentum, the evil legacy of imperialists will be wiped out from our soil once and for all soon.

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.

Efficient use of electricity

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

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

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.
Iraq mortar attack wounds 35 US soldiers

BAGHDAD, 8 Jan—Anti-American insurgents fired mortar rounds at a US military camp Wednesday night, wounding 35 US soldiers, the US command said.

Six mortar rounds exploded about 6:45 p.m. at Logistical Base Seitz west of Baghdad, a US military spokesman said in a statement. The camp is located in the so-called Sunni Muslim triangle that is a stronghold of resistance to the US occupation of Iraq.

“The wounded soldiers were given first aid and have been evacuated from the site for further medical treatment,” the statement said. The Pentagon added that the soldiers were from the Army’s 541st Maintenance Battalion, based in Fort Riley, Kan, and part of the 3rd Corps Support Command. The mortars hit “a living area where they have their sleeping quarters,” the spokesman said.

A Pentagon spokesman said that some of those wounded returned to duty shortly after the attack, while others were hospitalized. The spokesman, Lt Col James Cassella, said he did not know how many were seriously or lightly wounded. Earlier Wednesday, US troops said they destroyed a home in Fallujah, the center of the anti-American insurgency west of Baghdad, where enraged neighbors said a married couple was killed and their five children were orphaned.

The neighbors insisted the couple was innocent in an attack on the troops that led them to shell the house.

“This is democracy? These corpses?” Raad Majed asked at the hospital, gesturing at the remains of the couple, on gurneys covered with bloody sheets. “It’s a crime against humanity.”

Tuesday Airborne Division said its paratroopers acted after receiving “two rounds of indirect fire” around 9 p.m. Tuesday.

“Paratroopers from our Task Force engaged the point of origin with a grenade launcher and small arms, causing two personnel to flee into a nearby building, which was also engaged and destroyed,” division spokesman Capt. Tammy Galloway said in a statement.

“The building was searched and no weapons or personnel were found. Upon questioning, civilians in the area reported two dead personnel were taken to a nearby hospital,” the statement said. Civilian deaths in the counterinsurgency campaign have enraged many Iraqis at a time when the U.S.-led coalition is trying to win popular support.

On Wednesday, the coalition announced it was freeing 506 of 12,800 prisoners in a goodwill gesture also aimed at encouraging more Iraqis to come forward with intelligence against anti-American guerrillas.—Internet

US service members killed since beginning of military operations in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 8 Jan—As of Wednesday, 7 Jan, 484 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, according to the Defense Department. Of those, 332 died as a result of hostile action and 152 died of non-hostile causes, the department said.

The British military has reported 55 deaths: Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Bulgaria, five; Thailand, two; Denmark, Ukraine and Poland have reported each one. Since May 1, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 346 US soldiers have died—217 as a result of hostile action and 129 of non-hostile causes, according to the Defence Department’s figures. Since the start of military operations, 2,431 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department. Non-hostile injured numbered 383.—Internet

US accused of killing Iraqi couple

FULAIJAH, 8 Jan— US troops shelled a house after coming under fire in this hotbed of the anti-American resistance, killing an Iraqi couple, witnesses said Wednesday.

No immediate comment was made by the US military, despite telephone calls and e-mail messages to troops based in the restive town of Fallujah, 30 miles west of Baghdad.

Footage from Associated Press Televi- sion News showed a wall of collapsed concrete bricks and two walls splattered with blood where neighbors said Ahamed Hassar Farhoud, 37, and his wife Suham Omar, 28, were sitting when the house was hit by a shell. They said the couple’s five children were in bed in an adjoining room and survived unharmed.

“Is this democracy? These corpses?” angry neighbor Raad Majed asked at the hospital, gesturing to the couple’s remains on gurneys covered with bloody sheets. “It’s a crime against humanity.”

Other neighbors, who said they were too scared of retaliation to give their names, said they appeared someone fired at the soldiers in a crime against humanity. The joint operation was under investigation, based in Fort Riley, Kan, and part of the 3rd Corps Support Command.

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US Navy charges sailors with theft in Gulf search

MANAMA, 8 Jan — The US Navy said Wednesday it had charged two US sailors with stealing personal items from the crew of a Singapore-flagged vessel during a search in the Gulf.

A US Naval Forces Central Command statement said the sailors were investigated after the vessel’s master reported that three digital cameras, a wristwatch and more than 200-US-dollar bills were missing after the boarding by the US Navy on Tuesday.

“The boarding team members were questioned and searched upon their return... The missing items were found in the possession of two of the boarding team members,” it said.

The two could be dismissed from the Navy if found guilty, the statement added. US-led navies intercept ships in the Gulf region suspected of carrying illegal oil and arms in and out of Iraq.—MNA/Reuters

Scots soldier dies in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 8 Jan—A Scots soldier died yesterday after what the Ministry of Defence called a “tragic incident” on a training range near Basra.

The identity of the serviceman was being withheld until relatives have been informed.

An MoD spokesman said: “We regret to confirm that a British serviceman died following a tragic incident on a training range near Basra. The incident is under investigation.

“The death brings the number of British soldiers killed in Iraq since the start of hostilities to 55. It is the first since two training range near Basra. The incident is under investigation.

British soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the Light Infantry Division patrol in the outskirts of Iraq’s second-largest city of Basra, 500 kms south of the capital Baghdad recently.—Internet

Direct air route links Guangzhou, Paris

GUANGZHOU, 8 Jan— Air France became the first European airline to fly into the south China city of Guangzhou on Tuesday, when it launched a link to Paris.

Travellers from Guangzhou can take the AF107 flights every Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Monday at 11:30 Beijing Time and arrive in Paris at 17:25 local time. The AF107 return flights take off on every Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Monday at 11:30 Beijing Time. The Airbus A340 used in the service can carry 252 passengers.

Air France has opened two air routes from Paris to China, landing at the capital of Beijing and the economic centre of Shanghai. MNA/Xinhua
Iraq most dangerous for journalists in 2003

PARIS, 8 Jan—Reporters without Borders (RSF), the French-based press freedom watchdog, said Tuesday that a record 42 journalists died on assignment in 2003, and labeled the Middle East the worst region in terms of freedom of press.

The report, released in Paris, counted 16 media professionals killed in the Middle East, 14 in Iraq, and two at the hands of the IDF in the Palestinian territories.

“2003’s total is the highest toll since 1995 and up from 25 in 2002. “A seat of international tension and terrorist violence, the Middle East is the worst case region for press freedom this year,” said an RSF spokesperson.

The report cited violations of press freedom in the Middle East, for instance in Yemen, Syria, and the Palestinian Authority, where “the capture of Saddam Hussein was only very cautiously and partially reported by the government agencies.”

“The Arabic language press continues to grow under the weight of repress- sive and sertocratic regimes (Saudi Ara- bia, Syria) or sham democracies (Jor- dan, Yemen, the Palestinian Author- ity), while Lebanon, for so long a haven of media freedom, is displaying an ever more worrying contempt for the rule of law. In the Maghreb and Iran, express- ing an opinion or publishing a cartoon can lead to prison.”

Worldwide, arrests of journalists were up to 766, from 489 in 2001. At least 50 were detained in Iran.

Iraq was way ahead of the next high- est destinations for press killings in the list, which are Colombia (4) and India (3). The 14 journalists and other media professionals killed covering the Iraq war and its aftermath represent the largest number killed in a single country since 24 journalists were killed in Al- geria in 1995 at the height of civil strife between the government and Is- lamic militants, according to statistics of the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPI).

RSB claims that the US can be blamed for the deaths of at least five of these journalists but “in no case did they hold any investigation worthy of the name.”

Their report also notes that on the third day of the conflict, two journal- ists working for the British ITN televisi- on, French cameraman Frederic Nerac, and Lebanese interpreter Hussein-Ohman, all mysteriously dis- appeared.—Internet

Jordan’s transport sector hit in wake of Iraq war

AMMAN (Jordan), 8 Jan—Jordan’s transport sector is suffering as truck drivers avoid entering Iraq following armed attacks on the road linking the Red Sea to Baghdad, official sources said Tuesday.

