Nibbana sacchikiriya ca, realize the Nirvana; this is the way to auspiciousness.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt pays obeisance to Tipitakadhara Selection Ovadacariya Sayadaws

YANGON, 17 Jan — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attended the opening of a refectory and merit-sharing ceremony held at Dhammacariya University Alodawpyae Monastery in Dagon Myothit (East) Township, Yangon East District, this morning.

Present on the occasion were State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Vice-Chairman Bahan Township Aung Myay Bonsan, Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhivamsa, and members of the Sangha. Tipitakadhara Selection Ovadacariya Committee Chairman Mawlamiyne Sasana Manaung Wepyan Monastery Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijaya Bhivamsa, Dhammacariya University Alodawpyae Monastery (Yangon) Presiding Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Abhiya Bhivamsa and members of the Sangha, Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman of Yangon Abdhamipa Pitaka Palidaw books (Myanmar Translation) worth K 3 million donated by Chairman of World Peace IT Co U Maung Maung Hlaing-Daw Wah Wah Tun family of Myakantha 2nd Street in Kamayut Township and handed over the books to Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister inspected renovation of Maha Pasana Cave. He was conducted around there by Yangon Division Superintending Engineer U Nyunt Maung San and officials.

After leaving necessary instructions, the Prime Minister left there in the afternoon. — MNA

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Towards border areas development

The Government is implementing border area and national races development projects for harmonious development of various regions in the country and consolidating national unity. In his address at the Work Coordination Meeting (1/2004) of the Work Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races held at the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs on 17 January, Chairman of the Work Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said that since its assumption of the State duties, the government, with the conviction that only after national solidarity had been strengthened, would it be possible for the government to implement development tasks of the country, has been striving to strengthen national solidarity based on mutual understanding and forgiveness and that as national race armed groups, realizing the goodwill of the State, have returned to the legal fold and are taking part in the regional development tasks, border regions of the country are now witnessing peace, stability and progress like cities.

Border areas development projects have been implemented since 1989 for development of the regions of national race armed groups which have returned to the legal fold and raising the living standard of local people, and these projects met with success beyond expectation. In accord with the guidance of the Head of State, 24 special development zones projects and projects for the five rural development areas will contribute to flourishing of national races development projects met with success beyond expectation.

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.

Trainees visit Hlinethaya

YANGON, 18 Jan — Forty six trainees of the Myanmar Rice Marketing Course No 1 (programme 1), sponsored by the Education Committee of the Union of Myanmar Federations of Chambers of Commerce & Industry, yesterday morning visited the OK post-harvest rice reprocessing plant in Hlinethaya industrial zone. 2 Myanmarn Rice Traders Association Patron U Nyin explained matters on the reprocessing plant.

Afterwards, the trainees visited the 360-ton rice reprocessing plant of the Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading in Hlinethaya Township.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint pays obeisance to Sayadaws in Mandalay

YANGON, 18 Jan — State Peace and Development Council Member Lt-Gen Ye Myint, together with officials, paid obeisance to Mandalay Division Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman Sayadaw Abhidhaja Mahā Rathana Guru Bhaddanta Sasanaabhivamsa of Shwegeinwain monastery, Mai Yadana Rama Myadawng Taik in Mandalay yesterday morning. After presenting offerings to the Sayadaw, Lt-Gen Ye Myint proceeded to Wasso monastery of Mahā Visuddhayon Taikthit to pay obeisance to Shwekyin Sasanaabing State Ovadalacarya Sayadaw Abhidhaja Mahā Rathana Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Bhaddanta Agghia (Wasso Sayadaw) and offered provisions. He also paid obeisance to Vinaya Njapadetha monastery Maeseeyin Sayadaw Abhidhaja Mahā Rathana Guru Bhaddanta Paashambhibivamsa and presented offerings to the Sayadaw. — MNA

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.

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appealed

Salone Festival 2004

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

Myanmar ICT Week 2004

MICIT Park, Yangon.
(Admission free)
Three US soldiers killed in Iraq, toll reaches 500

BAGHDAD, 18 Jan—The northern Iraqi oil city of Kirkuk has largely plunged into darkness after its high voltage power line was blown up. “A bomb destroyed a high tension pylon on the grid which connects Babylon and Kirkuk and because of this attack, 80 per cent of the city is without electricity,” the head of the city’s power department Yalnine Muhammad said.

Friday’s blast served yet another reminder as to how insecure the occupied country remains. Reckless attacks on US-led occupation troops continue across Iraq, though their numbers have marginally come down.

“Relentless attacks”

It was the eighteenth attack on the city’s power supply infrastructure since US President George Bush declared major combat in Iraq over on 1 May.

In the town of Taza, 25 km away to the south, police shot dead an assailant who had attacked officers manning a checkpoint, Kirkuk police chief General Turhan Yussel said. “Jamal Hamed Abbud was wounded in the chest and legs and taken to hospital in a critical condition,” he said.

Military expert says second Bulgarian unit faces more dangers in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 18 Jan—The second infantry unit Bulgaria sent on a peacekeeping mission to Karbala is facing more dangers than their colleagues from the first troops, Chief of Military Information Service Major-General Plamen Studenkov said to a local radio broadcast on Saturday.

He stressed on the danger of new attacks at the time of significant religious, civil and political dates the Iraqis celebrate.

The attentats of December 27, 2003 had been thoroughly coordinated and prepared with a multiple-effect planning.

We had signals from Bulgarian and partnering foreign investigations prior to the tragic event in Karbala.

There are Bulgarian investigation servicemen working on field in Iraq at the moment, Major-General Studenkov informed.

He commented that Bulgarian military investigation has worked out the possibility that terrorist groups or individuals use Bulgaria as a starting point to Western Europe.

There were even signals about possible terrorist attacks over some embassies in Sofia, shortly after the start of 2004.

Chinese, Dutch universities jointly foster postgraduates

SHANGHAI, 18 Jan—China’s prestigious Fudan University and the Delft University of Technology for 18 months of study and then return to Fudan to finish the remaining year.

Those who do well will be sent to the Delft University of Technology for 18 months of study and then return to Fudan to finish the remaining year.

A US soldier from the 1st Armoured Division takes cover after being shot while another soldier shouts to ask about the status of the squad in front of them in Baghdad neighbourhood, in this file photo issued recently.
Irrational political parties denounce US plans

BANGKOK, 18 Jan—Daily problems, like getting fuel, overwhelm many Iraqis. Political parties in Iraq have denounced US plans to stabilize the country’s predicament tends to be dominated by the Shia majority.

In the last few days, news coverage has concentrated on threats by Shia leaders to protest against US plans to form an Iraqi parliament without direct elections. However, Iraq’s lesser-known parties are keen to have their say on one of the most crucial crises to face the country since its occupation.

As Iraqis poured into Basra’s streets to oppose US plans, their fellow citizens took to the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities to demand Iraq’s unity and employment opportunities. Undoubtedly, Iraqis have differing points of view regarding the holding of elections in their occupied country. “The IGC is appointed by the US, and its members are so far removed from the Iraqi people that while they are busy cancelling Iraq’s Civil Status Law of 1958 ordinary Iraqis are struggling to get food and fuel,” Workers Communist Party in Iraq Abd Allah Salih, of the Workers Communist Party in Iraq, said liberation is a popular demand. Democracy is vital to Iraq, he said, but it should be at the right time.

“We don’t think it is the right time for elections in Iraq, they should follow a transitional period during which Iraqi political parties would have the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Iraqi people. “Consequently the Iraqi voters could choose the political party that represent their individual aspirations,” Salih said.

