Yangon, 8 Jan — The following are messages of felicitations from Foreign Heads of State sent to Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, on the occasion of the 57th Anniversary Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar.

From Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumara-tunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka
Your Excellency,

It gives me great pleasure to convey to Your Excellency, the Government and the people of the Union of Myanmar my sincere greetings and warm felicitations and those of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka on the happy occasion of the Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar.

I am confident that the bonds of friendship and close cooperation that exist between our two countries will continue to flourish for the mutual well-being of our two peoples in the years ahead.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my sincere good wishes for Your Excellency’s health, happiness and personal well-being and for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of the Union of Myanmar.

From Jigme Singye Wangchuck, King of Bhutan
Your Excellency,

The Government and people of Bhutan join me in sending our warm felicitations to Your Excellency and the Government and people of Myanmar on the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of Myanmar.

We also send our best wishes for Your Excellency’s personal well-being and happiness as well as for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Myanmar.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration. —MNA

Cash assistance presented for surgical operations of cleft palate and lip patients

Yangon, 8 Jan — Yangon Division Supervisory Committee for Maternal and Child Welfare Association organized the ceremony to donate cash to be spent on treatment of cleft palate and lip patients at Thingangyun Sanpya Hospital, here, this morning.

Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council and Commander of Yangon Command, said that priority is being given to medical treatment in rural areas for narrowing the gap between rural and urban areas in health care services. In building the State, objectives have been laid down for ensuring health and fitness of the people in the health sector. It is obvious that Yangon Division Health Department and Yangon Division MCWA SC jointly conducted field trips to towns and villages and they searched patients so as to ward them at specialist hospitals.

In 1993, cleft palate and lip patients in Yangon Division were provided medical treatment at Thayangyun Sanpya Hospital, Yangon General Hospital and Taikkyi Hospital, he said. Similarly, more patients were warded at Thayangyun Sanpya Hospital the whole year of 2004. In addition, surgical operations of other baby patients were performed at Yangon General Hospital, Yangon Children’s Hospital and Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist Hospital.

Later, the commander thanked the donors.

Chairperson of Yangon Division MCWA SC Daw Khin Thet Htay explained health care service for cleft palate and lip patients.

The Commander, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo and Chairperson Daw Khin Thet Htay accepted K 300,000 each for the patients donated by U Win Lwin of Kyaw Tha Co, U Aung Myat of Mother Trading Co Ltd and U Aik Lin of Grade Nine Co Ltd; K 250,000 by U Thet Aung of Winner Brother Fish Breeding Industry; K 100,000 each for the patients donated by U Aung Lwin of PMG Co; and K 150,000 by U Aung Moe Kyaw of MWTC Co. Daw Khin Thet Htay presented cash assistance for surgical operations of the patients to Medical Superintendent Dr Maung Maung Gyi and gifts to the specialists and health staff. After the ceremony, Dr Mya Oo, Daw Khin Thet Htay and officials gave cash assistance to the patients. Surgical operations were performed on a total of 30 cleft palate and lip patients. In 2004, a total of 61 patients have been treated under the supervision of the Yangon Division MCWA SC.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe addresses cash donation ceremony for treatment of cleft palate and lip patients. — MNA

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

Established 1914

Four political objectives

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

Four economic objectives

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

Four social objectives

* Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
* Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
* Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
* Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation
Try best to become noble-minded nurses

Health and longevity is the key factor to the fundamental improvement of a human society as well as a nation.

Adhering to the motto of the Defence Services Medical Unit “Skilled and helpful medical soldiers”, the male nurses are responsible for health care concerns of the entire national people, especially for Tatmadaw members, who shoulder defence duties for safeguarding the land, water and air territories of the nation.

The graduation parade of the 2nd In-take of the Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Science took place at the Defence Service Medical Academy in Yangon on 7 January, with an address by Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye. In his speech, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye exhorted the graduates to safeguard the National Policy — Our Three Main National Causes — with Union Spirit, to preserve and uplift the prestige of the Tatmadaw by relaying the 12 noble traditions 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.

The contestants can portray objectives of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, matters related to fine traditions 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 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.

The entries are to be in line with the rules. The free verse and modern poems will not be accepted.

The poem must be written on one side of paper and the two copies of the entry must be submitted.

Rules for Armed Forces Day commemorative poem contest announced

YANGON, 8 Jan — 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 to hold the Poem Contest to mark the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day.

The contestants can portray objectives of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, matters related to fine traditions 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 first second or third prizes in the Poem Contest to mark the Armed Forces Day and the National Motto Contest, Sarpay Beik-man Manuscript Award Contest and the poem contest of the Pakokku 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.

Those who did not win the prizes can participate in the level-1. However, one contestant may take part in one level only, and the level number must be written on the entry. There will be two events at the level-1 — the long poem and the short poem. The contestant can participate in both or one of them. However, it must be one entry for one event. 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 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 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, Nanninga Soony Literary House, 531, Merchant Street, here, Tel: 374532, not later than 31-1-2005.

MNA

Armed Forces Day commemorative extempore talks held

YANGON, 7 Jan — The Yangon Division Union Solidarity and Development Association organized the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative extempore talks at its office on Saya San Street in Bahan Township this morning.

USDA CEC members in charge of Yangon Division USDA Chair-man of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa-secretaries and members of division, district and township USADAs, members of the panel of judges, teachers, social organizations and guests.

The mayor delivered an introductory address. After the contest, the vice-mayor presented first prize to Maung Aung Khin Zaw of Thingan-gyuan Township, the second to Maung Kyaw Maung Maung Sein of Thanlyin Township, the third to Ma Hsa Wady Nwe of Ahlón Township, and the consolation prize to Ma Soe Mya Mya Aung of Insein Township.

Yangon Division USDA Secretary U Aye Myint presented gifts to the panel of judges.

MNA

School building of BEHS No 1 renovated

YANGON, 7 Jan — A ceremony to open the school building of No 1 Basic Education High School (Phyu National School) in Phyu, Bago Division, which had been renovated without sacrificing its original style, was held in front of the school.

Bago Division Peace and Development Council Chairman of Bago Division Maj-Gen Ko Ko and Minister for Education U Than Aung graced the opening ceremony. After inspecting the school building, the commander and the minister delivered speeches and accepted a photo of the national school from the headmistress.

Next, the minister presented a computer and stationery to students. Later, the commander and the minister posed for a photographic photo to-gether with those present.

MNA
China to train plasma professionals for third world countries

HEFEI, 8 Jan — The Plasma Centre of the Hefei Matter Institute under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) announced on Thursday that it had been chosen to train plasma specialists for third world countries.

A spokeswoman with the centre said it was informed of the decision by the Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), a non-governmental organization, and that the fellowship training programme, established in accordance with an agreement signed between CAS and TWAS in 2004, would be valid for five years.

CAS with headquarters in Beijing, will provide fellowships to 50 medical professionals from third countries chosen for the training programme each year. The amount of the fellowship is not disclosed.

TWAS, initiated by Nobel physics laureate, Abdus Salam, of Pakistan, was founded in November 1983. It has 626 academicians from 77 countries and regions. A total of 89 Chinese scientists have been elected academicians of TWAS.

International forum on women, peace opens in Egypt

CAIRO, 8 Jan — An international forum on women and peace opened here Thursday under the auspices of the International Women’s Peace Movement, the official MENA news agency reported.

Egyptian First Lady Mrs Susan Mubarak, founder and chairperson of the movement, said in her inaugural address that women can play an important role in maintaining the world peace.

“Women experience and deal with conflicts, and women know what is needed when handling conflicts. Therefore women bring their vision into peace processes,” she said. Mrs Mubarak called on the international community to support women’s contribution to peace as an integral part of nation-building. “We have to think of establishing a mechanism, like an early warning system, which can open a communication channel for women, enabling them to play their role in preventing imminent conflicts or wars,” said the First Lady.

The Women’s International Peace Movement was launched in June, 2003, with an eye of leading women all over the world to promote peace and establishing connections between women in different parts of the world.

China hopes to work with Russia on energy cooperation

BEIJING, 8 Jan — China hopes to make concrete progress in energy cooperation with Russia with efforts made by both, said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan at a regular Press conference here Thursday.

While answering questions about the proposed oil pipeline project linking the two countries, Kong said energy cooperation constituted an important part of China-Russia strategic partnership and the mutually beneficial economic cooperation between the two countries.

State leaders, government and relevant departments attach great importance to the project, and have discussed different plans and proposals, he said. There is no official information yet on the plan to lay the pipeline, Kong said.

1350 US soldiers killed since beginning of Iraq war

BAGHDAD, 7 Jan — As of Friday, 7 Jan, 2005, at least 1,350 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 1,056 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is eight higher than the Defense Department’s tally, last updated at 10 am Friday. The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; 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, 1,212 US military members have died, according to AP’s count. That includes at least 947 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military’s numbers.

Petroleum field discovered in southeast Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, 8 Jan — Brazilian state-run oil firm PETROBRAS discovered on Thursday a light-oil field in the sea off the coast of Espiritu Santo State, southeast of the country.