“Before the war hundreds of Jordanian trucks travelled the road every day,” said Ala’a Batayneh, director general of Jordan’s Transport Ministry. “Now we see between 50 and 30 a day.”

Jordanian trucking companies say since the war in Iraq business has plum- meted. By comparison, it thrived during the war and its aftermath represent the large- est destinations for press killings in the list, which are Colombia (4) and India (3). The 14 journalists and other media professionals killed covering the Iraq war and its aftermath represent the largest number killed in a single country since 24 journalists were killed in Al- geria in 1995 at the height of civil strife between the government and Is- lamic militants, according to statistics of the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPI).

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China boost rural book markets

BEIJING, 8 Jan—The Chinese Government has moved to boost the book markets in the countryside through a series of new policies and measures, in order to meet the growing needs of farmers for cultural progress, an offi- cial said here Tuesday.

Lin Binjie, deputy director of the State Administra- tion of Press and Publications, said at a workshop the number of books specially published for rural readers is too small, while farmers have to buy books they do not need due to government interference in some areas.

Moreover, the book dis- tribution network has kept shrinking in rural areas and is being hampered by various factors, he added.

The administration will draw up favourable policies for publishing books for farm- ers and rebuilding the distribu- tion network. He calls for joint efforts by governments at all levels and people of different walks of life to reach the goal. Governments at all levels will continue to help poverty-stricken areas with financial assistance, he noted.

China protecting harbour seals online

PEKING, 8 Jan—China has opened a web site to spread knowledge on harbour seals and call on general public to protect the endangered species migrating to winter water off Mudao islands, the gate to Bohai Bay in Changdao County in east China.

The web site at www.csdal.net was launched by the environmental protection bureau of the island county in east China Shandong Province and the local harbour seal protection office to inform netizens of the animal’s life cycle, diet, habitat and distribu- tion, as well as China’s protec- tion efforts.

Netizens are also encour- aged to hold online talks on the species and related issues pertaining to wildlife and envi- ronment protection.

Najib Tun Razak appointed as Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister

KUALA LUMPUR, 8 Jan—Malaysian Defence Minister Najib Tun Razak is appointed as Deputy Prime Minister, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced on Wednesday.

“I handed over the appointment letter to Najib yesterday and went with him to the Istana Negara (State Palace) this morning for an audience with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong (Paramount Ruler),” Abdullah told the packed media conference in Putrajaya after the Cabinet meeting.

The announcement ended months of speculation after Abdullah became Prime

Megawati to send trade team to Zimbabwe

JAKARTA, 8 Jan—Indone- sian President Megawati Soekarnoputri will send a team to Zimbabwe as an ef- fort to enhance economic ties since the trade volume be- tween the two countries reaches only an average of 18 million US dollars annu- ally, a government minister said Wednesday.

“President Megawati will send a team to enhance bilat- eral ties,” Minister of For- eign Affairs Hassan Wirayuda was quoted by state news agency Antara as saying.

He made the remarks shortly after accompanying Megawati in a meeting with visiting Zimbabwean Presi- dent Robert Mugabe at the State Palace here.

Hassan said Megawati also invited Mugabe to at- tend the 50th commemora- tion of the Asia-Africa Con- ference in 2005.

Hassan said Megawati has decided to open Zimbabwe’s embassy in Jakarta late this year.—MNA/Xinhua

Policeman killed in northern Iraq

BAGHDAD, 8 Jan—Iraqi police were ambushed on the road between the northern oil refinery of Baiji and the town of Hawijah, 90 kilometres (50 miles) northeast of Kirkuk yesterday.

“Unknown gunmen sprayed automatic weapon fire at a police checkpoint... killing a policeman and one civilian,” said a police officer Ahmed Hassan Ali. The civilian’s car was stopped at the checkpoint when the gunfire erupted at 7:10 am [0410 GMT], the officer said. The attackers immediately fled...

Iraqi security forces have established checkpoints on the highways to search for suspect individuals.—Internet

Chinese Civil Defence Corps soldiers stand guard at a checkpoint next to an Iraqi flag in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, some 400 km northwest of Baghdad, on January 7, 2004.—Associated Press
IRAQ UNDER US OCCUPATION

An Iraqi passes on his bicycle between two British soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the Light Infantry Division as they patrol the outskirts of Iraq’s second-largest city of Basra, 550kms south of the capital Baghdad, on 7 Jan, 2004. —INTERNET

A US Army soldier of the task force Iron Horse walks on a foggy morning in Tikrit, Iraq, on 7 Jan, 2004. Sniper attacks and driveby shootings are the new hit-and-run tactics confronting the US occupiers of Saddam Hussein’s birthplace, punctuating an eerie calm that has settled on this tense town since the former Iraqi’s President’s capture. —INTERNET

A US Army soldier of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division looks at Iraqi people, during a foot patrol in Tikrit, Iraq, in this Saturday, 3 Jan, 2004 file photo. —INTERNET

A British soldier from 1st Battalion of the Light Infantry Division takes position inside a military vehicle during a patrol in the outskirts of Iraq’s second-largest city of Basra recently. —INTERNET

A US Army soldier sits inside a Humvee as he talks with Delshat Peerot Aziz, owner of the Iraqi company contracted to re-inforce about 100 of the vehicles with 8mm-thick steel to protect them against roadside bombs and other attacks by Iraqi guerillas, in Tikrit, Iraq, on 5 Jan, 2004. —INTERNET

A British soldier from 1st Battalion of the Light Infantry Division takes position inside a military vehicle during a patrol in the outskirts of Iraq’s second-largest city of Basra recently. —INTERNET

Neighbours of Ahmed Hassan and his wife Suham Omar check their house in Fallujah, on 7 Jan, 2004 after US troops shelled the house after coming under fire in this hotbed of the anti-American resistance, killing an Iraqi couple, witnesses said Wednesday. The witnesses said the couple’s five children were in bed in an adjoining room and survived unhurt. —INTERNET.
**Loud blasts heard in Baghdad**

**Baghdad, 8 Jan—** Two loud blasts within seconds of each other shook Baghdad on Tuesday, rattling windows across the centre of the city.

There was no immediate word on what might have caused the blasts. Tuesday was the anniversary of the founding of the Iraqi Army and police have been on high alert for attacks by guerrillas opposed to the US occupation. Police have said guerrillas usually plan major attacks on significant dates.

In Baghdad on Monday, a series of loud booms shook the city shortly before sunset. A US military spokeswoman said the blasts were caused by controlled US detonations and not by guerrillas.

**Ex-Iraqi soldiers protest in Basra, four injured**

**Basra (Iraq), 8 Jan—** Iraqi police opened fire on soldiers of the former Iraqi Army in the southern city of Basra on Tuesday as they staged a protest demanding payment of salaries, witnesses said.

At least four people were injured, they said. Hundreds of former soldiers protested in front of three banks in Basra after being told their salaries had not been received. They said the last time they were paid was in September, a 150-US dollars one-off payment for three months’ wages.

“Recent days have been very hard for many of these former soldiers, who are the backbone of the Iraqi forces,” said a US military official.

A spokesman for British forces in Iraq said he was aware of a demonstration in Basra but had not so far received any reports of shots being fired. Basra is part of a southern region of Iraq controlled by British forces, which supported US troops in their invasion of Iraq last March.

Iraq’s US Governor Paul Bremer abolished the 400,000-strong Iraqi Army in May and the United States is recruiting and training an Army it envisions as a force of about 40,000, along with larger numbers of police and border guards.

**UNSG plans on US participation at Iraq meeting**

**United Nations, 8 Jan—** Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he expected the United States to participate “at a senior level” in a forthcoming UN meeting on Iraq, despite American reluctance to cede any control.

Annan has scheduled a January 19 session in New York with leaders of the Iraqi Governing Council, headed by Adnan Pachachi, a former foreign minister, to discuss UN involvement in Iraq over the next six months.

He has also invited the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority, but the Bush Administration has been noncommittal about the meeting, which the Iraqis want before the occupation ends in July and a provisional government takes over.

