Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects development tasks in Dawei, Kawthoung

Yangon, 14 Jan — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt met with members of Dawei District Peace and Development Council, departmental officials, townsenders, members of social organizations and entrepreneurs at the City Hall in Dawei at 7 am on 12 January.

First, Chairman Lt-Col Khin Maung Kywe of Dawei District Peace and Development Council reported to the Prime Minister on land use and reclamation, sown acreage and yield of monosoon paddy, cultivation of summer paddy, local rice sufficiency, cultivation of oil palm, rubber and pepper, arrangements for extended cultivation, issuance of fishing licenses, fishing and income, conservation of forest, mining of lead, tungsten and alloy, power distribution, regional development tasks, transportation, education and health care services in the district.

After hearing the report, the Prime Minister fulfilled the requirements and gave a speech. He said he, dignitaries of the State and departmental heads came to the region to help with the arrangements for the development and long-term progress of the region.

He had visited rural areas at the edge of Launglon Township to witness the educational, health, social and economic conditions of the rural people, transportation of the areas and fulfilled the requirements on the spot, the Prime Minister said.

As the transportation plays an important role in regional development, he had also looked into the transport conditions of Dawei region by car and gave instructions on maintenance of roads, the Prime Minister added.

Efforts were being made for the long-term development of the region by building a deepsea port and a highway to link the region with the neighbouring and regional countries. At the same time, plans were under way to establish an industrial zone in the region and to upgrade Maungma-khan beach into a modern resort of international standard, the Prime Minister said.

On completion of the projects, the region would develop speedily. Requirements for development of education and health had been fulfilled during the visit. He had made arrangements to upgrade Auk Yebyu Basic Education High School (Branch) and Kyauk Nimaw Affiliated High School in Launglon Township into high schools and Launglon 16-bed hospital into a 25-bed one, the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister, pointing out the field tours of the dignitaries of the State to rural areas of the country, urged the officials concerned to make field tours of rural areas and look into the social life of local people and carry out necessary works for development of rural areas. Only with the supervision at different levels, regional and national development tasks would meet with success, he said.

The Government had been implementing national development projects for the equitable development of the entire Union. Besides border areas development projects, special development zones had been set up in states and divisions to ensure that there was no development gap in the entire nation.

In Taninthayi Division, development projects were based in Dawei and Myeik regions. So, universities and 200-bed hospitals had emerged in the regions. In Shan State, besides Taunggyi, Lashio and Kengtung, a special development zone was established in Loilem-Panglong region and development projects were being (See page 8)
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.

People’s Desire
* Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
* Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation
* Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
* Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

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 everyday by each household amounts to saving power that is equal to the capacity a 20-megawatt power station can supply.

Salone Traditional Festival stage show
YANGON, 14 Jan — The traditional festival of Salone, people of Myeik Archipelago will be held on a grand scale under the sponsorship of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council and the Ministry of Hotels & Tourism with a view to promoting tourism industry in the division. A fund-raising musical stage show will be presented at Mya Yeik Nyo Hotel here on 31 January evening with famous songsters, it is learnt. — MNA

Hole-in-one
YANGON, 14 Jan — Military Attache of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Myanmar Senior Colonel Xu Shulai got hole-in-one at the Dean Cup Invitational Golf Tournament, sponsored by him at Dagon Golf Course at 3.30 pm yesterday. He drove the ball with Titleist Honma Golf Clubs at 279 booths there. — MNA

Cooperative Product Exhibition & Market Festival
YANGON, 14 Jan — The 2004 Cooperative Product Exhibition & Market Festival continued for the second day at the Cooperative Trade Centre (Saya San Plaza) here today. Minister for Cooperatives Maj-Gen Htay Oo visited the exhibition this morning and gave necessary instructions. Contracts worth over K 59.425 million were signed this morning. Consumer goods, import-substitute items, regional products, textiles, cosmetics, etc are displayed at 279 booths there. — MNA

All this needs to be known
* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appeased

Salone Festival 2004
(Sea Gypsy Festival)
Ma Kyone Galet Village, Myeik Archipelago
Union of Myanmar
14 to 17 February 2004

Visitors buying pure coffee at the Chin State Cooperative Society Shop at the Coop Product Exhibition & Market Festival. — MNA

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Education Work Committee Chairman U Sein Win Hlaing explains matters relating to the course. — MNA

Rice marketing course opened
YANGON, 14 Jan — The Myanmar Rice Marketing Course (Programme-1) No 3 was opened with ceremony at the training Centre of UMFCU on Bo Sun Pat Road, Pabedan Township here yesterday.
Adviser of UMFCU U Khin Maung Yi delivered the opening address and Education Work Committee Chairman U Sein Win Hlaing explained matters relating to the course.
Altogether 46 trainees are attending the course which will last up to 23 January. — MNA

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

The New Light of Myanmar
Thursday, 15 January, 2004

Let’s actively and unitedly work for regional development
The Union of Myanmar is at the centre of Southeast Asia and South Asia. Now, there has been increased relations among the nations of these two regions in the economic, trade, social and cultural fields and plans are under way to build highways linking the countries in the regions crossing Myanmar. And measures have been taken to boost cooperation among Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand in the economic, trade, social and cultural sectors, especially in tourism industry, and for the construction of the highway linking India, Myanmar and Thailand.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party on 11 January visited Launglon Township, Taninthayi Division, and inspected the site chosen for the construction of a deep-sea port.

In his meeting with responsible personnel, the Prime Minister said that the purpose of his visit to the Dawei region was to make a first-hand study of the conditions for the construction of a deep-sea port and a highway. Steps have been taken to build a deep-sea port and a warehouse and an industrial zone at Hnyawbyin village 7 1/2 miles away from the mouth of the Dawei river. On completion, the port will surely contribute to the strengthening of cooperation among regional countries and regional development.

During World War II, in Taninthayi Division, there were motor roads and railroads linking Myanmar with the neighbouring countries.

However, these roads disappeared for different reasons. Now there are favourable conditions for the construction of roads linking several nations in the region.

Tourism industry is very popular in the world today. As Myanmar has a great deal of potential for the development of tourism industry, the Government is encouraging the development of its tourism industry.

Therefore, we would like to urge the respective ministries, local authorities, departmental personnel and local people to actively and unitedly lend themselves to the tasks of implementing the objectives of the State and developing their region.
Another US chopper crashes in Iraq amid fresh US criticism of war

BAGHDAD, 14 Jan—Another US helicopter crashed in Iraq, probably shot down by guerrilla fire, as a probe got under way in Washington into the use of official documents in a book accusing President George W Bush of planning to invade the country all along.

The Apache helicopter crashed near the hotbed town of Fallujah west of Baghdad, the third such incident in two weeks, as Iraq remains in the grip of insurgency exactly one month after the capture of Saddam Hussein.

"We are aware a helicopter went down," a US military spokesman said. "There is an initial report of enemy fire."

Two crew members survived but the US military said it did not know whether they had been injured in the crash, which happened around 10.00 am (0700 GMT) some 35 kilometres (20 miles) northwest of Fallujah.

Nine US soldiers were killed when a Blackhawk helicopter was hit by "enemy fire" near Fallujah last Thursday, an official said. A soldier died and another was wounded when ground fire struck a Delta Kiowa reconnaissance aircraft on January 2.

Soros says Bush must not be re-elected

WASHINGTON, 14 Jan—Billionaire fund manager George Soros, who plans to spend millions of dollars to try to prevent George W Bush from being re-elected in November, said on Monday the US President was pursuing an undesirable dream of American supremacy.

The financier and philanthropist likened the Bush Administration's international policies to George Orwell's Animal Farm. In that book the farm animals are all equal but the powerful pigs take charge and change the rules to justify their behaviour.

Soros said Bush "used the war on terror as a pretext to pursue a dream of American supremacy that is neither attainable or desirable."

"I consider it crucial that the policies of the Bush Administration be rejected in the forthcoming election," Soros said in a speech promoting his new book at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Soros, whose 11.5-billion-US-dollar Soros Fund Management is one of the world's largest hedge funds, has pledged 12.5 million US dollars to his campaign to defeat Bush.

