Established 1914

Through this very important International Sports Events, not only the athletic abilities of participants is developed in the spirit of friendly competition but even more important, a sense of fellowship and goodwill is also created in the true Olympic Spirit.

Even though existence of Myanmar Archery Federation is still quite young, development programme of Archery has been implemented tremendously.

First South East Asian Archery Championships opened

YANGON, 10 Jan—A ceremony to open the First South East Asian Archery Championships hosted in Myanmar was held at the Kyaikkasan Archery Ground here this morning, and it was attended by Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt Gen Thein Sein.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Yangon Mayor, deputy ministers, members of Myanmar Olympic Committee, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads, diplomats of foreign missions, Vice-President of Asian Archery Federation Mr San Gun Kosavinta and officials, Vice-President of Asian Archery Federation President of Myanmar Archery Federation Dr Khin Shwe and officials, the presidents of the Myanmar Sports Federations and officials, managers of archery teams of South East Asian nations, coaches, archers, guests, students and enthusiasts.

Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint made a speech. He said: As you may aware that the art of archery is well known to Myanmar since ancient times, but it is only in the last couple of years that Myanmar Archers have taken part in the International Archery Competitions.

Even though the existence of Myanmar Archery Federation is still quite young, the development programme of Archery has been implemented tremendously under the leadership and guidance of Myanmar National Olympic Council, Myanmar Olympic Committee and Ministry of Sport, by taking part in the Continental and Regional Games and in the International and World Archery Championships, and by hosting the continental and regional championships like this occasion and invitational championships in our country.

(See page 8)

INSIDE

People of Ayeyawady Division are now gearing themselves up for regional development tasks in the footstep of the government which is building infrastructures in agriculture, livestock breeding and transport in the region just as it does in other states and divisions.

(Page 7) MOR HET MYINT (Delta Region)

Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint delivers an address at the opening of SEA Archery Championships. — NLM

Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint delivers an address at the opening of SEA Archery Championships. — NLM
Strive for more consolidation of national unity

Our three main national causes — non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty — are the objectives that cover the past, the present and the future and the government of the Union of Myanmar has adopted them as its national policy. As the Union of Myanmar is home to more than 100 national races, it is necessary for all of them to safeguard “our three main national causes” as their lives so that they can live together in peace and friendship in the Union as long as the world exists.

On the fourth day of the Union Solidarity and Development Association General Assembly (2004), Patron of USDA Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe said that a united national force that was patriotic and full of Union Spirit and upheld our three main national causes was necessary in building a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

New generations youths who can assess the objective conditions of the nation are the highly-qualified national forces and so they are required to lend themselves to the tasks for perpetuation of the Union and emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

The spirit to safeguard the interests of and to enhance the dignity of the nation and the people is the noble spirit that each and every citizen should cultivate.

All the national races full of national spirit should actively take part in building a democratic nation and a better Myanmar society.

Now is the time when the entire nation is unitedly working for a developed and discipline-flourishing democracy through the implementation of the seven-point Road Map for the future of the nation. To reach our national goals, we need to lend ourselves to the tasks for perpetuation of the Union and the national unity and for success-ful implementation of the road map for the future of the State.
Malaysia keen on all Indian infrastructure projects

NEW DELHI, 10 Jan — Malaysia, which is implementing highway projects worth 1.8 billion US dollars in India, is now interested in making investments in all other areas of infrastructure such as water and power, the Indo-Asian News Service quoted a top minister from the Southeast Asian country as saying Saturday.

Addressing a session on infrastructure at the three-day Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas (Indian Diaspora Day) in Mumbai in Maharashtra State in west India, Malaysian Works Minister Samy Vellu said even within India’s road projects, his country was now looking at areas like operations and maintenance. “Malaysia hopes to retain an important strategic partner to the Republic of India not only in roads and highways but also in other areas of infrastructure development including power supply, water, ports and airports,” he said.

Vellu, who has his roots in southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu and is leading a 168-member high-level delegation to the three-day event, also recalled Malaysia’s participation in India’s development in the past and said it had been mutually beneficial.

US Army sgt convicted of assault in Iraq imprisoned for 6 months

Fort Hood, 10 Jan — A US Army sergeant — cleared of the drowning death of one of two Iraqis thrown off a bridge but convicted of assault — was sentenced to six months in a military prison on Saturday.

A military court cleared Sergeant First Class Tracy Perkins, 33, on Friday night of a charge of involuntary manslaughter for the supposed drowning death of one of the two Iraqis. That panel found Perkins guilty on charges of assault and obstruction of justice but cleared him on a charge of making false statements.

The same military court that passed judgment on Perkins also sentenced him to a one-grade reduction in rank to staff sergeant. Perkins faced a possible punishment of up to 11-1/2 years in prison and a dishonourable discharge from the Army.

Vietnam aims to produce 39 m tonnes of food this year

Hanoi, 10 Jan — Vietnam aims to produce 39 million tonnes of food and produce an agro-forestry sector to exports value of more than US$4.5 billion in 2005. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development announced the target at a conference in Hanoi on Thursday to review their 2004 work.

The sector mentioned eight measures which were needed to reach the goal. They include restructurising production to raise product quality and competitiveness, mobilizing all investment resources for the development of the agricultural and rural economy, actively expanding outlets for farm produce and preparing conditions for international integration. In 2004, the agricultural sector produced 35.9 million tonnes of rice, 1.3 million tonnes more than 2003; the country exported more than 4 million tonnes, ranking second in the world.

