Senior General Than Shwe attends Defence Services C-in-C’s Trophy Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) Golf Tourney

YANGON, 11 Jan— The Defence Services Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) Golf Tournament 2003-2004 was held at Tatmadaw Golf Course in Mingaladon Township at 6.30 am yesterday. Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe arrived at the golf course at 10 am and viewed the competitions.

The opening of the tournament was attended by Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, members of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, members of the State Peace and Development Council Lieutenant-Gen Soe Win, Lieutenant-Gen Khin Maung Than, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Rear Admiral Soe Thein and Commander-in-Chief (Air) Major-Gen Myat Hein; Lieutenant-Gen Ye Myint, Lieutenant-Gen Maung Bo, Lieutenant-Gen Thida Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Lieutenant-Gen Tin Aung Myint Oo and Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Than took part in the competitions together with golfers of the 17 teams.

The second and final day events of the Defence Services Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) Golf Tournament 2003-2004 was held at Tatmadaw Golf Course in Mingaladon Township at 6.30 am today. Senior General Than Shwe arrived at the golf course at 9.45 am and viewed the competitions.

The final day matches concluded in the evening. The prize presentation ceremony was held at the golf course at 5 pm attended by Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, General Thura Shwe Mann and party, golfers and guests.

On behalf of the Defence Services Commander in Chief, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein presents championship of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy Golf Tournament to Triangle Region Command team. — MNA

The following article was published in the Myanmar Times, but due to the text extraction limitations, it was not fully captured. It appears to be discussing Myanmar's all-out anti-narcotics drive.

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

Established 1914

The NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Volume XI, Number 270 6th Waning of Pyatho 1365 ME Monday, 12 January, 2004

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

Senior General Than Shwe watches Defence Services Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy Golf Tournament. — MNA

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Regional socio-economic development through concerted efforts

Myanmar’s all-out anti-narcotics drive

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Circulation
23,370
Regional socio-economic development through concerted efforts

After laying down the 12 objectives, the State Peace and Development Council is striving with momentum for emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

Only when townsships are developed, so are the States and Divisions and the entire nation. The development of townsships depends on that of rural areas. With this end in view, emphasis has been placed on progress of rural areas including border regions.

The Government has been implementing the five rural development tasks for raising the education standard of rural people, providing better health care services to them, ensuring better transport in rural areas, supplying potable water and water for agricultural purpose and boosting the economy of rural areas.

Head of State Senior General Than Shwe himself has gone on tours right down to rural and border regions and fulfilling the needs to uplift the socio-economic life of rural people.

In meeting with members of District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials and social organizations at Byamawo Hall in Kayan Township on 10 January, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said that with the conviction that the tasks for development of a township is not concerned with the in charge of the township alone but with all the staff of the departments in the township, all should participate in the development projects; and that those in charge of the townsships are to make field trips right down to the rural areas of the townsships concerned to fulfil the needs in efforts for accomplishment of the five rural development tasks and to carry out tasks in harmony after forming respective township development committees.

In Kayan, Thongwa, Kyauktyan and Thanlyin Townships in Yangon South District, land has been put under monsoon and winter crops and efforts are being made to cultivate summer paddy. Agricultural and livestock breeding tasks meet success in the regions and the local people, under the leadership of the State, are endeavouring for better transport, raising the education standard and providing better health care services.

The Government has been taking systematic measures for promotion of education and health sectors of rural people and at the same time it is implementing sector-wise projects including transportation and water supply. Various ways and means are being sought to supply water to farmlands for ever greening and water supply. Various ways and means are being sought to supply water to farmlands for ever greening.

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US says Black Hawk was shot down

WASHINGTON, 1 Jan — The US military says one of its Black Hawk helicopters that crashed in central Iraq on Thursday, killing all nine soldiers on board, was shot down by the Iraqi resistance.

Preliminary investigations indicated that the med-evac helicopter was brought down by ground fire,” said Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, the coalition’s deputy director of operations.

He added that “the investigation has not concluded.”

The helicopter crashed on Thursday near the town of Falluja, west of Baghdad, an area which is a hotbed of resistance to the US occupation.

Witnesses said they had seen the helicopter in flames before it crashed.

Another US military official, who declined to give his name, said US air forces had attacked it.

Bush's accusations spoiled Iran-US thaw

TEHRAN, 11 Jan — Iran's influential former president, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, said on Friday US President George W. Bush's repeated accusations against Iran had undermined a possible thaw in the decades-old enmity between the two nations.

“His statements are a step back in the peace process,” he said on a visit to the capital, Tehran.

Rafsanjani, who was a staunch critic of the US before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, US claims.

Speaking at Friday prayers in Teheran, Rafsanjani said Teheran was encouraged by US humanitarian relief to victims of the devastating earthquake in Bam on December 26 and a US proposal for a first public official visit to Iran in over two decades.

“Our initial analysis was that they wanted to pave the way for negotiations and resolving the problem,” Rafsanjani said in a sermon broadcast live on state radio.

“Their main mistake was that Mr Bush started to repeat the old allegations about Iran and weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and the Middle East conflict.”

“If you want to extend a hand of friendship and a new approach, you shouldn’t repeat the old words,” said Rafsanjani, who analysts say remains a key player in Iran's foreign policy.

Iran routinely denies Washington's accusations that it is pursuing weapons of mass destruction and sponsoring terrorism and repeatedly calls on US officials to stop meddling in its internal affairs.

Washington broke ties with Iran shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. US sanctions in place since 1980 prohibit US companies from investing in OPEC's second largest oil producer or trading in Iranian oil.

But US and Iranian officials have spoken recently about a willingness to resume a dialogue with Teheran, which was broken off by Washington last May.

“Following Iran’s acceptance of aid for Bam, Washington proposed sending a humanitarian mission led by US Senator Elizabeth Dole to Teheran. Tehran declined the offer.”

China-Vietnam border negotiations make good progress

HANOI, 11 Jan — A Chinese delegation led by Vice-Foreign Minister Wang Yi and a Vietnamese delegation led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Le Cong Dinh, the 10th round of government level negotiations on the Sino-Vietnamese borders in Hanoi on Friday and Saturday.

The two sides reviewed progress made in previous negotiations. They expressed high appreciation for the breakthrough achieved in follow-up negotiations on the agreement on Beibu Gulf fishery cooperation, and made concrete arrangements for the next negotiations.

They stated that delineating and placing markers on the land border had a good beginning, and agreed to speed up the process and complete the delineation of the border soon.

The two sides also agreed to try to complete follow-up negotiations on the agreement on Beibu Gulf fishery cooperation at an early stage, to sign the supplementary protocol, and to complete the formalities of each side approving the fishery agreement and the Beibu Gulf demarcation agreement.

China and Vietnam will strive to bring the two agreements into force in the second quarter of this year.

The two sides agreed to maintain the mechanism on negotiations on sea issues, to practically maintain stability in the South China Sea and to continue seeking ways and modes of sea cooperation.

US accused of Iraqi cruelty

WASHINGTON, 11 Jan — The US occupation army in Iraq has been slammed by a human rights group for being negligent in handling out compensations for Iraqis killed or injured by them.

According to Human Rights Watch, the US military received nearly 5,400 claims after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, but in the process for Iraqis to make claims was far more opaque and open than their treatment by the US military bordered on cruelty.

“There is a culture of impunity,” said senior researcher Paola Gasparoli.

“Sometimes soldiers know they have killed someone wrongly, so they do everything to make sure they get away with it,” she said.

There have been cases in which bodies were stripped of identification and delivered to hospitals as unknowns,” she said.

“We need to work together,” said Russell.