Bush has raised more than 130 million US dollars in campaign funds toward a goal of at least 170 million US dollars. But even with the large war chest and a big advantage in fund-raising over Democratic candidates, the Bush campaign says it could be outspent because Soros and others will spend up to 400 million US dollars on issue advertisements.

Soros said the invasion of Iraq was an example of the "Bush doctrine" which he charges entails pre-emptive military action and lack of tolerance for military rivals, suggesting two levels of national sovereignty in which the US is "exempt" from constraints of international law.

"This is reminiscent of George Orwell's famous book Animal Farm in which all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others," said Soros, a Hungarian-born American.

"If we re-elect Bush in 2004 we endorse the Bush doctrine and we will have to live with the consequences," he added. — MNA/Reuters

Singapore schools to begin mass SARS checks

SINGAPORE, 14 Jan—Singapore will start taking the temperature of school students this week to guard against a fresh outbreak of the deadly respiratory illness, the government said on Monday.

All of Singapore's nearly 600,000 students — from kindergarten to junior college — will have their temperatures taken, beginning on Wednesday, said Saravanan Tanapul, a Ministry of Education spokesman. About 53,000 first-year students were given free digital thermometers last month, he said.

Singapore was the world's fifth-most affected region in last year's SARS outbreak that began in southern China and was spread by travellers. About 8,000 people were infected worldwide and nearly 800 of them died. — MNA/Xinhua

Thailand targets 12 million tourists in 2004

BANGKOK, 14 Jan—The Tourism Authority of Thailand has launched a campaign to promote tourism to attract 12 million tourists who may spend around 9.6 billion US dollars in the country, the Business news newspaper reported Tuesday.

The campaign under the concept “Thailand the Heart of Asia” was directed at all market segments, including high end workers, families, students and youngsters. It would focus on the main markets including South Korea, China, Japan, the United States and Malaysia.

The new strategy also aims to increase the average tourist daily spending to 107.5 dollars to 112.5 dollars from the current 95 dollars and to increase the average length of stay to nine days from seven days. — MNA/Xinhua

US to open Iraq bids to more countries

MONTERREY (Mexico), 14 Jan—The United States is shifting its position on which countries will be allowed to bid for a second round of major reconstruction contracts in Iraq and will allow Canadian firms to compete, a Canadian official said Tuesday.

The official, speaking on the sidelines of a summit of Americas leaders in Mexico, also said it was likely that French and German companies would be allowed to compete for the contracts.

"We will not have access to the first major wave of contracts, which is closed. We will have access to the second major wave of contracts," the official told reporters.

This is a policy decision that the Americans have come to over the last four weeks. It will apply to countries who have made significant contributions to the reconstruction of Iraq. I am told it is likely France and Germany will also have access.

The United States angered a number of countries late last year when it insisted that only companies from countries that supported the US-led war in Iraq would be allowed to bid for major reconstruction contracts. — MNA/Reuters

Governing Council says Al-Arabiya to resume Iraq coverage soon

BAGHDAD, 14 Jan—The Iraqi Governing Council is in talks with Al-Arabiya aimed at lifting a ban on the Dubai-based satellite television from coverage in Iraq.

"I think we will close that chapter very quickly — we are just finalising our understanding," council member Samir Sumaiyyah said, adding that he hoped Al-Arabiya will resume coverage soon.

Al-Arabiya was banned on November 24 by the council from working in Iraq on charges of “murder incitement” after it broadcast a tape of ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein calling for attacks on council members.

The Saudi-owned broadcaster has denied the charges and the ban was condemned by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. Iraq’s interim Governing Council is also pushing for a comprehensive media law that would regulate some content as the country moves towards self-governance while the US-led coalition is advocating a more liberal approach.

The council invited journalists to what was to be a briefing about the role of a future industry watchdog called the National Media Committee. The meeting, the first of its kind, never took place because of a booking conflict with a wedding at the same venue, according to Ibrahim al-Zubaidi, secretary-general of the council’s media committee.

Mr Zubaidi had intended to circulate a document titled “A Code of Conduct for Media Work” for “voluntary signature” by all journalists working in Iraq.

The document urged media to refrain from “fueling racial or ethnic tensions and inciting hate, violence and killing,” and not to use the terms “jihad” and “resistance” to describe attacks against “civilians and national institutions.” — Internet

Singapore was the world’s fifth-most affected region in last year’s SARS outbreak that began in southern China and was spread by travellers. About 8,000 people were infected worldwide and nearly 800 of them died. — MNA/Xinhua

A wounded Iraqi is wheeled into a hospital following clashes between Ukrainian soldiers and Iraqi demonstrators in the southern city of Kut. — MNA/Reuters

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US troops kill driver, child in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 14 Jan — US soldiers opened fire at a car in Baghdad, killing the driver and a 10-year-old boy, moments after an Army vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb, relatives said Tuesday.

One soldier was killed in Monday’s bombing, the US military said. The slaying increased the American death toll in Iraq to 495, with most of those deaths occurring after President Bush declared an end to major hostilities on 1 May.

Monday’s shooting is the latest in a growing number of cases of civilians being shot by US soldiers near the end of their tour before a massive rotation begins next month.

Coalition forces also “likely” shot to death four Iraqi civilians, including a 7-year-old boy, in a taxi near Tikrit earlier this month, a senior US Army officer said Tuesday.

A preliminary inquiry into the 3 January shooting indicated that a heavy-caliber machine gun was used, local commander Lt Col Steve Russell said. The report has been sent to military headquarters in Baghdad.

Brig General Mark Hertling, a deputy commander of the division responsible for security in the Iraqi capital, said Monday’s shooting “has not been investigated.”

The Baghdad shooting occurred near the Oil Ministry when the car passed two Humvees on a patrol, said Wijdan Abdel Wahab, whose two sisters, two nephews and a niece were in the car.

As the vehicle passed the convoy, one of the Humvees was hit by the roadside bomb and the other Humvee started shooting indiscriminately, Abdel Wahab told The Associated Press.

She said her nephew, 10-year-old Mustafa Jamali Shabki, and the family driver, identified only as Haidar, were killed. Mustafa’s 30-year-old mother, Istafrak, and 40-year-old aunt, Hayam, were seriously wounded, Abdel Wahab said.

She said the family is fed up with the situation and wants to “leave Iraq because of the Americans and the (US- installed) Governing Council.”

Istafrak was impaled in the eyes by shrapnel and could lose her sight if she survives, Abdel Wahab quoted doctors as saying.

Abdel Wahab said Hayam was shot in the hand and chest and suffered shrapnel wounds in the leg.

She said the family was coming back from a hospital where Hayam was undergoing treatment for asthma. The others went with her for the ride.

Istafrak’s other two children, 8-year-old Ahmed and 6-year-old Nour, suffered minor bruises and cuts but were not shot, she said.

Separately, the driver of the taxi, Ibrahim Allawi, told the AP this week he was transporting four passengers when he was caught behind a convoy of four Humvees on a bypass road leading to the main highway through Tikrit.

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

The shooting came from the lead vehicle in the convoy, Allawi said from his hospital bed, where he was recovering from his injuries. — Internet

Russian company denies US accusations of arms sales to Iraq

MOSCOW, 14 Jan — A Russian company denied selling military equipment to the government of ousted leader Saddam Hussein in face of renewed US charges that Russian companies had violated UN sanctions against Iraq.

“Since we received in 1996 the right to independently sell to the international arms market, KBP has never signed any contracts with Iraq and did not deliver any arms to this country,” an official with KBP told the ITAR-TASS news agency.

KBP Tula is one of the Russian companies which Washington accused of selling military equipment to Baghdad as the war against Iraq got underway in March 2003.

The company had asked its customers to provide “certificates of end-use,” Valery Vozbranny told the news agency.

Thus the governments that bought Tula’s arms assumed the responsibility not to resell the equipment and not to pass it on to third countries.

