Senior General Than Shwe receives Lao PDR Prime Minister and party

YANGON, 7 Dec — At the invitation of Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar Lt-Gen Soe Win, a goodwill delegation led by Prime Minister of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic Mr Bounnhang Vorachith arrived here on an official visit accorded with the new State Constitution.

Also present on the occasion were Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Office Lt-Col Pe Nycin, Director-General of Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet, Senior General Maung Aye, member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Mann, Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Somsavat Lengsavad and senior officials of Myanmar and Lao PDR, from the dais, took the salute of the Guard of Honour at the airport.

Meanwhile, the State Peace and Development Council Office Lt-Col Pe Nycin and senior officials of Myanmar and Lao PDR, from the dais, took the salute of the Guard of Honour at the airport.

Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win, Deputy Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Thura Than Htaw, Myanmar Ambassador to Lao PDR U Tin Oo, Director-General of the State Peace and Development Council Office Lt-Col Pe Nycin and senior officials of Myanmar and Lao PDR, from the dais, took the salute of the Guard of Honour at the airport.

Senior General Than Shwe and party pose for a documentary photo together with visiting Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bounnhang Vorachith and party at the Credentials Hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw Building. — MNA

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Lao PDR Prime Minister arrives on official visit

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Also present on the occasion were Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Mann, Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Somsavat Lengsavad and senior officials of Myanmar and Lao PDR, from the dais, took the salute of the Guard of Honour at the airport.

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Senior General Than Shwe and party pose for a documentary photo together with visiting Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bounnhang Vorachith and party at the Credentials Hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw Building. — MNA

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

Wednesday, 8 December, 2004

World Buddhist Summit for perpetuation and propagation of the Buddha Sasana

The World Buddhist Summit is going to be held in full swing in the Union of Myanmar, the nation where Theravada Buddhism flourishes, from 9 to 11 December. It is to take place in the Maha Pasana Cave at Kaba Aye where the Sixth Great Buddhist Council (Synod) was held. Now preparations are well under way.

The Maha Pasana Cave is a historic place. It was in 1956 that venerable elders from five Theravada Buddhist nations, namely, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia, attended the Council to recite and verify the scriptures of the Buddha. Therefore, the Government is planning to hold the World Buddhist Summit at this place.

A rehearsal of the World Buddhist Summit took place at the Maha Pasana Cave on 6 December. Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win, also Chairman of the Leading Committee for Holding the World Buddhist Summit, attended the ceremony and left necessary instructions to all those responsible.

Myanmar has a Sangha population of nearly 400,000 and Sangha Nayaka Committees at different levels, together with the Ministry of Religious Affairs, are taking care of the Sasana. And the Government and the people are very religious and they are always ready to support the Sasana and provide four necessities to the Sangha. Therefore, Buddhism is flourishing very well in Myanmar.

Heads of State and Government, delegates, Buddhist leaders, participants and observers from 37 nations have been invited and they are going to attend the World Buddhist Summit. At the Summit, there will be talks on the teachings of Buddha, seminars and paper-reading sessions. Moreover, a joint declaration will be issued at the end of the Summit.

We believe that the World Buddhist Summit will contribute a lot to perpetuation and propagation of the Buddha Sasana and peace and stability of the world and that it will be a total success.

Our Pledges

* Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
* Oppose those trying to jeopardize the 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

Ambassador calls on F & R Minister

YANGON, 7 Dec — Singaporean Ambassador Mr T Jasudasen called on Minister for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun this afternoon at the latter’s office at 3pm today.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister Col Hla Thein Swe, Governor of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung and officials.

Minister Maj-Gen Hla Tun receives Singaporean Ambassador Mr Thambynathan Jasudasen. — &r

Foreign Minister returns from Second East Asia Forum

YANGON, 7 Dec — A Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win arrived back here by air yesterday evening after attending the Second East Asia Forum held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 5 to 6 December, at the invitation of Malaysian Foreign Minister Mr. Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

The Myanmar delegation was welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office U Than Shwe, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu, the directors-general and responsible officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chargé d’Affaires of Malaysian Embassy.

The Myanmar delegation member Deputy Director-General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Pe Than Oo also arrived back on the same flight.

On-job Training Course No 17 for Auditors concludes

YANGON, 7 Dec — The On-job Training Course No 17 for Auditors concluded at the Auditor-General’s Training School this afternoon, with an address by Auditor-General Maj-Gen Lun Maung.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Auditor-General Daw Thin Thin, Director-General of the Auditor-General’s Office U Myo Myint, the deputy directors-general, officials of the training school, faculty members and trainees.

The one-month course was attended by 85 auditors from the Auditor-General’s Office and regional auditor offices.

Sarsodaw Day commemorative Book Fair continues

YANGON, 7 Dec — A total of 48 publishing houses participated in the fair and there are 76 book shops. Over 7,000 bookworms today visited the fair and the sale fetched over K 2.1 million.

Book lovers browsing and choosing publications at the book fair. — MNA

Tiger Cup soccer live on TV

YANGON, 7 Dec — Myanmar Radio and TV will telecast live all the matches the Myanmar team plays at the Tiger Cup soccer tourney to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which begins 7 December.

The broadcasting of Myanmar’s fist match against the Philippines will begin at 4.30 pm on 8 December. — MNA
Pakistan seizes 2.3 tons of morphine

QUETTA (Pakistan), 6 Dec — Pakistan authorities seized 2.3 tons of morphine worth millions of dollars and a large quantity of arms from a remote southwestern village near the Afghan border, a paramilitary officer said on Sunday.

The drugs and arms such as rocket launchers, mortars and anti-aircraft rounds smuggled from Afghanistan were found dumped in a village after a raid by paramilitary Frontier Corps near the town of Chaghi in Baluchistan Province on Saturday, Lieutenant-Colonel Rizwan Malik told reporters.

Chaghi lies some 185 miles west of Quetta, capital of Pakistan’s Baluchistan Province.

HK to upgrade fire safety standards for better protection

HONG KONG, 6 Dec — Hong Kong’s Fire Services Department (FSD) is committed to upgrading the fire safety standards of old buildings for better protection. Director of Fire Services Lam Chun-man said Saturday at a ceremony for the annual Fire Prevention Campaign 2004/05 that this year’s campaign will focus on upgrading fire safety measures. He urged owners and occupiers of old buildings to improve the fire safety standards of their buildings for better protecting all residents.

He stressed that the scope of fire safety work included the improvement of hardware like fire services installations and equipment, as well as the support of software such as building management and fire prevention publicity.

The Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance was brought into operation in 1997 and implemented in four phases.

The ordinance requires the owners and occupiers of pre-1987 commercial buildings and prescribed commercial premises to upgrade their fire safety standards.

Singaporan couples may face HIV tests before marrying

SINGAPORE, 6 Dec — Couples in Singapore may face mandatory HIV tests before marrying, Singapore media reported on Sunday, a week after the government said all pregnant women would be screened for HIV/AIDS to stem a rise in new infections.

Although the South-east Asian island has one of Asia’s lowest levels of HIV infection, it is tightening defences after data from health workers showed women and girls in Asia increasingly at risk of becoming infected with the deadly disease.

Health Minister Khoo Boon Wan said Singapore planned to seek public feedback on the pre-marital HIV tests in the wealthy, tightly controlled city-state, where the number of new HIV infections reached a record high this year.

“If you ask me as a parent, I think there is no harm. I have three girls and you do not know what their boyfriends will be like,” Khoo was quoted by The Straits Times as telling local reporters on Saturday.

“I think we are more likely to succeed if we treat this as purely a public health problem, so let’s take away the morality and religion from all this,” he said.

1,276 US troops killed since beginning of Iraq war

WASHINGTON, 6 Dec — As of Monday, 6 December, 2004, at least 1,276 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 998 died as a result of hostile action, the Defence Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is six higher than the Defence Department’s tally, last updated at 10 am EST Monday.