“I am looking forward to a good and constructive meeting on the 19th and I expect all the parties to attend,” Annan told reporters. “I expect the US to participate. I expect the meeting to be at a senior level.”

He said he hoped for an American delegation from Baghdad and believed Sir Jeremy Greenstock, the senior British envoy in Iraq, would come to the one-day session.

Diplomats said the United States had no choice but to attend and the question now was who would come and at what level.

US officials have said that Washington’s representation would depend on the agenda. But Annan said “all this will be resolved before they get here.”

Annan first proposed the meeting last month in a phone call to President George W. Bush, who was positive but noncommittal, UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

But the decision then appeared to be caught in conflicting strategies in Washington, with some officials, particularly in the Pentagon, worried about another clash on Iraq with the Security Council and any ceding of control before the occupation ends in June, the diplomats said.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said, “US representatives from Washington and the coalition have been invited to the meeting.

“We are currently considering appropriate ways to support this meeting and are looking at the issue of our representation.”

At the same time the United States has repeatedly said it wanted UN help in the political transition.

**Another 17 Bulgarian soldiers refuse peacekeeping mission to Iraq**

**Sofia, 8 Jan—** Another 17 Bulgarian soldiers have refused to go to Iraq on a peacekeeping mission, bringing the total number of soldiers refusing to join the mission to 47, Bulgarian Defence Minister Nikolai Svinarov said Tuesday.

The minister made the announcement after inspecting Kazanluk peacekeeping camp, the Bulgarian Telegraphic Agency said. About 500 Bulgarian soldiers stationed there are scheduled to rotate the first batch of peacekeepers in mid-January.

A senior officer accompanying Svinarov said the 47 soldiers’ refusals would not affect Bulgaria’s peacekeeping mission in Iraq as a whole, but might create some difficulties.

The minister also said the military was taking measures to improve the weapons and equipment, and strengthen the security of Bulgarian soldiers in Iraq.

**NASA shows off Spirit’s ‘post card’ from Mars**

**Pasadena (California), 8 Jan—** NASA scientists on Tuesday showed off their first colour “post card” of Mars taken by the robot explorer Spirit, a high-definition portrait revealing the rocky, wind-swept surface of the red planet in greater detail than ever seen before.

The photograph, actually a mosaic of a dozen three-colour frames shot by Spirit’s twin panoramic cameras, brought into sharp focus such vivid details as the shape and texture of rocks, the soil trails left by dust devils, nearby hills, and a tantalizing but distant mesa.

One of the most intriguing features noticed by scientists was a darkened patch of the martian surface at the edge of the lander, where the soil had been scraped by Spirit’s air bags, leaving a crinkled pattern with a mud-like cohesive appearance.

“It looks like mud but it can’t be mud,” said Steven Squyres, the principal investigator for the team at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory. “It’s very cohesive. It holds together well.”

The picture also revealed that the surface of the rocks surrounding Spirit in its landing site at Gusev Crater appeared to have been worn clean by the sand-blasting effects of high winds. A close-up of one small rock showed it to be pitted with tiny craters of its own.

Jim Bell, the team’s lead-camera specialist, said the “post card” image was 16 times higher resolution than the earlier black-and-white panoramic photos taken by Spirit’s navigation cameras and three to four times sharper than the best pictures ever shot on Mars before, those taken by the Mars Pathfinder mission in 1997.

Still, scientists said the best is yet to come. Tuesday’s 12-million-pixel photo, though higher definition than earlier pictures, represents about one-eighth of the entire 360-degree panorama that the twin pan cams are capable of shooting.

In a matter of days, the JPL teams expect to acquire a full 360-degree shot in three-dimensional, four-colour, splendor, Bell said. This is just the tip of the iceberg, Squyres added.

Earlier on Tuesday, the mission managers at JPL received a telephone call from US President George W. Bush, who congratulated the team on their accomplishments.

**British soldier dies in training incident in Iraq**

**London, 8 Jan—** A British soldier died on Wednesday in an incident at a training range in Iraq.

Britain’s Ministry of Defence said, giving no further details.

“We regret to confirm that a British serviceman died following a tragic incident on a training range near Basra on January 7,” a spokesman said. “His family are being informed and no further details will be published until this is complete.”

The spokesman said the incident was under investigation.

At the height of last year’s war in Iraq Britain deployed some 45,000 troops in the Gulf, its largest deployment since the Korean War 50 years ago. It currently has about 9,500 troops in the Gulf.
To harmoniously drive out the danger of narcotic drugs

Maung Waing

Since days of yore, Myanmar has been a lovely place to live in, whether the protecting manhood has been flourishing, as it has the human resources and natural resources, fine traditions and amity, and its own language, customs and religious teachings. Myanmar society has been enjoying the pleasantness and prosperity, as the over 100 national races in the country born of the single stock, and binding one another with amity and attachment, are living together in unity and happiness, having the high moral vision. But the narcotic drugs are the dread enemies of the pleasant and prospering society. As the menace of the narcotic drugs is threatening the entire mankind of the world, it is the duty of all the peoples around the world to unitedly eradicate the narcotic and solve the deadly problem. Also an effective weapon of the colonialists, the narcotic drugs had been the goods the greedy businessmen, and the Dutch and Roman traders were distributing through India starting from the 16th Century. After the First Anglo-Myanmar War in 1824, the colonialists occupied Rakhine and Tanintharyi regions and opened licensed opium dens in both regions. The occupiers taught the locals the habit of opium smoking, and distributed opium free to the people and issued license to Chinese and Bengali people to run opium dens. The colonialists applied various means to raise opium cultivation and opium consumption in Myanmar to weaken the Myanmars, who had strong patriotism and preserved their own language and the fine traditions, and to prolong their occupation of the country. Since the regaining of independence, the successive Myanmar governments have been striving to root out the narcotic drugs as a national task of the people. The Myanmar kings took measures against the drug abuse in ancient times, King Bodaw Phaya (King Badon) in 1782-1829 issued a order, strictly prohibiting the sale of narcotic drugs and related substances. During the Second Anglo-Myanmar War in 1852, King Bagun prohibited gambling and use of intoxicating agents including alcohol and drugs among his troops. He also ordered his soldiers to eliminate the practice of gambling and abuse of intoxicating agents. King Thibaw (1875-1885) issued the five-point plan prohibiting the use of any kind of narcotic agent. Since the opium dens had started to exist in the nation, the Myanmar people who knew the danger of the drugs in advance, protested the colonial government, that made the running of the dens possible in the nation, through various means. The people and the members of the Sangha of Rakhine and Tanintharyi regions that were the earliest to face the problem of opium, made requests to the colonial government to close the drug shops and dens. When newspapers came into being in Myanmar, journalists and nationalist politicians continued to publish news reports and articles urging the colonialist government to stop the opium business in the country. In December 1885, Myanmar Christian Missionary made a request to the governor to stop or limit the import of opium to Upper Myanmar. In 1886, the opium prohibition association in Britain requested the Secretary of Indian Affairs to end the opium trade and consumption in Myanmar. In compliance with the request, the colonialists issued an order, prohibiting the operation of opium dens in Myanmar except in Yangon, Stittway, Mawlamyine, Pathein and Myeik, with effect from 1 April 1887. The British government enacted the Opium Act in 1909, the Excise Law in 1917, and the Dangerous Drugs Act in 1931. In 1924, the Second Opium Conference was held under the sanction of the League of Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, and the agreement on the harmful drugs was signed in February 1925. The colonialist government in Myanmar enacted a law in February 1931 to be in conformity with the agreement to mete out more severe punishment to the offenders. The Young Men's Buddhist Association opened a rehabilitation centre in Kyaukphyu in 1920. At a meeting of the Social Welfare Ministry held on 11 February 1948, after regaining of the national independence, a decision was made to root out the abuse of opium consumption as the practice for 12 years. A ward centre was opened at the Psychiatric Hospital in Yangon to treat drug addicts. In 1951, the then government formed an opium investigation body to end opium abuse, cultivate opium substitute crops, to run rehabilitation centres for drug addicts, and for the enforcement of the Burma Opium Act in Shan State. Myanmar made all-out efforts to end the opium trade and consumption in 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs on 30 March 1961. The Revolutionary Council Government formed the opium investigation committee on 15 August 1962 and made arrangements to treat the drug addicts and amend the outdated Opium Act. The Revolutionary Council Government enacted the 1974 Narcotic and Dangerous Drugs Law on 20 February 1974. At the Fourth Meeting of the First Pyithu Hluttaw, that was held on 28 October 1975, it was decided to launch the drug elimination drive, with the national outlook, as a national movement. On 3 February 1976, the Central Committee to Control Drugs, and the state/division, township and central working bodies were formed to curb the danger of the drugs. The then Myanmar government amended the laws and by-laws to be in conformity with the UN agreement on the joint hands with the international community to root out the drugs. At the same time, the Tatmadaw launched military operations in the border areas frequented by the insurgents to root out poppy cultivation and opium production. The Tatmadaw launched Operation Mo Hein from Phase I to Phase XII, Operation Ngay Pan from Phase I to Phase VIII, Operation Taungyanshin from Phase I to Phase IV, and Operation Taung Hteikpan from 11 December 1977 to 1978 to root out the narcotic drugs. The State Peace and Development Council Government formed the Central Committee for Drug Control, and has been implementing the 15-year narcotic eliminations plan from 1999-2000 to 2014-2015. Thanks to the endeavours of the Government, armed groups have returned to the legal fold, and they are now taking part in developing their own regions. The groups have returned to the legal fold in response to the sincere goodwill and correct deeds of the Government. So, the opportunities to develop the nation in all aspects and fulfill the basic requirements of the people of the border areas have emerged. Because of the peace and stability that is prevailing in the entire nation, the rule of law has reached the remote border areas.
Creating a constant learning society capable of developing knowledge. Masters’ degree courses, master of research degree courses and doctorate degree courses of the different branches of education are being conducted at the universities.