“The US and Iraq’s political parties should have access to corporate and state-owned media to promote our political message and policies.”

“The IGC is appointed by the US, and its members are so far removed from the Iraqi people that while they are busy cancelling Iraq’s Civil Status Law of 1958 ordinary Iraqis are struggling to get food and fuel.” AndSalih believes the US came to Iraq with an agenda different to the one promoted in the media. “I think that the IGC is a US propaganda tool. The aim of the US in Iraq is not to establish democracy its real aim is global domination. Elections will wipe out its appointed ally, the IGC because they will not win them.”

Soldiers sent to Gulf … with no bullets

BANGKOK, 18 Jan—Beginning tomorrow, Nottingham soldiers were sent into a battle-zone in Iraq without bullets for their rifles, a Notts MP has said.

Members of the Bullwinkle-based South Notts Hussars said they were horrified when they were told to “ask around” British soldiers in Basra for bullets because there were not enough for everyone. Newark Tory MP Patrick Mercer said he was told of the scandal by two officers.

The officers from the Territorial Army unit were drafted out to Iraq during the conflict to provide back-up for 7 Brigade. They and many of the seven others serving as backups from the Hussars, were told by a quartermaster that there was a bullet shortage because “ammunition is in woefully short supply.” Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon pledged to investigate.

Thai jewellery exports to grow 15 per cent this year

BANGKOK, 18 Jan—Thailand’s jewellery exports are likely to grow 15 per cent this year with a total value of 2.5 billion US dollars as a result of tax incentives and efforts to seek new markets, according to an industry executive.

Preeda Tiewsuwan, chairwoman of Pranda Jewellery Plc., was quoted by The Nation newspaper as saying Saturday that the jewellery business would grow on par with the government’s intention to promote Bangkok as the city of fashion.

Meanwhile, tax measures and efforts to expand existing markets and seek new ones would boost the industry growth.

French Navy team finds first Red Sea “black box”

SHARM-EL-SHEIKH (Egypt), 18 Jan—The French Navy on Friday recovered one flight recorder from an Egyptian Boeing 737 that crashed into the Red Sea killing 148 people, a source close to the operation said.

The robot is in the process of returning to the surface with the black box,” said the source, who declined to be named. The French Navy is using a remotely controlled robot to locate the flight recorders, or “black boxes”, from the wreck.

The two flight recorders could contain information to help determine why the Flash Airlines-operated plane plunged into deep sea near the Egyptian resort of Sharm.
US lawmakers say Halliburton pricing probe deepens

WASHINGTON, 17 Jan—US lawmakers said on Friday the Pentagon’s inspector general’s office was probing possible criminal violations involving fuel imports to Iraq by Halliburton Co., the oil services company once headed by Vice-President Dick Cheney.

The three Democratic lawmakers said they had been told by the inspector general’s (IG) staff that an ongoing issue involving Halliburton’s Kellogg Brown and Root unit was now with the IG’s Defence Criminal Investigative Service. The IG’s office could not immediately be reached for comment. Halliburton has strongly denied any wrongdoing and says it has brought fuel into Iraq for the best price under very difficult, dangerous circumstances.

The information about a possible criminal probe was released in a letter to Pentagon Inspector General Joseph Schmitz by the three lawmakers, Democratic presidential contender Senator Joseph Lieberman of Connecticut and Representative Henry Waxman of California and Representative John Dingell of Michigan.

On Wednesday, military auditors said they had asked the Pentagon’s Inspector General to look into a “suspected irregularity” over fuel brought into Iraq by KBR, suggesting the auditors suspected wrongdoing. “Your staff informed us that after receiving this referral from DCIA, you referred this matter for criminal investigation by the Defence Criminal Investigative Service (DCIS) within the inspector general’s office,” said the letter signed by the lawmakers, who are the ranking minority members of three congressional committees.

A draft audit by the Defence Contract Audit Agency last month found evidence KBR might have overcharged by 61 million US dollars to bring fuel into Iraq via Kuwaiti subcontractor Altainna Commercial Marketing Co.

In a bid to reduce costs, the Army said last month it would take over Halliburton’s job of bringing fuel into Iraq and gave it to the military’s own fuel agency, the Defence Energy Support Centre, which is expected to have its contractors in place by April.

Bringing in fuel to Iraq, which despite being oil rich suffers from fuel shortages, is one of the main jobs done by KBR under a no-competition contract it has with the US Army Corps of Engineers to rebuild Iraq’s oil industry. That no-bid contract is set to be replaced by two new contracts which are due to be announced before Saturday after several delays. — MNA/Reuters

Uganda earns more from coffee export

KAMPALA, 18 Jan — Uganda earned 10 million US dollars from export of 228,407 60-kilo bags of coffee last month, representing an increase in both volume and value of 65.4 per cent and 68.2 per cent respectively over November of 2003.

The monthly report from the Uganda Coffee Development Authority issued here said that the average realized price at the export level for December stood at 72US cents per kilo, up from 72 cents received in the previous month, local media reported Friday.

The report, however, said that as compared to the same month of the previous year, there was a drop in both volume and value by 24.6 per cent and 10.6 per cent respectively. — MNA/Xinhua

Northeast China provinces to share scientific resources

SHENYANG, 18 Jan—Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces in northeast China have vowed to band together and pool their scientific resources.

Directors of the science and technology departments of these provinces came to the consensus and signed an agreement here Thursday.

This will help breed technological innovations and promote development of these provinces, said Li Xueyong, Vice-Minister of Science and Technology.

Under the new system, these provinces will jointly map scientific development strategy, share technological information and cooperate in key research projects.

Half a century ago, northeast China contributed a lot to the country’s economy with the heavy industry in Liaoning, the auto industry in Jilin and natural resources in Heilongjiang.

However, these provinces have been lagging behind in recent years as the provinces in the east and south develop rapidly.

Under the country’s strategy to revive the northeast, these provinces have been seeking regional cooperation in various fields. — MNA/Xinhua

Bird flu spreads in Vietnam’s southern region

HANOI, 18 Jan — Bird flu has spread to eight of the 12 localities in the Mekong Delta in southern Vietnam and the country has yet to find an effective way to treat human flu Type A, which is suspected to have a link with bird flu.

Meanwhile, nine cities and provinces in the country’s northern region have reported flu Type A infections. The disease has killed 11 local people, including 11 children.

The virus H5N1 has been found in infected chickens and flu victims.

Bird flu spread has forced Ho Chi Minh City to announce a temporary ban on poultry from the Mekong Delta, local newspaper Vietnam Agriculture reported Friday.

The Mekong Delta province of An Giang has also asked chicken and duck traders to stop doing business temporarily.

It plans to ban selling and buying the fowls soon, after detecting 1,000 poultry dying of flu so far.

By Thursday, Long An, one of the first two localities in the country that have bird flu epidemic, had reported 960,000 dead chickens.

And the other province, Tien Giang, are spending 5.000 Vietnamese dong (0.3 US dollars) to buy each sick chicken for incineration.

The delta is home to 33.7 million poultry, mostly chickens, ducks and quails. Tien Giang alone has five million fowls.

Although bird flu is spreading in both southern and northern regions, Vietnam is still unable to work out an effective guidance on treating flu Type A. — MNA/Xinhua

Germany now open to helping Iraq

BERLIN, 18 Jan — Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder yesterday softened Germany’s refusal to offer its assistance in Iraq, opening the door to a “humanitarian” engagement using military planes to evacuate the wounded.

“We will make a decision when the issue comes up. In any case, we stand by the position that we will not engage militarily in Iraq,” Schroeder said on ARD television.