The British military has reported 74 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia one death each. Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,138 US military members have died, according to AP’s count. That includes at least 889 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military’s numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military: Three Marines were killed in action in two separate incidents Sunday in Anbar province. Two Marines were killed Friday in fighting in western Anbar province.

A customer reads comics on a computer at a Tokyo Internet cafe. Fujitsu and Cisco Systems have teamed up to provide routers and switches that will enable businesses to build advanced Internet Protocol networks.

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Two Filipinos hurt in Iraqi raid

BAGHDAD, 6 Dec — Two Filipinos working in two US military camps in Iraq were injured when terrorists attacked the two camps late last week.

Reports reaching the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) confirmed that Adulfo Adrea, 25, a mechanic working for Prime Product Inc, a US-owned subcontractor of Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR), was injured in the thigh when a rocket-propelled grenade hit Camp Victory on 3 December. Another Filipino, Mark Reyes, who was working at Camp Anaconda, was also injured in a mortar attack. The report came from Philippine Chargé d’Affaires Eric Endaya, who is now based in Baghdad, along with two remaining embassy officers. He said that the two workers are now out of danger.
Chinese Premier meets Italian President

BEIJING, 7 Dec— Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said here Monday that China and Italy can strengthen their cooperation in a number of areas to “enrich bilateral relations”.

During a meeting with visiting Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Wen proposed that China and Italy can advance their cooperation in political, economic, cultural, educational, tourism and media sectors.

China and Italy established diplomatic relations 34 years ago. Earlier this year, Beijing and Rome agreed to set up “full-range strategic partnership relations” and formed a China-Italy governmental commission to guide the growth of relations.

Two-way visits at different levels between the two countries have been frequent, and bilateral cooperation vigorous,” Wen noted. “We have had close coordination in international areas.”

On his first state visit to China as President of Italy, Ciampi said he agreed with Wen’s proposals on developing bilateral ties.

The President compared the current visit with his first visit to China in 1983 as governor of the Central Bank of Italy and said China-Italy cooperation has had fruitful results.

The Italian President said his current visit to China aims to enhance relations with China in areas of politics, culture and economy.

Vietnam, Singapore agree to forge economic link

HANOI, 7 Dec— Along with Singapore, Vietnam will take concrete measures to link the economies of the two countries, and strive for brighter future of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai made the statement when holding talks with his visiting Singaporean counterpart Lee Hsien Loong on Monday, Vietnam News Agency reported.

During the talks, the prime ministers focused on measures to implement the initiative to link the two economies proposed by Singapore during Khai’s visit to the island state in March 2004. In the short term, the two countries will join hands in six areas, namely investment, trade, transport, information technology and telecommunications, finance and banking, and education and training.

Khai affirmed that Vietnam always treasures and wants to boost multifaceted cooperative and friendly relations on the win-win basis with Singapore, considering the foreign country one of its reliable and important partners.

He also stressed that Vietnam and Singapore, in the current international situations, should promote mutual support, solidarity, cooperation and consultation under the ASEAN framework for peace, stability and prosperity in the region as well as the world.

MNA/Xinhua

Eight US soldiers sue Pentagon over extended Iraq tours

WASHINGTON, 6 Dec— Eight US soldiers on Monday sued the Pentagon, claiming the military extended their tours of duty in Iraq although their contracts had expired, their attorneys said.

It is the only known court challenge by active-duty soldiers against the Defence Department’s so-called stop-loss policy, said attorney Stoughton Lynd.

Seven of the soldiers in the lawsuit have asked to remain anonymous, but one of them, David Qualls, said at a news conference in Washington that the court challenge is over “a question of fairness.”

“I enlisted in July 2003. I completed and served that one year,” Qualls said. “I feel it is time to let me go back to my wife.”

Qualls, 35, signed a “Try One” contract on 7 July, 2003, which allows a soldier to serve for one year before deciding whether to extend service. Qualls says no one told him about the stop-loss policy. Pentagon paperwork said Qualls was on the hook until 2031, when Qualls will be over 60 years old, according to court papers.

MNA/Xinhua

China-Germany cooperation aim at long-term, win-win results

BEIJING, 7 Dec— The cooperation between governments of China and Germany and between businesses of the two countries will never seek temporary or short-term benefits, but aim at long-term and win-win results, visiting German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said here Monday.

The Chancellor made the remarks while visiting the China-Germany joint venture of Aircraft Maintenance and Engineering Co., Beijing (Ameco Beijing), the first stop immediately after he arrived in Beijing afternoon.

Schroeder came here for a three-day working visit to China at the invitation of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao. He cited Ameco as a successful example of cooperation between businesses of China and Germany.

“How should the cooperation be carried out between the two countries, Ameco can tell us,” Schroeder told dozens of reporters both from China and overseas in Ameco’s huge hangar with a capacity to accommodate four Boeing 747 aircraft that began operation in 1996.

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Singaporean PM to arrive in Philippines Thursday

MANILA, 7 Dec — Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong will arrive in Manila Thursday for a two-day official visit that will be highlighted by discussions on trade and counter-terrorism cooperation.

Coming from Vietnam, Lee, who is on a series of introductory visits to the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) capitals, will meet Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Senate President Franklin Drilon and House Speaker Jose de Venecia, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs said Monday.

The two sides are likely to discuss issues of bilateral cooperation, tourism, investments, and the current regional situation.

Singapore’s bilateral relationship with the Philippines is on a firm footing and officials note that progress has been made in its framework for cooperation, under the Philippines-Singapore Action Plan.

MNA/Xinhua

China’s “IT” industry to maintain rapid growth

BEIJING, 7 Dec — China’s information technology (IT) industry will maintain rapid and healthy growth in 2005, which will render a good start for the 11th Five-Year Plan that follows the 10th Five-Year Plan ending in 2005.

The prediction was made by Chen Wei, deputy director of the Economic Operations Department under the Ministry of the Information Industry (MII), at the 2004 Annual Economic Conference of China’s IT Industry over the weekend in Beijing, China Daily reported on Monday.

China’s IT industry is expected to see a total revenue of 2.68 trillion yuan (322.3 billion US dollars) in 2004, up 42.3 per cent year-on-year, becoming the country’s leading driver for economic growth, MII sources indicated.

Chen estimated that the industry’s added value is expected to hit 778 billion yuan (about 70 billion US dollars) for the entire 2004, up 44.5 per cent.

Tax revenue is likely to reach 143.1 billion yuan (some 17 billion US dollars), up 37.9 per cent; and exports totalling to 180 billion US dollars, roughly 34 per cent of country’s total exports.

China’s IT industry witnessed a 40.5-per-cent rise in added value to 363.2 billion yuan for the year through the third quarter, which compares to 15.5 per cent for all the country’s industries during the same period.

MNA/Xinhua

Jetstar Asia to start flights from Singapore next week

SINGAPORE, 7 Dec— Jetstar Asia, the Singapore-based budget carrier, will launch its operations in the island state by flying to Hong Kong on 13 Monday evening, flights to Shanghai, Jakarta, Surabaya and Manila at a later date.

The reports said that the Qantas-backed low-cost carrier also hopes to have more routes to cities in China and India so as to differentiate itself from its competitors in the local market.

MNA/Xinhua

Kuwait urges OPEC to check output quota

KUWAIT CITY, 7 Dec — Kuwait on Saturday urged members of the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) to stop producing above the output quota as it was seriously concerned about the falling oil prices, the Arab Times reported on Sunday.

“The have to take this decline very seriously. We are worried about the fall in the oil price,” Kuwait’s Energy Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah was quoted as saying at the symposium “The Outlook for the Global Oil Industry” hosted by National Bank of Kuwait.

“If this price slide of the last 48 hours were to continue, we would have to cut all over production, which is currently between 1.5 million to two million barrels,” Sheikh Ahmed said.

Global crude prices have fallen over 13 per cent over the last three days due to an increase in US inventories of crude oil.

“OPEC members must try and stick to the OPEC official production ceiling to avoid a steep price decline in the second quarter of the next year,” the minister said.