Guilherme Estrella, director of Exploration and Production of PETROBRAS, confirmed the discovery, saying a sandy structure of 90 metres in thickness was found saturated with high-quality oil and natural gas during their exploration in the Atlantic Ocean.

He said commercial extraction of the oilfield will start in 2006 after calculation of its reserves, and the output is estimated to reach at least 100,000 barrels per day.

Peruvian police seize 324 kilos of cocaine

LIMA, 8 Jan—Peruvian police have seized 324 kilos of cocaine in an operation and arrested six suspects, national police chief for drug enforcement Eduardo Montero said Thursday.

Montero told the Press that the cocaine was discovered Wednesday in a truckload of vegetables on the outskirts of Lima, separated in 279 packets.

The drug traffickers had tried to carry the drugs to neighbouring Ecuador and then smuggle to the United States or Europe.

Peru is the second largest cocaine producer in the world after Colombia, with an output of nearly 300 tons per year.
Oil producing countries seek security of demand

NEW DELHI, 7 Jan — Middle East oil producers stressed on Thursday here the need for continued demand if they were to expand their output.

“Producing countries would like to ensure availability of demand for their oil before embarking on major investment projects to expand oil production capacity,” the Indo-Asian News Service quoted Energy Minister Mohammed bin Dhaen Al-Hamli of United Arab Emirates (UAE) as saying at the first regional roundtable on energy security here.

“While consumers seek security of supply, suppliers seek security of demand to justify investing in new capacities,” added Qatar Second Deputy Premier and Minister of Energy and Industry Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah.

Organized by the Riyadh-based International Energy Forum and hosted by India, the one-day ministerial roundtable was attended by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Oman, Qatar, UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Japan and South Korea. Asia consumes two-thirds of the region’s oil production, and major Asian oil producers and consumers are seeking security, stability and sustainability in supplies and demand.

Though the Middle East has considerable proven reserves, the UAE stressed that for oil producing countries to put in the required investment, there was a need to have security of demand and stable prices to generate sufficient revenues for investments to create additional capacity.

“Oil producing countries must generate sufficient oil revenues to be re-invested in oil production capacity expansion projects, and this can only be achieved when oil prices are at fair levels,” said Al-Hamli.

Iran Petroleum Minister Bijan Zangeneh stressed that a constructive cooperation can only emerge through better understanding and recognition of realities.

MNA/Xinhua

Cambodian, Thai officials meet on promotion of ties

PHNOM PENH, 7 Jan — The 2nd meeting of the governors of the Cambodian-Thai border provinces was held here on Thursday focusing on promotion of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Cambodia’s Co-ministers of the Interior Ministry Sar Kheng and Prince Norodom Sreivutht attended the meeting with their Thai counterpart Bhokin Bhalakula.

Both sides expressed their satisfaction over the close and cordial cooperation and the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the first meeting, held in Thai’s Chonburi Province last November.

In a joint communique, they agreed to strengthen the management of border crossing, including using valid border passes, the use of border passes in specific border areas, and to find common, efficient procedures in order to facilitate border crossing transportation operators.

At the same time, the leaders determined to further cooperation on the prevention and suppression of all illegal activities in the border areas, particularly those related to transnational crimes including terrorism, illicit drugs trafficking, trafficking in persons, acts of piracy and smuggling of illegal weapons, money laundering, international economic crimes and cyber-crimes.

The two nations agreed to continue the exchange of visits of high-ranking officials, working groups and their respective officials at all levels. Moreover, channels of communication will be established between the authorities of the two countries at various levels in order to enhance effectiveness of their bilateral cooperation.

Both sides agreed to hold their third meeting in 2005.

MNA/Xinhua

French Foreign Ministry confirms journalist missing in Iraq

PARIS, 7 Jan — French Foreign Ministry confirmed Thursday that the journalist of French daily Liberation Florence Aubenas and her assistant, Hussein Hanoun Al-Saadi, had gone missing in Baghdad since Wednesday morning.

“Since the daily Liberation informs us of the news, every effort is being made by our representatives in Baghdad and by the ministry in Paris to find them,” French Foreign Ministry’s spokesman Herve Ladsous said. “We renew our advice to all our nationals, including media representatives, to avoid going to Iraq given the current security risks in this country,” he added.

Liberation announced earlier in the day that it had had no news from Florence Aubenas in over 24 hours, nor of her Iraqi assistant, Hussein Hanoun Al-Saadi, who collaborates with all correspondants of Liberation for almost two years. Florence Aubenas, 43, and Saadi left their Baghdad hotel early Wednesday but did not return and have not been seen since, Liberation said in a statement. — MNA/Xinhua

S Korean newly appointed Vice-PM resigns

SEOUL, 8 Jan — South Korean newly appointed Vice-Prime Minister and Education Minister Lee Ki-jun offered resignation on Friday amid a continuing controversy over his ethical standards.

“I wish to step down from my post as I failed to fulfill my duty as an education minister,” said Lee in a news conference held at the main government complex in downtown Seoul in late Friday.

“I wanted to do my best in my ministerial post because I thought this was my last chance to serve the country, but I apologize to our officials of the Education Ministry and other educational workers for causing social disputes,” he said.

Lee’s resignation came three days after South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun tapped him as Vice-Prime Minister and minister for education and human resources development. Since the nomination, local media and non-governmental organizations raised lots of doubts about his ethical standards. Lee has been criticized for his service as an outside director of a conglomerate and his free-spending ways when he was president of Seoul National University. — MNA/Xinhua

US ‘facing bigger bombs in Iraq’

LONDON, 8 Jan — Guerrillas in Iraq have increased the amount of explosives they pack into bombs targeting US army patrols, a top Pentagon official has said.

Brig Gen David Rodriguez was speaking after a roadside bomb killed seven US soldiers in Baghdad on Friday — the highest US death toll so far this year.

Troops were encountering fewer bombs, he said, but they were more powerful.

A “multi-pronged effort”, gathering intelligence on bombs and adapting tactics could reduce losses, he said. Brig Gen Rodriguez warned, however, that boosting armoured protection for US vehicles was not enough in every case.

The seven soldiers killed on Friday were travelling in a Bradley armoured fighting vehicle — the most heavily-protected US vehicle after the Abrams tank.

US soldiers and their families have complained the military has not given their vehicles adequate protection in Iraq.

Earlier this week, Maj Gen Peter Chiarelli, a US commander, said his forces were having greater success in finding and defusing roadside explosives and car bombs.

But, he warned, stopping them altogether required more cooperation from ordinary Iraqis. — Internet
India signs 25-year LNG deal with Iran

NEW DELHI, 8 Jan—India and Iran signed Friday a 25-year agreement under which Teheran will supply 7.5 million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) annually from 2009.

A memorandum of Understanding was signed here by Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and GAIL with the National Iranian Gas Export Corp.

The signing followed talks between Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar and his Iranian counterpart Bijan Nzangeneh, the Indo-Asian News Service reported.

Irretral, India has been given stakes in the development of two oil fields in Iran — at Yadavaran and Juseyr. While in the development of two oil fields in Iran, India will invest 20 per cent in Yadavaran and Juseyr. While New Delhi will invest 20 per cent in Yadavaran equivalent to 60,000 barrels a day, in Juseyr it will have a 100 per cent buy-back agreement.

According to the pact on the LNG deal, IOC and GAIL will take delivery of the Iranian gas and GAIL will be the nodal agency for the sale of gas in India. GAIL chairman and managing director Proshanto Banerjee said.

Aiyar said India’s main concern was to buy the best possible quality gas at the best possible prices.

He also said that an Iranian delegation would visit India on the eve of the Asian Gas Summit here 14 February for talks on delivery of Iranian gas by a pipeline at the India-Pakistan border.

The minister’s comments mean that India may not participate in the proposed multi-billion-US-dollar pipeline project but would be willing to buy the gas if it was delivered at its doorstep.

The minister added that India’s gas requirements were expected to increase four-fold by 2020.

“Today our output is less than 100 million standard cubic metres, and the demand is expected to reach 400 million. Despite new discoveries in India, we will be in need of substantial quantities of gas,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

US has only spent small portion set aside for Iraq rebuilding

WASHINGTON, 7 Jan—The United States has still only spent a small portion of the 18.4 billion US dollars it set aside for rebuilding Iraq and is being forced to reallocate funding from some projects because of the poor security situation, a new government report shows.

According to a copy of the Bush Administration’s latest quarterly update to Congress on Iraq obtained by Reuters on Thursday, as of December 29 only 2.2 billion US dollars of the funds had actually been spent.

“Insurgency and terrorism remain the most significant challenges to the reconstruction of Iraq,” the report said.

“Intimidation of local workers has delayed projects, while the insecure environment has driven away critically needed foreign technicians in essential services.” As a result, costs for private security has soared, adding to overall rebuilding costs.

The report comes as the Bush Administration prepares to ask Congress for an emergency spending package to pay for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan seen totalling 80 billion US dollars to 100 billion US dollars. Extra money for police training, which falls under reconstruction, is expected to be part of that request.