Up to now we have not had any evidence of any violations by our partners,” he said.

Over the weekend, senior US officials said that discoveries in Iraq had “corroborated” allegations of arms sales, a charge that Russia has vigorously denied.

One of the US officials said that Moscow’s denials of the allegations would make it harder for the US to prove its case.

“They were very difficult issues and we never received entirely satisfactory explanations of the evidence that we obtained in the heat of the war,” the official told reporters. — Internet

Oil at fresh postwar highs as US shivers

NEW YORK, London, 14 Jan — Oil prices hit fresh post-war highs on Monday as speculators bet on a market underpinned by low US crude inventories and the threat of another bout of Arctic weather in the United States.

US light crude futures rose 41 cents or just over 1 per cent to close at 34.72 US dollars a barrel, the highest price since the approach to the US-led invasion of Iraq in March.

London Brent closed 39 cents higher at 31.76 US dollars a barrel.

Speculative funds have driven the price strength, expecting another spell of very cold weather in the US Northeast, London Brent closed 39 cents higher at 31.76 US dollars a barrel.

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Ukrainian soldiers take shelter behind military vehicles after Iraqi demonstrators started throwing grenades towards them in the southern city of Kut recently.

Two US Army Apache attack helicopters fly over the Tigris River recently. A US AH-60 Apache helicopter ‘went down’ in Iraq west of Baghdad recently, a military spokesman said. — Internet

Iraqis gather around a truck which Iraqi police said was fired upon by American forces before slamming into another truck in Fallujah, Iraq on Tuesday, 13 Jan, 2004. According to witnesses, American forces opened fire killing two and wounding four after they were attacked in Fallujah following a protest in the city over the detention of a 17-year-old woman the day before. — Internet

Italian MSU Carabinieri, paramilitary police, Sgt. Mazzei Giovannibattista, stands in front of the destroyed former MSU Carabinieri headquarters, in Nasiriya, Iraq, on Tuesday, 13 Jan, 2004. A truck bomb rocked the headquarters of the Italian Carabinieri police in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriya on 12 Nov, 2003 killing 19 soldiers. — Internet

Wijdan Abdel-Wahab tries to comfort her sister Hayam who lies in a hospital bed in Baghdad with multiple gunshot and shrapnel wounds on Tuesday, 13 Jan, 2004 after a car she was travelling in was fired upon in Baghdad on Monday night. US soldiers opened fire at a car in the Iraqi capital, killing the driver and a 10-year-old boy, moments after an Army vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb, relatives said. One soldier was killed in the Monday bombing, the US military said. — Internet

US soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division on patrol in Tikrit. An Iraqi Civil Defence Corps soldier and an alleged attacker were killed in a firefight after security officials found a weapons cache in a vegetable truck, the US Army said. — Internet
Desperate for jobs, Iraqis take what they can get

Baghdad, 14 Jan — Mohammad Jawat used to teach mechanical engineering at Iraq’s Naval Academy in Basra. Now he has had to take a job as a security guard, checking identity papers and opening doors.

“Suddenly I found myself on the shelf,” he said. “When I went to the University of Baghdad they wouldn’t give me a job because I used to be part of the Ministry of Defence. I was four months without work. I feel like this (security job) isn’t my place, but if I leave it we won’t eat.”

Millions of Iraqis are either jobless or underemployed qualified people working as cleaners, guards, or drivers to pay the rent and put food on the table.

The disbanding of the old Army and firing of those associated with his regime has left even more people idle. The reconstruction effort has created jobs, but not enough.

Frustration is high, with job-related protests in the cities of Basra, Amara and Kut turning violent in recent days.

In Amara, six people died when soldiers and police shot at the crowd.

There are no reliable unemployment statistics in Iraq, but the United Nations and World Bank estimated in October that 50 per cent of the workforce was jobless or underemployed.

At a job centre in central Baghdad, women sat patiently in the hope that someone seeking domestic help may come in.

One man does, but leaves when he learns a housekeeper will cost 100,000 dinars (about 65 US dollars) a month.

“The government needs to create jobs. Real jobs. Cleaning the roads is not a solution. Security guards and so on are only a small percentage of people,” centre manager Sami Jawad said.

“Only when everyone has jobs will there be security. Iraq today needs security and work. Only that.”

Salama Ismail Ahmad said she was thinking to work as a cook. She left her job at the Health Ministry before the war, fearing bombs, and said she had failed to get it back.

“It’s my right to get my job back. Seventeen years I worked there. and it’s not just me. There were a lot of us,” she said.

Philippine economy grows 4.4% in 2003

Manila, 14 Jan— Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo announced Tuesday that the Philippine economy grew 4.4 per cent in 2003.

“The economy is moving up. GDP (gross domestic product) expansion accelerated to 4.4 percent (last year), the fastest since the Asian crisis,” Arroyo said in a statement.

Arroyo also said the economy is poised to grow more rapidly by 5.2 percent this year, with construction—a major job creator and a key indicator of investor confidence—expected to turn out as much as 7.8 per cent growth.

The government’s economic planning department is expected to announce details of last year’s economic performance in February. Economists had earlier said GDP growth last year was around 4.2 per cent, the lower end of the official target between 4.2 and 5.2 per cent.

The Philippines was among the nations in the region hit by the 1997/1998 financial crisis which plunged most economies into recession.

MNA/Xinhua

US troops kill seven in fuel smuggling incident

Tikrit, Iraq, 14 Jan—US troops killed seven men in a gun battle with an armed gang trying to steal fuel from a pipeline near the Iraqi town of Samarra, a US Army spokesman said here.

An Iraqi citizen led US troops late on Sunday to a group of about 40 men, armed with AK-47 assault rifles, who were trying to siphon fuel from a stretch of pipeline 11 miles north of Samarra, Sergeant Robert Cargie of the 4th Infantry Division told reporters in Tikrit.

The bandits, who had between 10 and 15 trucks, shot at the soldiers as they came forward to capture them, he said. The troops returned fire with rifles and a 125mm cannon on a Bradley fighting vehicle, killing seven.

“Three fuel trucks and one transport truck were destroyed,” Cargie said. He said the men did not succeed in breaching the pipeline.

Rampant fuel smuggling has contributed to chronic fuel shortages, Iraq’s world’s second-biggest oil reserves.

MNA/Reuters

ASEAN launches international year of rice

Jakarta, 14 Jan—The international year of rice was launched here Tuesday as a part of the commemoration of the international year of rice by the 10-member Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

The event in the ASEAN headquarters was opened by ASEAN Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong, who was witnessed by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) assistant director-general and regional representative for Asia and the Pacific, He Changchui, and ambassadors from ASEAN countries, China, Japan and South Korea.

Changchui said at the ceremony that the year 2004 has been declared the international year of rice because rice is the staple food for more than half of the world’s population.

“Rice is grown in all the continents of the world, ex...

MNA/Xinhua

Thailand says clear of bird flu

Bangkok, 14 Jan—Thailand, one of the world’s biggest chicken producers, is free of bird flu but is battling an outbreak of cholera in its poultry industry, a senior disease control official said on Tuesday. “I would like to insist that Thailand is free of bird flu,” Nirundorn Auptragonskul, director of the Agriculture Ministry’s Livestock Disease Control Division, told reporters.

He said the government had destroyed hundreds of thousands of chickens since November to stop the spread of a virulent strain of poultry cholera known as “Pasteurella Multocida Type A”.

“More chickens have been killed lately, but mainly due to poor farm management,” said Nirundorn. “The difference between the cholera and the bird flu is that the cholera can be cured by antibiotics, while bird flu cannot be cured,” he said, adding poultry cholera could not be transmitted to humans.

MNA/Reuters
Agricultural development measures inspected in Lashio

**Yangon**, 14 Jan — Member of the State Peace and Development Council and Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, accompanied by Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing and Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Aung Kyi, arrived at Tanyang yesterday afternoon. At the hall of the local battalion, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win met with officers, their families, departmental staff and gave instructions on extended agriculture for regional development.