“OPEC will be meeting in Cairo next week to assess the situation and will take positive steps to avoid a shortage, and work for the stability of the market,” he added.

MNA/Xinhua

FOA wants Thailand to become regional base for battling bird flu

BANGKOK, 7 Dec — The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FOA) wants Thailand to become the base for battling bird flu among the 10-member Association of South-East Asian Nations, an Agriculture Ministry spokesman said.

The spokesman said that the proposal was made during a recent meeting between Minister Wan Muhammad Noor Mutha and He Chang Chui, assistant director of FOA’s Asia and the Pacific regional office, the Thai News Agency reported on Monday.

The spokesman said the FOA had commended Thailand for its coope-

MNA/Xinhua

Ciampi calls for further Sino-Italian exchanges

BEIJING, 7 Dec— Visiting Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi Monday called upon more exchanges between Italy and China on language and culture.

“I wish once again to encourage all of you, particularly the young people of China, to make the Italian language and culture a part of your lives, a bridge to bring us closer,” Ciampi said.

Facing over 100 Chinese scholars who are engaged in Italian language teaching and research, Ciampi said more and more Chinese show interest in learning Italian language, but the total number of the learners is still small.

“A broader cultural interchange and a wider spreading of Italian are beneficial to the development of the Italy-China relations of mutual interest,” he said.

According to Francesco Sisci, culture counsellor of the Italian Embassy in China, China has more than 1,000 Italian language learners and researchers, and only seven universities have offered the speciality of Italian language. More than 800 Chinese students are studying in Italy at present.

MNA/Xinhua

Three more US Marines killed in western Iraq

BAGHDAD, 7 Dec— Three more US Marines were killed in two separate attacks in the restive province of Anbar, west of Baghdad, the US military said Monday.

Three soldiers from the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force were killed in two separate attacks while conducting security and stability operations in western Iraq on Sunday, the military said in a statement.

Earlier on Monday, the military said in another statement that two US Marines were killed in action in Anbar Province on Friday.

MNA/Xinhua

U.S. ARMY/PAUL HIRSCH/REUTERS

Macaws play inside their cage in a zoo in Delhi on 30 Nov. 2004. The Delhi zoo houses six macaws, which are found in the tropical south and central America, and feed on fruits, seeds and nuts that they crack open with their strong beaks. —INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 8 December, 2004 5
Afghanistan seeks world support to fight drug

KABUL, 6 Dec— Afghanistan on Sunday called upon the international community to help fight against the booming poppy cultivation in the post-war country, a ranking Afghan official said Sunday afternoon.

“Poppy plantation is illegal and defames Afghanistan. We are determined to fight against the menace and eliminate it but we will not achieve the goal unless the world community assists,” Deputy Interior Minister on Narcotics Mohammad Daud told reporters at a gathering devoted to counter-narcotics strategy here.

The poppy cultivation in the war-torn country can reap benefits from textile industry if alternative crops are introduced, the Afghan official said.

He said the Afghan government had made “specific measures” to attract more direct foreign investment, especially from China.

Some 500 Egyptian and Chinese businessmen and officials attended the seminar, which provided a platform for both sides to discuss ways of promoting bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

EIJING

Chinese, French presidents converse via phone on M-E issues

BEIJING, 6 Dec— Chinese President Hu Jintao said here on Sunday in a telephone conversation with French President Jacques Chirac that China and France share similar views on international issues.

The two sides should make joint efforts to promote the resolution of Iraq and peace process in the Middle East region, Hu said. Hu said that China backs efforts made by the three European Union member states, France, Germany and Britain, to continue their talks with Iran on a long-term resolution to the nuclear issue. China will continue to play a constructive role on the issue.

The Chinese President also expressed China’s deep concern on the current fluctuating situation in Iraq. In the recent international conference that has helped promote consensus on the issue of Iraq’s reconstruction reflects the supports from the international community for peace in Iraq.

On the Middle East issues, Hu said China supports the Middle East peace process and the relevant issues should be resolved by complying with the resolutions of the United Nations and through political negotiation based on the principle of “land for peace”.

Hu expressed his pleasure at seeing China-France ties maintain a good momentum of growth, saying that the consensus on the bilateral cooperation reached by the heads of the two states in Beijing summit has been thoroughly implemented. China is willing to join in hands with France to further promote the all-around Sino-French strategic partnership.

Chirac spoke positively on the remarkable results achieved in the friendly cooperation on various fields between the two nations.

Russian President leaves India for Turkey

NEW DELHI, 6 Dec— After winding up his three-day visit to India, Russian President Vladimir Putin left India’s southern city of Bangalore Sunday afternoon for Turkey.

Before his departure, Putin visited software company Infysoft on the outskirts of the city and defence undertaking Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

At HAL, the Russian President watched the display of the prowess of three home-grown aircraft — advanced light helicopter, the intermediate jet trainer and the light combat aircraft. Putin will reach Moscow on Tuesday after his visit to Turkey.

Sri Lanka optimistic over textile industry

COLOMBO, 6 Dec— Sri Lankan Secretary-General of the Joint Apparel Associations Forum MPT Cooray has expressed his belief that the island country can reap benefits from textile industry following the expiration of a preferential trade agreement, the Sunday Observer reported on Sunday.

Cooray projected that Sri Lanka will be able to raise its annual textile and garment export earnings from the present 2.3 billion US dollars to 4.5 billion dollars in 2007 by following the five-year strategy started in 2002. The strategy includes transforming the industry from a manufacture to a product provider of a fully integrated services facility, penetrating the premium market segment, becoming internationally recognized in specific product categories, and strengthening the industry.

In addition to the strategy, he also stressed that after being in the industry for several decades, Sri Lanka has achieved the strength to face the world competition.

Nepali overseas job seekers get 83 more options

KATHMANDU, 5 Dec— The Nepali Government has decided to allow the country’s overseas workforce to seek employment in 83 more countries in addition to the earlier 25, a senior official has said.

“A decision to this effect was taken in a Cabinet meeting held Monday,” The Himalayan Times newspaper quoted Sunday quoted Minister for Labour and Transport Management Raghuri Pant as saying.

Those new countries opened for foreign employment include France, China, Russia, Japan, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Brazil and Canada, among others.

Earlier, Nepali citizens were allowed to work in 25 countries, mainly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

“Those countries can provide employment opportunities to skilled workers such as security guards and nurses,” Pant said, adding that multi-national companies prefer retired Gurkha soldiers as security guards.

Chinese Minister sees Sino-Egyptian cooperation potentials

CAIRO, 6 Dec— Visiting Chinese Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai said on Sunday that China and Egypt, as two important developing nations, have great potentialities in bilateral economic cooperation.

Addressing the Egyptian Government has taken some 1.5 billion US dollars this year, more than 50 per cent up from 2003.

“China has achieved great economic success during the past two decades, which enables it to secure more and better business deals with our Egyptian friends,” he said.

The minister said that the Chinese Government encourages Chinese companies to invest in Egypt, adding that he hopes the Egyptian government, working with the Chinese side, would help those companies find new opportunities in the country.

Egyptian Minister of Industry and Foreign Trade Rasheed Hussein, told the seminar that the Egyptian Government has taken “specific measures” to attract more direct foreign investment, especially from China.

Some 500 Egyptian and Chinese businessmen and officials attended the seminar, which provided a platform for both sides to discuss ways of promoting bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

Nepali overseas job seekers get 83 more options

KATHMANDU, 5 Dec— The Nepali Government has decided to allow the country’s overseas workforce to seek employment in 83 more countries in addition to the earlier 25, a senior official has said.

“A decision to this effect was taken in a Cabinet meeting held Monday,” The Himalayan Times newspaper quoted Sunday quoted Minister for Labour and Transport Management Raghuri Pant as saying.

Those new countries opened for foreign employment include France, China, Russia, Japan, Egypt, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Brazil and Canada, among others.