Administration officials say that request is likely to be submitted in February or March, somewhat later than some had expected.

The amount of money spent is only a small increase from the 1.2 billion US dollars in the previous quarterly report, dated 22 September. However, the portion of the money promised to companies for projects has risen to 10.5 billion US dollars from 7.1 billion US dollars in the prior report.

The latest report said the US Embassy in Baghdad planned to divert 457 million US dollars from its reconstruction funding for high-impact projects in the electricity sector to essential programs key post battle cities.

Hampered by security problems in many areas and mindful of the need to show impotent Iraqis that progress is being made to rebuild their country, the United States has been shifting around funding for projects and changing its strategies.—MNA/Reuters

Pentagon plans review of Iraq strategy as nine US troops die

BAQDHAD, 8 Jan—The Pentagon has reportedly ordered a top-level review of its strategy in Iraq as nine US troops were killed.

The second-in-command of US forces in Iraq, Lieutenant General Thomas Metz, told reporters Thursday security was lacking in four provinces in central Iraq’s Sunni Muslim belt, but said postponing the elections would be a mistake.

According to an internal State Department poll, only 32 percent of Sunnis said they would stay away from the polls if they feared attacks. A US official said the findings were “not surprising” but said efforts would continue to encourage the participation of Sunnis, who enjoyed power until US troops toppled Saddam Hussein’s regime in 2003.

Amid increasing unrest, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is mounting an intensifying campaign to derail 30 January elections.

The Times said retired General Gary Luck’s review will be “open ended” and include a broader look at US military operations, including US troop levels and the strategy for fighting the guerrilla.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said Luck’s primary task was to assess the efforts to train and field Iraqi security forces, whose halting performance has compared unfavourably with an Iraqi guerrilla that appears to be growing in strength and sophistication.— Internet

Blatter to visit south Africa to meet Mbeki

JOHANNESBURG, 8 Jan—International soccer governing body FIFA head Sepp Blatter will meet South Africa President Thabo Mbeki during a twoday visit to the country next week, the organization said on Thursday.

The trip will be Blatter’s first to South Africa since it was awarded the 2010 World Cup last May, Blatter will be in the country on January 12 and 13 to meet Mbeki in Pretoria and will also have talks with the South African Football Association and the World Cup 2010 Local Organizing Committee.

France advises against sending journalists to Iraq

PARIS, 8 Jan—French President Jacques Chirac on Friday affirmed that the French authorities advises against sending journalists to Iraq, following the confirmation that the French journalist Florence Aubenas went missing in Baghdad.

Chirac expressed his worry about the fate of the journalist of the French daily Liberation and said France would find her by all means.

“Today, we have no news of your correspondent and we are worried. Naturally, we are mobilizing all possible means to obtain information and to find her,” Chirac told reporters attending a New Year’s reception at the Elysee Palace.

“I want to reiterate that the French authorities have formally advised against sending journalists” to Iraq, he said.

“For everyone, this is a question of responsibility. At the current time, the security of our correspondents cannot be ensured.”

Chirac said while he “understood the demands of the profession,” there were clear limits, adding: “It’s not good to put people’s lives in jeopardy.”

Liberation announced Thursday that it had had no news from Florence Aubenas in over 24 hours, nor of her Iraqi assistant, Hussein Hanouf Al-Saadi, who collaborates with all correspondents of Liberation for almost two years.

Florence Aubenas, 43, and Saadi left their Baghdad hotel early Wednesday but did not return and have not been seen since, Liberation said in a statement.

MNA/Xinhua

Iraqi boys throw stones at a US Bradley armoured vehicle in the Shiite suburb of al-Sadrd city in Baghdad, on 7 Jan, 2005.—INTERNET
CEA to help expand int’l scope of China’s trade show

LAS VEGAS, 8 Jan — The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) announced a partnership here Thursday with its Chinese counterpart to help expand the international scope of SINOCES, China’s largest consumer electronics exhibition.

The association is the producer of the annual International Consumer Electronics Show, which opens here Thursday. It said the new business venture with the China Electronic Chamber of Commerce will strengthen trade and business opportunities for the US consumer technology industry.

China is a huge market and the chamber is the most important electronics trade association in China, said Gary Shapiro, president and CEO of the association. The third annual SINOCES, the only government-sanctioned consumer electronics show in China, will take place on July 1-4 in Qingdao, a coastal city in east China, some 550 kilometres southeast of Beijing.

Over 60,000 people from around the world attended the 2004 SINOCES show, where more than 300 vendor companies exhibited. More than 120,000 people from about 110 countries are attending the 2005 International Consumer Electronics Show, the world’s largest showcase of latest digital technology and products.

Logitech expands mouse manufacturing facility in China

BEIJING, 8 Jan — Swiss Logitech, the world’s leading computer parts supplier, plans to reinforce its global mouse manufacturing base in China by launching a new factory project that will entail an investment of about 20 million US dollars.

Logitech Chief Executive Officer Guerino De Luca said at a press conference Thursday in Suzhou of East China’s Jiangsu Province that the new facility, which will be in operation in September, is expected to increase its annual mouse output by 30 per cent.

Logitech said the current output at the Suzhou New Area, which was set up in 1994, now produces annually 80 million mice, but they cannot meet the growing demand of the China market, the China Daily reported Friday.

“We need efforts to enlarge our production capacity since China is such a huge market,” he said. Logitech will double its growth rate of 30 per cent in a short time as the market expands, the daily reported. Its mice are sold to more than 20 big Chinese and foreign PC manufacturers.

Photo exhibition held to celebrate China-Tajikistan dip ties

BEIJING, 8 Jan — A photo exhibition was held here Thursday by the Tajikistan Embassy in China to celebrate the upcoming 13th anniversary of the establishment of China-Tajikistan diplomatic ties.

Ismail Amet, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC), said in the opening ceremony that the cultural exchange is one of the most important parts of bilateral ties.

“A prosperous country should not only be materially abundant, but also rich in national culture and spirit,” Amet said. “Through the photo show, we are convinced that the Tajik people can score greater achievements in national development and rejuvenation.”

Zaur Dakhte is a renowned Tajik cameraman, photographer and laureate of many contests in a number of film and photography festivals. The pictures presented in the show were taken by Zaur Dakhte in the past three years.

Uganda loses $23m annually in poor milk handling

KAMPALA, 8 Jan — Uganda loses 23 million US dollars annually due to poor handling of milk at farms, during transportation and marketing, reported local Press on Friday.

Uganda Dairy Development Authority (DDA) boss Nathan Twinamatsiko was quoted as saying that “in Uganda, approximately 27 per cent of milk produced is lost”.

“Six per cent is wasted at the farms, 11 per cent and 10 per cent is either lost to spillage or spoilage during transportation and marketing. The Food and Agricultural Organization (in a report) calculated the value of this loss at 23 million US dollars,” Twinamatsiko said.

He said the loss could be saved if collection centres in milk producing areas meet the standards.

Twinamatsiko said the report showed that Kenya and Tanzania also have higher losses, which adds up to 59 million US dollars in losses for the three East African countries.

“In Kenya, around 95 million litres worth 22.4 million US dollars are lost every year, cumulative losses in Tanzania amount to about 59 million litres worth 14.3 million US dollars. We need joint efforts to save the sector,” he said.

A Chinese artist makes final touches to a snow sculpture during a competition in a park during the annual ice and snow festival in Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang Province. —INTERNET
The Sasana and Myanmar always shine like gold that never rusts or becomes dull in colour due to the reaction caused by any element. Thanks to the efforts of Tapasta and Balika, the Sasana was introduced in Myanmar during the life time of the Lord Buddha. Myanmar warmly welcomed and accepted the missionary Buddhist monks who were sent to the country from India after the completion of the Third Buddha Synod. The eminent monk Shin Araham and King Anawratha made great strides in the effort to propagate and promote the Sasana.

Since then, Myanmar has seen the flourishing of the Paraytt, Patipatti and Pativeda Sasana and the emergence of monks and lay persons who are well versed in the Three Pitakas throughout the successive eras.

Myanmar held the World Buddhist Summit for purification, promotion and propagation of the Sasana till the future. The grand Summit was held in Maha Pasana Cave, the venue of the Sixth Buddhist Synod, in Yangon for three days from 9 to 11 December 2004.

In addition to heads of state and government, venerable monks, sent Buddhist researchers and guests from 38 nations attended the Summit, opened in accord with the tradition and religious rites.

At the opening ceremony, Secretary of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee (SSMNC) Abbot Maha Preussuru Abhuddha Agga Maha Swordsaddhammajotika Bhaddanta Kumara and Most Ven Dr Phra Maha Vichit Singhhar of Laos offered lights to the Jade Buddha in the cave. Local and foreign monks recited parittas, followed by the greetings extended by Myanmar Prime Minister, and the reading out of messages of the SSMNC Chairman, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe, President of Bangladesh Dr Iajuddin Ahmed and President of India Mr APJ Abdul Kalam.