Other products have registered high values on the world market. Vietnam earned US$594 million from coffee exports, an increase of 18 per cent, US$425 million from cashew nuts, up 49 per cent; US$150 million from pepper, up 43 per cent; and US$79 million from rubber, up 53 per cent from 2003.

Asia’s largest long-distance bus station to debut in Shanghai

SHANGHAI, 10 Jan — Asia’s largest long-distance bus station will open in Shanghai on 25 January, said the station’s operator.

Located near the city’s new railway station, the long-distance bus station will be a landmark building in the city thanks to its top class design, said Guo Wei, general manager of Shanghai Zhixin Transport Company, the operator of the station.

Guo said the new bus station, which cost 750 million yuan (90.6 million US dollars), have a three-floor parking lot with an area of 36,000 square metres and a 5,000-square-metre lounge able to seat 3,000 passengers.

The station is equipped with intelligent networks for ticket selling, logistics and bus arranging and will have the capacity to transport 20,000 passengers with 600-1,200 coaches-times each day, said Guo.

With the extension of freeways in China, the number of passengers choosing long-distance bus in travel is increasing at an annual speed of 10 per cent. About 30 per cent of Shanghai’s travellers choose to travel by bus, second only to rail transport.

MNA/Xinhua

Hunan Province sees growing foreign trade

CHANGSHA, 10 Jan — Central China’s Hunan Province has achieved a record foreign trade of 5.2 billion US dollars in 2004, a 40 per cent increase over 2003, said the source with Customs office of its capital Changsha here.

It is the first time that Hunan’s foreign trade has surpassed five billion US dollars. Hunan’s export turnover was 2.9 billion US dollars last year, bringing a 700 million-US dollar favourable balance to the province. The rapidly growing processing business is one of the major contributors to the province’s foreign trade. The European Union is the province’s biggest trade partner, with trade worth 850 million US dollars last year. — MNA/Xinhua

Party leader assassinated in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 9 Jan — The manager of the Iraqi National Accord party, headed by interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, was assassinated Sunday near the site of a series of assassinations in Iraq that has killed hundreds of political, security and military officials.

Armed men Saturday abducted Ali Ghaleb, the mayor of the northern Salaheddine Province, and Qahtan Hammadi, an aide to the Province’s governor, in southern Baghdad.

Iraqi security sources said the authorities were still searching for their whereabouts.

Meanwhile, the US military in Iraq said an American soldier was killed when an explosive device blew up during a patrol in a Baghdad street. No further details were provided.

Two Iraqi police were injured by stray bullets from a US military patrol Saturday night after a roadside bomb exploded in southern Baghdad.

MNA/Reuters

China 2005 Year of Rooster

Beijing, 9 Jan — The year of the rooster according to the Chinese calendar is being celebrated this year around the world. — Indo-Asian News

China’s first computer Games World Cup ends

CHENGDU, 10 Jan — The China Cyber Sports World Cup Grand Final, one of the highest level of e-Sports competitions in China, ended successfully here on Sunday with the final score of China Team 1-0 China Team 2 in Chengdu.

MNA/Xinhua

A US soldier guides an Iraqi hooded detainee in the western city of Fallujah, in this photograph released on 8 Jan, 2005. — Internet
South Korean firm to launch scholarship fund in Zimbabwe

HARARE, 10 Jan—A South Korean company has said that it will launch a scholarship fund for the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) first-degree graduates to study doctoral programmes in South Korea.

Speaking here on Friday at a handover ceremony of 20 state-of-art computers, which are part of 505 computers to be donated to the UZ for the next five years, the director of Blue Track Investments, Kevin Ahn said their company was committed to the development of Zimbabwe’s education sector.

He said a committee that will manage the scholarship fund and determine the criteria for the scholarship awards would be set up.

KAMPALA, 10 Jan—Six people were killed on Saturday when an Antonov transport plane registered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo crashed after taking off in Uganda’s Entebbe Airport, some 40 kilometres south of Kampala, Radio Uganda reported.

Minister of Works, Housing and Communications John Nasasira said the Antonov plane with six people on board crashed into a village, some 10 kilometres northwest of the airport, where it had taken off at 12.48 pm (0948 GMT).

“It crashed about 12 minutes after taking off and investigations into the possible cause of the accident have been instituted. All six people are feared dead,” the minister added.

Six killed in plane crash in Uganda

1,353 US troops killed since beginning of Iraq war

BAGHDAD, 9 Jan—As of Sunday, 9 Jan, 2005, at least 1,353 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 Defence Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is 11 higher than the Defence Department’s tally, last updated at 10 am Friday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Ukraine, 16; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each.

Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,214 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.

Fears as Iraq terror threat spreads to Europe

BAGHDAD, 10 Jan—Islamic extremists accused of plotting to kill Iraq’s Prime Minister in Germany are smuggling battle-hardened fighters from Iraq to Europe, raising a potential new terrorist threat on the continent, according to German officials.

More than 20 alleged supporters of Ansar al-Islam have been arrested in Europe in the past year as authorities move against the group that has links with al-Qaeda and Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who has been leading bloody attacks against US forces and their allies in Iraq.

About 100 Ansar al-Islam supporters are in Germany alone, officials say. Mullah Krekar, the group’s spiritual head, has lived for years as a refugee in Norway, and investigators believe that the group has also recruited volunteers in Italy and Britain. Estimates of its total membership range between about 500 and 1,000.

Ansar al-Islam is suspected of spiriting dozens of fired-up young Muslims to Iraq to join the guerillas, but the latest raids in Germany – the most spectacular yet against the group – have heightened concerns that the organisation also could pose a menace outside Iraq, too.