Earlier, Nepali citizens were allowed to work in 25 countries, mainly in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

“Those countries can provide employment opportunities to skilled workers such as security guards and nurses,” Pant said, adding that multi-national companies prefer retired Gurkha soldiers as security guards.

A Vietnamese shrimp farm. Vietnam has hit out at a decision by the United States to uphold anti-dumping duties on imports of Vietnamese shrimp.

INTERNET
It is natural that human society develops gradually. Everyone makes mistakes accidentally or ignorantly and so does the human society. So, human beings have to always struggle for positive development.

No one is perfect and to err is human. Therefore, people are to struggle constantly for progress and it is necessary to welcome and encourage all the positive changes.

For example, the Tatmadaw government offered a warm welcome to the armed groups who had returned to the legal fold. Forging their past misdeeds, the government provided necessary assistance to fulfill their basic needs to enable them to take part in the nation-building endeavours for regional and national development. That indicates the government’s loving kindness and sympathy to the people.

Each and every government has to represent respective human societies. They have strengths and weaknesses. Up to now, there has never been a perfect government, and what is different among them is “committing many or few mistakes and faults”. They are remediating their mistakes and errors through various ways and means. Of them, some failed to remedy their mistakes in time in their machinery, while some found their mistakes having grown to a certain degree beyond remedy, resulting in their fall as their failure served as an invitation to external instigation and intervention.

Yet, some governments managed to remedy their mistakes and faults. They are remedying their mistakes and errors through various ways and means. Of them, some failed to remedy their mistakes in time in their machinery, while some found their mistakes having grown to a certain degree beyond remedy, resulting in their fall as their failure served as an invitation to external instigation and intervention.

The government and the people have to bear the effects, good or bad, since they coexist in a single society. Therefore, finding reasonable solutions to one’s own problems will enable the practice of constructive practices and oppositions to thrive.

The incidents of upheaval and political instability will have a direct or indirect effect on public property, thereby exhausting the five strengths of society: brawn, wealth, fraternity, morality, and brain. Modernization and democratization will then be a distant reality.

With stability reigning in border areas, the government standing in solidarity with the entire national people has added new momentum to the drive for the establishment of a discipline-flourishing democratic nation. In Myanmar, which is now in the process of transition to democracy in a peaceful way, changes considered necessary were also made in the government structure. As part of these measures, 3,937 prisoners were released on 18 November this year.

The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) released 5,311 more prisoners for the second time on 25 November. The government released 9,248 prisoners in total. The dailies also reported these stories. According to the papers, the SPDC abolished the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) on 22 November this year. The investigation into the NIB’s activities found that some of them were done with impunity, the papers reported.

Peoples within and without the country welcomed the approach. So did the United Nations government’s endeavours which was made in genuine goodwill in the interest of the country. The destructive elements in exile criticized that the release of prisoners by the government was due to foreign pressure, that the government was finding an exit out of the difficulties, and that it was merely a political stunt. In this context, the motto “Do good, and never mind to whom” has proved right.

It is necessary for the people to see the good as good and the bad as bad. Only then will they have a correct outlook. Anyone trying to disturb the government’s efforts will be branded as destructionists and crushed in view of public interest. Action will be taken against them according to law. Priority will be paid to the welfare of the country rather than that of a handful of persons. Even some democracy-oriented western countries have to run a check on entry visas by promulgating security laws to curb terrorism.

This being the case, it is an act of disrupting the national interest to deter the release of 9,248 prisoners including political prisoners and to hamper the current Tatmadaw government’s drive for national reconsolidation and democratic reforms.

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Translation: MS+KTY

Myanma Alin, Kyemon: 6-12-04

China, Germany sign 22 cooperative documents

BEIJING, 7 Dec — China and Germany signed 22 cooperative documents here Monday evening at the Great Hall of the People, aiming at promoting bilateral cooperation in various fields. Premier Wen Jiabao and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, who is on a three-day working visit to China, attended the signing ceremony after their talks. These documents cover the cooperative fields of railways, finance, bank supervision, aviation, cars, agricultural products and digital communica-
Minister Maj-Gen Saw Tun inspects the site chosen for construction of Yaw Creek Bridge (Ohndaw).

Construction of roads inspected

YANGON, 7 Dec—Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, accompanied by Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Myint Thein and officials, inspected road maintenance tasks along NyaungU-Myingyan Road on 5 December.

The senior engineer of Myingyan District reported on target for construction of NyaungU-Myingyan Road in 2004-2005 and work progress the Minister and party inspected Myingyan-Myotha-TadaU Road.

Officials concerned reported on work progress of construction of Myingyan-Myotha section. The Minister gave instructions on meeting the standards set.

Yesterday, the Minister and party left Bagan through Pakokku-Pauk-Htilin-Gangaw Road for the site chosen for construction of Yaw Creek (Yaapyay) Bridge. Deputy Superintending Engineer of Bridge Special Group-13 U Soe Myint and officials reported on facts about the project. The Minister called for further details on the project. Afterwards, the Minister and party inspected the chosen site for implementation of Yaw Creek (Ohndaw) Bridge on Seikphyu-Kandaw-Pauk Road, and Pauk-Kandaw-Seikphyu Road. — MNA

Myanmar delegation leaves to study locomotives in India

YANGON, 7 Dec — A Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation Thura U Thaung Lwin left here by air for India yesterday to study locomotives and services there. The aim of the delegation is to study the technology of improving the power of MTU locomotives, engine production, and rail signaling equipment and system. The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation U Pe Than, officials and families. Members of the delegation General Manager (Locomotive Shed/Ywahtaung) of Myanmar Railways U Myint Khang, Deputy General Manager (Coach and Wagon Shed/Myitnye) U Myo Myint, Deputy General Manager (Mechanical) U Nyi Htut and Assistant General Manager (Communications) U Ba Myint left here on the same flight. — MNA
Rules for Armed Forces Day commemorative poem contest announced

YANGON, 7 Dec—Hailing the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day which falls on 27 March 2005, the Poem Contest Organizing Sub-committee under the Poem and Arts Competition Organizing Work Committee, chaired by Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, has announced plans to hold the Poem Contest to mark the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day.

The contests can compose objectives of the Tatmadaw, historic events occurred in the periods of Konbaung Era (AD 1824), Independence Era (1948-1988) and the State Peace and Development Council, endeavours of the State Peace and Development Council in religious affairs, construction, peace negotiation and drug elimination sectors.

The entries will be scrutinized with three sectors—theme style, presentation and composing. The poem contest will be divided into two categories.

Those who have won the first second or third prizes in the Poem Contest to mark the Armed Forces Day and the National Motto Contest, Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award Contest and the Poem Contest of the Palakkik U Ohn Pe Literary Award Contest and National Literary Award winners may participate in the level-1 and those who did not win the prizes may take part in the level-2.

The short poem must be between 100 and 300 stanzas and the long one between 1,000 and 2,000 stanzas. The entries must be in line with the rules. The free verse and modern poems will not be absolutely accepted.

The poem must be written on one side of paper and the two copies of the entry must be submitted. And, the entry must be attached with the name of the contestant, pen-name, names of parents, education, occupation and address together with three 2” x 2.5” size colour photos. The entry must be own creation and has not been featured in any publication yet. The State has authority to use the prize-winning works.

The entries are to be sent to Lt-Col Ohn Maung (Retd) (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe), Chief Editor, Nainggann Gonyi Literary House, Sarpay Beikman, 531, Merchant Street, here. Tel: 374532, not later than 31-1-2005. — MNA

Wellwishers invited for sinking tube-wells

YANGON, 7 Dec—The Development Affairs Committees under the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs are making concerted efforts in sinking tube-wells in order to get sufficient clean water in rural areas in States and Divisions where water is scarce. One 200 feet deep two-inch diameter tube-well costs K 250,000; one 400 feet deep two-inch diameter tube-well costs K 500,000; and one 200 feet deep four-inch diameter tube-well costs K 500,000.