In the evening, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspected high-yield summer paddy plantations in Nanpao village in Lashio Township and gave instructions to local farmers on high yield of crops and local rice sufficiency.

This morning, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win met with officers, other departmental staff and gave instructions on extended agriculture in Lashio Township.

On 120 acres of land, the commander reported to Lt-Gen Kyaw Win on measures being taken for local sufficiency of food.

The deputy commander, officials and farmers also reported on step nursing of high-yield paddy strain and progress of the tasks.

After hearing the reports, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win gave instructions on assistance being rendered by the Government for regional development, the collective efforts of departmental employees to successfully carry out their duties and harmonious cooperation among local farmers, departmental officials and local people.

Next, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win himself spread the strains of high-yield paddy crops together with the local farmers.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win also oversaw the 40-acre nursing ground being undertaken by Lashio District Peace and Development Council and another 40-acre paddy field being worked by the local battalion. Later, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspected a brick-making industry, being undertaken by North-East Command and Soe Soe Pyay brick company on the basis of mutual benefit, which will produce 40,000 bricks daily, and plantations of macadamia plants and honey orange plants. After hearing the reports presented by officials, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win gave instructions and attended to the requirements.

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**National Convention heading for national consolidation and flourishing of democracy**

Nowadays, the advancement in the inanimate world and human world depends on stability. Stable and peaceful conditions with developing productive forces go down in the history while unstable and restless conditions with decreasing productive forces are put aside throughout the history. Today, the developing nations that regarded their independence after the World War II can be categorized into two groups. The nations of the first group enjoying cumulative development in the economic, political and social sectors are now in the forefront. Among them, some have even become industrialized countries. The nations in the second group continue to face economic, political and social crises and various kinds of hardships. It is found that the difference between the two groups is based on whether or not they can choose the correct trend towards development.

According to the modern political economy, a developing nation can become a developed one only if it practices capitalism first but not socialism. It is totally right. Because, in the world, the nations that immediately practiced socialism first lag far behind in development while the nations that practised capitalism first have developed.

Some developing countries encountered total failure in making industry, being underdeveloped and then providing them with food and assistance. It is vividly found that certain big powers, so-called saviours, have bestowed themselves with selling arms to these nations and then providing them with food and assistance.

In the time of the Tatmadaw government the 17 armed groups of the national races, who were opposed to the successive governments for years, returned to the legal fold and joined hands with the government for national development.

It amounts to taking a great step for preventing the local conflicts which have completely ruined the mankind and productive forces.

Nowadays, the Tatmadaw government, which is marching to democracy after introducing market-oriented economic system, has set out the seven-point future political roadmap to democracy for national reconciliation through the forthcoming National Convention. That is why the government has been making efforts day in, day out for ensuring reconciliation with the national forces underground and aboveground.

The UN Secretary-General presented a report on Myanmar’s efforts for the national reconciliation and flourishing of democracy in the country to the 58th session of UN General Assembly on 6 November 2003. The UN Secretary-General stated in the report in which he said in the letter replied to the Prime Minister of Myanmar and in meeting with the Foreign Minister of Myanmar that the seven-point political roadmap of the State are firm steps which will lead to political reforms; and that he would like the political parties, the national leaders and the national race groups to participate in successful realization of the political roadmap.

At such a time, it is a golden opportunity for all to coordinate and discuss the differences with the family spirit while joining hands for the common objective through peaceful means. If they hesitate to grab the golden opportunity, it is sure that the momentum of national development will continue to be slow.

Therefore, the armed groups, especially those underground, are urged to return to the legal fold and participate in the National Convention in the interests of the State and the people in anticipation of the national reconciliation and flourishing of democracy in the nation.

Translation: MS + TS

Mya Aung Aung, Kyemon: 14-1-2004
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects... (from page 1)

implemented there, the Prime Minister said. Development projects were carried out in both eastern and western parts of Bago Division to ensure that they had harmonious development. In Kachin State, besides Myitkyina and Bhamo regions, development projects were being carried out in Mohntin and Moguamg regions.

Moreover, five rural development tasks such as education, health, transportation, water supply and economic development were also being carried out in the entire country. As development of all the rural and urban areas of the country was essential for the harmonious national development, work implementation of township level departmental personnel was important, the Prime Minister pointed out. Township level departmental personnel were required to make field tours of rural areas and fulfil the requirements of the local people. The Prime Minister urged the township level officials to form work committees for respective work sectors in cooperation with the departments concerned and to practise collective leadership and cooperation. Citing the goodwill and kindness of parents to their offspring, the Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects the pearls produced by Myanma Pearl Enterprise in Pale Island, Bokpyin Township, Tanintharyi Division.

A beautiful and pleasant scenery of Kawthoung Township. — MNA

As the Union was home to all the national races, harmonious development of all the regions of the country would strengthen the national consolidation, the Prime Minister said.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister urged those present to make concerted efforts, with the full sense of Union Spirit and national solidarity spirit, for the success of the seven-point future policy programme of the State laid down for the perpetuity of the Union and strengthening of national unity by the Government.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister and party arrived at Dawei Airport and inspected the passenger lounge and services for passengers. Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe and officials conducted the Prime Minister and party round the airport.

The Prime Minister gave instructions on upgrading of the runway of the airport.

Next, the Prime Minister, accompanied by Chairman of Tanintharyi Division Peace and Development Council Commander Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, left Dawei by air and arrived at Kawthoung at 9.30 am.

The Prime Minister and party were met at Kawthoung Airport by Supreme Court Justice Dr Tin Aung Aye, Officiating Commander of Tanintharyi Naval Base Headquarters Naval Captain Win Shin, Tactical Operations Commander Col Myint Tun, local authorities, departmental officials, and members of social organizations.

At 10 am, the Prime Minister met with members of Kawthoung District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials, townsenders, members of social organizations and national entrepreneurs at Myintzithaka hall in Kawthoung.

First, Chairman of Kawthoung District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Tin Soe briefed the Prime Minister on regional development tasks. The Prime Minister fulfilled the requirements for upgrading the Aye Yeikynye Basic Education High School (Branch) in Pale Island Basic Education Middle School into high schools and made arrangements for approval of the organizational set-up of Thaungbyu Basic Education Primary School.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister made a speech. He said he and the ministers and heads of departments came to Kawthoung to fulfill requirements for regional development.

He said Kawthoung has developed and become pleasant with magnificent buildings due to the government’s fulments. Being a forever.

He said departmental officials are to organize local people to make endeavors for regional development and food, clothing and shelter needs including sufficiency of food in the region and other personal goods without relying on others.

Tanintharyi Division gets better foundations for success of ecotourism and therefore the government is making arrangements for development with added momentum, he added. He said he would inspect arrangements for Salone traditional festival to be held in Makongalat Village on Cho Island as part of promotion of tourism.

He called on departmental officials and local people to make concerted efforts for regional development hand in hand with the government and the people.

The Prime Minister and party inspected health care for them. The Prime Minister and party watched skill demonstrations of the dolphins.

Managing Director of Shanhbara Col Ltd Dr Phone Win reported on matters related to Salone Marina and Resort Project.

Consultant expert Mr Jim Styers of Myanmar Dolphin Project presented a small dolphin statue to the Prime Minister who posed for documentary photos to gether with experts and staff of Shanhbara Co Ltd.

The Prime Minister and party observed along the beach and environs of the island and conditions for ecotourism. They arrived at Makongalat Village in Bo Cho Island where Salone traditional festival is to be held.

They were welcomed by members of village peace and development council, social organizations, teachers, students and local people.

Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu received arrangements for Salone traditional festival to be held in Makongalat Village in Bo Cho Island where Salone traditional festival is to be held.

The Prime Minister and party participated in the festival.