The Yangon University, the Mandalay University, the Yangon Institute of Economics and the Yangon Institute of Education are conducting doctorate degree courses in 31 different fields; the medical universities, seven PhD courses and 30 IT courses. 

Graduates, students and lecturers to present papers for PhD theses as those in Yangon City.

These achievements are the result of the Government’s efforts to recognize the achievements in which the entire national people should take pride. As the government, recognizing the achievements and perseverance of the doctorate degree holders, it is safe to assume that the number of intellectuals with doctorates will rise in the not too distant future.

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Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win attends…

...(from page 16)

...been rendering assistance to rice millers by sending technicians of government bodies to seminars of rice millers, conducting training courses for rice millers and holding exhibitions on rice and paddy industry, he said.

The minister said rice mills, machinery units and accessories of rice milling industry were on display at the fair. Small rice mills for urban and rural use were special items of the fair. Moreover, Myanmar Rice Millers Association displayed the development of Myanmar rice milling industry, he added.

As is known to all, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is also rendering technical and other assistance with the aims of enhancing the quality of Myanmar rice, he said. Industrial development plays an important role in building Myanmar into a peaceful, modern and developed nation. So does the fair in turning the agricultural country into an industrialized country.

The minister said he believed that the fair would be invaluable for rice millers and merchants, for they would have opportunity, at the fair, to learn where to buy high-quality rice mill and accessories produced as import substitute items by local manufacturers. Moreover, foreign rice mill and accessories manufacturers such as Satake Co of Japan, Nuxus Agricultural Resources Co and CimbriaFar East Co of Malaysia and Jing Yong Co of Korea would also take part in the fair together with local companies including Siena International, Watana Trading, ThaungWin Industry, Soe Electric, Han Sein Thant Engineering and Good Brothers Co.

During the fair, technicians from Myanmar, Japan and Malaysia would read 12 papers for three days. By participating in such a paper reading session on technologies and methods of rice and paddy industry, participants could exchange experience and knowledge. In reality, the fair was an international one, the minister said.

In conclusion, the minister said thanks to the efficiency of rice mills, Myanmar rice was at the top of the international market previously. The fair was an assistance to promote the rice milling industry being undertaken by private entrepreneurs in accord with the new rice and paddy marketing policy of the State. The minister expressed his belief that the development of rice milling industry, in accord with the motto of the fair “Development of rice milling industry in the interest of the nation”, would contribute towards the State by enabling it to export quality rice.

 Afterwards, the minister presented a commemorative gift of the fair to the Secretary-1.

Next, the minister presented commemorative gifts to four foreign entrepreneurs who take part in the fairs.

Later, honouring the fair, President U Win Myint of UMFCCI donated a K677,000-worth small rice mill with the capacity of ten bags of rice per hour, Chairman U Tun Win of MRMA a K500,000-worth small rice mill with the capacity of six bags of rice per hour, U Thaung Win of Thaung Win Industry a K1,200,000-worth rice and unpolished rice separator which won gold medal for quality in the Industrial Exhibition-2003 in Mandalay, U Nyun Win and U Hnin Bi of Exotic Wings Co a K500,000-worth small rice mill with the capacity of six bags of rice per hour. The minister accepted the donations and presented certifies of honour to the well wishers.

Afterwards, the Secretary-1 and party, diplomats and guests viewed round the fair. The Secretary-1 left the fair at 10 am.

A total of 36 companies from China, Japan, India, Korea, Malaysia and Thailand, and local companies have opened 150 booths at the fairs. Moreover, rice mill and accessories manufactured by industrial zones in Ayeyawady Division, Bago Division (East), Bago Division (West), Mandalay Division, Sagaing Division, Yangon Division and Mon State are also on display. The fair will be kept open to the public from 9 am to 5 pm daily till 11 January. Paper reading session on enhancement of the quality of Myanmar rice will be held from 8 am to noon on 9, 10 and 11 January. Interested persons can attend the fair reading sessions.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win attends the opening of Myanmar Rice Milling Industry Fair-2004. — MNA

Hydel power station projects inspected

YANGON, 8 Jan — Minister for Electric Power Maj-Gen Tin Htun, accompanied by officials, inspected the installation of machines, the power control room, the power substation, progress in construction of the tunnel, construction of the regulating dam and emergency spillway, and the bridge at Mone Creek Hydel Power Station Project being implemented in Magway Division on 3 January. The minister also met with employees at the project, giving instructions on tasks to be carried out and attending to the requirements.

On 4 January, the minister and party arrived at Yenangyaung industrial zone in Magway Division, where he met with officials and industrialists of the zone and gave instructions on assistance being rendered by the State to industrial growth. He also looked into automobiles, motorcycles and spare parts, which were produced at the zone and attended to the needs.

Next, the minister and party went to Taungdwingyi Main Power Substation that will distribute the electricity sent by Paunglaung Hydel Power Station. At the substation, the minister oversaw the tasks being carried out to upgrade the substation and the condition of electricity distribution and gave instructions.

On 5 January, the minister and party arrived at Paunglaung Hydel Power Station, where he inspected the installation of machines at the underground power station and gave instructions.

On 6 January, the minister and party proceeded to Yenangyaung hydel power station project, where he looked into earth work being carried out for construction of the power station, construction of the tunnel and regulating dam and gave instructions.

The minister and party also inspected Shwekyin hydel power station project and heard reports on tasks being carried out at the project and future tasks. After hearing the reports, the minister met with staff of the project and gave instructions. — MNA

YANGON, 8 Jan — A coordination meeting organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, took place at Yangon Division Vegetable Cultivation and Livestock Breeding Special Zone near Nyaungu MVP Station in Hmaubaw Township at noon today, with an address by Chairman of Agriculture Department.

Also present on the occasion were No 1 Military Region Commander Col Tun Kyi, Managing Director of MAS U Tun Than, Commander of Hmaubaw Station Lt-Col Tin Oo, officials, local authorities and national entrepreneurs and guests.

Managing Director U Tun Than reported on research projects, distribution of seeds and conducting courses on agricultural methods.

In response to the report, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe said that respective ministries and national entrepreneurs are engaged in the special zone. The Government has provided arrangements for dissemination of agricultural methods to national entrepreneurs. He called on the national entrepreneurs to carry out the tasks in accordance with the agricultural methods. The Government has provided basic infrastructures for their convenience. The national entrepreneurs are to make combined efforts in implementing the goal of the special zone, he noted.