Those wishing to donate cash for the tube-well sinking projects for rural areas may contact the Director-General (Tel: 01-245420 & 253088) and the Deputy Director-General (Tel: 01-240118). — MNA
First CLMTV-ECS Trade Fair-2004 concludes

Visitors at the First CLMTV-ECS Trade Fair-2004. —MNA

Crude oil prices rise ahead of OPEC Meeting

NEW YORK, 7 Dec — Crude oil prices rose from a three-month low Monday amid increased expectations that the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) would cut production at its meeting this week.

On the New York Mercantile Exchange, crude oil for January delivery rose 44 cents to end at 42.98 dollars per barrel. Meanwhile, on London’s International Petroleum Exchange the January Brent crude-oil futures contract climbed 29 cents to settle at 39.65 dollars a barrel.

OPEC should consider cutting production to end a slide in prices at its meeting in Cairo this week. Kuwait’s Oil Minister said OPEC meeting might discuss production for the first quarter of 2005.

OPEC members cut their output by 570,000 barrels, or 1.9 per cent, to an average 29.97 million barrels a day from their record highs of 30.54 million reached in October.

Meanwhile, an attack on the US Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, boosted concern that a revival of terrorism might threaten oil shipments from the world’s largest oil exporter.

A weather forecast released by the US National Weather Service showed lower-than-normal temperatures in most of the eastern half of the nation from December 11 to December 15. Colder weather further weighed on traders that concerned about tight heating supplies. —MNA/Xinhua

China to continue fight against “HIV/AIDS”, TB, Malaria

BEIJING, 7 Dec— China’s Vice-Premier Wu Yi said here Monday that the country will step up its efforts to take precautions against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in order to secure the health of all the people.

Wu made these remarks at a meeting with Richard Feachem, executive director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

China has an estimated 840,000 HIV carriers and 4.5 million people suffering from tuberculosis. Malaria was occasionally reported in the southern parts of China. Feachem said China has made significant progress in curbing the three major communicable diseases, especially in eliminating malaria. The international community was also greatly encouraged by the Chinese Government’s strong commitments in fighting against HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, he said. He expressed the satisfaction with China’s implementation of the projects sponsored by the Global Fund, saying that the Global Fund is willing to improve cooperation and exchanges with China in the prevention and control of the diseases. Established in 2002, the Global Fund has so far raised 5.4 billion US dollars for the prevention and control of the three communicable diseases with its projects covering 128 countries around the world.—MNA/Xinhua

Mass sports activities launched in Mandalay

YANGON, 7 Dec — Mass sports activities (2004) were launched in Mandalay on 4 December in which Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint and wife participated.

In the morning, Departmental personnel, members of social organizations and the people totaling over 15,000 took a walk starting from the junction of 26th and 73rd streets.

On 4 December, the people in 31 townships in Mandalay Division also participated in sports activities and took physical exercises. —MNA

Most Ven Dr Vichit Singharaj of Laos arrives

YANGON, 7 Dec — A delegation led by Most Ven Dr Vichit Singharaj of Lao People’s Democratic Republic arrived here this morning to attend the World Buddhist Summit.

Chancellor Sayadaw of Sitagu International Buddhist Academy Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma and Secretary of Leading Committee for holding the World Buddhist Summit Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thaung Aye and officials welcomed the delegation at Yangon International Airport. —MNA

Most Ven Dr Vichit Singharaj and party of Laos being welcomed at the airport by Sayadaw Ashin Ñanissara (D Litt) and Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung. —MNA

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U Kyaw Sein (Mogok)-Daw Nan Kham Hsa and family present K 100,000 and traditional medicines worth K 100,000 to MWJA Vice-Chairman U Than Maung. —MNA

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Most Ven Dr Vichit Singharaj and party of Laos being welcomed at the airport by Sayadaw Ashin Ñanissara (D Litt) and Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung. —MNA
Commerce Minister receives Pakistani Ambassador, Australian guests

YANGON, 7 Dec — Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein received Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Myanmar Mr Muhammad Nawaz Chaudhry at 10 am and Consultant of Capital Marketing Centre Co Ltd, Australia, Mr Clive Murray and party at 11 am respectively.

Also present during the call were Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun and departmental officials. — MNA

Initiation of bilateral FTAs is Thai foreign policy cornerstone

BANGKOK, 7 Dec — The initiation of bilateral FTAs with countries around the world has become one of the foreign policy cornerstone of the Thai Government, The Nation newspaper said in a commentary on Monday.

Impatient with slow progress of multilateral trade talks, the Thai Government in recent years has turned to pursue regional free-trade deals to enhance export opportunities.

In early July, Thailand signed its first FTA with Australia after one-year negotiation.

Thailand’s FTA with India is taking shape, with an “early harvest” scheme cutting duties on more than 80 items. Despite early concerns by India over the possible influx of Thai vehicles, both sides decided to proceed with the talks to support India’s Look East policy and Thailand’s similar vision for the Subcontinent.

The kingdom’s FTAs with Peru and New Zealand are expected to be concluded this month.

After two rounds of negotiations, Thailand’s FTA talks with the United States look likely to be drawn out due to sticky issues on labour, intellectual property rights and environmental protection among others.

“The government did not give us a deadline but it is prepared to wait for the best agreement,” Niya Prubitsongkram, Chief negotiator was quoted as saying on Monday. Singapore and Thailand boast the highest number of completed free-trade agreements (FTA) among Asian countries, according to the Asia News Network.

Reports by the members of the Asia News Network, an alliance of 14 newspapers in 12 Asian countries, said that more than 80 FTAs have been completed, under negotiation and under study, in Asia so far.

The number of FTAs around the world has risen remarkably from 79 in 1995 to 208 in 2004. Currently, India, Singapore, Thailand and Sri Lanka are the Asian countries in the process of negotiating FTAs.

MNA/Xinhua

IBM to fade from PC Market, quit China PC business

BEIJING, 7 Dec — The top computer provider worldwide, IBM, is likely to quit its PC business in China, as it gradually withdraws from the personal computer (PC) market.

“IBM will focus on game machines in the future,” China Business News quoted Bernard Meyerson, vice-president and chief technologist with IBM System & Technology Group, as quoted as saying on Thursday at a Press conference.

Meyerson’s statement echoes Gartner’s recent report, which predicted the global PC market will step into a period of sluggish growth and three of the world’s top ten PC providers will be squeezed out of the market. He said IBM and HP have the highest possibility of not making the cut. Nigel Beck, who is accountable for product management and marketing of IBM, acknowledged that PC profits have kept dropping, and IBM holds that game machines will become the next-generation advanced platform. A staff member with IBM System & Technology Group, who declined to be named, noted that IBM has decided to quit the PC business in China.

“We had planned to transfer our portable PC technology to International Information Products (IIPC), as reported by some media, but have cancelled the decision because of IIPC’s limited capacity,” he said.

Merrill Lynch Analyst Steve Milunovich said in his latest report that game machines will be the next generation in computing. IBM will become a beneficiary of the trend since it is moving its micro-electronic technology away from the ebbing PC business. Fang Xingdong, chief analyst of Internet China lab, was pessimistic about IBM’s manufacture of game machines, saying that games products do not suit the company’s culture, it would be a wise choice for IBM to supply high-quality chips for major game producers like Sony.

As a matter of fact, IBM, teaming up with Sony and Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. (SCEI) introduced the first cell-based work station prototype machine on November 29. The optimized “cell” chip is suited specifically for various broadband media, including games, films and other digital medium.

MNA/Xinhua

Philippines in urgent need of relief goods after typhoons

MANILA, 7 Dec — The calamity-striken towns in the northern Philippine province of Quezon is running out of relief goods, a local television reported Monday.

Distribution of relief goods in the area remained slow, resulting in insufficient supply of food and medicine for the residents of town General Nakar, the ABS-CBN News Channel reported.

Authorities said only helicopters can reach the area as roads leading to the town were still impassable due to landslides and the relief efforts are hampered by rain.