Philippines asks Japan to phase in immigration act over 5 years

MANILA, 9 Jan—Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said Friday that he had asked Tokyo to effect a five-year “transition period” for new anti-trafficking legislation, which threatens to keep tens of thousands of Filipino workers from going to Japan.

Romulo said he met Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura in Jakarta Thursday on the sidelines of an international conference on the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.

However, Romulo added he failed to win a definite commitment from his Japanese counterpart.

Romulo said he had a “very warm and friendly discussion” with Machimura on “how best to approach this issue in a way that would address the concerns of both our countries.”

Romulo said he believes “a transition period of at least five years will be necessary for the Philippines to make adjustments to the changes brought about by the amendments” to Japan’s immigration law.

“I believe that we both understood our respective position and situation,” Romulo said.

“I emphasized that one way to resolve this issue is for Japan to consider a reasonable adjustment period before implementing its new immigration act,” said Romulo.

“Although we have slight difference of opinion in terms of specifics, Japan and the Philippines share the common vision of making sure that foreign workers to Japan are properly protected and not victimized by human traffickers,” he added.

South Korean businessmen walk past a branch office of the Korea First Bank in Seoul on 10 Jan, 2005.—INTERNET

US Army soldiers with the 1-278th Regimental Combat Team of the 1st Infantry Division, search and clear a bridge during a combat patrol north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, on 8 Jan, 2005.—INTERNET

MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

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**Chinese Premier asks Shenzhen to accelerate development**

**SHENZHEN, 10 Jan —** Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao has asked southern city of Shenzhen, the country’s first special economic zone, to accelerate development and make an exemplary role in promoting all-round social and economic progress in China.

Wen made the remarks on Friday during an inspection tour in Shenzhen after attending a special international meeting in India for helping the tsunami-hit Asian countries.

Wen said the central government “always attaches great importance to, actively support and have great hopes for the reform and development of Shenzhen.”

"Since it became a special economic zone, Shenzhen has fully lived up to its role as a ‘window’ and ‘test field’ for China’s reform and opening-up,” Wen said. “It has achieved world-stunning achievements in economic and social progress and urban construction.”

He said the city faces new tasks in the new stage. "With reform and development, China steps up efforts to promote all-round economic and social progress and modernization." Wen urged the city to be a model in pursuing a scientific viewpoint of development, promoting all-round, coordinated and sustainable development, and improving the quality of economic growth.

In this process, the Premier said, the city should pay more attention to optimizing and updating its industrial structure and promoting the development of high tech and service sectors.

In addition, it should give more attention to environmental protection, coordinated economic and social development and building a harmonious society, Wen said.

Wen asked the city to boost cooperation with neighboring Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in economic, scientific and technological and cultural fields.

MNA/Xinhua

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**Russian plane diverts to Iceland**

**MOSCOW, 10 Jan —** A Russian plane diverted to Iceland on Saturday after a drunken man tried to start a fight with the crew and his fellow passengers, an Aeroflot spokeswoman said.

Police removed the man from the Toronto-Moscow flight, Irina Danenberg told Russia’s Ekho Moskvy radio.

“A Canadian of Russian extraction in a state of alcoholic intoxication provoked a fight, swore wildly and shouted at the crew and passengers," as the result the captain decided to make a forced landing in Iceland," she said. Ekho Moskvy quoted a passenger as saying the man punched the plane’s captain.

MNA/Reuters

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**Seven Ukrainian soldiers, one Kazakh die in Iraq**

**SUWAIJA, 10 Jan —** Seven Ukrainian soldiers and one Kazakh serving with the US-led coalition in Iraq were killed in an explosion Sunday while loading bombs that could be used by warplanes, officials said.

Lt Col Artur Domanski, a Polish military spokesman in Iraq, said the explosion occurred at about noon at an ammunition dump about 6 miles south of Suwaija. Eleven soldiers were wounded — seven Ukrainians and four Kazakhs, he said. An investigation is underway to determine what sparked the blast, Domanski said.

“We don’t know the reason of the explosion, but as a result seven Ukrainian soldiers and a Kazakh were killed and 11 soldiers were wounded,” he said. Ukraine’s Defence Ministry said soldiers were loading aviation bombs when one of the devices exploded. A spokesman said he had no further details. Ukraine serves in a US-led coalition in the Iraq conflict.

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**11 killed as winds batter N Europe at weekend**

**STOCKHOLM, 10 Jan —** Eleven people were killed and at least four were missing after gale-force winds battered northern Europe at the weekend, causing flooding and transport chaos and leaving hundreds of thousands without electricity.

Worst-hit was southern Scandinavia. In Sweden, TT news agency said seven people died, including three motorists whose cars were hit by falling trees, as winds of up to 67 miles per hour (mph) hit the south of the country. The winds left 400,000 Swedes without power and forced the closure of two nuclear power stations. Sturup Airport, near Malmo, was briefly closed and ferry traffic stopped, TT said.

Across the Baltic Sea, Latvia’s state power company, Latenergo, said 60 per cent of the country’s population of 2.4 million was without electricity on Sunday.

The Prime Minister has announced that this is an electricity crisis,” Arno Pjaktins, spokesman for Prime Minister Aigars Kalvitis, told Reuters.

The military had evacuated people from districts in the capital, Riga, because of flooding, he said.

Danish news agency Ritzau said more than 15,000 households were without power, and the Meteorological Institute issued a severe storm warning for the country as high winds caused widespread disruption to trains and ferry transport.

Danish police said on Saturday two men were killed when they were struck by a roof torn off a cottage on the Island of Funen, while two others were killed by falling trees.