Prime Minister of Thailand Dr Thaksin Shinawatra and Prime Minister of Laos Mr Bounhourn Vorachith delivered speeches, and Prime Minister of Cambodia Mr Samdech Hun Sen, President of Sri Lanka Mada Madchika Vdanaikaem Primate of Bangladesh Buzma, Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Vietnam Mr Phan Van Khai, and Prime Minister of Nepal Sher Bahadur Deuba sent messages to it.

Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academy Prof. Dr. Ing. H. Dr. Henk Overkuiple, Chairman of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Swordsaddhammajotika Maha Dhammakhathika Bahujanambahadhrtha Dr Nyansara, on behalf of the SSMNC, delivered the keynote speech.

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe paid respects to Myanmar Sayadawas and venerable monks from 18 foreign nations attending the Summit at 10.20 am on the morning of 10th December. The Senior General also presented a Buddha image each to them. He was accompanied by SPDC Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, SPDC Member General Thura Shwe Mann, Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win, SPDC Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and others.

The ceremony continued, and the Myanmar Prime Minister presented a Buddha image each to monks of Sweden, Netherlands, Nepal, Switzerland, America, Singapor, Cambodia and Sri Lanka and a certificate of honour to Mr Nakajma Yuyoshi for donating 34 cars to the Summit. The Secretary-1 presented one Buddha image each to eight Sayadaws from Germany, Australia, Indonesia, Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

Thus, the world is witnessing numerous conflicts and crimes. All those evils result from greed (lobha), anger (dosa) and delusion (moha). We should rid the world of the roots of all evils and sow the seeds of goodwill, tolerance, kindness and altruism for the sake of peace and prosperity," stated the Senior General in his message.

The message was read out by the Secretary-1. The message highlighted the causes behind the evil consequences the world is facing at present.

“Lord Buddha’s message of the four cardinal values—loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), appreciative joy (mudita) and equanimity (upekkha)—is the best path that will lead humanity to peace and harmony. Those teachings are applicable not only to Buddhists, but to all humankind, regardless of race or creed.”

I agree with the message, and believe that the people wish the loving-kindness to spread all over the world.

Here, I would like to present the excerpts of the address delivered by Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win at the Summit as follows:

“Of the two requirements of mankind, physical and spiritual, while progress in science and technology can fulfil the physical needs only the teachings of the Lord Buddha can satisfy the spiritual requirements.

“The Buddha Dhamma is preventing the decline of moral values and contributing to enhancing patience, loving-kindness, compassion and selflessness. It purifies the hearts and minds of mankind and promotes these values.

“While social development can be achieved through science and technology, moral attributes can be gained and peace and tranquillity developed through the teachings of the Lord Buddha. It is most important to control at all times excessive greed, violent anger and false pride.

“In the international arena, men are frightened and shocked by arms rivalry, terrorism, the gap between rich and poor and bullying of the weak by the strong. Men’s feelings are enflamed by the three evil fires of greed, anger and fear. These fires can be extinguished by Lord Buddha’s Teachings and bring global peace, loving-kindness, tolerance and forgiveness. It is our ardent hope that the Theras and religious leaders would unswervingly strive to attain peace and prosperity and the flourishing of the Eternal Truths, for the world and the country in which we reside, in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha. I am going to present the excerpts of the address delivered by the Thai Prime Minister as follows:

“Buddhism is the religion of moderation and tolerance. A peace of mind and the salvation from Arta (suffering) are the ultimate goals of all Buddhists.

“We, Buddhists, are taught to abide by Sila (the precepts), the first of which is to refrain from killing. We are also taught, among other things, to observe the four divine abidings, namely the loving-kindness (Metta), compassion (Karuna), sympathetic joy (Mudita) and equanimity (Upekha).”

By reading the excerpts, everyone can know what Buddhism really means. Hence, I hope that the World Buddhist Summit held in Myanmar will surely contribute to changing the world to be a better place under protection of loving-kindness from the place of crime and evil.

(Translation: TMT)
Sub-inspectors of police course concludes

YANGON, 8 Jan — The course No 50 for sub-inspectors of police concluded yesterday at the parade ground of the Central Training School of the Myanmar Police Force in Zibingyi, PyinOoLwin township, with an address delivered by MPF Director-General Brig-Gen Khin Yi.

Present were Police Quartermaster-General Police Brig-Gen Win Soe, Principal Police Brig-Gen Khin Maung, Director (Admin/Training) Police Col Win Khaung, departmental officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs in Mandalay Division, guests, and relatives of the outgoing sub-inspectors.

At the ceremony, MPF Director-General Brig-Gen Khin Yi took the salute of the sub-inspectors and inspected the companies. Next, he presented a best trainee award to Sub-Inspector Ye Htut, an outstanding award to Sub-Inspector Ko Myint for his excellence in law, an outstanding award to Sub-Inspector Hla Myo Aung for his excellence in military tactics, and outstanding award to Sub-Inspector Ko Myint for his excellence in shooting. In his speech, MPF Director-General Brig-Gen Khin Yi stressed the need to try to become good leaders capable of maintaining the fine traditions of the police force. He urged them to prepare themselves for national defence duties apart from such tasks as regional stability and enforcement of law, MPF’s prime responsibilities. He also spoke of the need to keep the national policy in the fore by building administration, development and organizational walls in defence of the country. Later, he called for their efforts to uphold and uplift the prestige of the Myanmar Police Force.

The Central Training School of the Myanmar Police Force conducted the course attended by a total of 204 trainees. — MNA

Export crop plantations in Myingyan District, Magway Division inspected

YANGON, 8 Jan — Accompanied by Myingyan District Peace and Development Council Chairman Lt-Col Tun Win and departmental officials, Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun on 4 January arrived at the site of Shwepadetha Co in Pinlai Village, Myingyan, Mandalay Division where onions, a kind of export crops, were grown after vacant land was reclaimed and inspected cultivation of 81 acres of onions.

Next, the deputy minister inspected the onion plantation of Maha Brothers Co in Myaynukyun, Thapaung Village-tract, Myingyan District. On 5 Jan, he attended the opening of the new school building of Orin Village primary school in Myaing Township and delivered a speech.

Pye Phyo Aung Co Managing Director U Aung Kyaw Moe donated a 21-inch colour TV to the school.

On 6 January, the deputy minister inspected the onion plantation of local farmers in Yenangyaung, that of MSKM Co in Shabintha Village, that of Diamond Star Co in Thayatlaybin Village-tract and that of Golden Crop Co.

Later, the deputy minister went to Magway and inspected onion plantations of Pyae Phyo Aung Co and Nyinmaung Co in Natmauk Township, and the onion plantation of Toetat Lin Co in Myothit. On 7 January, the deputy minister also inspected cultivation of onions in Pyay. — MNA

Education facilities in Bago Division (East) inspected

YANGON, 8 Jan — Minister for Education U Than Aung inspected the multimedia teaching centre of Nyanglebin BEHS No 1 and No 2 on 6 January.

In Kanyutkwin BEHS in Pyu Township, the minister met the headmistress and teachers and instructed them to carry out academic and sports activities.

On arrival at Toungoo University, the minister heard reports on facts about the university and instructed them to conduct research works to benefit the human society.

On 7 January, the minister inspected progress in construction of the two-storey building at Pyu BEHS No 2. He also looked into the language lab and the computer aided instruction. At Pyinbongyi BEHS (Branch) in Bago Township, the minister met with students and fulfilled the requirements of the language lab. — MNA

Pahtama Taungkyaunggyi Monastery Sayadaw passes away

YANGON, 8 Jan — The Religious Affairs Department announced that State Ovadacariya Pahtama Taungkyaunggyi Monastery Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw Bhaddanta Varinda, aged 86 and 66 vasa, of Taunggyi, Shan State (East), passed away at 4 pm on 6 January, 11th Waning of Nadaw, 1366 ME. — MNA

1st South-East Asia Archery Judges Seminar held

YANGON, 8 Jan — The 1st South-East Asia Archery Judges Seminar was held at Olympic Hotel on Wairayata Road in Thangyangyin Township this morning with an opening speech by President of the South-East Asia Archery Federation Mr Sanguan Kosavinta, Vice-President of South-East Asia Archery Federation President of Myanmar Archery Federation Dr Khin Sone extended greetings on the occasion.

A lecture was given in the seminar to 20 judges from Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar to be advanced international judges and the seminar will continue up to 9 January. — MNA

Use Natural Gas Vehicles and save fuel oil

- In automobiles, natural gas can be used in place of petrol and diesel.
- The use of natural gas can not only save fuel oil but also extend engine life.
- Natural gas exploited at home can be used effectively and safely.
- Natural gas burns cents per cent and is environment-friendly.
- Adequate supply of natural gas helps facilitate passenger and cargo transport.
**Independence Day Exhibition goes on**

**YANGON, 8 Jan —** The 57th Anniversary Independence Day Exhibition organized by the 57th Anniversary Independence Day Information Organizing Subcommittee and the Exhibition Staging Subcommittee continued for the sixth day today at the Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road in Dagon Township.