Local officials are appealing for more aid to the typhoon victims while many evacuees were down with fever, coughs and colds.

Residents also asked for reconstruction materials for them to begin rebuilding their homes, most of which are still buried deep in mud.

MNA/Xinhua

Low-cost rural houses built

MAUBIN, 30 NOV.—Maubin Township Development Affairs Department has implemented rural housing project in the town.

As part of the project, six low-cost rural houses were built in Malatto Model Village on Maubin-Twantay Road in the township.

Officials of Maubin Township DAD and Chairman of the village Peace and Development Council U Aung Naing supervised the project.

MNA/Xinhua

Irrigation canals dug in Wakema

WAKEMA, 21 NOV.— Under the arrangement of Aye Nawady Division Peace and Development Council, Irrigation Department on 19 November dug the irrigation canals to supply water to the summer paddy fields along the Wakema-KyonMaNge Road.

Officials of the township Peace and Development Council closely supervised the tasks.

It is expected that Wakema Township will reach its target of 126,947 acres of summer paddy in 2004-2005.

MNA/Xinhua

Libraries inaugurated on self-reliant basic

NYAUNGU, 3 Dec — With the assistance of NyaungU Township Information and Public Relations Department and local people, a self-reliant library was opened on 21 November in Myinkapa Village in NyaungU Township.

Wellwishers provided furniture and over 2,000 books on knowledge for the library.

Officials of the township Peace and Development Council and Head of the township IPRD formally inaugurated the library.

Similarly, on 6 November a library was opened on self-reliant basic in Tattwin Village in Labutta Township.

The head of the township IPRD opened the library. So far, IPRD has set up self-reliant libraries in 10610 out of more than 60,000 villages across the nation.

MNA/Xinhua
Turkey-Russia trade volume to reach $10b in 2004

ANKARA, 6 Dec — The bilateral trade volume between Turkey and Russia is expected to reach 10 billion US dollars by the end of this year, semi-official Anatolia News Agency reported Sunday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin will arrive here later in the day to pay a two-day official visit to cement economic relations between the two countries after he returned home.

The two countries are also expected to sign six documents in fields of security, information, intellectual property rights, research and investment.

Putin’s trip, originally scheduled for September, was postponed.

Turkey exported goods worth 1.6 billion dollars in 2003, while this figure was recorded as 1.5 billion in the first seven months of 2004.

Turkish imports from Russia was 5.4 billion US dollars last year, while Russia exported goods worth 2.7 billion US dollars to Turkey in the first seven months of this year.

In the meantime, bilateral trade volume, which was 6.8 billion US dollars last year, is expected to reach 10 billion by 2004.

Direct investments of Turkey in Russia exceeds one billion dollars. Turkey is mainly making investments in areas of communications, industry, tourism, and data technology.

Tremor hits area near Algerian capital

ALGIERS, 6 Dec — A tremor measuring 4.5 on the Richter Scale shook a region near the Algerian capital on Sunday, state radio said, days after an earthquake injured about 100 people and caused slight damage.

The tremor hit at about 9:30 am (0830 GMT) in the coastal town of Zemmouri, the same area as a devastating quake killed 2,300 people in May last year.

Zemmouri is located in the seismically active Boumerdes Province, 30 miles east of the capital. The aftershock was also felt in Algerians.

Frightened local residents fled their homes but there were no reports of injuries. A 5.7 magnitude earthquake in Boumerdes on Wednesday did cause any serious injuries or damages but temporarily cut off the coastal area from electricity and communications.

Algeria is one of the OPEC oil producing cartel and is a leading natural gas exporter.

Poland’s airline grounded due to financial problems

WARSAW, 6 Dec — Poland’s first budget airline Air Polonia has been grounded due to financial problems, stranding 53,000 passengers, its chairman said on Sunday.

But Jan Litwinski, who pioneered Air Polonia and negotiated a national Polish carrier LOT [LOT.U.L], said he had ironed out a deal with another low-cost airline, Braitslavia-based SkyEurope, to help most passengers reach their destinations.

SkyEurope will provide flights for the roughly 53,000 passengers who have purchased Air Polonia tickets,” he told a news conference in Warsaw, announcing a suspension of operations.

Privately owned Air Polonia signed a partnership agreement with Italy’s budget Volare Group in March, and in June Litwinski insisted the Polish carrier was in good financial shape.

But Volare was forced to ground its planes in November due to cash flow problems.

Litwinski said his airline’s leases may lapse if Air Polonia fails to gain new financing.

SkyEurope, a pioneer no-frills airline which revolutionized air travel in the post-Communist region, said it had no plans to take over Polonia.

Poland’s air transport system is the fourth largest in Europe, with more than 40 million passengers arriving and departing in 2003.

Egypt to provide COMESA with technical assistance

LUSAKA, 6 Dec — The Egyptian Fund for Technical Cooperation with Africa (EFTCA) will provide technical assistance expertise to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) to enhance COMESA’s capacity under a letter of intent the two sides signed here Sunday.

COMESA said in a statement that both parties (COMESA and Egypt) recognized the need for the promotion of cooperation especially intra-COMESA cooperation to enhance economic development in the region.

The statement stated that COMESA has recognized the need to strengthen the technical and human capacities of the member states in various fields using the existing strong institutions within the region.

“Both parties do recognize the crucial role COMESA and EFTCA can jointly play in building the capacities of COMESA member states in the areas of agriculture, irrigation, water development, industry, transport, communication and data technology,” said the statement.

Egypt has a long experience in agriculture, irrigation, health, infrastructure, information technol ogy and many other areas, which would benefit other member states through the fund.

Egypt will continue to support COMESA with technical assistance, the joint statement added.

Egypt has increased its financial assistance to COMESA member states.

Elephants, buffaloes killed by anthrax in Botswana

HARARE, 6 Dec — About 33 elephants and 21 buffaloes have been killed in the past two weeks in an outbreak of anthrax in the Chobe area in Botswana, Zimbabwe’s official media New Ziana reported Sunday.

The outbreak, the second in two months, has spread to the Okavango Delta and Nogatsha areas.

Wildlife officer Senne Nyoe-Mahupeng was quoted as saying that

Mideast ranks second in world tourism growth in 2004

ABU DHABI, 6 Dec — Middle East has been the world’s second biggest growth region in tourism in 2004, enjoying a 24-per-cent increase in tourist arrivals in the first eight months of the year, local Gulf News reported Sunday.

Despite the ongoing tensions in Iraq and Palestine, the region continues to attract record numbers of tourists, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), with the total number of tourists reaching 43 million.

The statistics showed that Syria experienced a 52-per-cent rise in arrivals in the first eight months of 2004, compared with the same period a year ago.

Turkey mainly making investments in areas of communications, industry, tourism, and data technology.
Researchers say new leukaemia drugs working better

WASHINGTON, 7 Dec — Next-generation leukaemia pills, designed to help patients not cured by the successful drug Gleevec, work even better than doctors had hoped, researchers said recently.

One new drug, made by Bristol-Myers Squibb, put 80 percent of patients who tried it in remission — meaning signs of their cancer disappeared, the researchers said.

Although they were only Phase I trials, meant to show the drug was safe, the affects were dramatic, the doctors told a meeting in San Diego of the American Society of Haematology.

“One certainly is it wonderful. It will save lives,” said Dr Alan Kinnunih, senior vice president of research for the Leukaemia and Lymphoma Society.

Oncologists hope the approach may work in many other cancers, too. Kinnunih said it is likely that the new pills will be used in combination, like old-fashioned chemotherapy.

“I know of no cancer where one single drug has ever cured the cancer”, he said.

The new drugs are being tested in patients with chronic myeloid leukaemia (CML), which affects about 4,400 Americans a year and 10,000 people around the world.

The Bristol drug is known by its experimental name HMS-354825. During the trial, also financed by Bristol-Myers, 36 of 36 patients with advanced CML, who had not been helped by Gleevec, had a complete hematologic response, meaning their bodies stopped producing leukaemia cells.