The Prime Minister and party watched skill demonstrations of the dolphins. Managing Director of Shanhbara Col Ltd Dr Phone Win reported on matters related to Salone Marina and Resort Project.
Health sector development reaches satisfactory level due to harmonious efforts of Government, academics, private sector, social organizations

Prime Minister addresses Myanmar Medical Association 50th Conference

Yangon, 14 Jan — Chair-
mum of the NHC Sec-
retary-2 of the State Peace and Developmen Council La-Gyi and Chair-
mum of Yangon Division Peace and Developmen Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Yangon mayor, deputy min-

isters, members of the NHC, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and Health Depart-
ment, heads of department, resident representatives of the UN agencies, the presi-
dent, executives and mem-
bers of the MMA, Myanmar doctors living abroad, mem-
bers of social organizations and guests.

Because of the spirit to serve the national interest or the family spirit — Blood is thicker than water — the 50th Conference of the 55-year-
old MMA can be held today.

The efforts to develop the Myanmar medical science and conduct public health care services are in accord with the lofty aims as well as the aims of the health sector to serve the national interest.

In this world today, there exist a continuous competi-
tion among the nations against one another on all fronts to serve their own in-
terest. Rather than relying on others, a developing na-
tion like Myanmar will have to strive with her own re-
sources to obtain and implement the useful knowledge and technol-
ologies from the people in other nations.

In the year 2003, the WHO declared that Myanmar was totally free from leprosy and polio. Like-
wise, effective measures can be taken to fight against such diseases as trachoma and blindness, and elephantiasis, removing them from the pub-
lic health problems. Success has been achieved to some extent in a bid to prevent and control such diseases as hepatitis B and C diseases and dengue hemorrhagic fe-
ver which are infected from other countries.

Particularly, Myanmar won a significant victory in preventing against the dis-
ese SARS that spread all over the world in 2003, as a result of the collective ef-
forts of medical experts and the entire people with full sense of health knowledge. The departments concerned, social organizations and the people hand in hand with the international NGOs widely carried out tasks as the na-
tional duty for control and prevention of HIV/AIDS that pose danger to the mankind. Educative talks on HIV-
AIDS can be given well to the national people and the achievements can be made known to the international community through the First Anti-AIDS Exhibition.

In connection with the public health care services, social organizations such as Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, Myanmar Mater-
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tion and social organizations and the people including physicians as mass activities, epidemic diseases have been nearly eradicated.

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AIDS can be given well to the national people and the achievements can be made known to the international community through the First Anti-AIDS Exhibition.
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects diplomats who will be taking part in the festival. The Prime Minister said the festival will be held with the aims of publicizing Myeik Islands and Salone nationals, promotion tourism in the island and ensuring regional development. He also gave instructions on success of the festival.

He then presented bags of rice to the Salone nationals and posed for pictures with them. The Prime Minister and party arrived at Pale Island in Bokepyin Township at 6.30 pm. They were welcomed by members of Township Peace and Development Council, social organizations, managing director of Myanmar Pearls Enterprise and service personnel, teachers and students. They went to the pearl production unit and observed pearls there. Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint reported on the background history of pearl production, efforts for boosting production of pearl, undertakings with local and foreign firms under the production sharing system and annual production of pearl.

Next, Managing Director of Myanmar Pearls Enterprise U Maung Toe reported on kinds of pearls produced in the world, popularity of Myanmar pearl, change of pearl production, boosting yearly production of pearl in Myanmar, production cost, market and future tasks. The Prime Minister then fulfilled the requirements and gave instructions on protection of sea pollution and security.

Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presented a TV and video deck for Pale Island Basic Education Middle School to Headmaster Tin Myint. The Prime Minister then fulfilled the requirements and gave instructions on protection of sea pollution and security.

Gen Myint Swe discussed irrigation projects pre-sented by officials. During his meeting with local farm-ers, the commander urged them to grow summer paddies as targeted, and to extend mixed cropping.

The commander inspected Kyunngu water pumping station and the chairman of Moghsat District Peace and Development Council and staff and attended to the presentation of fuel oil distribution of fuel oil.

The deputy minister met Col Tin Yu of Moghsat Station and the chairman of Moghsat District Peace and Development Council and staff and atten-ded to the requirements. On 11 January, the deputy minister and party arrived at Taichileik. After inspecting the extended construction tasks for fuel oil distribution station, they proceeded to Kengtung.

On 12 January morning, the deputy minister met with the staff and gave instructions and inspected construction tasks. The deputy minister arrived back here in the evening.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party pose for a documentary together with local people in Makyongalet Village on Bo Cho Island, Kawthoung District, Tanintharyi Division.

Commander inspects Htantabin Township development

YANGON, 14 Jan — Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe discussed with officials the cultivation of summer paddy and conducting of development activities in Htantabin Township, Yangon North District, this morning. Accompanied by officials, the commander observed summer paddy fields along the Yangon-Nyaungdon Road and gave instructions to officials on the use of four methods — application of correct cultivation techniques, quality strains, natural and chemical fertilizers and water.

At the special zone to produce 100 baskets of paddy per acre, the commander heard a report on cultivation of summer paddy and other crops and irrigation projects presented by officials. During his meeting with local farmers, the commander urged them to grow summer paddies as targeted, and to extend mixed cropping.

The commander inspected Kyunngu water pumping station, and heard reports on its functions. He spoke of the need to up-grade the feeder canal and the distributive canals to irri-gate summer paddy fields. At Lamadan water pumping station at Bawlekyun in the township, the commander observed the feeder canal and operations of the station. He also urged local farmers to grow beans and pulses, edible oil crops and vegetables in addition to paddy. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe also inspected construction of stalls at the Htantabin Mu-nicipal Market and the sports ground.

Prime Minister Khin Nyunt and party pose for a documentary together with local people in Makyongalet Village on Bo Cho Island, Kawthoung District, Tanintharyi Division.

Uncensored Myanmar Karaoke VCDs seized

YANGON, 14 Jan — The team comprising officials of Yangon Division Police Commander’s Office, Yangon Division Video Supervision Committee and Ward Peace and Development Council, acting on information, searched the house of Aung Moe at No 52, 14th Street, Aungyadana 4th Ward, South Ward in Thaketa Township today.

The officials found machines used in copying VCDs, 90 Myanmar Karaoke original VCDs, 320 uncensored VCDs and 30 X-rated VCDs in a room in the back of the house.

The team also searched the house of Phyoo Thitha at No 22 (GF), 42nd Street, Ward 7, Botataung Township, and found machines used in copying VCDs, 16 Myanmar Karaoke original VCDs, 338 uncensored VCDs and 31 X-rated VCDs in the attic of the house.

At the house of Naing Win Aung at Room 9B, No 110, 52nd Street, Ward 1 in Pazundaung Township, the team found 1,500 uncensored Myanmar Karaoke VCDs and related items in the attic of the house.

The police stations concerned filed against Aung Moe, Phyoo Thitha and Naing Win Aung who illegally copied and distributed uncensored Myanmar Karaoke VCDs and X-rated VCDs.

At the doubles event, Phyo Min Tha and Win Htet Paing of Myanmar team beat Zin Bo and Aung Kyaw Naing of Myanmar team and reached the final of the first round. Pakistani doubles team of Babar and Nazir reached final as their rival team had sustained injury and could not play for the match.

At women’s singles event, Malaysia and Sri Lanka reached final, and a Malaysia team and a Malaysia-Sri Lanka team reached final at the doubles event.

Final matches for the first round of the tourna-ment will take place tomorrow morning at the same venue.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party pose for a documentary together with local people in Makyongalet Village on Bo Cho Island, Kawthoung District, Tanintharyi Division.

Deputy Minister inspects distribution of fuel oil

YANGON, 14 Jan — Deputy Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Than Htoo, accompanied by Managing Director Col Sein Tin Win of Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise and officials, arrived at Moghsat on 10 January and inspected the distribution of fuel oil there.

The deputy minister met Col Tin Yu of Moghsat Station and the chairman of Moghsat District Peace and Development Council and staff and attended to the requirements. On 11 January, the deputy minister and party arrived at Taichileik. After inspecting the extended construction tasks for fuel oil distribution station, they proceeded to Kengtung.

On 12 January morning, the deputy minister met with the staff and gave instructions and inspected construction tasks. The deputy minister arrived back here in the evening.