Next, the responsible officials replied to the queries of the entrepreneurs.

The commander and party viewed the plantations around the special zone and left necessary instructions. They proceeded to Wantein Village, Hmaubaw Township, and inspected the summer paddy fields. Officials reported on supply of water from Ngamoeik Canal (left) to the plantations through Wantein Sliuce Gate, and dissemination of agricultural methods to the farmers.

The commander called for extended cultivation of crops, growing of summer paddy at all the fields that can be irrigated, full scale utilization of beans and pulses, edible oil crops, vegetables and cash crops, and fulfilling the requirements of the farmers. — MNA
Drug traffickers sentenced

YANGON, 8 Jan — A combined team comprising members of the local intelligence unit and Tachileik Special Anti-drug Squad, acting on information, searched the house of Myat Tun in Lwaisaton Village in Tachileik Township on 5 November 2003 and seized 270 stimulant tablets, which he said he had bought from Joye.

Action was taken against Myat Tun, son of U Nyunt Maung and Joye, son of U Cho of Lwaisaton Village in Tachileik Township under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law by Tachileik Police Station.

Tachileik District Court handed down 5 years' imprisonment and 13 years' imprisonment to serve separately on Myat Tun under Section 15 and Section 19 (A) of the law and 13 years' imprisonment on Joye under Section 19 (A) of the law on 13 March 2003.

Similarly, a combined team comprising members of the local intelligence unit, Yangon Special Anti-drug Squad and Mandalay Police Station, acting on information, searched the house of Nay Myo Aung and Ma Myint Nyo in Market Ward, Mandalay Township, on 3 June 2003 and seized 97,975 grams of marijuaana. Action was taken against Nay Myo Aung, son of U Hla Thein, and Ma Myint Nyo (a) Ma Nyo, daughter of U Kyi Soe of the above-mentioned ward under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law by Mandalay Police Station.

Yangon North District Court handed down 20 years' imprisonment on Nay Myo Aung under Section 15 of the law on 15 May 2003 and his imprisonment on Ma Myint Nyo (a) Ma Nyo under Section 15 of the law on 5 November 2003.

Minister inspects forest plantations

YANGON, 8 Jan — Min- ister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung inspected Paleik yard for storing logs in Mandalay Division on 5 January morning.

Next, the minister inspected forest plantations in Sagaing. Director-General of the Arid Zones Greening Department U Tun Tun and officials conducted the min- ister round the sites. In the afternoon, the minister looked into District Forest Department Office in Kyanso. On 6 January, the minister inspected No 103 Saw Mill in Amarapura, Mandalay Division timber extraction yard, and Hi Tech finished wood furniture fac- tory in Maha Aungmye Township.

Asian Tennis C'ship 2004

(Y Zone-2) 12-20 January

YANGON, 8 Jan — The 14th Asian Tennis Championships 2004 (Zone-2) or- ganized by the International Tennis Federation and Myanmar Tennis Federation will be held at Theinbyu Tennis Court here from 12 through 20 January.

It comprises men’s singles and doubles and women’s sin- gles and doubles events. Those who stand first to fourth in each event will be awarded and selected into the ITF Team. The out- standing ones can directly join the Asian Champion- ship Zone (1) to be held in Hong Kong.

The tournament will be sponsored by Max Myanmar Co Ltd, Htoo Trading Co Ltd, Ayer Shwe Wa Sh Co Ltd, S&G Shwe Gon Dine Specialist Centre, Traders Hotel, Canon, Lei Hein (Alpine), Myanmar Distribution Group Co Ltd (Gold Roast Coffeeexx) Wilson and Adidas.

Independence Day Exhibition continues

YANGON, 8 Jan — The 56th Anniversary Independence Day Commemorative Exhibition continued for the sixth day at the Tatmadaw Convention Centre on U Wisara Road from 9 am to 5 pm today.

Deputy Minister for Cul- ture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung visited the exhibition today. At the booth of the Central Committee for Drugs Abuse Control, ex- crements from the address on eradication of narcotic drugs by Senior General Than Shwe and paintings and photos depicting the threat posed to mankind by narcotic drugs, efforts for eradication of narcotic drugs, endeavours for es- tablishing drug-free zones in Tachileik, Mawady, Kanbawzathiri, development of Wa region, Yongkha Model Village Project, international rela- tions for elimination of drug, incineration of opium seed, and two stra- tegies and three tactics for elimination of narcotic drugs and map of town- ships under the New De- serty Project. were on dis- play.

Students took part in computer quiz. News and Periodicals Enterprise of the Ministry of Information has opened NPE Book Shop along with the Sarpay Beikman Book Shop of Printing and Publishing Enterprise near the exhibition hall.

Monks, students and the public totalling 5,982 people visited the exhibition today. It will be kept open from 9 am to 5 pm daily till 11 January. Ad- mission is free.

China to hold first int'l online game expo

BEIJING, 8 Jan — The China Digital Entertainment Expo and Conference, the first of its kind launched by the Chinese Government, will be held here Jan- uary 16-18.

Kou Xiaowei, a sen- ior official with the State Administration of Press and Publications, said Wednesday that all the re- lated departments are co- operating to sponsor this expo, including the State Administration of Press and Publications, National Copyright Administration, Ministry of the Information Industry, Ministry of Sci- ence and Technology and Ministry of Education, in a bid to show that they intend to devote them- selves to developing the local online game industry, fight against digital piracy and lead online game play- ers to play such games in a healthy way.

Kou said China is currently one of the world’s largest online game consumption markets, but its capability of self-design- ing game software is still weak. In a bid to promote the enthusiasm of domestic game companies to inde- pendently design and pro- duce online game software, the Chinese Government should intensify its fight against piracy.

“Moreover, only when we protect intellectual prop- erty better will foreign com- panies be more enthusiastic about investing in China,” he said.

So far, 130 domestic and overseas companies, in- cluding Sony, Nokia, Shenda and Sohu, have applied to attend the expo.

Ding Lei, head of Netease, and Chen Tiantiao, head of Shenda — both on the list of Chi- na’s Top 50 Richest Men last year due to their suc- cess in online game busi- ness — will give speeches at the expo.

In 2003, China’s online game industry was worth two billion yuan. But 70 per cent of the market share was occupied by South Korean game soft- ware, and the China-made online software only occupied 10 per cent of the market.

In the same year, the Chinese Government wrote its online game software development plan into its “863 High-Tech Pro- gramme” — MNA/Xinhua

Donate Blood
GIS and Remote Sensing Technologies Seminar held

YANGON, 8 Jan — The GIS and Remote Sensing Technologies Seminar, organized by Myanmar INGR Trading Co Ltd (Myanmar Intergraph), was opened at IBCC on Pyay Road here this morning, attended by President of e-National Task Force Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brig-Gen Thein Zaw.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Defence Maj-Gen Aung Hlaing, e-National Task Force Vice-President Civil Service Selection and Training Board member U Aung Myint and senior military officers, departmental heads, technicians and officials of Myanmar Intergraph. President of e-National Task Force Minister Brig-Gen Thein Zaw made a speech on the occasion. General Manager U Zaw Naing of Myanmar Intergraph briefed on latest advancement in GIS and remote sensing technology.

Then, paper-reading session was held Technical Consulting Manager Mr Edward D Bitau of Image Map Australia Pte Ltd, Assistant Head Daw Tin Tin Pyone of YCDC City Planning and Land Reclamation. Senior Application Specialists Mr Desmond Pansili of Intaragrafik Systems, Malaysia, Application Support Manager U Win Ko Ko of Myanmar Intergraph and Assistant Lecturer U Thet Tin Tun of Mandalay University presented papers.

The seminar continues tomorrow. — MNA

Indian scientists claim to have found "cure" to diabetes

CHANDIGARH, 8 Jan — A group of Indian researchers have claimed to have developed a cure for diabetes from a plant found in Purulia hills in the eastern state of West Bengal.