NASA hoping techniques for crew to repair damages

HOUSTON, 7 Dec — NASA is hoping techniques that would enable a crew to repair damages to a space shuttle in flight will be ready for the shuttle’s planned May 2005 return to space, officials with the agency said on Monday.

The shuttle’s launch, which has been delayed several times, would be the first flight since the Columbia broke apart as it entered the Earth’s atmosphere in February, 2003.

That disaster, which killed the seven astronauts aboard the shuttle and rained debris down on east Texas, was caused by cracks in the protective tiles that were struck by a piece of foam during the shuttle’s launch.

NASA hopes that closer-in-flight inspections and repairs — once thought impossible — could prevent a repeat of that incident. “It still is a challenge in front of us. We still have a long way to go,” Bill Parsons, space shuttle programme manager, told a news conference.

NASA will use new sensors that could detect potential problems and have been developing materials and procedures to repair the tiles and reinforced carbon panels during flight.

However, the launch of Discovery, currently planned for between 12 May to 2 June, 2005, would not be delayed if those techniques were not perfected.

“I think in a state of emergency we would have a technique we would be ready to put forth,” Parsons said.

Since the Columbia disaster, NASA has altered the launch vehicle that propels the shuttle off the launch pad and out of the Earth’s atmosphere in order to reduce the debris shed by the craft.

New techniques for applying foam to the launch vehicle have reduced the size of debris that can break off to no larger than 0.008 pound (13.6 grams), well below the 0.03 pound (13.6 grams) threshold that can cause damage to the shuttle, Wayne Hale, the deputy programme manager, told the Press conference.

JVC develops corn starch DVD

TOKYO, 7 Dec. — Victor Co of Japan said Monday it has succeeded in manufacturing an environmentally friendly DVD with a special plastic synthesized from corn starch.

Unlike conventional DVDs made from oil, the new DVD, made mainly from poly lactide resin, will help reduce the consumption of oil and the quantity of carbon dioxide emitted in the process of incinerating used DVDs for disposal, JVC said.

Poly lactide resin has been applied to the body of personal computers and other electronics devices.

But it has been difficult to apply it to DVDs as the material is vulnerable to high temperatures inside DVD players.

JVC said it succeeded in creating the corn-based poly lactide resin capable of withstand temperatures of up to 55 Centigrade.

It is possible to apply the new substance not only to a DVD, but to a CD and blue ray disk, which is a next-generation memory storage device, the company said.

However, the production cost of the new DVDs is three times that of conventional ones. JVC has yet to decide a schedule for commercializing the technology.

Well trained cat: Russian State Circus animal trainers perform with a cat during a show in Kolkata. — Internet

NEC to reenter Malaysian cell phone market

Tokyo, 7 Dec — NEC Corp. said Monday it will introduce two models of camera-equipped mobile phones Tuesday in Malaysia, reentering the country’s mobile phone handset market since its exit there in 2000. NEC, which had been selling analog-type mobile phone handsets market since its exit there in 2000, will launch the e238 and e101 models equipped with 300,000-pixel digital cameras, amid growing demand for digital mobile phones based on the global system for mobile communications format.

Health report says obesity more prevalent in Ne Zealand

WELLINGTON, 7 Dec — New Zealand is in the midst of an obesity epidemic with the condition now twice as common in adults as it was 25 years ago, said a Health Ministry report released Monday.

Launching the report “Tracking the Obesity Epidemic: New Zealand 1977-2003,” Under-Secretary for Health Mita Ririnui said “obesity has been one of the most concerning and we need to take action to show the drug was safe, the affects were dramatic, the doctors told a meeting in San Diego of the American Society of Haematology.

It tracks changes to the body mass index of New Zealanders aged 15-74 from 1977 to 2003.

Ririnui said the report provided a solid evidence base for future policy and planning and information that will be critical in further implementing and evaluating the ministry’s Health Eating-Healthy Action strategy.

“Excess body weight is one of the most important modifiable risk factors in major diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke and several cancers,” he said.

“We need to be concerned and we need to take action,” he added.

Death toll of flood rises to 11 in East Java, Indonesia

JAVA, 6 Dec — The death toll of the flood which took place in a number of districts in East Java Province in Indonesia has increased to 11 up to Sunday, mainly residents of Blitar District. Thousand of disaster-related victims from Blitar are now living in the location of refugees, according to the official Antara news agency.

The local officials in the province said the districts of Blitar and Kediri are the two worst areas hit by the flood which was caused by heavy rain in East Java as tens of villages in the two districts are still submerged in a 40 to 50 centimetre deep water.
Real held to 0-0 draw at Villarreal

Madrid, 6 Dec — A lacklustre Real Madrid lost further ground to Barcelona at the top of the table when they were held to a 0-0 draw at Villarreal in the Primera Liga on Sunday.

Real vs. Villareal — Real Madrid Brazilian Ronaldo crosses out after being foiled by a Villarreal player in a Spanish League match in Villarreal. — INTERNET

The home side, who had lost their previous three league games, dominated the encounter against Real who appeared to have their minds on next week’s decisive Champions League clash against AS Roma. Real Madrid head to Villarreal without a string of first-choice players as they kept one eye on Wednesday’s match against Roma.

Zinedine Zidane remained in Madrid to receive treatment on a back injury. Raul and Roberto Carlos spent the game on the bench.

Although it was Villarreal who dominated the early exchanges it was Real’s Michael Owen who created the first clear chance of the game midway through the first half. The English striker darted into the area, went past two defenders and then slotted a neat pass through to the unmarked Ronaldo, but the Brazilian took too long over his shot and was closed down by the defence.

England team mate David Beckham hit the bar with a trademark free kick from two metres outside the box on the half hour, but Real never looked comfortable against their more organized opponents.

New signing Luciano Figueroa combined well with fellow Argentine Juan Roman Riquelme on several occasions as the two created problems for the Real defence and forward Antonio Guayre sliced wide 10 minutes before the break.

The home side continued to dominate in the second half and Real had keeper Iker Casillas to thank for keeping them in the game when he blocked a sharp volley from young midfielder Santi Cazorla after some fine work from Riquelme.

Beckham and Ronaldo were taken off midway through the half but Real continued to stutter and Villarreal thought they had grabbed the win 11 minutes from time when Figueroa had the ball in the net only to find the goal was disallowed for a borderline offside.

Real Mallorca 3 — Numancia 2

Levante 0 — Getafe 0

Honours even in the battle between two of the sides new to the top flight this season although it was Bernd Schuster’s Levante who did more to try and win the game against their ultra-defensive opponents.

Midfielder Felix Fink had a persistent threat on the right and substitute Gastavo Reggi had a goal disallowed for a handball in the closing minutes.

Racing Santander 2 — Deportivo Coruna 2

Deportivo Coruna hung on to their eight-year unbeaten record at Racing Santander by the skin of their teeth when a last-gasp free kick from Uruguay centre-forward Walter Pandiani earned them a point.

Israeli international Yossi Benayoun put Racing ahead when he side-footed home in the 23rd minute, but Deporti got back into the match at the start of the second half when Albert Luque scored from the penalty spot after Mario Regueiro was penalized for a handball.

The home side looked as if they were on course to the deadlock when a Marco Zamboni free kick but Brescia striker Andre Caracciolo slipped home his sixth goal of the season 10 minutes from time.

Udinese 1 — Siena 0

A 17th minute Antonio Di Natale close-range header gave in-form Udinese their seventh win of the season.

The Italian international striker nodded home after a convincing victory over struggling Reggina.

Udinese’s Gianpiero Pinzi was sent off two minutes into injury time for his second bookable offence.

AS Roma 1 — Sampdoria 1

Biagio Pagano put Sampdoria in front in the 81st minute with a but the lead lasted just three minutes.

Referee Daniele Tombolini spotted some pushing in the Sampdoria area and awarded a penalty which Francesco Totti rattled home equal to Roberto Pruzzo’s club record of 106 Serie A goals.