A blackout hit 20,000 households in southern Norway on Saturday night, but power had been restored to most homes by Sunday morning, Norwegian rescue services said.

Power was out at one quarter of Estonia’s electricity companies, and mobile and fixed line telephones were also hit, the Baltic News Service said.

The Tallinn weather station reported waves of up to 12 metres high in the Gulf of Finland.

In Britain, police searched for two men swept away by overflowing rivers in the north of England, after heavy rain and 90 mph gales ripped through many parts of the country.

Police were also investigating three deaths that may have been caused by the extreme weather. MNA/Reuters

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**Withdrawn Ukraine troops from Iraq priority, Yushchenko says**

**KIEV, 10 Jan —** The winner of Ukraine’s presidential vote Viktor Yushchenko said that withdrawing the nation’s troops from Iraq will be a priority for him once he takes office, after an accidental blast killed seven Ukrainian soldiers there.

“Viktor Yushchenko sends deep condolences to the families of Ukrainian peacekeepers who died in Iraq Sunday,” said a statement released by his press office late Sunday.

“Insofar as withdrawing Ukraine’s peacekeeping contingent from Iraq, it remains one of Yushchenko’s priorities once he assumes office,” the statement said.

The seven Ukrainian troops, along with one Kazakh soldier, died after a bomb they were about to defuse went off accidentally in Iraq’s central Wasit region, where Ukraine and Kazakh troops serve under Polish control, Kiev’s Defense ministry said.

Another seven Ukrainian and four Kazakh troops were injured as a result of the accident, which occurred at 12.05 pm after a team of Kazakh sappers and their Ukrainian backup had brought back for defusion some 35 aerial bombs that Iraqi police had found stashed near the central military base of As Sawyahr.

Internet

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**Honda Motor’s biped humanoid robot, ‘ASIMO’ (R), demonstrates pounding mock rice cakes with a malleled made from styrofoam while three-year-old Ayano Sato look on at the company’s New Year event in Tokyo on 5 Jan, 2004. Rice cakes are eaten in Japan during special occasions such as New Year’s day and other festivals.**

Internet

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Police were also investigating three deaths that may have been caused by the extreme weather. MNA/Reuters
Reva powered for Japan run

NEW DELHI, 9 Jan—The Reva, India’s low-cost electric car, is all set to enter the Japanese market.

The Reva, made by Bangalore’s Maini industrial group, will be exported to Japan as an eco-friendly product.

The Japanese government has agreed to provide a subsidy of $2,600 for each car. Three models, which will be sold there, will be priced between $12,000 and $13,500, or 1.29 million yen and 1.49 million yen.

Speaking to The Telegraph, Reva Electric Car Co Deputy Chairman Chetan Kumar Maini said, “The models were now being showcased at the Osaka Auto Show. Car lovers are quite enthusiastic about them. The subsidy will be given to customers directly by the Japanese government on purchasing the car.”

Reva Electric has appointed Takeoaka Auto-craft as its distributor to market the Reva in select Japanese cities. Maini said, “The Reva will be positioned in the small and mid-sized car segments and promoted as an ideal alternative environmental vehicle to gasoline-based passenger cars.”

Reva can be described as a two-door hatchback. It can seat two adults in front and two children at the back. It uses 9 units of electricity for a single full charge that gives a mileage of 80 kilometers in city-driving conditions.

At home, the Reva, which is priced between Rs 2.6 lakh and Rs 3.2 lakh, has a presence in Chennai, Pune, Ahmedabad and Bangalore. The variations in the car’s prices are not only based on embellishments but also on the road tax imposed by some states.

A BBC source told Reuters on Saturday that significant number of people — but not exclusively the politicians and business leaders — have been harassed and bullied before and during the broadcast. It is more than two or three — are trying to impose their will by harassing,” the source added.

The BBC also forced the closure of a web site revealing the private telephone numbers of two senior managers and its governors after its decision to transmit the award-winning London show “Jerry Springer — The Opera”.

BBC staff and their families have received a significant number of abusive and threatening telephone calls, some of which have been reported to the police as criminal matters,” the spokesman said.

Christian protestors had demonstrated peacefully outside the BBC’s London offices before and during the broadcast on Saturday night, condemning the show’s profane language and portrayal of Jesus as a fat man wearing a diaper.

But the campaign of abusive phone calls, many answered in daytime by the executives’ young children, had taken the protest to an unacceptable level, a BBC source told Reuters.

“These staff have been harassed and bullied in a way that is unacceptable in a free and democratic society,” the source said.

A very small number of people — but it is more than two or three — are trying to impose their will by threats and by harassment,” the source added.

The BBC has now installed special interceptors to divert incoming calls made to the homes of the executives named on the web site. — MNA/Reuters

Two Chinese firms forge alliance to build coking projects

SHENZHEN, 10 Jan—A strategic cooperative-partner relationship has been formed by two Chinese companies to build coking plants in China. The Fung Fong Group and the Handan Iron and Steel Group have recently forged a strategic cooperative-partner relationship to jointly construct two 800,000-ton environmentally friendly coking projects.

Construction of the Yanting coking project started in December 30, 2004 and total investment in the project is estimated to be 700 million yuan. Upon completion, it will be able to produce 800,000 tons of cokes, 600,000 tons of active lime and one million tons of limestone, with annual output value exceeding one billion yuan.

Portuguese President sees better ties with China

LISBON, 10 Jan—Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio said relations between Portugal and China have a bright prospect and his upcoming visit to China will further strengthen bilateral cooperation in politics, economy and other sectors.

Sampaio, who starts his 8-day China trip on Tuesday, said in an interview with Xinhua that the main purpose of his visit is to infuse new vigor into bilateral economic ties, expanding cooperation in trade, investment and tourism.