“This is course does not mean that aid for the wounded is needed that we would not help.”

The daily Die Welt reported this week that Schroeder had told lawmakers he was ready to provide military evacuation planes for the Bundeswehr armed forces to Iraq.

Asked about the article, Schroeder told reporters on Wednesday evening that Germany had “no intention of changing our policy in Iraq.”

But he added: “We now intend to give humanitarian aid, above all to those who are injured.”

Defence Minister Peter Struck confirmed Germany could provide “helicopters and planes to provide aid” if asked by an interim Iraqi government. — Internet

Sydney, 18 Jan — Senior officials from Australia and China started their first meeting on the implementation of a bilateral trade and economic framework here Friday.

The talks also include a joint feasibility study on a possible free trade agreement.

Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile said in a statement that good progress has been made on the implementation of the framework signed during Chinese President Hu Jintao’s visit last October.

Senior officials also discussed possible arrangements for a meeting this year of a bilateral Joint Ministerial Economic Commission and areas within the framework for further cooperation in trade facilitation.

The two-way trade totalled 13.5 billion US dollars in volume for the year 2003, or 30 per cent increase over the previous year. — MNA/Xinhua

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Although bird flu is spreading in both southern and northern regions, Vietnam is still unable to work out an effective guidance on treating flu Type A. — MNA/Xinhua
Malaysian PM's visit to Thailand successful

Kuala Lumpur, 18 Jan—Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's visit to Thailand this week was a great success, Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said on Saturday.

The Malaysian and Thai Foreign Ministers would meet more often to ensure what had been agreed to by the prime ministers of both countries was implemented effectively, Syed Hamid told reporters in Kuala Terengganu, north Malay-
sia.

Abdullah paid a one-day visit to Thailand on Friday as part of his familiarization tour of ASEAN capitals after tak-
ing office as Prime Minister on October 31 last year.

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), set up in 1967, now groups Brunei, Cambo-
dia, Indonesia, Laos, Malay-
sia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

The Foreign Minister said during the visit, Abdullah and his Thai coun-
terpart Thaksin Shinawatra reached several agreements on setting up a joint commi-
tee for the development of strategic areas on the bor-
der, stepping up socio-economic, develop-
ment and solving border disputes amicably.

He said both countries had also agreed to draw up an agreement on agricultural cooperation and transport.

Thailand had also agreed to accept Malaysian prawn exports to that coun-
try, he said, adding "we are also cooperating in deepsea fishing".

Malaysia and Thailand enjoy good relations in vari-
ous fields. The bilateral trade in the first nine months of 2003 reached 5,800 million US dollars, up 23 per cent over the corresponding pe-
riod in the previous year.

Abdullah has so far vis-
ted Brunei, Indonesia, Singa-
pore and Thailand. He is scheduled to pay a half-day visit to Laos on Monday fol-
towed by a two-day visit to the Philip-
ippines.—MNA/Reuters

International business conference opens in Bangladesh

Dhaka, 18 Jan—A high-profile international business conference begins here on Saturday afternoon, bringing together world's leading trade leaders and some political figures to contribute toward a revival of the multilateral trade talks.

The two-day conference, titled “Global Economic Governance and Challenges of Multilateralism” is organ-
ized by the International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh (ICC-B), and is going to be held at the Bang-
adesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Bangla-
desh Prime Minister Begum Khaleeda Zia is scheduled to inaugurate the conference.

Some 400 delegates from more than 30 countries will attend the meeting. Among the major figures are Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, European Un-
ion Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, World Trade Organization (WTO) direc-
tor-general Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi, as well as a host of trade ministers and business leaders from across the globe. UN Secretary-
General Kofi Annan will deliver a video address to the Dhaka business meet.

The event comes after the multilateral trade nego-
tiations collapsed in Cancun, and ICC-B president Mahbubur Rahman de-
scribed the meeting as “an event of great significance in the context of the fast-
changing global trade scenario”, adding never before such a high-profile business and trade-related conference was held in Bangladesh.

The organizers said the event would be an enthusiastic one, especially after the disap-
pointments stemming from the collapse of Cancun Ministerial Conference held in September 2003.—MNA/Xinhua

Vietnam reports two more flu Type A suspects

Hanoi, 18 Jan—Vietnam reports two more suspected flu Type A patients in the southern province of Kien Giang, raising the total to 20, according to Vietnam News Agency on Friday.

Pham Thi Kim Thung and Tran Van Phong, both 23 years old, were hospitalized with symptoms of a high temperature, diffi-
cult breathing, low blood pressure, and de-
creasing numbers of white cells, the symp-
toms of flu Type A which has killed 13 local people so far.

The Kien Giang Hospital said the two young patients are in need of respirators, and at risk of dying soon. It is awaiting the result of testing whether they are contracted with flu Type A or not.

If the two youths are contracted with flu Type A, they will be the first patients in southern Vietnam. Other 18 patients live in the northern region.—MNA/Xinhua

US accused of trying to sabotage fight against obesity

Geneva, 18 Jan—Consumer groups accused the United States on Friday of trying to sabotage a global fight against obesity targeting junk food and soft drinks.

The World Health Organization (WHO) executive, which includes the United States and 31 other countries, will debate on Tuesday a plan drawn up by the UN agency after talks with member states, nutritional experts and the food industry.

The Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health says poor diets and lack of exercise are the leading cause of illnesses including heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers. These ac-
count for nearly 60 per cent of 56.5 million deaths a year deemed preventable.

As well as recommending lower in-
take of sugar, sodium and artery-clogging trans-fatty acids, the WHO plan urges coun-
tries to restrict food and beverage adver-
sitement aimed at children. It also sug-
gests that governments gear their taxation and subsidy policies to encourage healthy eating habits.

But activist groups charged that the US Administration, under pressure from the food industry, aims to weaken the plan when it comes before the executive board, which meets from January 19-24.

Senior US Health Department official William Steiger, who has challenged some of the findings of a nutri-
tion study carried out with the UN Fund and Agriculture Organization, which forms the basis for the strategy.

In an interview with the Washington Post on Friday, he said: “We have a whole series of potential changes we’d like to see... What’s lacking is the notion of personal responsibility as opposed to what the govern-
ment can do.”

In a letter to WHO chief Lee Jong-
Wook, which was leaked to activists, Steiger said the WHO-FAO report did not meet US scientific standards, including peer review criteria.

“The assertion that heavy marketing of energy-dense foods or fast food outlets in-
creases the risk of obesity is supported by almost no data,” his letter said.

“No data have yet clearly demonstrated that the advertising on children’s television causes obesity.”

Steiger also said the WHO/FAO Report exceeded the two UN agencies’ mandates by covering areas such as sleep, activity and health says poor diets and environmental degradation.

The Malaysian and Thai Food Ministers would meet more often to ensure what had been agreed to by the prime ministers of both countries was implemented effectively, Syed Hamid told reporters in Kuala Terengganu, north Malay-
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towed by a two-day visit to the Philip-
ippines.—MNA/Reuters

Annan urges world leaders to focus on poverty

United Nations, 18 Jan—The world’s leaders must re-focus their energies on such threats as extreme poverty, hunger, endemic disease and environmental degradation after a year in which they were distracted by other threats, United Na-
tions Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Friday.

“The events of 2003 dis-
tracted the world’s leaders from dealing with other threats which, to most peo-
pie, are equally and really real,” Annan said in a speech delivered at a handover ceremony in New York for chairmanship of the Group of 77 developing nations. Qatar takes over from Morocco as chairman of the group, now a coalition of 135 countries, whose aim is to promote the developing world’s collective economic interests and give it a stronger voice in international forums.