Its therapeutic properties first came to the notice of scientists after they observed tribals in the area use the plant as a traditional cure for diabetes. Dr S Bhattacharya of the Indian Institute of Chemical Biology in Kolkata told a session of the Science Congress.

His team developed the drug from the plant and named ICB201. He did not identify the plant.

Bhattacharya, delivering the B C Guha Memorial Award Lecture on "Confronting Diabetes Type II: A global Epidemic", claimed "probably the answer to Type II diabetes has been found".

Asserting that earlier there was "practically no drug to treat the Type II diabetes", he said "ICB201 acts by lowering the fatty acid levels in blood. Higher levels of fatty acids in blood diminish activity of insulin, which causes diabetes. The Phase I toxicity studies on mice have been carried out and the data would be submitted to authorities. Phase II studies would start in about three months and the drug is likely to hit the market in next two to three years," Bhattacharya said. — MNA/PTI

Prizes presented to winners of extempore talks contest, essay contests

YANGON, 8 Jan — The prize-presentation of the Third Exttempore Talks (English) for teachers and the Essay Contest (English) for eighth and ninth graders, organized by the Office of the Director-General of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare, the Ministry of Defence, was held at Aung San Thadi Hall of No 2 BEHS in Mingaladon Township on 31 December morning.

The ceremony was attended by Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint of the Ministry of Defence, senior military officers, Dr Rector Dr Soe Win of the University of Foreign Languages and officials, invited guests, teachers and students.

Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint made an opening speech. He then presented first, second and third prizes respectively to Daw Nan Yin Yin Mon of No 7 BEHS in Pathin Township, Daw Ni Ni Than of BEHS in Bahan Taunggyi, Daw Mya Mya Thein of No 7 BEHS in Taunggyi Township in the extempore talks contest (English) for teachers; Ma May Chan Oo of No 2 BEHS in Mingaladon Township, Maung Zaw Myo Aung of No 2 BEHS in An and Maung Tun Kyaw Htwe o No 3 BEHS in Meiktila Township in the essay contest (English) for ninth graders; and Maung Soe Thita of No 2 BEHS in Mingaladon Township, Maung Laphne Zaw Khan of No 3 BEHS in PyinOoLwin Township and Maung Sit Naung of No 4 BEHS in Kengtung in the essay contest (English) for eighth graders. He also presented honorary gifts to the members of board of judges.

Professor Daw May Kyaw Myint of English Department of Yangon Institute of Education and Head U Tun Aung Kyaw of English Department of Defence Services Medical Academy reviewed the performance of competitors.

Altogether 21 teachers and 41 ninth and eighth graders took part in the contests. — MNA

Publications donated to IPRD libraries

YANGON, 8 Jan —Wellwishers donated publications to libraries of the Information and Public Relations Department under the Ministry of Information at Pansodan Street here this afternoon.

Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein expressed words of thanks at the ceremony. Also present on the occasion were Director-General of Myanmar Radio and Television U Khin Maung Htay, Managing Director of the News and Periodicals Enterprise U Tin Kha, Managing Director of Printing and Publishing Enterprise U Myint Thein, Deputy Director-General of the IPRD U Aung Hsian, departmental heads, officials and wellwishers.

Wellwishers presented publications worth K 1,164,746 to the deputy minister, when he presented certificates of honour to them and spoke words of thanks. — MNA

Arab League chief says Syria has no WMD

DUBAI, 8 Jan — Syria has no weapons of mass destruction but it and other Middle East countries have the right to acquire defensive measures against Israel’s nuclear capabilities, Arab League chief Amr Moussa said on Wednesday.

Moussa, in an interview with Dubai-based Al Arabiya television, also took a swipe at the United States, saying it was wrong to assume Syria had nuclear weapons without evidence.

"Syria does not have weapons of mass destruction or nuclear weapons," he said. "We can’t presume Syria has nuclear weapons just like that, that’s wrong."

"There is just one country with WMDs in the Middle East — Israel. And in that case, perhaps in the near future, other countries will try — and it is their right — to protect themselves against such weapons," Syria denies US charges that it already has weapons of mass destruction. But in a British newspaper interview on Tuesday, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said it was natural for Syria to find means to defend itself against Israeli aggression and that WMDs were readily available in the world.

During a trip to Turkey, Assad also called for a ban on WMDs in the Middle East. Moussa told Al Arabiya that Israel was creating a "huge and serious security imbalance" by being the only country in the region to possess such weapons.

Israel has peace treaties with only two Arab countries — Egypt and Jordan. It occupies the Golan Heights which it seized from Syria in 1967 and in October, Israeli forces bombed an alleged training camp for Palestinian militants near Damascus. — MNA/Reuters
S Korea welcomes India-Pakistan summit meeting

SOUTH KOREA, 8 Jan — South Korea said Wednesday it hopes India-Pakistan summit meeting on the sideline of the 12th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit will enhance their bilateral relations and stability in the region.

"The government of the Republic of Korea greatly welcomes that Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf held a summit on January 5 and agreed to begin dialogue for the peaceful settlement of bilateral issues," South Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman Shin Bong-ki said in a statement.

The statement also said South Korea regards highly the series of confidence-building measures taken by both of the countries and hopes such efforts will continue.

The Pakistani President and Indian Prime Minister held an hour-long meeting in Islamabad on the sideline of the SAARC on Monday. And the two leaders reached an agreement to resume process of the composite dialogue in February 2004 over all bilateral pending issues, including Jammu and Kashmir.

S Korean 2003 digital electronics products exports hit record

SOUTH KOREA, 8 Jan — South Korea’s overseas shipments of digital electronics products rose 22.1 per cent year-on-year to a record 74.71 billion US dollars last year, according to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy Wednesday.

The digital electronics industry also marked a record trade account surplus of an estimated 30.25 billion dollars over the one-year period, up sharply from 23.4 billion dollars three years ago.

By item, wireless devices, including mobile handsets, accounted for 37.4 per cent of the digital electronics products exports, followed by semiconductors (17.5 per cent), digital home appliances (17.3 per cent), and computers (15.8 per cent), according to ministry data.

VNM/Minhuan

Vietnam intensifies investment abroad

HANOI, 8 Jan — Vietnam had 25 projects worth 28 million US dollars abroad in 2003, up 66.7 per cent in project number against 2002. To date, the country has invested 216.7 million US dollars in 97 projects abroad, mainly in the fields of light industry, petroleum and tourism, the Ministry of Planning and Investment said Tuesday.

As many as eight Vietnam-invested projects were licensed in Laos last year, raising the total in the country to 28 projects with combined capital of 18.6 million US dollars.

Vietnam now has most projects in Russia, 11 worth 34.3 million US dollars, most of which are on seafood, instant noodles, garments and construction materials.

To boost outbound investment, Vietnam plans to simplify investment procedures, and allow foreign-invested enterprises in the country to invest in finance, banking and credit insurance overseas.

MNA/Xinhua

Vietnam imported more medicines in 2003

HANOI, 8 Jan — Vietnam imported 370 million US dollars’ worth of medicines last year, a year-on-year rise of 15.6 per cent, according to the Ministry of Trade on Tuesday.

The country imported the products mainly from South Korea, India, China, England, France and the United States.

The medicine consumption per capita of local people rose to seven dollars in 2003 from six dollars in 2002.

Prices of medicines in the local market climbed considerably last year, with those of foreign products increasing 7-15 per cent.

To prevent suppliers, distributors and retailers from raising medicine prices by themselves, Vietnam has planned to label price tags on the products.

MNA/Xinhua
ASEAN vows to harmonize efforts to fight transnational crimes

BANGKOK, 8 Jan—Member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations were determined to harmonize their efforts to fight against transnational crimes despite great challenge in the process, a high official of ASEAN said here Wednesday evening.

It is very timely and significant for ASEAN ministers to meet on the fight against transnational crimes when the region had witnessed a rise of the untraditional crime, the ASEAN Deputy Secretary-General Wilfrido Villacorta told a Press conference after a preparatory session by senior officials for ASEAN ministerial meeting on Thursday.

Transnational crime was a broad problem involving drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal immigration, money laundering and terrorist attack, and therefore required regional cooperation to address the issue, said Villacorta.