Annan keeps ‘open mind’ about Iraq role

UNITED NATIONS 11 Jan—Secretary-General Koﬁ Annan will keep an “open mind” about the United Nations role when he meets with Iraqi and coalition leaders to discuss Iraq future, but he has concrete ideas about a possible mandate, ofﬁcials said Friday.

Annan was to talk with US Ambassador John Negroponte and British Ambassador Emmy Jones-Parry later Friday to lay the groundwork for a Jan. 19 meeting with Iraq’s Governing Council and the Coalition Provisional Authority to clarify the world body’s role in postwar Iraq.

The secretary-general pulled UN international staff out of Iraq after a deadly suicide attack on its Baghdad headquarters last month, and on Saturday the presence of UN staff will depend on whether the UN will be able to purchase security insurance.

Annan now is seeking security assurances and hopes to learn how much Washington is willing to allow the United Nations to do in Iraq in coming months.

“Everyone wants to see a successful transition to sovereignty in Iraq and everyone has their thinking caps on as to the best way to do that,” U.N. spokesman Fred Eckhard said. “We are maintaining an open mind while we listen to whatever the Brits and Americans put forward to us and we’re also listening to what the Iraqis are saying.”

A Nov. 15 agreement calls for a legislature elected through caucuses in Iraq’s 18 provinces and a handover of power by June 30. It does not deﬁne what role the United Nations could play.

Annan has been pressured by Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, the Governing Council’s president for December, to get involved in Iraq immediately.

Al-Hakim supports Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani, Iraq’s most powerful cleric, who wants direct elections, and not caucuses, for the transitional assembly. Al-Hakim asked Annan in a Dec. 28 letter if the United Nations would oversee that process.

Annan replied to al-Hakim on Thurs-
day, Eckhard said, without disclosing what he said. Annan has said previously that holding national elections in Iraq by June 30 would be impossible, and the United States agrees.

A senior British ofﬁcial said Friday that two families were ﬁghting. When they arrived, the soldiers found two men ﬁ ring weapons. Wolfe said.

When the men failed to identify themselves, the US soldiers ﬁ red warning shots, then shot at them, wounding one man and killing the other, the spokesman said. The wounded man died at a hospital.

US troops kill two Iraqi policemen by mistake

BAGHDAD, 11 Jan—On Friday, two Iraqi policemen were killed by US soldiers after the men failed to identify themselves when the soldiers responded to a domestic dispute near Kirkuk, an Army spokesman said Saturday.

Capt. Jefferey Wolfe said soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade got a report that two families were ﬁghting. When they arrived, the soldiers found two men ﬁ ring weapons. Wolfe said.

When the men failed to identify themselves, the US soldiers ﬁ red warning shots, then shot at them, wounding one man and killing the other, the spokesman said. The wounded man died at a hospital.

“The was an unfortunate in-
cident,” said Master Sgt. Robert Caregie of the 4th In-
y-national markets.

Mazda recorded a 283-
percent rise in sales, up 28.5 per-
t-testimate, 30 percent for the previous year. Hyundra was second with 20,935 sales, down 4.5 per cent over the same period, while Opel was third with 19,838, up one position from 2002.

Ford jumped to fourth po-
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CONTINUING ANTI-US RESISTANCE

Iraqi policemen walk past a car in which 100kg of plastic explosives were found outside the entrance to a building in Baquba recently. —INTERNET

Iraqis crowd the dispensary of a hospital in Abul Khassib, a town near the southern city of Basra January 10, 2004, to receive medicine which is in short supply in many areas of postwar Iraq. —INTERNET

A US Army soldier of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division, walks on a foggy morning in Tikrit, Iraq, recently. —INTERNET

Iraqi demonstrators face British Army soldiers guarding the administration headquarters in the southeastern city of Amara, on 11 January, 2004. British troops said they opened fire on grenade-throwing Iraqi protesters in a clash in which at least five people were killed on Saturday. —INTERNET

US soldiers on patrol in Kirkuk recently. —INTERNET

A US Army soldier stands guard while the other inspects a damaged truck after a military supply truck accidentally smashed into another in Baghdad’s suburb of Taji. Saturday, Jan. 10, 2004. —INTERNET

Iraqi policemen walk past a car in which 100kg of plastic explosives were found outside the entrance to a building in Baquba recently. —INTERNET
Iraqi civilians claim US military opened fire on taxi, killing four and wounding one

Tikrit, 11 Jan—The US military is investigating a report that American soldiers opened fire with a machine gun on a taxi, killing four Iraqi civilians, including a 7-year-old boy, and wounded the driver last week in Saddam Hussein’s hometown.

Iraqi police in the northern town of Tikrit, found the bullet-riddled car and took the wounded driver, Ibrahim Allawi, to the hospital.

Allawi said he was driving four passengers in his taxi on the evening of 3 Jan when he was caught behind a convoy of four Humvees on a road leading to the main highway through Tikrit.

Soldiers in the last Humvee, he says, directed him to pass the convoy. When he had nearly cleared all the vehicles, machine gun fire struck his taxi, he said.

The fire came from the lead vehicle in the convoy, Allawi said from his hospital bed.

The US military is investigating the shooting, but has not yet reached any conclusion, said Maj. Joslyn Auberle, a spokeswoman for the Army’s 4th Infantry Division, which is based in Tikrit.

The Iraqi officers said they believed his account and expressed frustration by what they said was a delayed response to the incident by US authorities.

US soldiers who went to the scene found a blue Chevrolet Caprice “hit by multiple bullets and heavy-caliber machine gunfire,” and several dead Iraqis, said Lt Col Steve Russell, a battalion commander in Tikrit. The incident was a “human tragedy,” he added.

“Our soldiers were not involved in this incident,” Russell said. “But it’s possible that the damage to the vehicle could have come from coalition forces given the type of damage.”

The incident, which people refer to as “the car slayings,” adds to already high tension in Tikrit, a major centre of attacks against coalition forces.

In a raid on Friday that was aimed at Saddam loyalists, US soldiers kicked open doors and dragged men and teenage boys from their beds. Thirty suspects were arrested.

“The misconduct (of American soldiers) will make people turn against them, more than they already are,” Allawi said.

Six killed, 11 injured in clash between protesters and British and Iraqi security forces

AMARAH, 11 Jan—Iraqi police fired into a crowd of stone-throwing protesters angry over the lack of jobs in the southern town of Amarah on Saturday, killing six people and wounding 11, witnesses and a hospital doctor said.

Hundreds of protesters gathered opposite the coalition office where British security forces have a regional headquarters, saying coalition authorities had not kept a promise to find them jobs by the beginning of January.

There were conflicting reports about what led the police to fire. Some witnesses said people in the crowd shot at police first, others that the crowd was only throwing stones when police shot at them.

Dr Saad Hamoud of the Al-Zahrawi Surgical Hospital said six people were killed and the hospital was treating 11 wounded protesters. There were no reports of casualties among the police. Internet

UN seeks security assurances from US in Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, 11 Jan—In an effort to get UN staff back into Iraq, the United States on Friday reviewed security for the world body, still reluctant to send officials into the field after last summer’s disastrous bombing of its Baghdad offices.

US and British ambassadors sounded out UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan before a crucial January 19 meeting on the future role of the United Nations in Iraq. But many UN officials are wary of seeing the United Nations back in Baghdad while the US occupation is in force.

“Security is of course one of the principle concerns of the United Nations,” said US Ambassador John Negroponte after talks with Annan and British Ambassador Emrys Jones Parry.

One proposal, participants said, was to have the multinational force in Iraq breakout of a contingent to protect UN staff. But no decisions were made at the session that included senior UN security officials.

“The situation on the ground remains insecure, so the scope for a UN role is very much limited by the security factor. That’s a fact of life,” UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

Annan withdrew international staff in October after two bombing attacks on its Iraq headquarters, the one on August 19 costing the lives of 22 staff and visitors.