“I hope it is an auspici-
sous sign that Qatar will be guiding the G-77 in the year when we hope to push for-
ward the Doha ‘development round’ of trade negotiations,” he said.—MNA/Xinhua

Bank of China records profits of 57 billion yuan in 2003

Beijing, 18 Jan—The Bank of China (BOC) reported last year made profits of 57 billion yuan (some 6.9 bil-
don US dollars), up 4.7 bil-
don yuan (about 6.5 bil-
don US dollars) from 2002, said a BOC spokesperson here Friday.

Deducting profits from selling shares of the Bank of China (Hong Kong), the to-
tal profit of BOC reached 49.6 billion yuan (about six billion US dollars), up three billion yuan from 2002, the spokesperson said.

The BOC saw the handover ceremony in New York for chairmanship of the Group of 77 developing nations. Qatar takes over from Morocco as chairman of the group, now a coalition of 135 countries, whose aim is to promote the developing world’s collective economic interests and give it a stronger voice in international forums.

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Iraqis celebrate while holding pieces of a destroyed US Bradley fighting vehicle in the air after three US and two Iraqi soldiers were killed when a roadside bomb blew apart their armoured vehicle near Taji, north of Baghdad on 17 January. 2004. A car bomb ripped through the entrance of the US-led coalition in Baghdad.—INTERNET
Blood donated to Defence Services hospitals

YANGON, 18 Jan — Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, members of Myittrum Group of the Shine Hope Co of Sangyoung Township donated blood and K 100,000 to the Defence Services Orthopaedic Hospital — (Mingaladon). — MNA

Commandant Lt-Col Tun Tun accepted the cash donation and presented certificates of honour to the donors.

Deputy General Manager U Ohn Kyaing of the hospital spoke words of thanks and presented certificates of honour to the wellwishers.

Next, Col Myo Nyunt of the hospital spoke words of thanks and presented certificates of honour to the wellwishers. Later, members of the group donated blood and K 100,000 to the Defence Services Liver Hospital — (Mingaladon). — MNA

My goodwill visit

I had occasion to travel to the northeast of Shan State on 10 December 2003 together with a goodwill delegation. It was I that led the delegation, and Moh Moh Soe, my daughter, was its member. Driven by the urge to visit Shan State, we started our journey in December of the cold season. No sooner had air tickets been bought than we set forth as we were so overwhelmed by the desire to start the trip. We flew to Lashio via Heho, and then hired a van to proceed to Muse. We went on to Shweli in the People’s Republic of China, where my bosom friends live. On our trip to China, we conveyed the intimate friendship of Myanmar people to them. My Chinese friends returned the same thing to us. And we received their kind hospitality wherever we went. We did everything in our capacity for further cementing the existing friendship.

All along the trip we made by plane, we caught sight of the magnificent views of the Shan hills, valleys, ridges, fields, rivers, creeks, and lakes without feeling bored in the slightest. No doubt will there lie buried mineral resources under them. Various kinds of rice and crops grow well on these fields. Moreover, dams and hydro power stations are under construction there by making use of water from rivers and waterfalls. These natural resources are substances Nature provides for Myanmar. What is necessary is to make good use of them.

After the plane had touched down at the Lashio Airport, my friends there welcomed us heartily. Not only did they treat us to lunch, but they also arranged a van for our trip to Muse. We felt a touch of warmth in the cold season like winter.

On our way we passed a train on mountains. I considered the ability of those who constructed those roads to be wizards. So smooth was the road that I who used to be afraid of travelling on such kind of road forgot my fear. Instead, I let myself be enchanted by scenic beauties of Shan State. When I, as a cultural attaché, served my duties in Britain, I frequented Wales and Scotland. I thought then the mountain ranges and fields in those regions were of great beauty. Also as an ambassador to Australia, it occurred to me that the beauties of Canberra and the scenes of Brisbane could not be found in Myanmar. I thought so because at that time I had not been to Shan State yet. Now that I have visited there, I dare say that a broader scale. The economic as well as social growth will move with an astonishing velocity, and be able to keep abreast of other nations. There are favourable conditions to secure success, if such measures are to be taken.

I was lost in a train of thought of the welfare of the State all along the trip till I reached Muse, where my nephew Maung Maung Lin welcomed us heartily. My nephew was married to Mu Mu Huak, a Shan national girl, and is earning his living in the line of border trade. They have had a son, who is now one year old. My nephew found it delightful to live in Shan State and said that he would settle in Muse. Their happiness came over me. I have now got Shan national relatives to love as blood relation. To meet them was included in the purpose of my goodwill visit.

They also gave us a VIP treat. A friend of my nephew drove us to well-known Kyukog-Pangsang, which was once a blood-stained area owing to battles with the BCP but now a picturesque town with hills, valleys and orange farms as the BCP were driven out of the town by the Tatmadaw and locals. Also gone with them were poppy plantations. Presently, peace prevails in the region. There can be found children playing in the sunshine and girls and boys going to school. Like Singapore, Shweli with grand supermarkets on broad and clean roads is where the action is. When modified with fertilizers and hi-techs, the young plants brought from Myanmar are quick to grow big in a short time. For the same reason, sapphires, rubies and jade of Myanmar fetch high prices when decorated with their excellent artistic talent. Myanmar people should export not only the finished jewelleries but also many a prospect of making profits out of the Sino-Myanmar border trade on a mutual-benefit basis. Both countries will then become bound up with close ties. It is expected that one can stop service’ centres will be opened to ensure the easy flow of commodities.

King Anawrahta paid a visit to Shweli, where he visited pagoda and said prayers for a stronger friendship between the two countries. On 13-12-2003, I bid adieu to my nephew, niece, grandson and friends and left Muse for Lashio. It seemed to me impossible to forget the scenic beauties of Shan State along Kutkai-Hsenwi road, and the dinner my niece’s mother treated us to. The memory of their kind hospitality will live on. My thanks are due to all of them.

Our goodwill delegation has dreamed a series of visits to Chin State, Kayah State and others, if the occasion arises.

It is because I have set my sights on building a modern and developed nation in union with the dedicated service of all national brethren.

(Translation: KTY)


Independence Day Reception held in London

YANGON, 18 Jan — A reception to mark the 56th Anniversary Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar took place at Chiswick Town Hall in London on 4 January under the aegis of Myanmar Association (UK).

Present on the occasion were patrons of the association, executives and members and Myanmar citizens residing in UK and foreigners totalling about 300.

Permanent Patron of Myanmar Ambassador to UK Dr Kyaw Win, Chairman of the association U Nay Win spoke on the occasion. Patron of the association Prof U Tony Hla Pe and executive committee member of Myanmar Britain Business Association (MBBBA) Mr Keith Win explained the assistance to be rendered to Myanmar members.

Next, certificates of honour and awards were presented to four outstanding students. Myanmar students entertained those present with Myanmar traditional songs and dances.

Later, the guests enjoyed Myanmar traditional snacks, and the reception came to a close at 4 pm with the singing of National Anthem in chorus. — MNA
Prime Minister attends 45th Founding Anniversary of Maha Visuddhayon (Pali University)

Shwekyin Kyaitaing presents certificates of honour to members of the Sangha

Yangon, 17 Jan — The 45th Founding Anniversary of Maha Visuddhayon (Pali University) in Yangon Division Sangha has been marked by the presentation of certificates of honour and awards to members of the Sangha.