As a great country, China would play an important role in the 21st Century in politics, economy and culture, and Portugal looks forward to boosting bilateral cooperation in culture and technology, Sampaio said.

The visit, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the establishment of full diplomatic relations and the 5th anniversary of China’s resumption of its exercise of sovereignty over Macao, is an indication of the good political ties between the two countries, Sampaio said.

Bilateral relations have developed very smoothly since the establishment of diplomatic ties, Sampaio said, noting successful negotiations over Macao’s handover.

Sampaio recalled his meetings with Chinese leaders during the negotiations, said his visits to China in 1997 and former Chinese President Jiang Zemin’s visit to Lisbon in 1999 consolidated the friendship between the two countries and deepened mutual understanding.

He stressed Portugal’s adherence to the one-China policy, adding that since the implementation of the “one China, two systems” principle in Macao, the region has retained its identity and characteristics, facilitating political stability and economic prosperity.

China, as one of the largest economies in the world, has become an important economic partner of many countries or regions, especially since its accession to the World Trade Organization, the President said.

Some Pakistani women make their way along a street in Peshawar

BBC calls in police to investigate torrent of abusive calls

LONDON, 10 Jan—The BBC has called in police to investigate a torrent of abusive calls made to the homes of its senior executives before its broadcast of a Profanity-laden opera, a BBC spokesman said on Saturday.

The BBC also forced the closure of a web site revealing the private telephone numbers of two senior managers and its governors after its decision to transmit the award-winning London show “Jerry Springer — The Opera”.

“BBC staff and their families have received a significant number of abusive and threatening telephone calls, some of which have been reported to the police as criminal matters,” the spokesman said.

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The BBC has now installed special interceptors to divert incoming calls made to the homes of the executives named on the web site. — MNA/Reuters
On his inspection tour of Ayeyawady Division on 7 June 2003, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance, saying that the paddy output of the country will hit 1,200 million baskets if efforts are exerted on a perceptible increase of current per acre yield of paddy in the division; therefore, ways and means are to be sought to obtain 1,200 million baskets as the output has dwelt around 1,000 million baskets.

In Ayeyawady Division, over 1.3 million acres of land have been put under beans and pulses; over 300,000 acres under edible crops; some 100,000 acres under maize; over 200 acres under cotton; and some 2,000 acres under sugarcane as part of efforts to ensure an increase in per acre yield of crops in line with the guidance of the Head of State.


On 15 June 1996 and was opened for public good will. In addition to the division, Pathein-Thabaugh, Pathein-Changthakh and Pathein-Ngwehsaung roads have been upgraded phase by phase to turn them into tar roads. Transport facilities on the west bank of Ngawun River will help further develop the region. Marine, agricultural and forest products from this region can be transported to all other places of the nation through the bridge in a short time, leading to promotion of trade and economy on the west bank. Moreover access to Chaungtha and Ngwehsaung beach resorts will become easier and speedier.

"The government has been building a network of roads linking the whole nation and also the bridges to narrow the gap between one region and the other. Up to now, the government has built 40 large bridges including Pathein Bridge in Ayeyawady Division, and on the Ngawun River alone, flying from north to south in the division, are two facilities — the Ngathang-chaung Bridge and the Pathein Bridge. The division now has nearly 1,300 miles of roads, up from over 460 miles in the past. Now, the division can rely both on road and water transport, thus it can be said that the division has entered a new age of development and changes, or, in other words, it is a victory for both the government and the people of the division".

Pathein Bridge is 2,140 feet in length, and it has a 28-foot-wide motor road with a four-foot-wide pedestrian lane on its two sides. The clearance of the bridge is 840 feet in width and 33 feet in height. The bridge can withstand 75 tons of loads. On the bridges which are 180 feet and above, Pathein Bridge is the 176th and the 40th in the region.

Thanks to the emergence of the bridge, people living in the vicinity of Pathein township are now enjoying fruitful results in such sectors as health, economy and education.

Now, Pathein has become a boon town in trade.
Even though existence of Myanmar Archery...

(from page 1)

We are very proud and much honoured to get the opportunity to host this First South East Asian Archery Championships in order to take another step towards the development of archery in our country, and I would like to welcome you again, all the world-grade archers from the participating countries.

It is my honest belief that the goodwill and friendship, which will be cultivated and cemented from this event, will contribute significantly towards a better understanding and further strengthening of the existing friendship between our member countries of this region, South East Asia.

I also sincerely believe that through this very important International Sports Events, not only one the athletic abilities of participants developed in the spirit of friendly competition but even more important, a sense of fellowship and goodwill is also created in the true Olympic Spirit.

I am also sure that during your stay in our country, you can witness and see the peaceful development, beauty and scenery of the country, the dynamism and friendliness of the people as well as the diversity and richness of our Myanmar’s culture and civilization, which you will find the better way for the vitalization of existing friendship and relationship between our participating countries, and better understanding for the promotion of sports relationship among our neighbouring countries.

Once again, I would like to stress that we are very proud and much honoured to host this championships, of which I wish also to take this opportunity to express our very sincere appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to the International Archery Federation, Asian Archery Federation and South East Asia Archery Federation for granting Myanmar the opportunity to host this championships, the first time ever such a big event takes place in our nation.

In conclusion, with our warm Myanmar hospitality and culture embracing you, may I once again convey my best wishes and good luck for the championships, and let me convey my sincere thanks and appreciation to all the responsible personnel from the Organizing Committee of the First South East Asian Archery Championships, team officials and participants from all the participating teams, and all the sports fans, for assisting us to organize this championship to come into reality. I hope that you all can make the best of your time with full enjoyment during your short stay in the golden city of Myanmar.