Since then Annan has emphasized he would not send them back unless security improved — and unless the UN’s political role was well-defined in contributing to the country’s future.

The United States has devised a schedule that would transfer governing power to an Iraqi provisional authority by June 30, a procedure known as “phase I.”

In “phase 2” the Iraqis would write a Constitution and hold general elections by the end of 2005.

Negroponte acknowledged the United Nations still had a problem fielding staff quickly before June by saying that “I think that on phase 2 there isn’t any doubt that the United Nations is prepared to play a robust role if it is asked to do so by the Iraqis.” Annan has called a meeting for January 19 that would include the US-led occupation coalition in Iraq and leaders of the Iraqi Governing Council.

Britain has offered to send Sir Jeremy Greenstock, its top envoy in Iraq, to the talks. The United States has not yet made clear the level of its representation, from Washington or Baghdad, but Negroponte said it would be “appropriate.”

MNA/Reuters

Report says US anti-drug policy failing in Andes

WASHINGTON, 11 Jan—US counternarcotic policy in the Andes gives too much priority to military aid, focuses too much on Colombia and pays too little attention to urgent economic and social issues, a new report said on Thursday.

The report, “Andes 2000,” by the Council on Foreign Relations think-tank, comes as the Bush Administration looks for a successor program to the Plan Colombia anti-drug scheme, which expired at the end of next year.

Launched in 2000 by the Clinton Administration and the centre piece of the Bush Administration’s anti-drug fight abroad, Plan Colombia makes about 700 million US dollars a year in mostly military assistance available to the Andean region, with the bulk’s share earmarked for Colombia.

Officials in Colombia and the United States say sharp drops in the planted acreage of coca crops in Colombia, thanks to crop spraying and reduced violence across the region are signs that Washington’s policy has been working. But the report’s authors say the plan will fail in the long haul, with drug production merely shifting to other countries, notably Bolivia.

“The US policy seems to have been in the past years to push drug production up and down the Andean ridge,” John Heimann, former Comptroller of the US Treasury and one of the reports’ authors, said.

Washington, January 10—Morakot, an 80-year-old female elephant, plays after being fitted with custom-made dentures in Kananchaburi province, west of Bangkok, Thailand, on 10 Jan, 2004.—INTERNET

British trade deficit widens again

LONDON, 11 Jan—Britain’s trade deficit with the rest of the world has risen again, according to the latest official figures published Friday.

The Office for National Statistics said Britain imported 4.4 billion pounds’ worth of goods more than it exported in last November, compared to 4.25 billion pounds in October. Reduced production of North Sea oil due to maintenance was one reason for the deficit, but the declining dollar is also hurting British exports to the United States, the office said in a report.

Exports to the United States fell by nearly 10 per cent in November to 2.3 billion pounds, despite the rapid growth in the US economy, which grew by more than 8 per cent in the third quarter of 2003. This accounted for two-thirds of the drop in exports for the month. Since then, the dollar has fallen further against the pound to 1.82 dollars to the pound.

The higher pound makes British goods more expensive in the US market, and may dash hopes that a booming global economy will help spark British economic growth. —MNA/Xinhua
The narcotics elimination drive in Myanmar is advancing step by step towards its goal, thanks to the all-out efforts. The problem of narcotic drugs is the evil legacy. The colonialists from the west carried opium to the east and forced the people of the colonies to grow poppy for opium. The colonialist gained benefits from the opium trade which also made a large number of Asian people become drug addicts, depriving them of the ability to ward off the danger of the colonialists.

Since regaining of independence, Myanmar has been striving to root out the problem of opium. It had to face and crush the internal insurgents and the drug trafficking insurgents like Kuomin that who were refining heroin. As soon as internal peace and stability is restored, the country starts to make strenuous efforts to root out the drugs.

While trying to solve the drug problem, Myanmar has come face-to-face with eliminating the illegal business of poppy or the Yaba. The chemicals used in refining narcotic drugs are not produced in Myanmar. And for no reason, Myanmar will import those chemical substances. Even opium was a contraband smuggled into the nation by the colonialists. The heroin refining method and equipment and precursor chemicals were smuggled into the nation by the Kuomintrang and their CIA supporters. The stimulant pill manufacturing machines and chemicals are the illegal goods smuggled into the nation by the remnants of the insurgents, who clandestinely carried the finished goods or the pills out of the country across the borders.

Taking strict border control measures and handing down severe punishments on the drug traffickers and producers are not enough to produce the illegal business of milling stimulant pills and heroin. But ending the practice of cultivating poppy for opium is another thing. As the practice of opium cultivation is the evil legacy of the colonialists, it takes time to organize the national race opium growers, to quit the practice. Alternative crops cultivation and development projects are needed to gradually change the lives of the opium growers.

It has been known all over the world that as the opium substitute cultivation and livestock breeding project is gaining greater support, the opium growers have been handing over the opium buds and seeds to the Government out of their own volition. Myanmar is now in the process of implementing the 15-year narcotics elimination plan. The problem of drugs cannot be solved with words, or be used for political gains. In this regard, Myanmar is making efforts with heart and soul and through fruitful discussions to drive out the drugs.

Myanmar is not working alone in tackling the problem. It is joining hands with the neighbouring and regional countries, the anti-narcotics bodies of the UN and international organizations. It is now implementing the New Destiny Project to end poppy cultivation in the regions where the practice was introduced by the colonialists. Some of the regions have made a good start, and are able to declare themselves opium free zone. For example, in 1999, Myanmar and Shan State. Other regions including those form the Kachin State and Wa region are trying to free them themselves from the opium by the year 2005. Peace and stability can be restored even in the border areas after the 17 armed groups returned to the legal fold. Thus, the anti-narcotics drive can be launched with greater acceleration.

The countries that are pointing a finger at others for their own drug problem should study our situation with clear outlook. They should help us achieve greater success in driving out the drug menace.

Myanmar is extrading the Chinese citizens who are wanted in China for their drug related crimes back to their own country. It is one of the results of the project. Under the Myanmar-Thai anti-narcotics and borders area development project, a 16-bed hospital, built by the Yaungkha Village Project of Monghast District, eastern Shan State, has been opened on 9 December 2003 and in the village. It is one of the results of the project.

The hospital was formally opened by Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander of Triangle Region Command Maj-Gen Khan Zaw and Commander of Area of Thailand Li-Gen Pichamneth Muangmanee.

The Yaungkha Village Project is an outcome of the meeting between the Prime Ministers of the two nations. It is an all-round development project jointly implemented by the two countries, and Thailand contributed 20 million baht to it.

After holding discussions, the officials of the two countries chose Yaungkha village tract, located 30 miles west of Tachileik, as the project area. The project covering all the 18 villages in the village-tract also benefits national races of the surrounding areas.

The project which began in January 2003 has opened a 500-student capacity basic education primary school and a 16-bed hospital. The school was opened with 10 teachers and 222 students in June.

The project also covers the alternative crop culti-
Senior General Than Shwe attends Defence Services…

(from page 1)

Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Hein presented first, second and third prizes to the Triangle Region Command team with 557 strokes, the South East Command team with 578 strokes and the Northern Command team with 591 strokes in the team handicap event.

Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Rear Admiral Soe Thein presented first, second and third prizes to the Commander-in-Chief (Navy)’s office team with 674 strokes, the Yangon Command team with 712 strokes and the Eastern Command team with 739 strokes in the team scratch event.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint presented first, second and third prizes to Lt Tin Shwe of the Western Command team with 127 strokes, Lt-Col Than Lwin of the Triangle Region Command team with 132 strokes, Maj Zaw Win of the South East Command team with 132 strokes in the individual handicap event.

Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence presented first, second and third prizes to Maj Khin Zaw Win of the Triangle Region Command team with 152 strokes, Maj Tin Ko Ko of the Northern Command team with 162 strokes, Lt Tin Shwe of the Western Command team with 163 strokes in the individual scratch event.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than presented best par and best birdie prizes to the respective winners.

Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thitha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo presented prizes to daily best score golfers in the individual handicap and scratch events.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win presented prizes to longest drive, nearest pin and steam to the respective winners.

In handicap event, the Triangle Region Command team won the first prize with 557 and in the scratch event the Commander-in-Chief (Navy)’s office team won the first prize with 674 strokes.

On behalf of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant General Lt-Gen Thein Sein presented the trophy to the Triangle Region Command team and the ceremony came to a close.

After the prize presentation ceremony, Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than, Lt-Gen Thitha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Rear Admiral Soe Thein and Maj-Gen Myat Hein had a documentary photo taken together with golfers of the Triangle Region Command and the Commander-in-Chief (Navy) teams.

After the ceremony, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye cordially greeted the golfers.

Minister looks into road, bridge construction tasks in Sagaing, Mandalay divisions

YANGON, 11 Jan—Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, accompanied by officials from the Public Works, on 7 January morning, arrived at Wayluwun monastery in Tiddim, Chin State, to pay homage to Presiding Sayadaw Saddhamma Jotikadha Vannasuri.

After presenting offerings to the Sayadaw, the minister inspected the Tiddim-Thaingnng road. Deputy Superintending Engineer U Thein Tun of Road Construction Special Group-11 reported on future tasks. The minister then inspected the Kalay-Falam-Haka road and gave instructions.

On 8 January morning, the minister and party left Haka and inspected the Haka-Thanthlang road. At Thanthlang Township Engineering Office, Chin State Superintending Engineer U Tin Maung Hla and Township Engineer U Man Do Kyiim reported to the minister on road construction tasks and the minister gave instructions.

Afterwards, the minister and party inspected the Thantlang-Falam road section and the Falam-Kalay road section.

On 9 January morning, the minister and party visited the construction site for Panmon Creek Bridge of Road Construction Special Group-11 between mile posts 15/5 and 15/6 on Kalay-Gangaw road. Deputy Superintending Engineer U Thein Tun briefed them on completion of the construction tasks for the bridge and Kyunzonghla Bridge between mile posts 32/5 and 32/6 on the road and future tasks.

The minister gave instructions on timely completion and meeting the set standards and minimizing of wastage.

In the afternoon, the minister left Kalay for Kalaywa and arrived at Myittha Bridge (Kalaywa) construction site where Chief Engineer U Kyaw Lin reported on completion of the bridge and future tasks.

The minister gave instructions and provided them with necessary materials and machinery. The minister and party inspected earthen works for approach road and bridge construction tasks. The bridge, crossing Myittha river, links Monywa-Yangyi Road and Kalaywa. It can be used for Kalaywa-Kalay-Tamu border trade and will be beneficial to townships on Chin mountain ranges.
Lt-Gen Thein Sein offers provisions to members of the Sangha in Kengtung

Yangon, 11 Jan.—Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thein Sein attended the ceremony to offer rice and provisions to the members of the Sangha of Parryutty monasteries in Kengtung, Shan State (East) yesterday morning.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of Sayadaws of Kengyin, Kengnang, Hokhon, Maukmai, Duya, Datsum Siri, Dhamawdhiya, Jatavun, Sarasateypulla and Theravada missionary monasteries and senior nuns. Also present were members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence, Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander of Triangle Region Command Maj-Gen Khin Zaw, ministers, deputy ministers, local authorities, wellwishers and guests.

The ceremony was opened with three-time recitation of Namo Tassa. The congregation received the Five Precepts from Sayadaw Agga Maha Saddama Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Kemasara of Kengyin monastery in Kengtung.

Secretary-2 inspects...

(from page 16)

Next, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint gave a supplementary report.

Afterwards, Principal of Kengtung Nursing and Midwifery Training School Dr Nan Soe Phan reported to the Secretary-2 on administrative, academic and staff affairs of the training school, number of trainees and requirements. Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint gave a supplementary report.

After hearing the reports, the Secretary-2 said competent health personnel were being nurtured at the institutes of medicine and nursing and midwifery training schools for the achievement of objective of the health policy of the State. The Secretary-2 urged the health personnel to strive with goodwill for the accomplishment of their duties to ensure the long and healthy lives for the public.

Afterwards, the Secretary-2 cordially greeted the medical superintendents, physicians, doctors and nurses.

Next, the Secretary-2 and party proceeded to Kengtung Nursing and Midwifery Training School and inspected the lecture halls, the demonstration room and computer lab, the altar room, the computer lab, the altar room, the demonstration room and teaching and learning activities at the training school. Next, the Secretary-2 cordially greeted the trainees.

Next, the Secretary-2 and party inspected the upgrading of sports grounds near Kengtung Degree College on Kengtung-Taunggyi road and gave necessary instructions.

Later, the Secretary-2 and party enjoyed the volleyball match of Kengtung Station Team (A) and (B) of the Kengtung District Volleyball Tournament at the indoor stadium in Kengtung.

On 9 January afternoon, the Secretary-2 and party met with departmental personnel in Shan State (East) at the city hall in the town and gave instructions on taking measures for regional development tasks.

It was attended by members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander of Triangle Region Command Maj-Gen Khin Zaw, ministers, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads, local authorities and members of social organizations.

First, the commander reported to the Secretary-2 on location, area, climate, land utilization, monsoon paddy cultivated acreage, target for cultivation of summer paddy, sufficiency of rice and edible oil, condition of roads, economic, education, health and social affairs of Shan State (East).

Next, the Secretary-2 made a speech. He said the nation would be transformed into a democratic one through seven stages. It was clearly stated in the clarification of the seven-points future policy programme of the State by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt on 30 August 2003, he added. There were three important points in transforming the nation into a modern and developed one. The first of them was to ensure the security and stability of the State and rule of law. The second one was the economic development of the State for ensuring the sufficiency of food for the entire people and the third was the literacy of the entire nation to distinguish between right and wrong, he said.

The Tatmadaw government took over the responsibilities of the State in accordance with the historical requirement on 18 September 1988. Safeguarding the nation against the deterioration, it laid down three national policies and 12 objectives and strove to build the modern and developed nation through day and night. The security, stability and rule of law were the most important requirements for the nation. Without them, there would be no progress for the nation. All the local people who had undergone internal strife knew it. Therefore, the government had striven to make peace with national race armed groups through negotiations. As a result, 17 armed groups had returned to the legal fold and the entire nation was able to enjoy stability and security, the Secretary-2 said.

Kengtung region where people had had to live under fear amid the sound of explosion of guns and bombs, became quite another thing enjoying peace and stability. Only after ensuring peace and stability, development tasks could be carried out. Economy plays an important role in development of the nation. The nation had to place emphasis on agriculture because it lacked technology and investment capable of turning it into an industrialized one, he pointed out.

Therefore, the State had laid down an economic objective taking agriculture as the base for all-round development of other sectors. Agriculture was the basic economic activity. The efficiency of paddy for the nation, in which 70 per cent of its people in rural areas were engaged in farming, the Secretary-2 said. For agricultural development the government implemented 155 dams and reservoirs and 265 river water pumping projects spending large sum of money in the regions where there is insufficiency of water. In 1988-89, irrigated areas were 2.52 million and the irrigated acres rose to 5.1 million in 2002-2003. The regions of insufficient water got drinking water and became free from diseases.

He said government made efforts for sufficiency and surplus of paddy. In 1988, 654 million baskets of paddy were produced and over 1,000 million baskets in 2000-2001. Now efforts are being made for production of 1,200 million baskets of paddy and sufficiency of paddy for the growing population.