Present on the occasion were State Ovadacariya Sayadaw Shwekyin Joint-Sasana Baum Bhaddanta Abhidhaja Maha Ratthi Guru Bhaddanta Rajindabhi- vamsa of Thirimanda San Kyaung in Bahan Township and Shwekyin Joint-Sasana Baum Sayadaw Abdihidja Maha Ratthi Guru Abdihidja Agga Maha Saddhammamajika Bhaddanta Joitapala of Kyakhtawing Kyaitaing in Bago, State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Saydaws, Tipitaka Ovadacariya Sayadaw, Presiding Saydaw Tipitaka Dhamma Bhurataung Shwekyin Pandita Agga Maha Pandita Ashin Sirinanda- bhiyavamsa of Maha Visudhavon (Pali University) Shwekyin Kyaitaing (Yw Bandagarika Agga Maha Myint) and Chief Engineer Gen Ye Myint and party arrived at the site for construction of the wooden bridge on Lethis-Htamanthi Road and inspected the road.

He inspected the 40-ft long wooden bridge at mile post 29/4 and arrived at mile post 32/1 on the road and inspected there. At mile post 30/Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspected the site for construction of a detour and gave instructions.

He inspected the 40-ft long wooden bridges at mile posts 29/4 and 24/4. After viewing the wooden bridge at mile post 26/Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party proceeded to mile post 24/4 where the Khamti District Chief Engineer reported extension of the road. Lt-Gen Ye Myint and officials left Lethis by car and arrived at mile post 32/1 on the road and inspected there. At mile post 30/Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspected the site for construction of a detour and gave instructions. The Prime Minister then presented certificates of honour and awards to Ashin Iminda who had passed the Tipitaka Selection Examination 2003 of the State and won the Vinajadhara Vinajavokida title, the Dipyakata title and the Dwipitakadhara title.

The Prime Minister also presented certificates of honour and awards to Ashin Sirakijana who won the Vinajadhara Vinajavokida title at the Tipitaka Selection Examination 2003 of the State and Pitakattaya Paragu title at Swamahimaye Pahtamalat Sanghanath Examination in Thaton, Shin Yeja Nanda Lankara who stood first in the whole country at Pathamalat class of Pahtamahayon examination, Shin Javana Lankara who stood second in the whole country at Pahtamage class of Pathamahayon examination, Shin Jenea Lankara who won first in the whole country at Engtara-Nikaya Vidiu of the Nikaya Examination of the State and Samanekyaw title, and Shin Tikkha Lankara who won three Samanekyaw titles at Mandalay Thakaythar University. The chairman and members of Weyawutisa Association of the monastery presented certificates of honour and awards to members of the Sangha from the monastery who passed examination.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister left there. The second session of the ceremony was then held. Myintgen Maha Sasana Yeikha Sayadaw Bhaddanta Indohhaksa (Vinajadhara Vinajavokida) read the verses written by the Mandalay Maha Visuddhayon Taik Mingala Beikman Sayadaw and the Kanta Nwariyatt Sar- thitaik Sayadaw in Gangaw.

The chairman and members of Weyawutisa Association of the monastery presented certificates of honour and awards to members of the Sangha from the monastery who passed examination. The Prime Minister then presented certificates of honour and awards to Ashin Iminda who had passed the Tipitaka Selection Examination 2003 and won the Vinajadhara Vinajavokida title, the Dipyakata title and the Dwipitakadhara title.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents certificates of honour and awards to Ashin Iminda who passed the Tipitaka Selection Examination 2003 and won the Vinajadhara Vinajavokida title, the Dipyakata title and the Dwipitakadhara title.

The ceremony came to a close with three-time recitation of Namaste.

The ceremony was held to honour 96 members of the Sangha from the monastery who passed examinations of the State and other associations — six members of the Sangha who passed the 55th Tipitaka Selection Examination of the State with credit, six members of the Sangha who passed State Dhammacaraya (Lecture) examination (three treatises), one member of the Sangha who won Pitakattaya Paragu title, two members of the Sangha who passed Pahtamagyi examination, 12 members of the Sangha who passed Pahtamalat examination, 14 members of the Sangha who passed the Pahtamangame examination, three members of the Sangha who won Vinajadhara Vinajavokida title, four members of the Sangha who won Inguttara Nikaya Vidhu title and members of the Sangha who passed other examinations of Buddhist missionary associations and departments. — MNA

Prime Minister Khin Nyunt formally unveils the stone inscriptions of the refectory of Alowdawpyae Monastery in Dagon Myothit (East) Township.

(Yangon, 19 January, 2004) The Prime Minister formally unveiled the stone inscriptions of the refectory of Alowdawpyae Monastery in Dagon Myothit (East) Township.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects Lesh-Htamanthi road

Yangon, 18 Jan — Members of the State Peace and Development Council, Lt-Gen Ye Myint, who accompanied Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win on his tour as a member, together with officials from the SPDF Office, officers from the North-West Command, the Chief Engineer of Khamti District Public Works and officials, on 16 January, continued at the People’s Hospital. — MNA

Lt-Gen Ye Myint and officials left Lethis by car and arrived at mile post 32/1 on the road and inspected there. At mile post 30/Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspected the site for construction of a detour and gave instructions. He inspected the 40-ft long wooden bridges at mile posts 29/4 and 24/4. After viewing the wooden bridge at mile post 26/Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party proceeded to mile post 24/4 where the Khamti District Chief Engineer reported extension of the road. Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party arrived at the People’s Hospital. — MNA

Military Band contest continues

Yangon, 18 Jan — The 13th Military Band Contest of the Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) commemorating the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day continued at the People’s Hospital Square this morning.

Before the contest, bands comprising school girls of Bahan Township Basic Education High School No 2 and Latha Township BEHS-1 presented skill demonstration. Bands of Nos 44 LID, Nos 221 LID, Company-1 of North-East Command, Nos 3 and 1 Training Depot and Commanders of Western Command participated in the contest.

After today’s contest, Chairman of the Committee for Organizing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commemorative Military Band Contest Vice-Adjoint-General Brig-Gen Hla Hse presented cash awards to the bands of school girls.

On the occasion were Chairman of the Committee for Organizing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commemorative Military Band Contest Vice-Adjoint-General Brig-Gen Hla Hse and senior officers, panel of judges, guests, families of defence services and students. — MNA

Prime Minister Khin Nyunt presents certificates of honour and awards to Ashin Iminda who passed the Tipitaka Selection Examination 2003 and won the Vinajadhara Vinajavokida title, the Dipyakata title and the Dwipitakadhara title.
Secretary-1 inspects Yazagyo Dam …

(from page 16)

On arrival at Kalaywa by helicopter, the Secretary-1 and party were welcomed by Col Nyi Tun of Kyigon Station and officials.

Next, they proceeded to Myittha Bridge (Kalaywa) construction project site. At the briefing hall, Senior Engineer U Kyaw Lin reported on progress of work in constructing the bridge and work being carried out.

The Secretary-1 gave necessary instructions and looked into the project site. Myittha Bridge (Kalaywa) is to link Kalaywa, which is the end of Monywa-Ahlon road, with Shan Tat village. Efforts are being made for timely completion of the 1,320 feet long bridge.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party inspected the project site and proceeded to Kalaywa Township People’s Hospital where they inspected the X-ray unit, dental ward, medical ward, the OG theatre.

At the briefing hall, the chairman of Kalay District Peace and Development Council and the chairman of the Industries Supervisory Committee reported on establishment of the industrial zone, production of light trucks, farm equipment and machines for small-scale hydroelectric power.

In the evening, the Secretary-1 and party paid homage to Saddhamma-jotika adhaja Bhaddanta Dhammapala. Kyaungtaik Agga Maha Muni with the principals and faculty members of the Government Technical College.