Next, Vice-President of Asian Archery Federation and President of South East Asian Archery Federation Mr San Gun Kosavinta formally open the championships.

Secretary-1 Ly-Gen Thein Sein, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, and SEA Archery Federation President Mr San Gun Kosavinta formally open the championship. — NLM

Peace and Development Council, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee, Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint, Chairman of the Committee for Ensuring Myanmar Sports to win victory Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and Vice-President of Asian Archery Federation President of South East Asian Archery Federation Mr San Gun Kosavinta formally opened the championships.

Next, President of MAF Dr Khin Shwe presented K 10 million, Vice-Presidents of MAF Chairman of ACE Construction Co U Tint Htun K 10 million, Managing Director of Shwe Gdn Dine Specialist Clinic Dr Zaw Tun K 10 million, and Managing Director of Asia Express Co U Maung Maung K 10 million for the holding of the archery championships.

Later, President of MAF Dr Khin Shwe presented US$ 10,000 donated by Myanmar Archery Federation for South East Asian Archery Federation to Vice-President of Asian Archery Federation President of South East Asian Archery Federation Mr San Gun Kosavinta.

The opening ceremony ended with the skill demonstrations of Indian Club sports team, Myanmar Thaing Federation and students of Latha BEHS No 2 and Mingalar Taungnyunt BEHS No 3. Altogether 76 archers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Laos and host Myanmar are participating in the championships. The championships continues until 13 January. — MNA

President of MAF Dr Khin Shwe presents US$ 10,000 to SEA Archery Federation President Mr San Gun Kosavinta. — NLM

Yangon Division MCWASC meets

YANGON, 10 Jan — Yangon Division Maternal and Child Welfare Association Supervisory Committee held a work coordination meeting at Yankin College this morning, with an address by Chairperson of the committee Daw Khin Thet Htu.

Daw Khin Thet Htu explained the project for all round progress of womenfolk with the supervision of the committee and future work programmes.


Chairperson of the district association Daw Nang Shwe Yin accepted the donation, and presented proposals for permanent membership to Daw Khin Thet Htu.

Secretary of the division supervisory committee Head of Division Health Department Office Dr Hla Myint reported to the meeting on organizational set up and the assignment of duties, and Joint Secretary Dr Daw Nwenti Ohn, the future work programmes.

MNA
Measures taken for hydro electric power projects inspected

YANGON, 10 Jan — Accompanied by Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Myo Myint and the Directors-General, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Tin Htut arrived at Shwekyin hydro electric power project which is located on Shwekyin creek, 6 miles northeast of Shwekyin, Bago District on 7 January. At the briefing hall, the ministers gave necessary instructions to officials concerned following the reports presented by the deputy minister and officials of the project.

After scanning the scale model and sample of hydro electric power station, the ministers and party observed construction tasks of emergency spillway and water intake. Next, Secretary-General of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Maj-Gen Tin Htut met with executives and members of Shwekyin Township USDA and held discussions on regional development tasks with them and donated cash for rural development tasks and books for the library.

On arrival at Yenwe hydro electric power project being built in Mooyachung, Kyauktaka Township, the ministers gave instructions to the officials concerned after hearing the reports at the briefing hall of the project and they inspected construction tasks of emergency spillway, water intake and hydro electric power station.

On the following day, they went on inspection tour of Kunchuang hydro electric power project which is situated in southwest of Pyu. At the briefing hall, the officials concerned reported on matters relating to the project tasks. Regarding the reports, the ministers gave necessary instructions to the officials concerned.

Afterwards, the ministers instructed the officials concerned to carry out the projects in co-operation with other departments, to make efforts to complete the construction tasks earlier than schedule meeting the set standards, to handle and drive heavy machinery with care, to use fuel and cement efficiently, to minimize loss and wastage and to take preventive measures against occupational hazards and fire outbreaks.

Paddy fields thriving in Lashio

YANGON, 10 Jan — Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, accompanied by departmental officials, arrived at the plantation of Yadana high yield paddy strains in the 1,000-acre paddy strain-producing zone in Lashio, on January 8 and inspected arrangements for the project meeting the set standards. — MNA

Independence Day Exhibition continues

School boys and girls visit the 57th Anniversary Independence Day Exhibition. — MNA

SEA Archery team managers meet

YANGON, 10 Jan — Managers of the teams to the first Southeast Asian Archery championships met at Myanmar Archery Federation in Kyiakkaan Grounds here today. President of MAF Dr Khin Shwe, Dr Myat Thura Soe of MAF and President of SEA Archery Federation Mr Sun Gosavanta gave speeches. Judges led by Mr Baharuddin Jamal of Malaysia, managers of Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai, Vietnamese, Singaporean Lao and Myanmar teams and MAF officials joined in the discussions. — MNA

Mac-lae village gets bio-gas power

YANGON, 10 Jan — Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint inspected Mac-lae Nattaung Dam Project in Singu Township and attended the opening of a village bio-gas power plant on 6 January.

Accompanied by departmental personnel, the commander visited the Mac-lae Nattaung Dam Project near Mac-lae village in Singu Township, PyinOoLwin District, Mandalay Division.

The official of the Irrigation Department and the project explained salient points of the project. After fulfilling the requirements, the commander observed the construction of the No 1 outlet conduit.

The earth dam on Mac-lae Nattaung Creek will be a 11,850-foot-long and 72-foot-high facility storing up to 57,470-acre feet of water. It will irrigate 8,000 acres of monsoon paddy and 2,000 acres of other crops.