The exhibition was crowded with members of social organizations, students, monks and the people including Ministers for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung and members.

The exhibition of traditional Chinlon (cane ball) competition will be held to hail the Buddha Puja and Festival of the Kyaukkaung Pagoda in Thanlyin from 16 to 24 February from 12 noon to 10 pm daily at the south stairways of the pagoda.

Chinlon teams are to offer Shwe Thangons to the pagoda on 23 February. Chinlon committees and teams from across the country are to

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**Prizes awarded in Dagon BEMS No 1**

**YANGON, 8 Jan —** A ceremony to present prizes to outstanding students of Dagon BEMS No 1 for the 2003-2004 academic year was held at Nawarat hall of the school this morning.

Headmistress Daw Cathy Soe Thein extended greetings at the ceremony.

Next, the Headmistress, members of the school board of trustees and teachers awarded prizes to the outstanding students of the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth standards in 2003-2004 academic year.

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**60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives**

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- To work in concert with the people to achieve success in implementation of the seven-point Road Map for emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation
- To exert energetic efforts in carrying out the five rural development tasks
- To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the twelve State Objectives while upholding Our Three Main National Causes
- To build a strong, efficient and modern Tatmadaw

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(Yangon, 8 Jan —) Chairman of Bago Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko attended a coordination meeting of the Bago Division PDC and divisional level departments at Thiri Ooikha Hall in Bago yesterday afternoon.

It was also attended by Secretary Lt.-Col. Thein Lwin and members and chairmen from district and township PDCs.

First, the commander addressed the meeting. Respective department officials reported on tasks being carried out by the departments concerned and future tasks, and the chairmen from district and township PDCs on harvest of monsoon paddy and cultivation of summer paddy and other crops.

Later, the commander fulfilled the requirements regarding the reports and gave concluding remarks to the meeting.

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**Minister for Cooperatives Col Zaw Min and guests on 7 January observe items displayed at the pavilions of the Myanma Cooperatives Centenary Commemorative Products Show and Festival being held at the Cooperative Commercial Centre (Saya San Plaza) at the corner of Saya San Road and University Avenue (News reported). — MNA**
**FEA continues its research seminar**

YANGON, 8 Jan — The fifth research seminar of the Forest Experts Association was organized by the Yangon Division USDA under the Poem and Arts Competitions Organizing Work Committee chaired by Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung announced the opening and the Arts and Sculpture Contests.

**Rules on Armed Forces Day Commemorative Painting and Sculpture Contests announced**

YANGON, 8 Jan — Hailing the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day which falls on 27 March 2005, the Painting and Sculpture Contests and Exhibition Organizing Sub-committee under the Poem and Arts Competitions Organizing Work Committee chaired by Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung announced the opening and the Arts and Sculpture Contests.

**Preparations for Naga Traditional New Year Festival inspected**

YANGON, 8 Jan — Union Solidarity and Development Association Central Executive Committee member in-charge of Yangon Division USDA Yangon City Development Committee Chairman Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, accompanied by officials, inspected this morning public welfare tasks being carried out in Dagon Myothit (East) and South Okkalapa townships under the supervision of respective township USDA's.

**USDA CEC member inspects public welfare tasks**

YANGON, 8 Jan — Union Solidarity and Development Association Central Executive Committee member in-charge of Yangon Division USDA Yangon City Development Committee Chairman Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, accompanied by officials, inspected this morning public welfare tasks being carried out in Dagon Myothit (East) and South Okkalapa townships under the supervision of respective township USDA's.

**Armed Forces Day commemorative article contest to be held**

YANGON, 8 Jan — In commemoration of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day 2005, the Working Committee for organizing the competitions announced today how to hold the professional level article contest in accord with the objectives of 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day 2005.

The facet members from universities, colleges, institutes and basic education schools under the Ministry of Education can participate in the contest with the title, “New Century and the Tatmadaw”. Words of the article contest must be between 3,000 and 5,000. The entrants are to submit their works together with admission of ownership, two (2.5” x 2”) colour photos and the brief biography to Secretary of the Working Committee Director-General of the Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar) U Saw Lwin, not later than 15 February.

Handsome prizes will be awarded to the first, second and third winners of the contest. — MNA

**USDA CEC member inspects public welfare tasks**

YANGON, 8 Jan — USDA CEC member inspects public welfare tasks in Thingangyun Township.

**Headmaster U Aung Kyi of Insein BEHS No 1 presents prize to an outstanding teacher at School Family Day on 3-1-2005.**

U Win Kyi, Rector of the Forest University, presided over the afternoon session, in which resource persons read out three research papers. Dr San Win’s paper ‘Study of ‘slash and burn’ farming method being practised by people of hilly regions in Myanmar for invention of agricultural techniques for mixed-cultivation of crops and forest’ was chosen best research paper, and an honorary prize was presented to him. Prizes were also presented to other resource persons. — MNA

**Headmaster U Aung Kyi of Insein BEHS No 1 presents prize to an outstanding teacher at School Family Day on 3-1-2005.**

Headmaster U Aung Kyi of Insein BEHS No 1 presents prize to an outstanding teacher at School Family Day on 3-1-2005.
Researchers say mega-dose of Vitamin C reduces oxidative stress

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan — Researchers, who set out to prove that a mega-dose of Vitamin C can improve exercise performance in fact showed it has no effect at all, according to a report published on Friday. The Vitamin, given intravenously to younger and older volunteers, did nothing to help them work harder on a treadmill, the team at the University of Colorado found.

But the Vitamin, given as ascorbic acid, did reduce oxidative stress chemical damage done to cells and proteins in the body, the researchers found.

“We did see a decrease in oxidative stress with large doses of Vitamin C, but this decrease didn’t improve aerobic abilities either for younger or older subjects,” said Christopher Bell, now at Colorado State University, who led the research. The experiment was based on the theory that aging and weakness is caused to a large degree by oxidative stress — the same chemical process that leads to rusting. This can affect the heart’s ability to pump, for instance, as cells are damaged by day-to-day living.

The researchers tested 12 healthy but mostly inactive people aged 22 to 24, and 10 people aged 59 to 61. They checked their exercise ability several times before any treatment. During treatment and after a month of tests.

Partway through they gave the volunteers daily 500 milligramme Vitamin C tablets for a month. At the time of testing the volunteers randomly got salt water or ascorbic acid in a slow-drip infusion.

The researchers hoped to show that the huge doses of the Vitamin given directly in the blood would increase breathing capacity and heart output.

But oxygen uptake and heart output were unaffected, they reported in the Journal of Applied Physiology. Volunteers given a saltwater solution did no worse than those given Vitamins.

Jordan calls for UN role in Iraqi elections

AMMAN, 8 Jan — Jordanian Foreign Minister Hani Mulqi called here Thursday for a leading UN role in facilitating the Iraqi elections to be held on 30 January.

He said at a session of Iraqi neighbouring countries’ conferences that the interim Iraqi Government should hold elections on time with participation of all Iraqis in line with the UN Security Council Resolution 1546. The elections reflected the aspirations of Iraqi people for a prosperous and free life, said the minister, adding that achieving such a goal would also positively influence its neighbouring countries.

“I have no doubt that a stable, secure and prosperous Iraq will contribute to promoting developmental goals that we all need,” Mulqi said.

He also stressed the importance for all Iraqis to seize the opportunity to put Iraq back on the right track with a view to imposing the rule of law and restoring security and stability to the war-torn country.

The one-day meeting drew foreign ministers from Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Turkey, Iraq and representatives of the United Nations, Iran, Egypt and Bahrain.

The upcoming Iraqi election was high on the agenda of the meeting, which kicked off earlier Thursday in the Jordanian capital Amman.

Thailand to set up consulate office in S-W China

CHENGDU, 8 Jan — Thailand will set up a consulate office in Chengdu, the capital of southwest China’s Sichuan Province, this year, making it possible for Chengdu residents to apply for and get visas without leaving town.

The Foreign Affairs Office of the Sichuan provincial government said on Thursday the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs has informed it that China has signed a memorandum of understanding with Thailand on establishing the office.

The office in Chengdu will be established to serve the increasingly exchanges between Sichuan and Thailand on economy, culture and tourism, said the Sichuan Foreign Affairs Office. The office is expected to open within the first half of this year.

Sichuan Province has been trying in recent years to win over more countries to establish consulates and offices in Sichuan, said the Foreign Affairs Office.

Germany has opened a consulate in Chengdu in November 2004. A consulate of South Korea will also open soon.

Israelis troops kill two Palestinians in Gaza

GAZA, 8 Jan — Israeli troops shot dead on Friday two Palestinians in two separate incidents in Gaza City and the Gaza Strip in southern town of Khan Younis, Palestinian medics and witnesses said.

They said that Israeli troops stationed on the road leading to the Jewish settlement of Nitzanim shot dead on Friday night a Palestinian militant in an exchange of fire with Israeli soldiers.