Later, the Secretary-1 presented gifts to the principals, on behalf of the faculty members.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win visits a patient at Htamanthi Station Hospital in Homalin. — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win views round the Kalay District People’s Hospital. — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win inspects cars assembled at Kalay Industrial Zone — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win inspects the construction of the two-storey school building of BEHS No 1 in Kalay. — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win inspects the construction of the two-storey school building of BEHS No 1 in Kalay — MNA

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In the evening, the Secretary-1 and party were welcomed by the medical superintendent, specialists, nurses and hospital staff.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party inspected children ward, medical ward, the OG ward and intensive care unit, delivery room and operation theatre.

At the briefing hall, the medical superintendent reported on the strength of specialists, doctors, nurses, hospital staff, fulfilment of medicines, medical equipment, laboratory equipment, common diseases of the region and treatment, mobile medical treatment of specialists and raising of trust funds for the hospital.

Next, Director-General of Health Department Dr Wan Maung gave a supplementary report.

After giving necessary instructions, the Secretary-1 greeted specialists and doctors. Next, member of Panel of Patrons of Union Solidarity and Development Association (Central) Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win met with secretaries of Kalay and Kalaywa Township Union Solidarity and Development Associations and executives at the hall of Kalay Station and gave instructions.

Next, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win and party left for Yangon by Myanmar Airways and arrived back here in the evening.—MNA

In response to the report, Vice-Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win gave instructions. He said that they were there to meet with fellow education staff of the university and to fulfill the requirements, that includes buses for the students and upgrading of the entrance to the university.

He said he felt pleased to learn that students from Chin State and Sagain Division are pursuing education at the university happily. It can be attributed to the goodwill and efforts of faculty members aided by the Pro-Rector.

The Tatmadaw, since its assumption of the State duties, has been making efforts for national development after laying down plans and progress has been made in political, economic, education, health and communication sectors. The government will continue to make efforts for national development whatever hindrances and obstacles are.

A modern and developed nation will have to be built with intellectuals and intellectuals. Thus, universities, colleges and institutes were opened across the nation for the emergence of highly qualified human resources. In the process, faculty members are to train and teach the students to become outstanding ones capable of serving the interests of the State and the people.

Afterwards, the Secretary-1 and party arrived at Kalay Industrial Zone.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party inspected machines for hydroelectric power, turbines and spare parts for turbines and small-scale machines for hydroelectric power.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party inspected the project site of Myittha Bridge, Kalaywa Station and officials.

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In the evening, the Secretary-1 and party paid homage to Saddhamma-jotika adhaja Bhaddanta Dhammapala. Kyaungtaik Agga Maha Muni with the principals and faculty members of the Government Technical College.

Later, the Secretary-1 presented gifts to the principals, on behalf of the faculty members.

Yesterday morning, the Secretary-1 and party inspected the 10-kilo-watt hydroelectric power plant constructed at the regional battalion in Kalay and gave necessary instructions.

Next, they paid homage to ancient Buddha images kept at Dhammayaz Kyaungtaik in Kalay and presented offer to the Priests of Vajrayana Kyaungtaik in Kalay.

In the evening, the Secretary-1 and party arrived at Kalay Government Technical College where they inspected the project site of Myittha Bridge, Kalaywa Station and officials.

At the briefing hall, the chairman of Kalay District Peace and Development Council and the chairman of the Industries Supervisory Committee reported on establishment of the industrial zone, production of light trucks, farm equipment and machines for small-scale hydroelectric power.

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Next, they proceeded to Kalay BEHS No 1 and inspected construction of the two-storey new school building.

Later, the Secretary-1 met with Headmaster U Sein Lwin and teachers and gave instructions on academic matters.

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Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win tours
Bhamo, Homalin and Leshi

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win views round in Homalin People’s Hospital on 17-1-2004. (News reported)— MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win inspects Leshi People’s Hospital on 17-1-2004. (News reported) — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win inspects arrangements for preventing Shweli Bridge from erosion on 17-1-2004. (News reported) — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win meets departmental staff and townelders at Leshi Township Peace and Development Council Office on 17-1-2004. (News reported)— MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win inspects Homalin Airport construction project on 17-1-2004. (News reported) — MNA
Chairman U Hsankha Naung addresses the opening of Naga Traditional New Year Festival in Leshi, Hkamti District, Sagaing Division, on 17-1-2004. (News reported) — MNA

Chairman U Hsankha Naung addresses the opening of Naga Traditional New Year Festival in Leshi, Hkamti District, Sagaing Division, on 17-1-2004. (News reported) — MNA

Naga Traditional New Year Festival in progress in Leshi, Hkamti District, Sagaing Division, on 17-1-2004. (News reported) — MNA

Tourists seen at Naga Traditional New Year Festival in Leshi, Hkamti District, Sagaing Division, on 17-1-2004. (News reported) — MNA

Myanmar reaches finals in U-14 Asia Zone (2) Tennis Tournament

YANGON, 18 Jan — The semi-finals of the second round matches of the U-14 Asia Zone (2) Tennis Tournament organized by International Tennis Federation and Tennis Federation of Myanmar took place at Theinbyu Tennis court here this morning. At the men’s single event, Phyo Min Tha of Myanmar team and Sri Lanka-Malaysia team reached finals after beating their rivals. Final matches will take place tomorrow morning. — MNA

Ensuring smooth and secure transport coordinated

YANGON, 17 Jan — Work coordination meeting of Yangon Division Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport was held at the meeting hall of Yangon Command yesterday evening, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe. It was also attended by Deputy Commander Col Wai Lwin, military region commanders, members of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council, members of the supervisory committee, chairman of district and township Peace and Development Councils, registrars of universities and colleges in Yangon, chairman of bus lines and guests.

Officials reported to the commander on measures taken for ensuring smooth and secure transport. After hearing the reports, the commander explained the arrangements for facilitation of transport in Yangon and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

Phyo Min Tha in action. — M.L.M
Airbus to deliver over 30 planes to China in 2004

BANGKOK, 18 Jan—Airbus, the European aircraft manufacturer, said it will deliver more than 30 civil aircraft to China in 2004. Airbus China president Lawrence Barron announced here Friday.

The aircraft will be operated by major Chinese airlines, including China Southern Airlines, Air China, China Eastern Airlines, Hainan Airlines and Shichuan Airlines, Barron said.

Airbus had delivered 36 civil aircraft to China in 2004. Airbus China President Lawrence Barron announced here Friday that the aircraft will be operated by major Chinese airlines, including China Southern Airlines, Air China, China Eastern Airlines, Hainan Airlines and Sichuan Airlines, Barron said.

Exploration activities boost Indonesia’s oil, gas reserves

JAKARTA, 18 Jan—The Indonesian Government said that various oil and gas exploration and exploitation activities in 2003 had added one billion barrels of oil and 20 trillion cubic feet (TCF) of natural gas to the country’s current oil and gas reserves.

Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Purnomo Yudinarto said on Friday that the boost in the oil and gas reserves marked a successful year for investment in the sector.

Some 70 per cent of the additional reserves was contributed by state-owned oil company PT Pertamina’s new oil and gas find, Pumono was quoted Friday by the Jakarta Post as saying. Director of Exploration and Exploitation, Dr. Purnomo Yudantra said that the additional reserves, the country’s potential proven oil and gas reserves now stand at 17.6 billion barrels and 140 TCF of gas, respectively.

The government’s policy of boosting exploration and exploitation activities is expected to continue in 2004, with the aim of increasing the country’s oil and gas reserves. The government has set a target of increasing the country’s oil reserves to 30 billion barrels and gas reserves to 40 trillion cubic feet by 2010.