He said economic development means not only food sufficiency but also prosperity for high standard of living. Only when an industrialized country can be established will it be prosperous. As is known to all, industrialized nations are rich and their living standard is high. Investors and technicians are needed for industrial development.

Profits gained from agricultural, fish and meat and... (See page 15)
Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects Armed Forces
Day competition

YANGON, 11 Jan — 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Observance Leading Committee Chairman State Peace and Development Council Member Lt-Gen Kyaw Win of the Ministry of Defence this morning inspected the Armed Forces Day commemorative essay competition at basic education middle school level at the BEHS-1 in Mingala Taungnyunt Township and round the essay competition.

They proceeded to Thanaw BEHS-4. They were welcomed by the headmistress and teachers. Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party viewed the essay competition and handed over the donation of K 30,000 for the school to Headmistress Daw Hla Sein.

MNA

Home Affairs Minister arrives back from Thailand

YANGON, 11 Jan— After attending the fourth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Control of Transnational Crimes and the first ASEAN +3 Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing arrived back here by air this evening.

The minister was welcomed back at the airport by Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Minister for Peace and Development Council Member Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party viewed office U Ko Lay, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Phone Swe, departmental heads of Myanmar Police Force and departments and family members.

MNA

Drug traffickers sentenced

YANGON, 11 Jan—A combined team comprising members of local intelligence unit and Bago Special Anti-Drug Squad, acting on information, on 26 January 2003 searched Htay Oo (a) Maung Pu, son of U Phyu, of Myoma-4 Extension Ward, Nyaunglaybin under Section 15/19 (A) of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law by Nyaunglaybin Police Station.

Htay Oo (a) Maung Pu was sentenced to five years’ imprisonment under Section 15 and 25 years’ imprisonment under Section 19 (A) by Bago District Court to serve separately on 20 February 2003.

Likewise, a combined team comprising members of local intelligence unit and Taunggyi Special Anti-Drug Squad, acting on information, on 6 March 2003 searched the house of Ma San Myint (a) Ah Tu in Konninththa Ward, Mongshu under Section 15/19(A)/20 (A) of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law by Ah Llosaungthaik Police Station.

She was sentenced to 25 years’ imprisonment under Section 19 (A) by Taunggyi District Court on 1 September 2003.

MNA

Deputy Minister inspects pearl production camps

YANGON, 11 Jan — Deputy Minister for Mines U Myint Thein, together with officials, on 8 January, arrived at Myanmar Atlantic joint-venture in Pale Don-aw region in Taninthayi Division where officials reported on progress of pearl production.

The deputy minister gave necessary instructions and viewed stages of oyster reproduction. Afterwards, he inspected condition of oysters kept in water, regular cleaning tasks and attended to the requirements.

The deputy minister and party then visited Myanmar Tasaki pearl joint-venture in Domei island, where officials reported on progress of work. The deputy minister praised foreign and Myanmar experts and staff for progress of work and urged them to boost production.

On 9 January morning, they arrived at Myanmar pearl production camp in Pale Kyun Gyi where the managing director and officials reported to them on progress of joint-ventures and Myanmar pearl industry.

Afterwards, they viewed oyster reproduction carried out by Myanmar experts and cultivating pearls in oysters and cultured pearls.

After leaving instructions there, the deputy minister visited the basic education middle school in Pale Kyun Gyi. In the afternoon, local joint-ventures, Orient pearl industry, Myanmar Nino pearl production camp and gave necessary instructions.—MNA

Dinner hosted in honour of medical superintendents and specialists

YANGON, 11 Jan — A dinner was hosted at the hall of Yangon Command Headquarters yesterday evening in honour of medical superintendents and specialists of Yangon Division Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee, who served the townsships performing surgical operations for inborn defects.

It was attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife and Yangon Division MCWSC Patron Daw Khan That Htay, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint and wife, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo and wife, Deputy Commander Col Wai Lwin and wife, military region commanders and their wives. Health Department Director General Dr Wan Maung and wife, Yangon Division PDC members and their wives and chairman of Distict PDCs and their wives. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife presented certificates of honour to the medical superintendents and specialists, who performed surgical operations for inborn defects.

Later, Yangon Division MCWSC hosted the dinner.

Cultural Minister inspects excavation tasks in Mandalay Division

YANGON, 11 Jan — Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, accompanied by Archaeology Department Director-General U Nyunt Han and staff officers, on 9 January arrived at Myohla Village in Yamethin Township, Mandalay Division, to inspect Pyn cultural sites in the late Bronze Age and the early Iron Age, being excavated by the Mandalay branch of Archaeology Department (Upper Myanmar) Director U Moe Kyaw Kyaw of the Mandalay branch.

Before starting the task, the minister inspected the ancient foundry in Wayondaw Village about two miles to the west of Myohla Village. On a small hilltop near the village, three big foundries and a lot of lava, lava containing cast iron and stones mixed with iron have been found. The minister viewed human skeletons, Pyns, beads, earthen pots and cups.

After viewing the exca-vated objects, the minister proceeded to ancient Yan Aung Myin Shwelethla Pagoda in Lewe to inspect the damages caused by the earthquake. After presenting K 100,000 towards the funds of the pagoda, he inspected ancient moat and town walls to the north-west of the pagoda. He gave instructions on doing research works to find out the period when they were built.

The minister arrived back here in the evening.

MNA

Ancient Pyu beads excavated near Myohla village of Yamethin Township. — MNA
MNWAF President meets with members of WAWC in Ayeyawady Division

Yangon, 11 Jan — Officials of the Myanmar National Women’s Affairs Federation led by President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe and Vice-President Daw Khin Lay Thet held meetings with members of Ward Peace and Development Council in the Ayeyawady Division at 1:30 pm.

It was attended by Daw Tin Tin Latt, wife of the commander, members of the Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council, senior military officers, members of the women’s affairs supporting committee and Women’s Affairs Work Committee, members of the panel of patrons and executives of the Division Women’s Affairs Work Committee, members of District and Township Peace and Development Councils, members of Township Women’s Affairs Committees in Pathein, Hinthada, Myaungmya, Maubin, and Pyapon districts and members of Ward Peace and Development Council in Pathein and Kanyangdaung totalling 450 people.

First, President of the federation Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe made an opening speech. She said they were there to explain the organizational set-up and duties and responsibilities of MNWAF formed, with the aim of carrying out comprehensive tasks related to the women’s affairs discussed by the Prime Minister on 20 December. As Myanmar National Women’s Affairs Committee had its limits in covering the comprehensive tasks of women’s affairs of the entire nation, the federation had to be formed as a non-governmental organization to fully undertake the tasks in the interest of women and the State, she added.

It was certain that all the women would participate in the activities of the federation, she said, urging those present to systematically implement the tasks of the federation.

Next, Secretary of MNWAF Dr Daw San Shwe explained the organizational set-up and matters related to applying for the membership of the federation.

Afterwards, Vice-President Daw Khin Lay Thet explained the duties and responsibilities of educational, health, economic and environmental conservation groups.

Next, leader of the group for prevention of violence against women of MNWAF Daw Kyin San explained the duties and responsibilities of the groups for prevention of violence against women, prevention of trafficking in persons, and nurturing and rehabilitation of women: leader of cultural group Daw Thein Thein Nyunt the duties and responsibilities of the cultural group and working group for girls; leader of communication and information group Daw Mya Mya the duties and responsibilities of communication and information group and national race affairs working group; and leader of disciplinary group Prof Daw Khin Thein Yi the duties and responsibilities of disciplinary group and management and financial group.

Afterward, President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe made concluding remarks.

In the evening, the president and party met with members of Ayeyawady Division Women’s Affairs Committee and supporting committee at the guest house of the command. At the meeting, the president and officials replied to the queries concerning the organizational set-up and future tasks of the federation raised by the division committee.