Medics at Shifa Hospital in Gaza City said that Bashir Ayyad, 26, was shot and killed in east of Gaza City, adding there were no other injuries.

Earlier Friday, another Palestinian, who is believed to be a member of Hamas movement, was shot dead as he approached to the Jewish settlement of Gani Tal west of the town of Khan Younis in southern Gaza Strip.

Israeli and Palestinian sources said that the man was killed as he approached to the settlement in a bid to plant a roadside bomb near the settlement’s fence. Palestinian medics at Rafah Town, meanwhile, said that a nine-year-old child was shot and critically wounded by Israeli soldiers stationed on the borderline between Rafah Town in southern Gaza Strip and Egypt.

Palestinian security officials expressed concerns that the Israeli Army’s escalation in the Palestinian territories would obstruct holding the presidential elections on Sunday.

Abbas attacks against Israel cannot be justified

RAMALLAH, 8 Jan — Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization Mahmoud Abbas said Friday night that Palestinian militants’ attacks against Israel cannot be justified.

Abbas made the remarks in the West Bank town of al Beera in response to an ambush carried out by al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the armed wing of Fatah, against an Israeli vehicle near the West Bank town of Nablus.

One Israeli was killed and three others were injured in the attack.

“Attacks have its reasons and motives, but I don’t justify anybody to carry out these attacks. But in the same time, there are many reasons, there is an occupation and there are many issues I don’t want to go into it now,” he said.

He revealed that Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades promised him that they would be committed to his programme once he was elected as the new Palestinian leader in Sunday’s elections, adding that he hoped a new era would begin.

The group said in a leaflet distributed in the northern part of the West Bank that the attack is to avenge the Israeli Army military actions carried out against the Palestinians.
China becomes world’s second largest source of spam

BEIJING, 8 Jan—A source from the Internet Society of China’s anti-scam team on Wednesday said China has become the world’s second largest source of spam, after the United States.

The source acknowledged that 180 of 400 IP addresses blocked by the International Anti-Spam Organization in November 2004 were Chinese. “From the beginning of December to December 19, another 80 Chinese IP addresses were blocked,” acknowledged the source which was quoted by the China Business Times.

The source cited spam as a global problem, mentioning the United States, which generated 42.1 per cent of it, as the dominant origin of junk e-mail. The source said too many IP sites were black-listed and blocked by the International Anti-Spam Organizations, affecting China’s normal e-mail delivery.

A Volkswagen assembly plant in Germany. Europe’s leading carmakers are facing a profit margin squeeze in the coming year as soaring raw materials costs look set to outstrip any price rises the companies can force through in what remains a consumer-led market. —INTERNET

Head-on collision kills 28 in E China province

FUZHOU, 8 Jan—At least 28 people were killed in a traffic accident in eastern China’s Fujian Province at around 2 pm Thursday, local police said.

A runaway truck loaded with containers had a head-on collision with a coach carrying 45 people on an expressway linking Fuzhou, provincial capital, and Xiamen, a coastal city, killing 24 at the scene.

Four others died on the way to a local hospital, and the 19 injured are in an under medical care, said the police. Investigation into the cause is underway. MNA/Xinhua

Genghis Khan’s medicine finds its home with common herdsmers

BEIJING, 8 Jan—Traditional Mongolian Medicine — the kind used by Genghis Khan (1162-1227), founder of the most Mongol empire of the Middle Ages, and his family — has found wider uses both at home and abroad, said veteran medical expert Yu Linyan.

Attending the Annual Chinese Traditional Medicine (CTM) meeting here on January 6-7, Yu, an official of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Regional Health Department, found numerous reasons to feel good about the future of Mongolian Medicine.

“When Genghis Khan, born in Temuujin, swept through Europe, Mongolian Medicine was like the wind beneath his wings,” said Yu.

More brother than cousin to CTM, the distinctive Mongolian medicine can be traced back more than 1,000 years. It is famous for its “bizarre” treatment of hypertension with blood-letting and drinking fermented horse milk.

“Mongolian Medicine, which helped Genghis Khan conquer high and low in the Asian-Euro continent, has found a place in everyday life of common Mongolian,” acknowledged Yu.

Many traditional Mongolian medicines have proved effective in clinical diagnosis. According to the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, at the end of 2004, there were approximately 14,900 traditional medical doctors in Inner Mongolia, with 4,777 Mongolian Medical doctors.

“The web of doctors and clinics links up all the herdsmen who are widely scattered in Inner Mongolia, putting medical services within their reach,” Yu said.

Part of the job at the annual meeting is to explore the new possibilities of traditional medicine, including the medicine of minority ethnicities. An offset of CTM, Mongolian medicine stands out for its easy way of taking, cheap price and effectiveness.

Unlike CTM, which is known for its hours of preparation and the attitude that “bitter medicine treats you well,” Mongolian medicine is now in tablet, pill and powder forms to cater to the accustomed habits of modern people.

But given the above-mentioned advantages, Mongolian medicine still retains a strong accent — only finding most of its strong influence in Inner Mongolia area — the problem confronting all traditional medicine today.

MNA/Xinhua

Population growth slows down in central China province

ZHENGZHOU, 8 Jan—Central China’s Henan Province — the most populous province of the country — has seen a decrease of more than 6 million births in the past decade, said the provincial statistics bureau.

By the end of 2003, the population of Henan reached 96.67 million. It is estimated to hit 100 million by 2009.

The natural population growth of Henan Province dropped from 18.4 per thousand in 1990 to 5.64 in 2003, below the country’s average level for the thirteenth consecutive year, said the bureau Wednesday.

Meanwhile, with improved medical service and living conditions, Henan maintains a low death rate. Life expectancy in Henan was 72.82 years in 2000.

The effective control on population growth has also contributed to the province’s economic development. Its gross domestic product (GDP) has quadrupled since 1990, with per capita GDP hitting 1,000 US dollars. MNA/Xinhua
Researchers say CCL3L1 gene may protect people from AIDS

WASHINGTON, 7 Jan.—A gene that may help block the AIDS virus from getting into cells seems to protect some people from the deadly and incurable infection, researchers said on Thursday.

They found that people who carry extra copies of the gene are less likely to become infected with the virus, which affects 40 million people worldwide.

The findings may eventually lead to better ways to prevent and treat HIV, which has killed more than 25 million people since it was first identified in the early 1980s, said the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, which funded the study.

It also may help explain overall human immunity against infectious diseases, the researchers write in an advance report in the journal Science.

The gene, called CCL3L1, controls production of an immune system signaling chemical, or chemokine.

Normally, genetic variation means people have slight mutations or variations in a gene, or working and non-working copies — one copy inherited from the mother and one from the father. In this case, people actually have multiple copies of the entire gene, said Dr Sunil Ahuja of the University of Texas Health Science Centre in San Antonio, who led the study.

“About 5 per cent of the human genome has got large chunks of sequence that are duplicated,” Ahuja said in a telephone interview. For CCL3L1, some people have no copies of the gene at all and some people have four, five and more. This chemokine is associated with a receptor — a cellular entryway — known as CCR5.

CCR5 is known to affect susceptibility to HIV infection and how quickly an infected person progresses to AIDS.

For their study Ahuja and colleagues in the United States, Britain and Argentina analyzed blood samples from more than 4,300 HIV-infected and non-infected people of different ancestral origins.

They counted how many copies of the CCL3L1 gene each person had, and found big variations.

For example, HIV-negative black adults had an average of four copies of CCL3L1, while HIV-negative European-Americans averaged two copies each and uninfected Hispanic-Americans had an average of three copies. The more copies a person had, the less likely he or she was to be infected with HIV. — MNA/Reuters

Drug trafficking offences down in Tanzania in 2004

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 8 Jan.—The number of drug trafficking offences went down in Tanzania in the past year when 7,185 cases were reported compared with 8,052 cases in the previous year, according to police statistics available on Friday.

The East African country’s anti-narcotics effort ended up with the catch on the last day of last year of a businessman who had swallowed 72 pellets of heroin weighing 720 grammes worth 12,960 US dollars (12,960 US dollars) at street value while travelling to Dar-es-Salaam from abroad.

Most of the drug traffickers detained by police were Tanzanian nationals from Dar-es-Salaam and Zanzibar.

Also last year, 32 Tanzanian nationals were caught for either trafficking or in possession of illegal drugs in nine foreign countries. Of these overseas offenders, 13 were nabbed in Pakistan, four each in Germany and Kenya, three each in India and Ethiopia, two in Britain, one each in Uganda, Mauritius and the United Arab Emirates. — MNA/Xinhua

New vaccine against rotavirus launched in Mexico

MEXICO CITY, 8 Jan.— A new vaccine against child-killer rotavirus is being launched this week in Mexico rather than in the developed world, marking a sea change in how major companies market drugs worldwide.

GlaxoSmithKline will introduce its oral vaccine Rotarix on Friday, after it was licensed for sale by Mexican authorities in July.

This is the first time a drug company has side-stepped US and European regulators, allowing it to get out the drug in time for the peak infection season in one region where the disease is deadliest, and to beat competitors collaborating on similar vaccines.