Russia hails SCO as tool for solving world problems

MOSCOW, 19 Jan—Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Yakovenko said Friday that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an effective tool of multilateral solution for world problems.

Russian “is convinced that SCO will cope with its tasks and will assert itself as an effective instrument of multilateral interaction of our states in solving problems of both the regional and international scales”, Yakovenko said in a briefing with his Chinese and Iranian counterparts.

The official noted that the Chinese and Iranian foreign ministers had visited Moscow last week, furthering the consultation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). The group of countries includes Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The Russian foreign ministry spokesman said he was confident that the SCO would continue to play a constructive role in regional and international affairs.

Norway to provide grant assistance for Nepal’s hydropower projects

KATHMANDU, 18 Jan—The Norwegian Government has signed a grant agreement to provide a grant assistance of 1.5 million US dollars to feasibility studies of constructing small and medium size hydropower projects in Nepal, the Nepalese Finance Minister said Saturday.

The grant assistance will be utilized to conduct feasibility studies and environmental impact assessments for 10 small and medium size hydropower projects in Nepal, the Nepalese Finance Minister said Saturday.

The agreement was signed here Friday evening by Madhav Prasad Ghimire, joint secretary of the Nepalese Finance Ministry and Norwegian Ambassador to Nepal Ingrid Ofstad on behalf of their governments.
NASA decrees early demise for “Hubble” telescope

CAPE CANAVERAL, (Florida), 18 Jan — NASA announced on Friday it would cancel a space shuttle mission to service the Hubble Space Telescope, a decision that dictates an early demise for the most storied space agency's science programme in the space agency's history.

The Hubble, the most famous of all telescopes, has sent a steady diet of spectacular space images back to Earth since it was launched in 1990 has been invaluable in helping astronomers and astrophysicists understand how the universe was formed and how stars are born and die.

The Hubble could malfunction at any time, but NASA predicts a failure between early 2006 and 2008. At some point after that, a robotic ship will be used to push the satellite out of orbit and it will burn in the Earth's atmosphere.

A shuttle mission targeted for mid-2005 would have repaired broken gyroscopes used to aim the Hubble and astronauts would have replaced batteries that are working on borrowed time.

That mission, now cancelled, would also have new instruments, including the Wide Field Camera 3, powerful enough to see back in time to the period when the first lights in the universe turned on.

Because of the time it takes light to reach Earth, telescopes as powerful as the Hubble enable BI to continuously assess the situation in their respective regions, including the performance of the UN and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, a UN spokesman said.

The UN chief told the envelopes at the closed-door meeting that AIDS is a priority issue for the UN system, and for him personally, and stressed the envelopes’ value in reaching out to countries as they respond to the AIDS epidemic.

The meeting came a day after Annan hosted a summit of executives from the worldwide media at UN headquarters in New York, where the media leaders made major commitments towards expanding public knowledge and understanding about HIV/AIDS.

Manila. 18 Jan — The Philippine Government has said about 55 Filipinos die of lung cancer and other tobacco-related diseases every day, which entail 46 billion pesos (836.36 million US dollars) in economic and medical costs annually.

Philippine Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit urged the government to get serious about implementing the anti-smoking law passed by Congress last year, saying Filipinos were starting to smoke earlier in life.

Advertisements linking smoking with beauty, sophistication, power and success are a major factor in the increase in number of young Filipinos learning to smoke before they reach 17 years old, the Philippine Daily Inquirer on-line news Saturday quoted Dayrit as saying in a statement.

Corazon Ngelam-gel, an oncologist at the Philippine General Hospital and a consultant at the Philippine Cancer Society, said male Filipino smokers consumed around 26 sticks of cigarettes a day and women smokers consumed an average of seven sticks.

A stick of cigarette contains 2,000 different chemicals, the ones that can be found in exhaust pipes, including tar, which causes addiction and nicotine, which causes darkening of the lips, the Philippine Cancer Society said.

Bank Indonesia’s interest rate may go below 8 per cent

JAKARTA, 18 Jan — The deputy governor of the Indonesian central bank said Friday that the central bank’s benchmark interest rate may go below 8 per cent this year if the government maintains the sound economic situation.

Deputy governor of Bank Indonesia (BI) Anwar Nasution made the remarks while commenting on the central bank's move to lower its interest rate to 8.06 per cent during the weekly auction of its promissory notes on Wednesday.

He said Indonesia posted good economic performance last year, during which the exchange rate between the national currency rupiah and the US dollar was stable and the inflation remained low, enabling BI to continuously lower its interest rate.

Manila. 18 Jan — The World Health Organization has raised the number of Vietnam’s confirmed bird flu deaths by one to four, saying a five-year-old boy who died this month was found to have been carrying the virus.

The UN health agency, which is helping Vietnam battle the fast-spreading disease, said the boy, from Nam Dinh Province, died on January 8. Nam Dinh is about 60 miles south of the capital Hanoi.

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The UN health agency, which is helping Vietnam battle the fast-spreading disease, said the boy, from Nam Dinh Province, died on January 8. Nam Dinh is about 60 miles south of the capital Hanoi.

WHO now counts four confirmed cases of H5N1 in Vietnam, “the agency said in a statement issued late on Friday, referring to the bird flu virus.

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http://www.newlightofmyanmar.com/
Parma accused for tax evasion

Rome, 18 Jan — Italy’s Parma soccer club has been accused for tax evasion on player transfers, and it amounted to some 640 billion old lire, or about 330 million euros, judicial sources said Friday.

The Italian top Serie A outfit was once one of the symbols of Parmalat’s success, but now faces possible sale as the insolvent group sheds non-strategic assets.

The cash-strapped club is also facing a probe into the sale of TV rights, which stems from the 1990s.

Earlier this week Parmalat’s court-appointed administrator Enrico Bondi took over the running of the club Parma after last week’s forced resignation of Stefano Tanzi, son of disgraced Parmalat chief Calisto Tanzi. Bondi took over the chairmanship of the club himself as it prepares to shed players in order to stay afloat ahead of a possible sale.

Luca Baraldi, a former Parma director who put together a rescue package for its cash-strapped rival Lazio earlier this year, was named new CEO of the club, which currently lies fifth in Serie A.

The news came before a Parma shareholders’ meeting which approved the sale of three players including Brazilian star Adriano to repay a 70-million-euro debt to its insolvent parent group.

MNA/Xinhua

Arsenal’s Volz, Shabaan on the move, McBride eyed

LONDON, 18 Jan — Fulham completed the permanent signing of German defender Moritz Volz on Friday from London Premier League rivals Arsenal for an undislosed fee.

Volz, who has been playing on loan at Fulham this season, has signed a contract taking him to the end of the 2006-07 season, Fulham said on their official website.

Volz joined Arsenal from Schalke 04 in 2000 but struggled to break into the first team. The defender, who turns 21 on Wednesday, was loaned out to Wimbridge and then Fulham, for whom he has played 16 times this season.

Arsenal also released Swedish reserve goalkeeper Rami Shabaan on a one-month loan to First Division West Ham United. West Ham need goalkeeper cover after selling England international David James to Manchester City this week.

Former England assistant coach Steve McClaren said his club held talks with Liverpool over a possible transfer but Houllier told reporters: "The situation as it is, is that Emile will travel as normal with the rest of the squad to Spurs on Saturday."

"There has been interest in Emile but at the moment I’m not ready to let him go and I don’t think Emile wants to go." The Frenchman added: "I have said it before and I will happily repeat it again – there will be no players leaving the club and no players coming to the club during this transfer window."