At 1 pm on 10 January, the president and party together with Division WAWC Patron Daw Tin Tin Latt met with members of the Women’s Affairs Committee, the Maternal and Child Welfare Association, the Union Solidarity and Development Association and Red Cross Society and students of Nyawngsaung Village.

Get-together of old students to be held

Yangon, 11 Jan — The third get-together dinner of old students of St. Agnes’ Convent (Kalaw) will be held at the Princess Restaurant on Wadan Street in Lamdaw Township here at 6.30 pm on 19 January. For further details, contacts can be made to Daw Tin Myo ASye (Violette Tin Hla) Tel: 663014; Daw Tin Tin Oo (Rosemarie Bo) Tel: 527440; Dr Khin Tar Tra (Emma Myat) Tel: 294060; Dr Win Win Cho (Winner Cho Tom) Tel: 371285; and Daw Myint Myint Moe (Dore Soe) Tel: 660528. — (H)
Singapore, Malaysia seek to build new bridges

SINGAPORE, 11 Jan.—Nothing symbols the state of relations between Singapore and Malaysia like the wrangling over the future of the narrow 80-year old causeway that links the neighbours.

The causeway carries a pipeline through which Singapore receives the water that feeds everything from semiconductor plants to garden hoses.

Malaysia wants a new elevated bridge to allow ships to reach its southern port. Singapore wants a deal to guarantee the water supply at a reasonable price. Both sides are refusing to budge and talks are suspended.

The first visit to Singapore by Malaysia’s new Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, which begins on Monday, will seek to end the stalemate and move this acrimonious relationship toward reconciliation and rebuilding.

Both Singapore and Malaysian Government officials have publicly stated a willingness to forge the new approach, though most analysts believe it will take some time.

“The groundwork had been laid for a very cordial visit in which it is unlikely any serious contentious issues will be discussed,” said Andrew Tan, assistant professor at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies.

In an interview with Singapore’s state run ChannelNewsAsia, Abdullah said he hoped his visit would lead to the drawing up of a timetable to discuss all outstanding bilateral issues.

The price of the water Malaysia supplies to Singapore has been a long list of unresolved issues between the two countries which includes land reclamation projects near the Johor Strait, the relocation of Malaysia’s shipbuilding yards, and the city-state’s financial district, as well as the new bridge.

“The issues, we all know. What’s going to be different is the more the style and the approach, which will not be underlined or influenced too strongly by any former baggage,” said Ramon Navaratnam, a former civil servant and public policy commentator in Kuala Lumpur.—MNA/Reuters

China to retool electron-positron accelerator

BEIJING, 11 Jan.—China has launched a 640 million yuan (77.4 million US dollars) project to retool a Beijing-based electron-positron accelerator in a bid to keep its forward role in the world’s high-energy physics.

The most advanced colliding technology is to be used to renovate the Beijing Electron-Positron Collider (BEPAC) built in 1989 by the Institute of High-energy Physics (IHEP) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), according to media reports on Friday.

BEPAC was used to be the world’s eighth high-energy accelerator experimental centre.

To add a new storage ring to the existing ring of the collider to spur the electron and positron beams’ movement and collision, the construction of the colliding zone, the retooled collider will have 97 pairs of electron beams as against the original one pair, and its luminosity, a leading parameter, be 100 times stronger than that of the original BEPAC.

Meanwhile, scientists will make improvements to the grobing device of the Beijing Spectrum Meter, to greatly raise its measuring accuracy and lessen errors, so that it will be adapted to the operation requirements of the retooled collider.

The upgrading will help the BEPAC attain its forward status as one of the most ideal colliding experiment facilities of its kind.

The electron-positron collider is now applied to a range of research covering material, pharmaceutical, semiconductor and micro-electronic researches.

The BEPAC and Beijing Spectrum Meter have enabled Chinese scientists to make significant progress over the past 15 years since 1988 in the field of high-energy physics with serial world-class research findings.

Chinese scientists have also been able to exploit synchronous radiation device, an accessory of the collider for post-genome research projects and even the macromolecule of an enzyme of the virus of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), the Beijing Morning Post quoted scientists at the institute.

CAS acknowledged that “it used to take 27 years for scientists to study the molecular structure of haemoglobin. With the help of the synchronous radiation device, however, it will take only one single day.”—MNA/Xinhua

Reception marks 40th anniversary of Sino-Tunisian ties

BEIJING, 11 Jan.—A major Chinese non-governmental friendship organization held a reception here Friday to mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Tunisia.

Wang Zhaoshuo, president of the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), said the two countries have conducted friendly exchanges and fruitful cooperation in political, economic and cultural fields since the establishment of diplomatic links 40 years ago.

Chen said the unremitting efforts of the two countries’ senior leaders have laid a solid foundation for further cooperation between the two sides. He said that in April 2004, the Tunisian-Chinese Friendship Association will organize a delegation of Tunisian entrepreneurs to visit China. The Tunisian business people will discuss with their Chinese counterparts cooperation in medical services, public health, tourism and shipping.

In addition, the CPAFFC will organize groups of Chinese entrepreneurs to visit North African countries, including Tunisia, he said.

Chen expressed the hope that the mutually-beneficial friendship cooperation between the two sides would be strengthened.

The Tunisian Ambassador to China Salah Hamdi expressed his gratitude for China’s support for Tunisia’s economic and social development. He said the overall cooperation between the two countries will help promote the bilateral relations to a new stage, and make contributions to international and regional stability, as well as mutual development.—MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia’s leading airline to acquire up to 15 “Boeings”

JAKARTA, 11 Jan.—National flag carrier Garuda Indonesia has confirmed it would add 10 to 15 new Boeing 737-300s to enhance its service in the domestic market.

“Two of the new aircraft arrived here last December,” Garuda president Indra Setiawan was quoted as saying by the official Antara news agency.

He added the new aircraft would serve the company’s Citilink service, which offers low-cost flights on domestic routes now using only five Fokker F-28s.

Indra said the aircraft will also be used to boost the company’s competitiveness in competition with other regional airlines. “Low-cost airlines have become the focus of attention of regional airlines, including Singapore Airlines, which has set up a subsidiary, Tiger Airways,” he said.

He said Garuda hopes to achieve a 15-per cent increase in passengers this year. The Ministry of Transportation previously predicted that the number of air passengers this year would reach 20 million, or 25 per cent higher than the figure in 2003.—MNA/Xinhua

Gansu Province confiscates 959 kilos of drugs in 2003

LANZHOU, 11 Jan.—Police in northwest China’s Gansu Province seized a total of 959 kilos of drugs of various kinds in the last year, the Provincial Public Security Bureau said Saturday.

According to Zhao Juzhong, bureau director and deputy director of the provincial anti-drug committee, the province investigated 791 drug cases in the January-November period of 2003, seizing 130.4 kilos of heroine, 27 kilos of opium, 3.4 kilos of ecstasy pills and 798.4 kilos of other kinds of drugs.

A total of 1,015 drug-related criminals were arrested.

Zhao said that although great achievements were made in the crackdown on drug crimes in 2003, the police are facing growing difficulties, as drug criminals are updating their methods, becoming more tricky with the use of modern intelligent communications, and making the drug trade more organized and family-controlled.—MNA/Xinhua
U.S. obesity epidemic means more are disabled

WASHINGTON, 11 Jan—The U.S. obesity epidemic may be causing another, quieter epidemic of disability, including back trouble and diabetes, health experts reported recently.

Younger Americans are becoming disabled more often, many with back pain, according to studies published in the journal "Health Affairs." Although there was no direct proof, the researchers believed obesity was most likely the cause.

"Obesity is the only trend that is consistent in size with what we found happening with disability," said Darius Lakdawalla, an economist at the RAND research institute who helped write the study.