Wednesday’s preparatory meeting would recommend ASEAN ministers to reach an agreement on improving legal coordination to curb transnational crimes.

A joint communique was also drafted on how to improve the region’s cooperation to fight against transnational crimes. The communique would be forwarded to Thursday’s ministerial meeting on the issue.

The other ASEAN ministerial meeting on transnational crime plus China, Japan and Korea would be held Saturday following the ASEAN ministerial meeting.

Villacorta said that ASEAN still had a long way to harmonize their legal systems to fight transnational crime, noting the communique only mentioned tentative proposals on how to improve the region’s cooperation in this fight.

China steps up supervision to secure consumers’ rights

BEIJING, 8 Jan—China Consumers’ Association (CCA) will conduct a nationwide inspection on ten industries to ensure business credit and consumer rights and interests, its secretary-general Teng Jiacai said Tuesday.

The inspection will, according to Teng, focus on quality, sanitation, safety, prices, logos of the commodities or services provided by the ten industries and see whether there is any fraud incurred.

The ten industries are all closely related with daily life, including food, commercial housing, construction materials and house building, travel service, insurance and medical instruments, telecommunication and auto.

The CCA will, added Teng, launch a quarterly inspection drive on possible problems emerging from the four sectors of food, medicine and medical instruments, telecommunication and auto.

The inspection will be held 100 times a year, he said.

China issues regulation to protect historical city streets, buildings

BEIJING, 8 Jan—China’s Ministry of Construction has issued a new regulation to strengthen the protection of historical city streets and buildings, which will take effect on 1 February, 2004.

A city should set specific protection areas for historical streets and buildings in city planning, and all construction activities in these areas should be supervised, according to the regulation.

It says that damaging, demolishing and restructuring historical buildings, constructing new buildings to change the traditional style of the old buildings, and illegally occupying or damaging gardens, grasslands, lakes, roads and ancient and rare trees are all forbidden in protection areas.

Anyone who is in breach of the regulation shall face punishment or charges according to the law, the regulation says.

US study shows coffee lowers diabetes risk

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan—People who gulp several cups of coffee a day can greatly lower their risk of developing diabetes later in life, even if they are overweight, according to a US study published on Tuesday.

The study of 125,000 people suggests that caffeine-free coffee—not caffeine-free—may affect the body’s metabolism in positive ways, the researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health said.

Men who drank more than six cups of full-caffeine coffee a day cut their risk of diabetes by more than half over 12 to 18 years, the study found. Women who drank that much coffee reduced their risk by 30 per cent.

Writing in the Annals of Internal Medicine, the researchers said it was not clear what caffeinated coffee does to reduce the risk of type II or adult-onset diabetes.

An estimated 15 million Americans have type II diabetes, the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Linked strongly with being overweight and with a lack of exercise, diabetes can lead to heart disease, stroke, blindness, limb loss and other disabilities.

Type I or juvenile diabetes is a different disease, affecting an estimated one million to two million Americans. It is caused by the destruction of key pancreatic cells. In type II diabetes, the body loses its ability to use insulin properly to metabolize food, especially sugar.

The researchers, led by Dr Eduardo Salazar-Martinez, Dr JoAnn Manson and others at Harvard and Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, said caffeine is known to affect how the body handles sugar.

Caffeine also raises metabolism, they said, and may affect other aspects of metabolism such as fat oxidation and mobilization of glycogen in muscle. “Coffee contains many other ingredients that may contribute to the inverse association,” they wrote in their report.

BP to sell petrol stations in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 8 Jan—Oil giant British Petroleum (BP) has said it plans to sell its 30 petrol stations and related marketing assets in Singapore, local TV station Channelnewsasia reported.

BP was quoted by Channelnewsasia as saying that the divestment is part of its global strategy to concentrate on markets and segments where it can build a significant presence.

The move will not impact the company’s other activities in the city-state, said Chan Yu-hung, divisional vice-president Shun Kong, BP’s president in Singapore.

BP’s office here will remain to manage its operations for the region, hosting key businesses and functions, said Wu. BP is vying for the International Headquarters Status Award from the Singapore Government this year.

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Anyone who is in breach of the regulation shall face punishment or charges according to the law, the regulation says.
Romario denies choosing Fluminense signings

Rio de Janeiro, 8 Jan—Former Brazil striker Romario has denied reports that he picks the new signings for his club Fluminense.

"I’d like to make it quite clear that I didn’t choose who should sign for Fluminense, all I did was to say what I thought of them," he told Radio Globo in an interview.

"Some agreed terms with the club and some didn’t. But I want to make it clear that the people who build the team are the coach, the directors and (team sponsors) Unimed."

Romario, who will be 38 at the end of this month, has often been criticized for the privileges he enjoys at the club.

The former Barcelona and PSV Eindhoven striker enjoys the right to skip training on the days after matches and to travel to away games on his own, often arriving shortly before kickoff.

Romario, who was plagued by nagging muscular injuries last year, said he would play on for at least one year and possibly longer if he thought there was a chance of scoring 1,000 goals in his career.

He currently claims to have scored 890 in his career, although it has been suggested this total includes friendly and even youth team matches: "I still want to reach 1,000 goals," he said. "Depending what happens this year, I will decide whether to retire or not."

Real Madrid’s Juanfran, right, challenges for the ball with Eibar’s Kepa Zarraga during a Copa del Rey soccer match at Ipurua Stadium in Eibar, Spain, on Jan. 7, 2004. —INQUIRER

Shadow Real side claim 1-1 Cup draw at Eibar

Madrid, 8 Jan—A second-string Real Madrid side claimed a 1-1 draw away to Second Division Eibar in an entertaining King’s Cup third round, first leg clash on Wednesday.

Real took the lead through Guti after 37 minutes, with Eibar equalizing with a Roberto Cuevas header in first-half injury time.

Ronaldo had the better chances throughout the game but could not find a second goal and had to settle for a result that will see Real go into next week’s second leg as strong favourites.

Dortmund to fine trio of absent players

Berlin, 8 Jan—Borussia Dortmund plan to fine Brazilian players Dede and Evainson and Argentinian Juan Ramon Fernandez after they failed to turn up for training at the start of this week.

Dortmund’s sporting director Michael Zorc said on Tuesday that there was no chance of the three being pardoned, adding that their efforts to contact coach Matthias Sammer had been inadequate.

“We will reward this behaviour appropriately,” he said.

The 1997 European champions said on Monday they had contacted all three players for Fluminense, scoring their 14th league goal of the season, established a two-goal lead at the break.

But they had been inadequate.

The real surprise, though, came at another all-First Division clash. Real Zaragoza beat Real Betis 3-1 to give themselves a handy lead to take into the away leg next week.

Chelsea, who were beaten by Brazilian Roberto Carlos in the Champions League but in the relegation places in the Primera Liga, got the only goal nine minutes into the second half when Vagner cracked in a 25-metre shot via the bar.

In other all-First Division ties, Real Zaragoza beat Real Betis 3-1 to give themselves a handy lead to take into the away leg next week, while Valencia drew 2-2 with Osasuna.

Barcelona, looking for a good Cup run after a poor start to the league season, faced a tricky away game to Second Division promotion favourites Levante on Thursday.

Real Madrid coach Carlos Queiroz denied the services of David Beckham and Zinedine Zidane because of injury, opting to field a ‘shadow’ side, were promoted favourites Levante on Thursday.

Struggling Celta Vigo eased the pressure on coach Miguel Angel Lotina with a 1-0 win away to Malaga.

Celta, through to the knockout stage of the Champions League but in the relegation places in the Primera Liga, got the only goal nine minutes into the second half when Vagner cracked in a 25-metre shot via the bar.

In another all-First Division clash, Real Zaragoza beat Real Betis 3-1 to give themselves a handy lead to take into the away leg next week.

Real Madrid, fielding a shadow side, were in action against Second Division Eibar in a later kick-off on Wednesday.

Kings Cup boost for Celta Vigo

Mazamitla, 8 Jan—Struggling Celta Vigo eased the pressure on coach Miguel Angel Lotina with a 1-0 win away to Malaga in their King’s Cup third round, first leg clash on Wednesday.