"It’s just a situation you can do nothing about. It’s their department. But there have been enquiries," Ferguson told a news conference.

That's their department. But there have been... — MNA/Reuters

Houllier rebuffs Middlesbrough approach for Heskey

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That's their department. But there have been... — MNA/Reuters

Leeds United still in credit talks

London, 18 Jan — Leeds United said on Friday they were still in talks with their creditors about extending a repayment deadline and had no evidence that an Arab Sheikh had raised money to bid for the club.

Leeds, second-bottom of the Premier League table and saddled with massive debts, had earlier seen their shares soar more than 40 per cent on a newspaper report that Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Mubarak Al-Khalifa would buy the club, enabling them to stave off the threat of administration.

Creditors have given Leeds until January 19 to raise fresh funds. If they fail, the club best known for their trophy-winning team of the 1970s, could become the first Premier League team to be forced into administration, a form of creditor protection.

MNA/Reuters

Butt move unavoidable, says Ferguson

Manchester, (England), 18 Jan — The impending departure from Old Trafford of England international Nicky Butt is an unavoidable situation, Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson said on Friday.

"There has been plenty of interest, although I won’t say who from. It’s not my job to say which clubs have phoned us up. That’s their department. But there have been enquiries," Ferguson told a news conference.

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WEATHER

Sunday, 18 January, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rains have been isolated in Kachin State, upper Sagon Division and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Chin, Rakhine, Kayin States, Ayeyawady Division, (5°C) below normal in Shan State, Yangon Division, (4°C) above normal in upper Sagaing Division and normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 17-1-2004 was 33°C (91°F). Minimum temperature on 18-1-2004 was 12.5°C (55°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 18-1-2004 was 65%. Total sunshine hours on 17-1-2004 was 9.0 hours approx.

Rainfall on 18-1-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 10 mph from Northwest at (11:30) hrs MST on 17-1-2004.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 19-1-2004: Except for the possibility of isolated rain in Kachin State, weather will be partly cloudy in the whole country. Degree of certainty is (40%).

State of the sea: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Continuation of decrease of night temperatures is likely in the Eastern Myanmar areas.


THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Monday, 19 January, 2004

Asleip in Jesus
Dr Charles Pangi
Skin Specialist, Yangon General Hospital (Retired)

Age (68) Years

Son of (U Pangi and Gha Ida) of No. 234, A/Bt Street, A/B Ward, Myothit, Insein Township, Yangon, son-in-law of (Mahn Aung Myaing) and Gha Tin May, brother of Daw Khin Thet Mu (DSTV) & U Soe Win Tun, Mah Lin Shwe & Gha Ohn Kyang, Gha Rose Marry & Marthun Pa, husband of Gha Shirley Maung (Singapore), father of S’Aung Thet Soe & Ma Miyat Win Kyi, Nant Sabai Thynn & Nant Joyathan (PCP). Nant Zarnu Aye (YIEC) & Ko Aung Hpone Shain, S’ Zaw Thet Naing, Nant May Hnin Tin (Singapore), S’ Aung Thet Wai (B.E.), grandfather of six. Asleep in Jesus on 16th January 2004 at Singapore (NUH). The funeral service will be held at 11:00 am on Tuesday (20-1-2004) at Immanuel Baptist Church in Mahabandula Panyang Road and thence to Weyow Christian Cemetery for burial.

Friends and Relatives accept only intimation.

Bereaved Family
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt visits Cooperative Product Exhibition and Market Festival

YANGON, 18 Jan — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt visited the Cooperative Product Exhibition and Market Festival-2004 organized by the Ministry of Cooperatives at the Cooperative Trade Centre (Saya San Plaza) at the corner of New University Avenue and Saya San Road in Bahan Township this evening.

First, the Prime Minister, accompanied by officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, arrived at the exhibition at 3 pm. The Prime Minister was welcomed there by Minister for Cooperatives Maj-Gen Htay Oo and ministers, the Mayor of Yangon and departmental heads.

Next, the Prime Minister and party viewed the booths of consumer products, foodstuff, regional products, weaving traditional costumes of national races, the spinning of thread from water lily stems, the weaving of water lily thread into robes and weaving Zinmei longyi of Shan State at the first floor of the plaza.

Next, the Prime Minister and party inspected the booths of the Ministry of Industry-1 and the Ministry of Industry-2, cooperative societies and private industries.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister and party viewed the jewellry shops, souvenir shops, gem mosaic paintings, biomass gas engines of Myanmar Inventors Cooperative Ltd, demonstration of running engines with the power of bio-gas, marine products of Mon and Rakhine States, import substitute items, foodstuff, textile and furniture of state division cooperative societies and private industries.

Next, the Prime Minister and party inspected the vehicles and generators manufactured by industrial zones, cooperative societies and private industries in the compound of the plaza.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister and party viewed the booths of rice marketing and red coral groupers culturing of Annawa Devi Fisheries Cooperative Society on the ground floor and vehicles assembled in Dagon Seikkan Industrial Zone. Minister Maj-Gen Htay Oo and officials conducted the Prime Minister and party round the exhibition.

At the request of the visitors, the exhibition and festival was extended to 21 January from 9 am to 9 pm.

Later, the Prime Minister and party arrived at the site of cleaning and beautifying Inya Lake on Gaba Aye Pagoda Road. Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and officials welcomed the Prime Minister and party.

Next, the Prime Minister and party inspected the dredging of the lake and maintenance tasks of the embankment. The mayor conducted the Prime Minister round the work site. The Prime Minister gave instructions on taking measures for cleanliness of the lake and conservation of natural environs. The Prime Minister left the work site at 5 pm.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt view the Cooperative Product Exhibition and Market Festival-2004. — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win looks into Yazagyo Dam project in Kalay Township. — MNA

Secretary-1 inspects Yazagyo Dam construction project, Myittha Bridge (Kalay) construction project

YANGON, 18 Jan — Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, accompanied by Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and heads of department, on 16 January morning, left Leshi by helicopter and arrived at Hhamthi Model Village in Homalin Township.

Next, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win and party together with member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint who had already arrived at the village and officials, proceeded to Hhamthi Station Hospital where they inspected the operation theatre and X-ray unit.

At the hall of the hospital, the Secretary-1 met with departmental officials of Hkamti and Homalin Townships and officials of Hhamthi Model Village.

At the meeting, Station Hospital Medical Officer Dr Thit Lwin reported on requirement of medical equipment and Headmaster of Hhamthi Basic Education High School (Branch) U Aung Zan, on requirement of a new school building.

Deputy Minister for Education Col Aung Myo Min and Director-General of Health Department Dr Wan Maung gave supplementary reports. Next, Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye reported on work to be carried out for regional development to the Secretary-1 who gave necessary instructions.

After that, the Secretary-1 presented cash for the trust fund of the hospital to Dr Thit Lwin. Next, the Secretary-1 and party inspected Hhamthi BHHS (Branch) and gave instructions.

On arrival at Yazagyo Dam project in Kalay Township, the Secretary-1 and party were welcomed by Brig-Gen Khin Maung Aung Maung Chaung (Kyaw Ywa) Dam project. In response to the report, the Secretary-1 gave necessary instructions and inspected construction of the retaining wall there.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party looked into the site choosen for construction of the main embankment and work being carried out for the project. The aim of the project is to irrigate 6500 acres of farmland for development of Myittha Valley region and to generate 5 mega-watt of electricity. (See page 9)

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt visits Cooperative Product Exhibition and Market Festival-2004. — MNA

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