Primera Liga match reports

Madrid, 6 Dec — Brief reports of Primera Liga matches played on Sunday:

Atletico Madrid 3 — Osasuna 2

Atletico made their fans suffer right to the end despite going 2-0 up in the first half hour after well-taken goals from strike partners Fernando Torres and Salva Ballesta. Osasuna pulled one back on the stroke of halftime when forward Valdo ghosted in at the far post, only to see substitute Gonzalo Colsa restore Atletico’s two-goal lead with a fine glancing header 10 minutes after the break.

The visitors looked to be out of it when midfielder Pablo Garcia was dismissed midway through the half, but they set up an exciting finale when striker Richard Morales scored his fourth in four games with a close-range header. Atletico were also reduced to 10 men when midfielder Marcelo Sosa received his marching orders in injury time.

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Juventus’ Zlatan Ibrahimovic, left of Sweden, celebrates after scoring a second half goal during the Italian first division soccer match between Juventus and Lazio, at the Turin delle Alpi Stadium, Sunday, Dec. 5, 2004. Juventus won 2-1 and leads the Italian League. — INTERNET

Serie A match reports

Rome, 6 Dec — Reports of Serie A matches played on Sunday:

Fiorentina 1 — Bologna 0

Enzo Maresca floated in a 62nd minute free-kick to give Fiorentina a precious win over struggling Bologna.

Fiorentina attacked from the outset but finally broke the deadlock midway through the second half when midfield maestro Maresca sent a harmless looking free kick in the area that went untouched past Bologna keeper Gianluca Pagliuca.

Lecce 3 — Livorno 2

Lecce twice fought back from a goal down to beat Livorno. A fine solo run by Luca Vigni gave Livorno an unexpected lead on the half hour mark. Nine minutes later an Erminio Rullo volley from outside the box levelled the score but within a minute Tomas Danieleviscu rested Livorno’s lead with a close range effort.

After the restart Zdenek Zeman’s Lecce side poured forward and grabbed the equaliser through Samuele Dalla Bona’s 85th minute penalty after Marco Cassetti was dragged down. Three minutes later Guillermo Giacomuzzi completed the comeback by volleying home the winner.

Palermo 1 — Atalanta 0

Franco Brienza’s fine solo effort one minute before halftime lifted Palermo to their third consecutive win of the season.

Brienza lucked aイラ Luca Toni pass on over-coming keeper Massimo Taibi and slotted into an empty net.

Wireless Atalanta had a chance to level the score but Antonio Bernardini had his 54th minute penalty superbly saved by Matteo Guardalben.

Reggina 1 — Brescia 3

Brescia notched their third away win of the season with a convincing victory over struggling Reggina.

Lithuanian Marius Stanevicius gave the visitors an 18th minute lead before Costa Rican Gilberto Martinez rocketed home Brescia’s second from over 20 metres out. Reggina cut the deficit in the 75th minute thanks to a Marco Zamboni free kick but Brescia striker Andrea Caracciolo slotted home his sixth goal of the season 10 minutes from time.

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Juventus’ Zlatan Ibrahimovic, left of Sweden, celebrates after scoring a second half goal during the Italian first division soccer match between Juventus and Lazio, at the Turin delle Alpi Stadium, Sunday, Dec. 5, 2004. Juventus won 2-1 and leads the Italian League. — INTERNET
Shandong Province to build China’s largest geothermal base

JINAN, 7 Dec — East China’s Shandong Province plans to build the country’s largest geothermal research and development base in Qile County, on the northern bank of the Yellow River, where ample geothermal resources have been spotted.

Shandong Provincial Geology and Mineral Resources Bureau will invest some 180 million yuan (21.7 million US dollars) of start-up fund to build the 40-hectare geothermal base, which will consist of a sci-tech park, a production zone for geothermal air-conditioners and rust proof tubing, a hot spring bathing and therapeutic centre, an aquatic breeding centre and a plantation of green farm products.

Sources with the bureau noted that the plan has got the green light from the Ministry of Land and Resources, China Geological Survey Bureau and Shandong provincial government.

A preliminary survey shows the exploitable geothermal resources within 3,000 metres underground Shandong Province are equal to 10 billion tons of standard coal. Earlier this year, prospectors drilled what they believed to be one of the largest geothermal wells in the province, one that has groundwater measuring 57 degrees Celsius and can supply 120 cubic metres of water per hour. Laboratory tests show the groundwater contains enough strontium and fluoride for medication purposes and is rich in lithium, boron and other trace elements helpful for human health.

Experts cite geothermal energy as an alternative energy resource that has a brighter future than hydropower and fossil fuels, and say it can be used in heating, health care and manufacturing industries.

Wealth

Tuesday, 7 December, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain has been isolated in upper Sagaing Division and weather has been generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3˚C) to (4˚C) above normal in Kachin and Chin States, Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions, (3˚C) below normal in Yangon and Tanintharyi Divisions and about normal in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant night temperatures were Hakha (7˚C), Mindat (8˚C) and PyinOoLwin (9˚C).

Maximum temperature on 6-12-2004 was 94°F. Minimum temperature on 7-12-2004 was 60°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 7-12-2004 was 67%. Total sunshine hours on 6-12-2004 was (7.3) hours approx. Rainfall on 7-12-2004 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 were 112.28 inches at Yangon Airport, 106.77 inches at Kaba-Aye and 109.64 inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 7 mph from East at (08:40) hours MST on 7-12-2004.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 8-12-2004: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 8-12-2004: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 8-12-2004: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.
Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win meets with Laotian counterpart. — MNA

Present at the call together with both Prime Ministers were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Deputy Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Than Htay, Myanmar Ambassador to Laos U Tin Oo, Director-General of Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic Mr Somsavat Lengsavad and senior officials and Laotian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chanthavy Bodhisane. — MNA

INSIDE

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Prime Minister LT-Gen Soe Win hosts dinner in honour of visiting Laotian counterpart. — MNA

Summit opening live on TV

YANGON, 7 Dec — The opening ceremony of the World Buddhist Summit will be telecast live by Myanma Radio and TV beginning 7.45 am on 9 December.

The three-day Summit will be held in Maha Pasana Cave in Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Hill, Yangon, from 9 to 11 December. — MNA

Prime Minister LT-Gen Soe Win cordially greets his Laotian counterpart Mr Bounnhang Vorachith. — MNA

Prime Minister LT-Gen Soe Win hosts a dinner in honour of Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bounnhang Vorachith and party. — MNA

Prime Minister hosts dinner in honour of visiting Laotian counterpart

YANGON, 7 Dec — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar LT-Gen Soe Win hosted a dinner in honour of visiting Prime Minister of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic Mr Bounnhang Vorachith and members of the goodwill delegation at the reception hall in the Pyithu Hluttaw Building at 7.15 pm today.

The dinner was also attended by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council LT-Gen Thein Sein, Chairman of Yangon Division PDC Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, the ministers, the Yangon mayor, the deputy minister for energy, the Myanmar Ambassador to Lao PDR, the director-general of the SPDC Office and departmental heads. Together with the Laotian Prime Minister were the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Somsavat Lengsavad and delegation members and Ambassodor of Lao PDR to Myanmar Mr Chanthavy Bodhisane. Before and during the dinner, artistes entertained the guests with songs to the accompaniment of the modern music troupe of Myanmar Athan. After the dinner, artistes of the Fine Arts Department entertained the audience with Myanmar traditional songs and dances. Later, the visiting Prime Minister presented bouquets to the artistes, and posed for a documentary photo together with them. — MNA

Prime Minister LT-Gen Soe Win meets with Laotian counterpart. — MNA

YANGON, 7 Dec — Prime Minister LT-Gen Soe Win of the Union of Myanmar received Laotian counterpart Mr Bounnhang Vorachith at Mingalar Hall of Pyithu Hluttaw Building at 7 pm today.

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