Pirated video tapes…

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Final matches for the first round of the tourna-ment will take place tomorrow morning at the same venue.

The pirated video tapes and discs were then crushed by road-rollers.

The number of pirated video tapes and discs de-stroyed were 5,397 Myanmar and foreign video tapes, 44,690 video laser discs, 584 digital video las-er discs, 5,435 song tapes, and two laser discs. The value of the seizures stood at some K 30 million.

The police stations concerned filed against Aung Moe, Phyoo Thitha and Naing Win Aung who illegally copied and distributed uncensored Myanmar Karaoke VCDs and X-rated VCDs.

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Press conference on Myanmar Open Golf Tournament-2004 held

YANGON, 14 Jan — The press conference on the Myanmar Golf Open 2004, organized by Myanmar Professional Golfers Association (MPGA) and the Octagon and mainly sponsored by the Rothmans of Pall Mall Myanmar Ltd, was held at Sedona Hotel on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, here, this afternoon.

The press conference was attended by MPGA and Myanmar Golf Federation (MGF) President Maj-Gen Win Hlaing, officials from Sports and Physical Education Department, departmental officials, Secretary U Aung Kyi of MGF, Deputy Managing Director Col Aung San of Rothmans of Pall Mall Myanmar Pte Ltd, Officer on Special duty Col Soe Win of News and Periodicals Enterprise, Director (News) U Hla Tun and officials, President U Sao Kai Hpa of Myanmar Foreign Correspondents Club and members, mediamen, Myanmar selected golfers and invited guests.

Maj-Gen Win Hlaing presented a brief account of the golf tournament. Managing Director Mr Arend Ng of Rothmans of Pall Mall Myanmar Pte Ltd explained assistance to be rendered at the golf tournament. MPGA Secretary U Chan Han briefed on arrangements for the golf tournament and Myanmar Star Player U Kyi Hla Han extended greetings. Afterwards, queries of the mediamen were replied and the ceremony came to a close.

The golf tournament will be held at Yangon Golf Club, Danyingon, here, from 12 to 15 February. A total of US$ 200,000 will be presented to the winners including US$ 32,300 for the first prize, US$ 22,260 for the second prize, US$ 12,400 for the third prize.

The co-sponsors of the golf tournament were Myanmar Airways International (MAI), Sedona Hotel, Yangon, Wilson, Grand Slam (Munsing wear), Inetol (Headwear Company), Canon (Accel International Co Ltd), Maruman (Kaung Myat Co Ltd), Dagon Beer (Dagon Brewery Co Ltd), Alpne Purified Drinking Water (Lo Hein Co Ltd), UPID (United Paint Group), Mins Logistics and Max Myanmar Co Ltd. — MNA

Independence Day reception held at Myanmar Embassy in Malaysia

Myanmar Ambassador U Hla Maung welcomes Mr Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Mrs Li Soe Win Maung, officials and PRC Ambassador Mr Li to the Independence Day reception held at Myanmar Embassy in Malaysia on 13 January evening. The Chinese delegation this morning visited the 10th anniversary of Hovid Co of Malaysia at the Traders Hotel in Yangon on 13 January evening. Managing Director of Hovid Co Mr David Ho hands over medicines worth K 2.75 million to Deputy Director-General of Health Department Dr Soe Aung. — (MNA)

Minister receives Chinese delegation

YANGON, 14 Jan — A delegation from the People’s Republic of China headed by Deputy Minister of Culture Mrs Meng Xiao Si arrived here by air yesterday evening.

The delegation was welcomed at the Yangon International Airport by Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, officials and PRC Ambassador Mr Li Janjun.

Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung received the PRC delegation at his office on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here at 11 am today. Present on the occasion were Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung and heads of departments.

The Chinese delegation this morning visited Shwedagon pagoda and paid homage to the pagoda. Mrs Meng Xiao Si made cash donations to the pagoda and signed in the visitors’ book.

The delegation next visited the National Museum on Pyay Road here. In the evening, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung hosted a dinner in honour of the delegation at Karaweik Palace.

MNA
Venezuela says not necessary to increase OPEC output

Caracas, 14 Jan — Venezuela’s Energy and Mining Minister Rafael Ramirez said on Monday it was not necessary to increase the output of the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) prior to its next meeting.

“There is no pressure to increase now,” Ramirez told a Press conference: “It is still early to decide what actions OPEC will take next month.” Ramirez said some oil producing countries are seeking to include in the meeting’s agenda the establishment of a mixed pricing system based on a currency basket that would include US dollars and euros.

Venezuela is the world’s fifth largest exporter of crude. — MNA/Xinhua

The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best time is now. — MNA/Reuters

Patients from Pakistan increasing in India’s hospitals

NEW DELHI, 14 Jan — With the thaw in Indo-Pakistani relations, the number of patients coming from across the border for treatment in Indian hospitals is on the rise and the country is all set to be a global health destination.

“We get more patients from neighboring SAARC and ASEAN countries due to cultural similarity. Even the number of patients from Pakistan are increasing,” Dr Naresh Trehan of the Escorts Hospital, who is also a member of the task force set up by the Health Ministry to promote India as a health destination, told PTI.

“There is interest for collaboration from the two sides in health care,” he said, adding his hospital was also talking with Pakistani authorities at high levels.

“We get many patients who have been treated at Escorts, mainly for bypass and pediatric-related problems, while six were awaiting visa clearance, he said.

Corroborating this, Dr Aslam Sibal from Apollo Hospital said there had been a number of inquiries from Pakistan on getting treatment at his hospital.

MNA/PTI

RE-LOCATION OF OFFICE PREMISES

MYANMAR BESTIN CO., LTD. has now re-located to Building (A), Room (201), 2nd fl., Shwe Than Lwin Condominium, New University Avenue Road, Bahan Township, Yangon, Myanmar. Tel: 544029, 727638

Turkish fighter jet crashes, at least one dead

ISTANBUL, 14 Jan — A Turkish F-4 fighter jet on a training flight crashed in western Turkey on Monday, killing at least one pilot, officials told Reuters.

It was not immediately clear what caused the crash near the town of Selendi in Manisa Province, nor whether there was more than one pilot on board, provincial Governor Orhan Isin said.

“At least one person was killed when the plane went down. Body parts are strewn across the site, and identification is difficult,” Isin said.

Several Turkish military planes have crashed in recent years. In 2001, a Cansu CN-235 aircraft crashed near the capital Ankara, killing all 34 military personnel on board.

MNA/Reuters
**Singapore says Asia must boost health controls**

SINGAPORE, 14 Jan — Asia must invest more money to tighten public health controls and fight future outbreaks of SARS and other contagious diseases, Singapore’s Health Minister Khaw Boon Wan said on Tuesday.

The warning came as the region faced a southern China and infected around 8,000 people worldwide. Nearly 800 of them died, including 33 in Singapore.

It won praise from the World Health Organization for its swift response to the outbreak, and the UN health body took the republic off its list of SARS-affected countries on May 31, a move more than a month before the global outbreak over on July 5.

Khaw said the outbreak exposed gaps in public health defences but forced Singapore to strengthen its infection controls, laboratory bio-safety measures and bio-defence controls, while strengthening the hand of the WHO.

“We have now a small demonstration of what bio-terrorism may look like in the future,” he said.

He said more is needed to be done to ensure that public health systems were able to respond rapidly to disease outbreaks.

— MNA/Reuters

**Indonesia’s first LNG shipment from Qatar to arrive on Jan 31**

NEW DELHI, 14 Jan— India’s first liquefied natural gas import terminal at Dahej in the western Indian state of Gujarat is complete and will receive the first shipment from Qatar on Monday, Petroleum Minister Ram Naik said Tuesday.

The terminal was test-fired from a mobile launcher at 0622 hrs GMT, defence sources said.

The independently-built sophisticated multi-target missile, which has the capacity to carry a 540 kilo payload and hit a moving target. The 650 kilo missile has a range of 25 kilometres and is one of the five missiles currently under various stages of development at the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO).