Heralded as a public health breakthrough that could significantly dent the mortality, the vaccine’s global launch in Mexico sets a new model for bringing such remedies first to poorer populations often ravaged by preventable diseases.

“Rotavirus occurs most in the winter and in less developed countries like Mexico and much of Latin America,” said America Anguiano, a company spokeswoman.

The drug giant is changing a pattern of vaccine development in which products are traditionally introduced in the United States and Europe and then sold in poor nations. This new scheme could apply to drugs for malaria and AIDS, for example.

“The experience in Mexico will be very important for the public health impact but also to inform decision makers in poor countries in Latin America and around the world,” said Dr John Wecker of the US-based, nonprofit Rotavirus Vaccine Programme.

“This approach certainly has merits for drugs and vaccines for diseases endemic in the developing world,” he said. “It also highlights the need to strengthen the regulatory capacity in many of these countries to ensure that sovereign nations are able to make informed decisions.”

The fight against rotavirus was set back in 1999, when a vaccine sold in the United States by Wyeth was pulled for fears it could cause a sometimes deadly bowel obstruction. — MNA/Reuters

“Lord of the Rings” director Jackson eyes

“The Lovely Bones”

WELLINGTON, 8 Jan.—Peter Jackson, who is director of “Lord of the Rings”, has confirmed that his next film will be an adaptation of the book The Lovely Bones, the Wellington-based daily The Dominion Post reported Friday.

With King Kong set for release in December, rumours have been circulating as to what the Kiwi director will turn his attention to next.

In an interview with a magazine Lord of the Rings fan, Jackson and co-writer Philippa Boyens confirmed they would team up again to turn Alice Sebold’s feature film into a celluloid reality, the report said.

“One next project after King Kong is The Lovely Bones,” Boyens was quoted as saying.

“We feel comfortable with each other. I am sure there will be other projects we do separately but at the moment, as long as it works, we’ll keep doing it,” he said. When asked about his filming a genda after King Kong, Jackson also said it would be to make “The Lovely Bones”.

The story is based on a 14-year-old girl watching from heaven as her family copes with her rape and murder. She narrates the story as she watches the turmoil they go through. — MNA/Xinhua

Death toll from freight train collision in US rises to eight

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan.—Eight people have been found dead and about 240 treated for respiratory and other ailments one day after a freight train carrying chlorine gas collided with a parked train in southeastern US state of South Carolina, authorities said Friday.

The collision happened about 2:30 am EST (730 GMT) Thursday at the town of Graniteville in the southern end of the state. Thirteen cars derailed.

GlaxoSmithKline will introduce its oral vaccine Rotarix on Friday, after it was licensed for sale by Mexican authorities in July.

This is the first time a drug company has side-stepped US and European regulators, allowing it to get out the drug in time for the peak infection season in one region where the disease is deadliest, and to beat competitors collaborating on similar vaccines.

Heralded as a public health breakthrough that could significantly dent the mortality, the vaccine’s global launch in Mexico sets a new model for bringing such remedies first to poorer populations often ravaged by preventable diseases.

“Rotavirus occurs most in the winter and in less developed countries like Mexico and much of Latin America,” said America Anguiano, a company spokeswoman.

The drug giant is changing a pattern of vaccine development in which products are traditionally introduced in the United States and Europe and then sold in poor nations. This new scheme could apply to drugs for malaria and AIDS, for example.

“The experience in Mexico will be very important for the public health impact but also to inform decision makers in poor countries in Latin America and around the world,” said Dr John Wecker of the US-based, nonprofit Rotavirus Vaccine Programme.

“This approach certainly has merits for drugs and vaccines for diseases endemic in the developing world,” he said. “It also highlights the need to strengthen the regulatory capacity in many of these countries to ensure that sovereign nations are able to make informed decisions.”

The fight against rotavirus was set back in 1999, when a vaccine sold in the United States by Wyeth was pulled for fears it could cause a sometimes deadly bowel obstruction. — MNA/Reuters

Two lion cubs play with a tiger cub in the Jinan Wildlife World, Jinan, capital of east China’s Shandong Province, on 6 Jan, 2005. Three lion cubs have been put in the same cage with four tiger cubs with an aim of fostering intimacy among them. — MNA/Xinhua

People look at smog covering the skyline of Hong Kong recently. — INTERNET
Naval commander

28 World War I British

26 Trembling poplar

23 Peewit

21 Threatening

18 Small fish

15 Simple

14 Learning

10 Armour

9 Carrion bird

8 Beat strongly

ACROSS

1 Sharp

4 Soft down

8 Beat strongly

9 Carrion bird

10 Shoulder-piece

11 Armour

12 Largest of all deer

14 Learning

15 Simple

18 Small fish

21 Threatening

23 Peewit

25 End of daylight

26 Trembling poplar

27 Artificial fabric

28 World War I British

Naval commander

DOWN

1 Nipped

2 Winp-storm

3 Mabled me (anag.)

4 People

5 Part of throat

6 Infirm

7 Egg-shaped

13 Remembrance gift

16 Scrap

17 Cosmic source of regular radio signal

19 Movement of the eyelid

20 Specialised department

22 Tall and ungrainly

24 Advance

ACROSS

1 Sharp

4 Soft down

8 Beat strongly

9 Carrion bird

10 Shoulder-piece

11 Armour

12 Largest of all deer

14 Learning

15 Simple

18 Small fish

21 Threatening

23 Peewit

25 End of daylight

26 Trembling poplar

27 Artificial fabric

28 World War I British

Naval commander

S Korean int’l Song back to home K-League

SEOUL, 8 Jan— South Korea international Song Chong-gug will play for K-League champion Suwon Bluewings next season after losing his place at Dutch club Feyenoord, Suwon officials said on Friday.

The 25-year-old Song joined Feyenoord from Pusan I-cons on a five-year contract after helping South Korea reach the 2002 World Cup semifinals.

He has been largely overlooked by Feyenoord coach Ruud Gullit, however, since the former Chelsea boss took over a year ago, prompting the wing back to seek a return home.—MNA/Reuters

Brazillian midfielder becomes third
signing for Panathinaikos

ATHENS, 8 Jan— Brazilian midfielder Anderson became the third signing of the week for Greek champions Panathinaikos in a 700,000-euro (926,200-
US-dollars) deal on Friday.

Anderson, 25, who will make his debut against fellow title-chasers AEK Athens on Sunday, joined second-placed Panathinaikos from another Greek club, Halkida.

Panathinaikos released Cameroonian Joel Epalle, who was given a 100,000-
euro (132,300-US-dollars) pay-off, to make room for Anderson.

Earlier in the week, Panathinaikos signed Cyprus international winger Costas Charalambides from APOEL Nicosia.

"Panathinaikos are the side that fulfil my personal ambitions. I want to prove myself in the Greek league," said the 23-year-old who has 14 caps for Cyprus.

Their third signing of the week was 26-year-old defender Manolis Rouvakis from OFI Crete.

Panathinaikos are one point behind league leaders Olympiakos Piraeus. AEK Athens are third, two points further behind.—MNA/Reuters

Wales striker signs 2-1/2-year
contract extension with Celtic

GLASGOW, 8 Jan— Wales striker John Hartson signed a two-
and-a-half-year contract extension with Celtic on Friday to boost his team before Sunday’s Scottish Cup third-round
downshow with Old Firm rivals Rangers.

The 29-year-old Hartson, who was put into the small deal was due to expire in the close season, has scored 77 goals from 139 appearances since joining Celtic from Coventry City in August 2001.

The new deal will keep him at Parkhead until May 2007.

"I am very relieved, to be honest, because it has been dragging on for a while and, as the manager said, these things can sometimes take a bit longer than you would like," he told a news conference on Friday.

"But I am pleased that I was happy to agree and also looking forward to the next two-and-a-half years.

"Reports that I was looking to move elsewhere and that I was not true at all.

"I always wanted to stay and I made that clear to the manager on a number of occasions ... it was just a matter of sorting a few things out in finer detail."

He added of his future at Celtic: "I just want to enjoy the amount of success that I have had in my previous three-and-
a-half years."

"Winning the Championship was obviously very special in the first year I was here and the Uefa Cup run we had and some great results we have had in Europe.

"I just want to score plenty more goals and help the club achieve more success; that’s really what I am here to do."

Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova (front) gives a thumbs up sign, while compatriot Vera Zvonareva claps, after her racket and a T-shirt were sold for HK$320,000 ($66,700) during an auction in Hong Kong on 8 Jan. 2005. —INTERNET
China offers $524m in loans to 800,000 students last years

BEIJING, 8 Jan — China offered an estimated $524 million US dollars in loans to about 800,000 colleges in the past year, the Ministry of Finance said Friday.

The loans are made to college students in economic terms. Poor students account for one forth of college students in China, the ministry said. Under the new mechanism, students can apply for loan, and the central government selects banks to offer the loans through public bidding. The system uses an improved mechanism of government subsidy and risk control.