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Chelsea’s Glen Johnston (C) watches as Liverpool’s Bruno Cheyrou scores against Chelsea’s keeper Carlo Cudicini (R) during their premiership match at Stamford Bridge. —REUTERS

United go clear as Arsenal draw, Chelsea lose

London, 8 Jan—Manchester United beat Bolton Wanderers 2-1 to go three points clear in the Premier League on Wednesday as Arsenal were held 1-1 at Everton and Chelsea slumped to a surprise 1-0 home defeat by Liverpool.

Goals from England midfielder Paul Scholes and Dutch striker Ruud van Nistelrooy earned champions United their victory at the Reebok, while a 75-minute equalizer from Everton’s Canadian forward Tomasz Radzinski denied Arsenal all three points at Goodison Park.

Chelsea, who were beaten by Brazilian Roberto Carlos in the Champions League but in the relegation places in the Primera Liga, got the only goal nine minutes into the second half when Vagner cracked in a 25-metre shot via the bar.

In another all-First Division clash, Real Zaragoza beat Real Betis 3-1 to give themselves a handy lead to take into the away leg next week.

Real Madrid, fielding a shadow side, were in action against Second Division Eibar in a later kick-off on Wednesday.

Leeds striker Smith banned for two games

London, 8 Jan—Leeds United striker Alan Smith received a two-match ban on Tuesday for throwing a plastic water bottle into the crowd during a League Cup match against Manchester United on October 28, was at the centre of Smith’s controversial withdrawal from an England squad in November.

Smith was released without charge by police and the FA has since announced a review of its international selection procedures. —REUTERS

Smeth was released without charge by police and the FA has since announced a review of its international selection procedures. —REUTERS
Friday, January 9

View today:

7:00 am
1. Recitation of Parittas by Missionary Sayadaw U Ottamathara
7:15 am
2. Prayer by Mr. Weng, retired Inspector of Schools (Science), a professor and head of training at the Mandalay Police Academy
7:25 am
3. To be healthy exercise
7:30 am
4. Morning news
7:40 am
5. Nice and sweet song
7:55 am
6. 8:05 am
7. 8:10 am
8. The mirror images of the musical oldies
8:20 am
9. 8:30 am

10. International news
8:45 am
11. English for Everyday Use
4:00 pm
12. Marital song
4:15 pm
13. Song to uphold National Spirit
4:30 pm
14. Demonstration exercises for correct pronunciation
4:45 pm
15. Musical programme
5:00 pm
16. Song of national races
5:30 pm
17. Bhutanese song
5:45 pm
18. Myanmar movie
6:00 pm
19. Songs of the year-end
20. The next day’s programme

WEATHER

Thursday, 8 January, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST:

During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in the whole country. Night temperatures were 3°C below normal in Chin State and Tanintharyi Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Mon, Shan and Rakhine States, Lower Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions and about normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 7-1-2004 was 34.0°C (93°F). Minimum temperature on 8-1-2004 was 16.2°C (61°F). Relative humidity at 9.30 am MST on 8-1-2004 was 74%. Total sunshine hours on 7-1-2004 was 3.7 hours approx. Rainfall on 8-1-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 8 mph from North (18.20) hours MST on 7-1-2004.

Bay influence: Weather is partly cloudy in South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until morning of 9-1-2004: Weather will be generally fair in the whole country.

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

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


Daw Aye Kyi (Edna)
NA, AL, Advocate
Legal Adviser (Rtd) (Office of the Attorney General (Age 84 years)

Eldest daughter of (Thiray Sithu U Choon Fong, former Attorney-General) and Daw Khin Daw Dwar; wife of (Wunna Kyaw Hnin U Weng, retired Inspector of Schools (Science), sister of (U Kyaw Nyo U Aung Mya Mya Lecturer, English Dept, Institute of Education); (U Kyaw Tin-tinted retired Divisional Education Officer)-Daw Yi Yi Khin-Asst Director (Rtd), Dept of Basic Education; aunt of U Ye Myint, Deputy Director of Office of the Attorney General-Daw Khin Chan Ma Min-Assist. Director, Office of the Attorney General; grand aunt of Myint Mg Mg Tin, Myint Mg Mg Tin, Myint Thaw Min, expired at No 168 Shwegone Road, Bahan on 7-1-2004 at 10.05 pm and cremated at Yayway on 8-1-2004.

Bereaved family
Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win attends opening ceremony of Myanmar Rice Milling Industry Fair-2004

YANGON, 8 Jan — The opening ceremony of Myanmar Rice Milling Industry Fair-2004 organized with the objectives of enabling Myanmar rice to regain its share in international market and commanding the market, producing high-quality Myanmar rice, developing the Myanmar rice milling industry, developing the regional industries, and creating job opportunities and raising the income of the people by the Ministry of Commerce and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry was held at the Yangon Trade Centre on Upper Paradungan Road this morning, attended by Chairman of the Industrial Development Committee Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, Development Minister for Industry U Aung Thaung, and the chairman and executives of Myanmar Rice Milling Industry Fair-2004 organized by the Myanmar Rice Milling Industry Association formally opened the exhibition in front of the trade centre.

First, Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, President U Win Myint of the UMFCCI, and Chairman U Tin Win of Myanmar Rice Millers Association formally opened the exhibition in front of the trade centre. He said it was the first time for Myanmar to hold such a fair. Private entrepreneurs and individuals were able to enjoy the free trade and export of rice and paddy after the Government had adopted the new rice and paddy marketing policy.

The fair was organized with five objectives of enabling Myanmar rice to regain its share in international market and commanding the market, producing high-quality Myanmar rice, developing the Myanmar rice milling industry, developing the regional industries, and creating job opportunities and raising the income of the people, he added. Rice mills in Myanmar were not able to produce high quality rice as they had come into use for 40 or 50 years. So, in the process of milling paddy into rice, it was an urgent need for the rice milling industry to modernize the private-owned rice mills, he said.

As an outcome of the seminar on requirements for enhancing the quality of rice and paddy held by the Ministry of Commerce last November, the Exhibition on Myanmar Rice Milling Industry could be opened successfully. The State had

Monywa Industrial Zone (Yangon) showroom opened

YANGON, 8 Jan — The opening of Monywa Industrial Zone (Yangon) showroom took place at No 86/88 on Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Kyauktada Township, here, this morning.

It was attended by Chairman of Myanmar Industrial Development Committee Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, Member of MDBC Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe, Deputy Minister for Labour Brig-Gen Win Sein, departmental heads, Chairman of Monywa Industrial Zone Co Ltd U Aung Khin and members and guests. Chairman U Aung Khin explained the purpose of the holding of the showroom.

Minister U Aung Thaung, Minister Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe, and U Aung Khin formally opened the showroom. Minister Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe in charge of Monywa Industrial Zone pressed the button to unveil the signboard of the showroom.

Available at the showroom are automobiles assembled at Monywa Industrial Zone, various kinds of farm implements and machinery, groundnut oil, bean vermicelli, noodle, blankets, textiles, Aye Nyein Thida traditional medicines, finished wooden furniture and battery lead-acid accumulators.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects tasks for distribution of electricity at the electrical engineering office in Kale — MNA

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win tours Kale District

YANGON, 8 Jan — Members of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, accompanied by Brig-Gen Khin Maung Aye of Kale Station, met with Tatmadaw members of Kale and Kyikon stations and their families at Kale Station yesterday morning.

At the meeting, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win gave instructions on extension of agriculture and livestock breeding, boosting production, and cooperation with local people for regional development.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win held a meeting with local administative bodies, departmental personnel and town elders at the town hall of Kale. On the occasion, he elaborated on collective efforts to be made with the sense of duties for successful implementation of five rural development tasks, prevalence of law and order, and national and regional development.

Chairman of Electricity and Fuel Use Supervisory Committee Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspected distribution of electricity of Myanma Electric Power Enterprise and tasks at the gas station. He gave instructions on timely distribution of electricity and fuel and attended to the needs.

In the afternoon, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspected assembling of automobiles at Kale Industrial Zone and left instructions on production of quality products.