The missile uses ramjet propulsion system and is powered by an air-breathing engine. Its surveillance radar—Rajendra— was also developed indigenously and could simultaneously keep track of 64 aircraft within a range of 40 to 60 kilometres, the sources said. — MNA/PTI

**US rover ready to roll, sees water clues on Mars**

PASADENA (California), 14 Jan— Broken rocks and a “magic carpet” of smeared soil were among clues to water discovered in a 360-degree panoramic photo taken by the US rover Spirit and released on Monday by NASA scientists.

The high-definition photograph—a series of 225 images taken by the rover’s panoramic cameras— provided crucial information that scientists at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory needed to finish planning the rover’s first foray onto martian soil on Wednesday night, or sol 12 in local time.

The Spirit team also presented the first 3-D model derived from those photos and other data beamed down by the rover during its nine-day journey from the Red Planet.

The golf-cart-sized rover landed at Gusev Crater, which scientists believe may be the site of a dry lake bed once fed by a long, deep river.

The new images revealed exciting features, including a mound-like substance dug up by the rover’s airbags.

NASA/JPL/Caltech

**Anthrax outbreak claims three lives in Zimbabwe**

HARARE, 14 Jan — A cumulative total of 191 anthrax cases had been reported on humans in Masvingo Province claiming three lives since the outbreak of the disease about a month ago, local media reported Tuesday.

Zimbabwean veterinary experts had found more anthrax cases in the Bikita District of the province as the number of affected persons has risen to 100 from 50 nearly a week ago.

Officials from the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare were quoted as saying that although anthrax had not claimed any human life in Bikita, more cases were sprouting and killing more cattle.

The number of anthrax cases had gone up from 39 to 149 in the District where the disease continued to decimate more and more cattle.

The Department of Veterinary Services had already embarked on a mass vaccination exercise to contain the disease. — MNA/Xinhua

**Overweight adults who are not on a diet need only a small amount of exercise, the equivalent of a half-hour of brisk walking per day, to prevent further weight gain, a study found.** — VIOCENT

**Surface-to-air missile ‘Aakash’ test-fired**

BALASPUR, 14 Jan— India on Tuesday test-fired its medium range surface-to-air missile Aakash from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur-on-sea, about 13 kilometres from here in eastern state of Orissa.

The missile was test-fired from a mobile launcher at 0622 hrs GMT, the sources said.

Speaking at the inauguration of the 5th Oil and Gas Development Organization (DRDO).

The 650 kilo missile has a range of 25 kilometres and could be simultaneously keep track of 64 aircraft within a range of 40 to 60 kilometres, the sources said. — MNA/PTI

**Ugandan capital’s spring wells contaminated**

KAMPALA, 14 Jan— About 90 per cent of spring wells in Kampala, the capital of Uganda, are polluted, a research has shown.

The research carried out by Kampala Urban Sanitation Project covered 360 wells in the city’s five divisions.

The research report was quoted by local media as saying on Monday that 200 spring wells are polluted with industrial waste and human excreta.

Coordinator Dan Twabeza of the project warned that the contamination possesses a health risk to more than 500,000 people who consume spring water daily.

He said they have recommended to the Kampala City Council to erect signposts at these spring wells warning the public not to consume the contaminated water there.

Most of the (water) rocks clear but laboratory tests carried out by a sanitation consultancy firm show that the water is contaminated,” he said.

He said 5.4 million euros (about 6.4 million US dollars) has been funded and will be used to improve water and sanitation in the capital city. — MNA/Xinhua

**This image, taken on Mars, shows the view from the front hazard avoidance cameras on the Mars Exploration Rover Spirit after the rover has backed up 25 centimetres (10 inches) and turned 45 degrees clockwise on 13 Jan, 2004. Spirit remained on track to roll onto the martian soil late Wednesday or early Thursday. The rover cut the last cable attaching it to its lander and began a three-part turn to line it up with the exit ramp it should use to reach the ground, flight director Chris Lewicki said. — Internet**
Nestlé makes it to UEFA's team of year

London, 14 Jan—Ruud van Nistelrooy has made it into the UEFA’s team of the year after the Manchester United star was overlooked in the 2001 and 2002 polls, said the club's web site on Monday. Van Nistelrooy received 18.7 per cent of the strikers’ votes with over 43,000 nominations. File photograph shows former England goalkeeper David Seaman celebrating his side's victory over Argentina in a group F World Cup Finals match at the Sapporo Dome Stadium on 7 June, 2002. The 40-year-old Manchester City and former England and Arsenal goalkeeper has announced his retirement after suffering a recurring shoulder injury, Manchester City said on 15 Jan, 2004. Interact

Former England keeper Seaman retires

London, 14 Jan—Former England goalkeeper David Seaman has announced his retirement after over 20 years in football, his Premier League club Manchester City said on Tuesday. The 40-year-old, who won 75 England caps, joined City at the start of the season after spending most of his career with Arsenal but has been plagued by a recurring shoulder injury. “I have reached this difficult decision after much discussion with my family and those in the game whose views I respect,” Seaman told City's web site. “It has become clear to me that this type of injury will not quickly disappear and I think now would be a good time to hang up my boots, rather than at the end of the season as planned. “I believe I have had a fantastic career playing at the highest level.” “After deciding to retire it was a pleasure to recommend David James — so I know the position is in safe hands,” Seaman added. Seaman joined City on a year's contract last June after 13 years at Arsenal, where he won three league titles, four FA Cups, and the European Cup Winners Cup. MNA/Reuters

Chinese striker signs for Man United

Beijing, 14 Jan—Chinese teenage striker Dong Fangzhuo has signed for Manchester United in a 3.5-million-pound (6.48-milion U.S-dollars) deal with Dalian Shide, the China club said on Tuesday. “It is worth it,” Dalian’s general manager, Lin Lefeng, told Reuters. “It’s good for the two sides and for Dong Fangzhuo himself.” The deal was signed in Dalian on January 3, Dong, emerged as the cream of a crop of youngsters sent by China's top clubs to England for trials in August and United manager Alex Ferguson said in November that the club was pursuing him. Former Dalian defender Sun Jihai, the first Chinese international to join the Premier League, plays with rivals Manchester City. MNA/Reuters

Ronaldo, Figo see Real through to Cup quarters

Madrid, 14 Jan—Second-half goals from Ronaldo and Luis Figo earned Real Madrid a 2-0 win at home to second division Eibar on Tuesday and a place in the quarter-finals of the King’s Cup. After a 1-1 draw in the first leg, Real were under pressure for much of the return until Ronaldo broke the deadlock in the 85th minute. Eibar continued to threaten, but a Figo free kick 10 minutes later settled the contest, giving Real a 3-1 aggregate win. Apart from the injured David Beckham and Raul, Real fielded their strongest line-up, including Ronaldo, Zinedine Zidane, Roberto Carlos and Figo, but it was Eibar who made the better start. The visitors created three good chances inside the first three minutes, the best of which saw midfielder Francisco Corredor crack a half-voley over the bar. Gaizka Saizar was then put through but failed to get behind his shot and Real keeper Iker Casillas was able to clear. At the other end the Eibar defence did an expert job in stifling Ronaldo and Real only threatened from set pieces, keeper Garikoitz Basauri reacting sharply to turn successive Zidane free kicks around the post. Eibar should have taken the lead in the 57th minute when Roberto Cevais found himself free at the far post only to hoist the ball over from two metres out. A minute later Real went ahead. Roberto Carlos beat the offside trap with a run down the left and curled in a precise pass for Ronaldo to guide in unopposed. Real made sure of the victory 10 minutes later when Figo curled a free kick around the wall and in at the keeper's near post. Barcelona, 1-0 down after a first leg away to Levante, will also have a tough task on their hands when they play the second division promotion candidates at the Nou Camp on Wednesday. League leader's Valencia, who drew 2-2 at home to Osasuna, will also have plenty to do in another of Wednesday's second leg games. MNA/Reuters

Machete-wielding burglar threatens Chelsea's Veron

London, 14 Jan—Chelsea’s Argentine midfielder Juan Sebastian Veron was threatened by a machete-wielding burglar at his London home on the weekend, police sources said on Monday. Richmond Magistrates Court confirmed that a 35-year-old builder had appeared, charged with aggravated burglary for allegedly breaking into a house in the up-market south-west London neighbourhood of Barnes armed with a machete on Sunday morning. The address of the house in court records matches that of Veron’s luxury home. Police sources said residents reported a burglar had climbed through the window near dawn and threatened them, demanding jewellery. Chelsea made no comment on the incident. MNA/Reuters

Ronaldo and Luis Figo earned Real Madrid a 2-0 win at home to second division Eibar on Tuesday and a place in the quarter-finals of the King’s Cup.