"It's the only suspect. We found that there is something going on with people's health and that the increase is not just a case of people dropping out of the workforce and going on the public dole," the economist said.

More than 60 percent of Americans are overweight or obese. In 2000, 38.8 million Americans or 31 percent of the adult population were classified as obese, meaning "no margin for healthy weight," the researchers said. Obese people are more likely to suffer heart attacks, strokes, several forms of cancer and less-deadly disability such as backache.

Lakdawalla and colleagues at RAND and at Stanford University in California analyzed data from the National Health Interview Survey, an annual nationwide government survey of about 36,000 households.

They looked for disability trends among people aged 18 to 69 between 1984 and 2000. They found substantial changes in reported disability rates among those under 50 but not among the elderly.

Among those aged 50 to 59, disability rose only among those who were obese, the study found.

"Obesity accounts for about half the increased disability among those ages 18 to 29," they wrote in their report. Much of the time, diabetes and back pain was to blame and the researchers said the links with obesity were clear. This will end up costing private money, the researchers said.—MNA/Reuters

France, Libya sign UTA bomb compensation pact

PARIS, 11 Jan—Families of 170 people killed in the 1989 bombing of a French UTA commuter flight off the Libyan coast said six Libyans signed a 170-million-U.S.-dollar compensation deal with Tripoli on Friday in Libya's latest trend to mend relations with the West.

The accord was signed in Paris by a representative of a private Libyan foundation and the son of Libyan leader Muammar Kadhafi. France and Libya were expected later in the day to issue a statement pledging to strengthen bilateral ties.

"This accord shows that Libya is changing, has changed," said Guillaume Denoix de Saint-Marc, who lost his father in the attack and helped lead negotiations that led to the deal.

The pay-out total, clinched late last year by family representatives and Libyan negotiators, falls short of the 2.7 billion U.S. dollars pay-out agreed by Libya in the last year for 270 victims of the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland. But Denoix de Saint-Marc defended the French deal, saying the difference between it and the Lockerbie pay-out was not as large as it seemed.

He estimated between 40-60 percent of the Lockerbie compensation would disappear in legal fees and a further 10 percent in federal taxes. He reckoned the Lockerbie families would end up with at most 2 million U.S. dollars each.—MNA/Reuters

Study finds farmed salmon loaded with chemicals

WASHINGTON, 11 Jan—Farmed salmon contains far more toxic chemicals than wild salmon — high enough to suggest that fish-eaters limit how much they eat, U.S. researchers said here.

The culprit is "salmon chow" — the feed given to the captive fish, the researchers report in this week's issue of the journal Science. Many health experts urge people to eat fish such as salmon because it contains healthy fats, especially the Omega-3 fatty acids that can lower the risk of heart disease and perhaps have other health benefits, too.

But the researchers, as well as environmental groups, said the findings in Science indicated that people should choose their fish carefully. They should also demand that salmon be clearly labelled to indicate whether it is farmed or wild so they can make informed choices about which fish to eat.

The team at Indiana University, University at Albany, Cornell University and elsewhere analysed toxic contaminants in 700 farmed and wild salmon taken from markets in 16 cities in Europe and North America.

"We think it's important for people who eat salmon to know that farmed salmon have higher levels of toxins than wild salmon from the open ocean," environmental affairs professor Ronald Rites of Albany, who led the study, said in a statement. They looked for 13 different chemicals known to build up in the flesh of fish, including polychlorinated biphenyls or PCBs, dioxins, toxaphene, dieldrin, hexachlorobenzene, lindane, heptachlor epoxide, cis-nonachlor, trans-nonachlor, gamma-chlordane, alpha-chlordane, Mirex, endrin and DDT. Some are pesticides, others are industrial by-products, and many are known or suspected cancer-causing agents.

Farmed salmon taken from markets in Frankfurt, Edinburgh, Paris, London, Oslo, Boston, San Francisco and Toronto had the highest concentrations, and the researchers said consumers should eat no more than one-half to one meal of salmon per month. A meal was eight ounces (one-quarter of a kilo) of uncooked meat.—MNA/Reuters

Philippines buying 20 helicopters from S'pore firm

MANILA, 11 Jan—The Philippines is buying 20 refurbished helicopters from a Singapore defence contractor, the Air Force said on Friday, in a 12-million-U.S.-dollar deal that will bolster the region's weakest military force.

Singapore Technologies Aerospace, Southeast Asia's largest aviation service company, is expected to deliver the first batch of three upgraded versions of the U.S.-built UH-1H helicopters in March, Air Force spokesman Major Restituto Padilla told Reuters.

The Philippines will get at least three helicopters, which date from the Vietnam War era, every month until all 20 are delivered by the end of this year.

"This is the best deal we can get considering our limited resources," Padilla said. "It is not a new aircraft but they will be better because of night-flying capability.

The UH-1H is the workhorse of the Philippine military, performing medical evacuations, troop transport and close air support on operations against a host of Muslim and Communist rebel groups.

The Air Force already has about 60 UH-1Hs, all acquired from the United States under a foreign military sales programme, but less than 30 are in flying condition.

Padilla said the funds for the helicopter transfer deal were drawn from the three-billion-U.S.-dollar military modernization programme, but that only 90 million U.S. dollars was available for reimbursement.

Singapore Technologies Aerospace's regional marketing director Anthony Tan said it was still awaiting the final award. Padilla said the contract was awarded on December 2 but required a second agreement with Defence Secretary Eduardo Ermita and General Narciso Abaya, the military's chief of staff.—MNA/Reuters

HK, France sign immigration cooperation protocol

HONG KONG, 11 Jan—The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government and France signed the Immigration Cooperation Protocol here Friday. The protocol was signed in the presence of Security Ambrose Lee and visiting Minister of Interior of France Nicolas Sarkozy.

"The protocol, which enters into force with immediate effect, enables the two services to raise the level of cooperation through closer contacts, exchange of information and sharing and information exchange," a spokesman for Hong Kong's Immigration Department said.

"We warmly welcome the conclusion of the protocol with France, which reflects our determination of the two services to work more closely and cooperatively to tackle immigration problems of concern, and opens the door for greater Hong Kong-France cooperation on immigration fronts," the spokesman added.

"The Immigration Department has signed similar protocols with Portugal, Belgium, Finland and the United Kingdom. Hong Kong has paid a visit to Beijing and signed an agreement on enhancing cooperation between Hong Kong and the French police with Chinese State Councillor Zhou Yongkang on Thursday," the spokesman added.
Stuttgart’s Wenzel moves to Kaiserslautern

BERLIN, 11 Jan—VfB Stuttgart defender Timo Wenzel is moving to fellow Bundesliga club FC Kaiserslautern, Kaiserslautern said on Friday.

Wenzel’s contract with Stuttgart was due to run until June 30 this year but the 26-year-old will now start training with Kaiserslautern on Friday. Neither club would give details of the deal beyond saying that Wenzel’s contract runs until 2006.

The defender told Kaiserslautern’s official web site: “I proved in Stuttgart that I can get results... I want to help Kaiserslautern and I think I can.”

Kaiserslautern, four-times German champions, are 15th in the 18-strong Bundesliga after 17 games, one place above the relegation zone.

German striker Miroslav Klose has said he may leave the struggling western German club during the winter break, which ends on January 31.

Stuttgart are four points behind leaders Werder Bremen in fourth place but level on 35 points with the other two clubs above them — Bayern Munich and Bayer Leverkusen.

Juventus latest of “seven sisters” to hit trouble

MILAN, 10 Jan—They were known as the ‘seven sisters’ — the giants of the Italian game who, thanks to the backing of millionaire businessmen, could be guaranteed to be among the contenders for the Serie A title and European trophies.