At the village, the commander gave instructions on making efforts to obtain targeted paddy output and speedy completion of the drains. Next, the commander and party arrived at Bala No 2 bridge construction project. At the briefing hall, the commander heard reports on tasks being carried out and the turning of the feeder road to Nos 1, 2 & 3 highways. Afterwards, the commander inspected construction of the bridge and the feeder road and gave instructions on timeliness completion of the project meeting the set standards. — MNA

6th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives

— 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

The potrait of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe and his guidance on independence, the booth on human origin from Myanmar, that on ancient Myanmar empires, that on independence and safeguarding it, that on sceneric Myanmar, that on eye-catching national culture that on nation-building endeavours and the booths of various ministries, are being displayed at the exhibition.

Students of basic education high schools in Yangon Division took part in the computer quiz organized by Yangon University of Computer Studies and the teaching contest with audio language lab by Soft Guide Computer Co Ltd. BEHS No 1, Dagon Township, won the first prize.

Books on various subjects, journals and magazines are available at reasonable prices at the News and Periodicals Enterprise Book Shop, Sarpay Beikman Book Shop and three other private book shops.

The exhibition continues tomorrow from 9 am to 5 pm. — MNA
Minister inspects approach road of Thanlwin River Bridge (Mawlamyine) Project

YANGON, 10 Jan — Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min inspected the Thanlwin River Bridge (Mawlamyine) Project on 8 January. The minister heard a report on the approach road project, progress in building Mawlamyine Railway Station and requirements with the help of charts. Deputy Minister U Pe Than gave a supplementary report. The minister made arrangements for completion of the approach road and the railway station in time. At the construction site where a railway will pass Mawlamyine—Ye-Dawre road, the minister observed heavy machinery at work. In Ye, he inspected the durability of Ye River Bridge and progress in construction of Ye Railway Station. The following day, he inspected the bridges, substitution of sleepers and Thanyuzayat Railway Station on Ye—Thanyuzayat railway by EMRC rail bus. He urged the officials to conduct constant inspection of the railroad and the bridges, add up to make arrangements for the trains to run according to the schedule and ensuring swift and convenient transport of goods and passengers.

Villages in Kachin State get water supply station and power plant

YANGON, 10 Jan — Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Chairman of Northern Command Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe inspected development undertakings in Hopin Township on 6 January. Accompanied by officials, the commander attended the ceremony to hand over a fire engine to auxiliary fire brigade in Namti village, Mogaung Township, Kachin State, in the morning. He presented the related documents to deputy company commander of the fire brigade. At the village, the commander inspected the basic education high school, the station hospital, repair of the road bordering MyoW’ ward and ShweWa Iward, and made arrangements to facilitate the work of departments. In the afternoon, he visited the basic education middle school in Taung village, Mogaung Township, and provided K 1 million for construction of a new building, 250 corrugated iron sheets, 100 bags of cement and two computers. Hailing the 50th Anniversary Union Day, the village opened the water purification tank of its water supply project. The project was jointly implemented by Mogaung Township Development Affairs Committee and the local people. Donors and officials formally opened the project, and the commander opened the taps. He also delivered an address. The Township DAC provided K 5 million, and the public, K 2.5 million. At Namman village in the township, he made arrangements for the facility of the work to construction of extra classrooms at the village school. The village opened its self-reliant power station. The commander pulled the gear to start the power generation. Afterwards, he delivered an address, and donated K 2.2 million for installation of cables in the village.

In the evening, the commander visited Hopin Township Information and Public Relations Office Project, and heard a report on progress in construction of the office presented by officials. He inspected the site to build the office. The commander attended the school family day at the township basic education high school at 7.30 pm.

Chairman of Ayeyawady Division PDC inspects pulp factory in Thabaung Township

YANGON, 10 Jan — Chairman of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Commander of South West Command Maj-Gen Soe Naing and departmental officials inspected 200-ton pulp factory in Thabaung Township on 8 January. Factory manager U Nyunt Aung reported on operation of the factory, raw materials and production. The commander observed production process and transport of raw materials to the factory. Construction of the pulp factory started in November 2001 and completed in April 2004. Test run started in July 2004 and regular production will commence soon. The commander met departmental officials, chairman of Ward Peace and Development Council and members of social associations. Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U Hla Thaung reported on agriculture, livestock breeding, transport, social, health and regional development tasks.

The commander called for cooperation with local people and departments concerned.

Commander inspects regional development

YANGON, 10 Jan — Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of South East Command Maj-Gen Thuya Myint Aung and officials inspected cultivation of cold season crops in Kawtumupon Village in Chaungzon Township on 8 January. The commander also met farmers and Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U Khan Maung Myint reported on cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy and cultivation of cold season crops. The commander gave necessary instructions. He also inspected construction of Daw Chow Bridge in Khaaw village.

Myanmar Cooperatives Centenary Products Show and Festival continues

YANGON, 10 Jan — Myanmar Cooperatives Centenary Products Show and Festival 2005 continued for the fourth day at Cooperatives Commercial Centre (Saya San Plaza), Bahan Township today and it was teeming with visitors.

It displayed traditional costumes manufactured by Kayin State Cooperatives Society, a variety of handicraft of Myawady Township Cooperative Society, personal goods, foodstuff, clothing, stationary, household goods of cooperative societies of Yangon Division sold at reasonable prices, local products, silverware and bronzeware, furniture and local clothing of Sagaing Division Cooperatives Society, plus, traditional medicines of Kachin State Cooperative Society and all kinds of textile, personal goods and household goods of private shops.