This year the ministry said, Chinese Government departments at various levels are expected to provide 163 million US dollar in loan subsidies and risk compensation funds to government loans to college students in need for 2004–2005 academic year.

The ministry said the government will provide more funding so that college students in dire need will have access to loans.

French President warns Iran against nuclear activities

PARIS, 8 Jan — French President Jacques Chirac warned Iran on Thursday against activities that risk to ruin its nuclear non-proliferation accord with Europe.

In November, Iran, suspected by Washington of intending to develop the atomic bomb, agreed to suspend its uranium enrichment programme after long negotiations with France, Britain and Germany under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

“So I think the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, Iran’s case is the path to take,” he told all foreign ambassadors in Paris.

“Countries which respect their international obligations in terms of non-proliferation and show proof of the peaceful nature of their activities should be able to benefit from technologies that are allowed under international rules,” Chirac said.

“But no weakness can be shown to those who renege on their commitments,” he added.

CIA report faults top officials before Sept 11 attacks

WASHINGTON, 8 Jan — An internal investigation by the Central Intelligence Agency has concluded that top officials in the agency should be held accountable for failing to allocate adequate resources before the September 11 attacks, the New York Times reported on Friday.

The conclusion is spelled out in a near-final version of a report by CIA’s Inspector-General John Helgerson, the Times said. Among those most sharply criticized in the report are George J Tenet, the former intelligence chief, and James L Pavitt, the former deputy director of operations.

Both Tenet and Pavitt stepped down from their posts last summer.

The report says that Pavitt, among others, failed to meet an acceptable standard of performance, and it recommends that his conduct be assessed by an internal review.

The criticism of Tenet is equal in equally terms, the officials said, but they would not say whether he reached a judgment about whether his performance had been acceptable.

The basic conclusion that the CIA paid too little heed to the threat posed by terrorism echoes those reached in the last two years by the joint congressional panel on the September 11 attacks and by the independent commission that investigated those attacks, the newspaper said.

But the criticisms of senior CIA officials are more direct and personal than those spelled out in either of those two previous formal assessments.

A final report of the review, ordered by the joint Congressional panel, is expected to be completed within six weeks.

Earthquake report

(Issued at 09:00 hours (MST on today))

An earthquake of slight intensity (4.7) Richter Scale with its epicenter outside of Myanmar about 270 miles Northeast of Mandalay seismological observatory was recorded at (22) hrs (20) min (56) sec MST on 7 Jan 2005.

Sunday, 9 January

View on today:

7:00 am
1. outside temperature
2. To be healthy exercise
7:30 am
3. Morning news
7:40 am
4. Nice and sweet song
7:55 am
5. မြန်မာစာမျက်နှာ ပို့ချချက်များ
8:10 am
6. Myanmar news
8:20 am
7. အီရန်-ဇိုင်းအိုလ်နာ့-ထိုင်းအိုလ်နာ့ ပို့ချချက်များ
8:30 am
8. International news
8:45 am
9. Say it in English
11:00 am
1. Marital song
11:10 am
2. Musical programme
11:25 am
3. Round-up of the Week International News
11:40 am
4. မြန်မာနိုင်ငံ စားသောက်မှုနှင့် ပြန်လည်ချချက်များ
12:20 pm
5. အီရန်နိုင်ငံများ ပြန်လည်ချချက်များ
6. Myanmar video feature:
7. နောက်ဆိုင်ရာ နိုင်ငံတကာ အိမ်အိမ်ပြန်လည်ချချက်များ
2:35 pm
7. အီရန်နိုင်ငံများ ပြန်လည်ချချက်များ
8. International news
4:00 pm
9. Marital song
4:15 pm
10. Song to uphold National Spirit
4:30 pm
11. English for Everyday Use
4:45 pm
12. Weather report
5:00 pm
13. News
5:30 pm
14. International news
7:00 pm
15. News
7:30 pm
16. International news
8:00 pm
17. Weather report
8:15 pm
18. News
9:00 pm
19. Weekly news review
9:15 pm
20. Today’s programme
10:00 pm
21. News
10:15 pm
22. Time for Sleep
11:00 pm
23. News
11:15 pm
24. News

WEATHER

Saturday, 8 January, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been fair in the whole country. Night temperatures were (3˚C) below normal in Chin and Rakhine States, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions, (3˚C) above normal lower Sagaing Division and above normal in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were (1˚C) in Hakha.

Maximum temperature on 7-1-2005 was 93.9˚F. Minimum temperature on 8-1-2005 was 58.9˚F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 8-1-2005 was 96%. Total sunshine hours on 7-1-2005 was (8.2) hours approx. Rainfalls on 8-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 9 mph from East at (09-30) hours MST on 8-1-2005.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 9-1-2005: Weather will be partly cloudy in Taninthayi Division and generally fair in the remaining areas.

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

Lookout for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in Northern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 9-1-2005: Fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 9-1-2005: Fair weather.

Daw Khin Khin Aye (Grace)

Age 78

Daw Khin Khin Aye, beloved daughter of (Sithu U Ba Kay-Daw Khin Khin Aye), beloved daughter in law of (U Ba Thaw-Daw Ohn Khin), beloved wife of U Than Tu, beloved mother of Daw Win May Tu-Dr. Min Thaw Kyi, U Min Tu-Daw Sandar Myint, Dr. Aye Khin Tu-Dr. Zan Mra, Dr. Tun Tu, U Win Tu-Dr. Martina Than Tu, Daw Hla May Tu-Dr Tha Dun, U Ohn Khin Tu-Nadi Than Tu, Daw May Thin Tu-Dr. Steven Chang and Daw Hla Yin Tu, beloved grand- mother of Hagen Tu Kyi, Chrissan Kyi, Kaithin Kyi, Melanie Thant, Mindy Me Thant, Spencer Raymond Thant, Andrew Tu Mra, Hilary Tu Mra, Madison Grace Thant, Ashley Aye Aye Dun and Hayden Dun.

Sri Lankan Prime Minister sends felicitations to Prime Minister Li-Gen Soe Win

YANGON 8 Jan — The following is a message of felicitations from Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, sent to Li-Gen Soe Win, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, on the occasion of the 57th Anniversary Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar.

Excellency,

I have great pleasure to congratulate Your Excellency on the happy occasion of the Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar. It is my fervent hope that the existing ties of friendship and co-operation between our two countries will be further strengthened and enhanced in the future.

May I take this opportunity to extend to Your Excellency, my best wishes for your good health, happiness and personal well-being. — MNA

Commander and mayor inspect proper drainage, reconstruction of pavements

YANGON, 8 Jan—Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and officials inspected cleanliness, proper drainage and reconstruction of pavements in the city this morning.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspect upgrading of the road of the overpass on Sule Pagoda Road. — YANGON COMMAND

Babu show contest

Lord Buddha’s message of the four cardinal values—loving-kindness (metta), compassion (karuna), appreciative joy (mudita) and equanimity (apakka)—is the best path that will lead humanity to peace and harmony. Those teachings are applicable not only to Buddhists, but to all human-kind, regardless of race or creed. — YADANASI SAYADAW (LOLEIM)

Self-reliant library, school building put into service

YANGON, 8 Jan — The self-reliant library in Kanbyu Village of Madaya Township was opened in conjunction with the ceremony to donate 10,000 books to the library on 6 January morning.

Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Commissioner U Kyin Lin of General Administration Department, Director-General Lt-Col Win Htein of No 2 Basic Education Department and officials attended the ceremony.

Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U Myo Nyunt handed over books to Chairman of the library construction committee U Ohn Maung. Next, Director-General Lt-Col Win Htein also presented 412 Sayadaws and offered robes to them. The minister also paid homage to members of the Sangha who were sitting the exam.

The examination will last 33 days from 26 December 2004 to 27 January 2005. A total of 121 members of the Sangha are taking the oral exam, while 105 taking the written exam. Wellwishers are invited to donate cash to the funds set up for the members of the Sangha at the cave. — MNA

Minister visits Tipitakadhara Selection Exam

YANGON, 8 Jan — Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung visited the ongoing 57th Tipitakadhara Tipitaka Kovidha Selection Examination, organized by the Religious Affairs Department, at Maha Pasana Cave on Thirimingala Kabay Aye Hill here this afternoon.

Accompanied by Director-General of the Religious Affairs Department Dr Myo Myint and officials, the minister paid obeisance to Ovadacaryya Sayadaws and offered robes to them. The minister also paid homage to members of the Sangha who were sitting the exam.

The examination will last 33 days from 26 December 2004 to 27 January 2005. A total of 121 members of the Sangha are taking the oral exam, while 105 taking the written exam. Wellwishers are invited to donate cash to the funds set up for the members of the Sangha at the cave. — MNA

Test: insein Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association organized a baby show contest to commemorate the 57th Anniversary Independence Day in Taungthuagon Ward in the township on 8-1-2005. Photo shows Township MCWA Chairperson Daw Ohmmar Tun Lwin presenting first prize to Nwe Jose Phine Au Bwae. — W