But now that Tanzi has been arrested, having admitted to diverting about 500 million euros from Parmalat to family companies, all that remains are debts and a very uncertain future.

It will all sound very familiar to fans of Fiorentina, who fell from the Champions League to the fourth division after the financial mismanagement of Fiorentina’s benefactor can no longer be considered to be in the same bracket as AC Milan, Inter, Juventus and AS Roma.

The sides shared 16 goals in their two games last season but Palma, currently sixth in Serie A, have been a central figure in Maradona’s ‘sugar daddy’, film mogul Vittorio Cecchi Gori, led them to bankruptcy in 2002.

Despite selling top players, such as Rui Costa and Francesco Toldo, Fiorentina were unable to pay their wages and after relegation to Serie B they were formally declared bankrupt.

Ferguson says Consistency, key to United’s success

MANCHESTER, 11 Jan—Alex Ferguson said consistency was the key to Manchester United opening up a three-point gap at the top of the Premier League.

United have won their last six League games, while their 18-point lead means the cash runs out.

On Thursday, Italy’s industry minister gave the go-ahead for the club to be put up for sale at the end of the season and two or three of their players placed on the transfer list straight away. Parma, currently sixth in Serie A, have been torn apart by claims of financial irregularities.

It was the millions injected by Parmalata’s founder Calisto Tanzi that helped transform the club in the 1990s from a lower division provincial outfit into a serious force in Europe capable of attracting some of the world’s top players.

Michael Jackson finds new, luxurious pad in Beverly Hills

LOS ANGELES, 11 Jan—Embattled US pop superstar Michael Jackson has rented a luxurious hillside mansion in Beverly Hills after he said he could no longer live in his Neverland Ranch in central California, a web site report said Thursday.

The new residence is a massive, 20-million-dollar estate that overlooks a children’s park in Coldwater Canyon.

“It’s one of the crown jewels of Beverly Hills,” a real estate source was quoted as saying.

The web site report said the 37,000-square-foot mansion, sitting on 2.25 acres in one of the most exclusive areas of north Beverly Hills, has nine bedroom suites, 10 baths, a theater, a tennis court and indoor and outdoor swimming pools.

It said Jackson rented the mansion in early December.

MNA/Reuters

Arsenal’s Thierry Henry (L) fights for the ball with Middlesbrough’s Gareth Southgate (R) at Highbury in London on 10 Jan, 2004. —I/nsetra

United to sign Celtic midfielder Miller

MANCHESTER (England), 11 Jan—Manchester United have agreed a deal to sign Celtic midfielder Liam Miller, the English champions announced on its web site on Friday.

The 22-year-old will move to Old Trafford on a long-term contract on July 1 after finalizing a pre-contract agreement.

“We recognized the potential of Liam. He has had a great season at Celtic. He is very much part of our progressive thinking of developing young talent and he is considered to be in the same bracket as AC Milan, Inter, Juventus and AS Roma. Fans of twice UEFA Cup winners Parma are the latest to discover that a wealthy benefactor can bring as much pain as joy — when the deal with the Italian club and Barcelona officials will now begin direct talks with Davids, who is reported to be in Surinam attending the funeral of an aunt.

The former Ajax and AC Milan player has fallen out with the Serie A champions after failing to renew his contract, which expires at the end of the season.

Davids fits the bill of the combative player that Barca coach Frank Rijkaard wants to sign to bolster the Catalan club’s midfield.

Renowned for his uncompromising play, Davids first made his name when he played alongside Rijkaard in Ajax’s 1995 European Cup-winning side.

In 2001 he tested positive for the steroid nandrolone after a Serie A match against Udinese, but maintained he was innocent of any doping offence and made a successful return to action after serving a four-month ban.

He was sent off in last season’s Champions League quarterfinal, second leg victory over Barcelona, but after serving a one-match ban he was instrumental in helping Juve to an impressive 3-1 victory over Real Madrid in the semifinal, second leg.

Juve went on to lose the final to AC Milan after a penalty shoot-out.

Barcelona are a disappointing 12th in the Spanish Primera Liga. 18 points behind leaders and bitter rivals Real, but they are only four points behind rivals Osasuna, who occupy the final Champions League berth.

MNA/Reuters

Celtic rising star Liam Miller, seen here in 2002, signed a pre-contract agreement with English champions Manchester United — I/nsetra

Ferguson, seen here in 2002, has won the last seven matches and Chelsea have taken seven points from a possible 18.

In periods of games recently we have done very well,” the United manager told reporters on Friday. “Hopefully by March and April we’ll be at full throttle. But the most important thing is that we are doing well at the moment and keeping a consistency.

“The players are playing with great determination, particularly in their defending.”

United winning streak will be tested at Old Trafford Sunday by a Newcastle United side that has won its last two games.

The sides shared 16 goals in their two games last season and Ferguson is expecting another open contest.

“Both clubs share the same philosophy of attacking football,” he said. “They are exciting games and normally you’ll see a real attacking game when the two teams meet.” — MNA/Reuters

Michael Jackson finds new, luxurious pad in Beverly Hills

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MNA/Reuters

US pop superstar Michael Jackson — I/nsetra

The estate is owned by a group of Asian businessmen, who tried to sell the house, but took it off the market in October. — MNA/Xinhua

Answers for yesterday’s Crossword Puzzle
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Secretary-2 inspects regional development in Kengtung District, Shan State (East)

YANGON, 11 Jan—Vice-Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Thein Sein unveiled the signboard to mark the opening ceremony.

Next, Secretary-2 Li-Gen Thein Sein and party inspected the computer skills room, the computer aided instruction room, the audio system, the painting room, the domestic science room, the fine arts room and the altar room and teaching and learning of the students.

The second session of opening of the new school building and opening of the multimedia classrooms was held at the meeting hall and eighth grader Ma Hnin Wai Wai Oo, on behalf of the students, spoke words of thanks in English.

Next, Headmistress Daw Khin Myint Wai reported on measures taken for opening the multimedia classrooms and Chairman of the School Board of Trustees, on concerted efforts made for opening the multimedia teaching center.

Afterwards, the Secretary-2 made a speech. He said that the emergence of two-storey new school building will benefit the students in their pursuit of formal education.

He expressed his belief that the parents, local people and students will feel pleased as teachers will be able to teach the students science and technology with the use of modern teaching and learning aids after the emergence of the new school building.

The emergence of the new school building complete with modern teaching and learning aids can be attributed to the earnest efforts of the government and the people.

The government has laid down the education promotion programmes and is implementing them. In this context, the special four-year education plan has been laid down and is being implemented to be able to keep abreast with ASEAN nations. To keep pace with changes and developments, the government has laid down the long-term 30-year education plan and is implementing it.

At a time when science and technology is making progress with greater momentum, the Information Technology (IT) which is based on computers is ranking top. That is why IT is being introduced at the basic education schools. Based on the new school building facilitated with the multimedia classrooms, the students are to try their best to become the outstanding ones capable of serving the interests of the State and the people.

He also urged the teachers to nurture and train their pupils to become intellectuals and intelligenstia on whom the State can rely.

After the ceremony, the Secretary-2 and party had a group photo taken together with teachers and students.

Afterwards, the Secretary-2 and party proceeded to Kengtung General Hospital (200-bed) where they were welcomed by the medical superintendent, the specialists and health staff.

Next, the Secretary-2 inspected the medical ward (male), the medical ward (female), the surgical ward, the paediatric ward, the traumatic injury ward and the eye ward and attended to the needs.

At the meeting hall of the hospital, the Secretary-2 and party were reported by the medical superintendent on opening of the hospital on 18 May 2003 and measures taken, raising trust funds for medicines to be used at the hospital, free medical treatment, participation of the people and field trips made by the specialists.