Butt asks Man Utd for a transfer

Butt, who turns 29 on January 21, is a one-club man. He has won 30 caps for England. MNA/Reuters

Totti, Nedved named Italy’s best players

Rome, 14 Jan—AS Roma striker Francesco Totti and Juventus midfilder Pavel Nedved shared Italy’s Best Player award for the 2002-03 season at a ceremony on Monday. It was the first time that the prize, voted by the members of the Italian Association of Footballers, had been shared in its seven-year history. Earlier in the ceremony, dubbed the Italian football “Oscars”, Czech Nedved beat Roma’s Brazilian midfielder Emerson and Romanian striker Adrian Mutu, who moved from Parma to Chelsea last year, to win the award for Best Foreign Player. Totti came out ahead of international team mates Paolo Maldini of AC Milan and Christian Vieri of Inter Milan in the award for Best Italian Player. Nedved was also named the European Footballer of the Year and World Soccer Player of the Year last month. He was the first time that the prize, voted by the members of the Italian Association of Footballers, had been shared in its seven-year history. Earlier in the ceremony, dubbed the Italian football “Oscars”, Czech Nedved beat Roma’s Brazilian midfielder Emerson and Romanian striker Adrian Mutu, who moved from Parma to Chelsea last year, to win the award for Best Foreign Player. Totti came out ahead of international team mates Paolo Maldini of AC Milan and Christian Vieri of Inter Milan in the award for Best Italian Player. Nedved was also named the European Footballer of the Year and World Soccer Player of the Year last month.

Weakened Bolton suffer Cup exit to Tranmere

London, 14 Jan—Premier League Bolton Wanderers paid the price for fielding a weakened side when they crashed out of the FA Cup on Tuesday, losing 2-1 to second division Tranmere Rovers in a third round replay. A dull game sprang to life in the final 10 minutes when Eugene Dadi put Rovers ahead in the 82nd minute, only for Bolton to level with a last-gasp equaliser from Ricky Shakes. Iain Hulse restored Rovers' lead in the first minute of extra time and they hung on to set up an all second division tie at Laton Town. On a night of seven re- plays Wolvesvhampton Wanderers put their Premier League woes to one side with a 2-0 victory over third division Kidderminster Harriers courtesy of a goal in each half from Kenny Miller. However there was joy for other third division survivors. Northampton Town beat first division Rotherham United 2-1 to set up a lucrative fourth round tie at home to English champions Manchester United. The meeting will revive memories of the 1970 Cup tie between the two sides when George Best famously scored six goals in an 8-2 victory for United. Colchester United also reached the fourth round as they ended the dreams of minor league Accrington Stanley in a bad-tempered 2-1 victory at their Layer Road ground. Accrington’s Steve Halford was sent off while manager John Coleman had to be restrained during a touchline scuffle at halftime. Colchester now travel to 1987 winners Coventry City. MNA/Reuters

London, 14 Jan—Second-half goals from Ronaldo and Luis Figo earned Real Madrid a 2-0 win at home to second division Eibar on Tuesday and a place in the quarter-finals of the King’s Cup. Weakened Bolton suffer Cup exit to Tranmere

London, 14 Jan—Pre-
Wedneday, 14 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) to (4°C) above normal in Shan State, upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Ayeayawady Divisions, (6°C) above normal in Mon State, (3°C) below normal in Bago Division, (6°C) below normal in Magway Division and about normal in the remaining areas. Maximum temperature on 13-1-2004 was 33.5°C (92°F) Minimum temperature on 14-1-2004 was 16.5°C (62°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 14-1-2004 was 74%. Total sunshine hours on 13-1-2004 was (6.3) hours approx. Rainfall on 14-1-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 0.0 mm. Wind speed at Yangon (Kaba Aye) was 10 mph from Northerly at (11:30) hours MST on 13-1-2004.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the South Bay and generally cloudy elsewhere in the country.

Forecast valid until evening of 15-1-2004: Possibility of isolated rain or thunderstorms in Kachin State and Sagaing Division and weather partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (40%).

State of the sea: Seas will be moderate in Myanamar waters. Outlook for the next two days: Weather will be partly cloudy in the whole country.
Prime Minister receives Chinese Cultural Deputy Minister

YANGON, 14 Jan — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received Deputy Minister of Culture Mrs Meng Xiao Si and party of the People’s Republic of China and party at Zeyathiri Beikman Hall on Konmyinttha, here, at 4 pm today.

Also present on the occasion were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win, Director-General of Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet, Chinese Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun and embassy staff.

Prime Minister receives national race leaders

YANGON, 14 Jan — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received Shan national race leader U Khun Mein and party of Shwe Pyi Aye Development village, who have returned to the legal fold, at Zeyathiri Beikman Hall on Konmyinttha, here, at 4.50 pm today.

Also present on the occasion were Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Hlw, Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office Maj-Gen Thein Swe, Vice Chief of Military Intelligence Maj-Gen Kyi Aung Win, Director-General of the State Peace and Development Council Office Lt-Col Pe Nyein and Director-General U Soe Tint of Government Office.

The national race leaders expressed their support for the seven-point future political programme of the State and pledged to actively participate in the tasks to successfully implement the programme. Afterwards, they reported matters relating to regional development, agriculture and economic enterprise.

— MNA

Seized pirated video tapes and laser discs being destroyed with the use of road-rollers. — MNA

Pirated video tapes, laser discs, digital discs destroyed

YANGON, 14 Jan — Video tapes, laser discs and digital discs, which were inconsistent with Television and Video Law, were destroyed in the compound of the Drug Elimination Museum at the corner of Hanthawady Road and Kyundaw Street in Kamayut Township here this morning.

Present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, Head of Department of the Office of the Myanmar Intelligence Headquarters Brig-Gen Than Tun and senior military officers, members of the central committee for video scrutinizing board, departmental heads, journalists, and guests.

In his explanation, Brig-Gen Than Tun said that uncensored video tapes and laser discs seized and action was taken against the culprits. It is the fifth time that such ceremony has been held.

In our country, the video censorship board decides what films are fit for public entertainment in order to prevent our culture from being influenced by alien decadent culture. Steps are being taken to deter the porn films, video tapes and discs from entering the country. A total of 915 porn video laser discs were among the seizures to be destroyed.

Pirated Myanmar karaoke songs discs are also on the increase annually. Such kinds of discs are available even on roadside platforms and at shops in Yangon and Mandalay. Therefore, the video censorship board, city development committee, the Myanmar police force and other responsible organizations held a meeting in November to address the issue. Later, the authorities launched a one-month educational campaign and announced through newspapers, journals and magazines that severe action will be taken against law-breakers in the wake of the campaign. However, the sales of pirated tapes and discs did not come to a halt. Therefore, the authorities made many arrests in Yangon and Mandalay.

— MNA

Salone traditional festival to be held

YANGON, 14 Jan — Salone traditional festival will be held in Ma Kyone Galat Village in Kawthoung Township from 14 to 17 February 2004 under the aegis of the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council and Kawthoung District Peace and Development Council.

Visitors can get information on the festival on the website under the name of Myanmar national/salone.htm www.salonefestival.com and www. sea Gypsy festival.com.

The tour will be arranged by Shabhala Tours Co. The e-mail address is info@salonefestival.com. — MNA

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