It offered entertainment programmes to the visitors.

He inspected station hospital donated by U Aung Kyaw Win Dr May Thet Sein in the village and rural roads. In meeting with local authorities and people, the minister discussed rural development matters. The commander inspected upgradation of Nathawm Port and extension of the retaining wall.

Commander attends opening of new school building in Sagaing Div

YANGON, 10 Jan — A ceremony to donate Shwe Yeik Mon new school building of Saye (East) village post-primary school and furniture was held in conjunction with stake driving for the annex at the site in Sagaing Division on 9 January.

Present on the occasion were Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Thura Aye Aye, Minister for Education U Than Aung, Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint and well wishers. U Maung Ko formally opened the new school building while Commander Maj-Gen Than Aye formally unveiled the stone inscriptions.

Next, stake driving ceremony for the annex was held. The commander and the ministers delivered addresses on the occasion. Related documents of the new school building were handed over to Director-General of No 2 Basic Education Department Lt-Gen Win Hein. The new school was built at a cost of K 35 million.

Afterwards, the commander and the ministers presented teaching aids and sports gear to officials concerned.

Well wishers donated K 9.92 million for new generation education funds. School board of trustees member U Sein Myint Aung expressed thanks.

Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min inspects a rail bridge. — RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Mahamuni Paya Aung MyoGyi visited Mindat town, Mindat Township on 6 January. He met departmental officials and communities.

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It offered entertainment programmes to the visitors.

Buyers at a booth of Myanmar Cooperatives Centenary Products Show and Festival. — COOPERATIVES

Commander of Township Peace and Development Council U Khan Maung Myint reported on cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy and cultivation of cold season crops. The commander gave necessary instructions. He also inspected construction of Daw Chow Bridge in Khaaw village.
UN overpaid $5b to compensate for Iraq’s 1990 invasion of Kuwait

GENEVA, 10 Jan — The United Nations overpaid by as much as 5 billion US dollars to individuals, companies and Gulf states for losses in Iraq’s 1990 invasion and occupation of Kuwait, auditors’ documents showed on Sunday.

The 19 internal audits of the UN Compensation Commission (UNCC) were posted on its web site a day before a total of 56 audits were to be made public by an independent panel led by former US Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker.

Senior UNCC officials strongly denied any overpayment and dismissed the auditors’ conclusions saying they had exceeded their mandate by delving into legal issues.

Volcker’s panel is investigating the oil-for-food programme that the United Nations operated for Saddam Hussein’s Iraq when the country was under international sanctions.

The US Congress is probing alleged corruption in the programme. The 19 audits of the Geneva-based UNCC, carried out by the U.N. Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) from July 1997 to December 2004, do not identify any corruption.

But the audits raised questions, mainly about evidence in approving awards for damages, and concluded overpayments had been made. Along with exchange rate and other issues, the audits pointed to a total overpayment of some 5 billion US dollars, officials said.

The UNCC said it had made the audits after being tipped the Volcker panel was going to make them public without including the UNCC’s responses to each audit’s findings.

“Our goal is to show that the Office of Internal Oversight Services’ audits have been easily rebutted,” said UNCC deputy executive secretary Mike Raboin.

“Since we are not part of oil-for-food, we are at a loss as to why these documents were given to the Volcker committee.”

The UNCC also posted a confidential decision by UN legal counsel Hans Corell, who ruled in November 2002 that the U.N. auditors had gone “beyond the proper scope of audit” by trying to reopen legal issues.

The UNCC was set up by the UN Security Council in 1991 to compensate individuals, companies and governments for losses from Iraq’s invasion and seven-month occupation of Kuwait.

Eight soldiers killed in Iraq while detonating ammunition cache

WARSAW, 10 Jan — Eight soldiers, seven Ukrainians and one Kazakh, were killed in Iraq on Sunday while attempting to detonate an ammunition cache, a spokesman for the Polish army said.

“ICan confirm that seven Ukrainians were killed and one Kazakh,” General Staff spokesman Colonel Zdzislaw Gnatowski told Reuters of the incident in Wasit Province.

Earlier, Poland’s PAP news agency had reported General Andrzej Ekiert, commander of the Polish-led multinational division in south-central Iraq, as putting the death toll at nine.

In Kiev, Ukraine’s Defence Ministry confirmed seven of its soldiers had been killed. Gnatowski said a single large bomb had exploded while being transported for destruction, injuring an additional seven Ukrainians and four Kazakhs.

Ukraine’s Parliament has asked outgoing president Leonid Kuchma to withdraw its 1,600 troops in Iraq, further depleting the multinational division, whose numbers have already fallen to 6,000.

Poland, one of the US Administration’s staunchest allies in Iraq, has said it will reduce its own 2,400 troops in the country by one-third from February and hopes to bring the rest home by the end of the year.

Rats can tell difference between Dutch, Japanese

WASHINGTON, 10 Jan — Rats can use the rhythm of human language to tell the difference between Dutch and Japanese, researchers in Spain reported on Sunday.

Their study suggests that animals, especially mammals, evolved some of the skills underlying the use and development of language long before language itself evolved, the researchers said. It is the first time an animal other than a human or monkey has been shown to have this skill.

“These findings have remarkable parallels with data from human adults, human newborns, and cotton-top tamarins,” the researchers write in their report, published in the Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behaviour Processes, which is published by the American Psychological Association. For their study neuroscientists Juan Toro and colleagues at Barcelona’s Scientific Park tested 64 adult male rats. They used Dutch and Japanese because these languages were used in earlier, similar tests, and because they are very different from one another in use of words, rhythm and structure. The rats were trained to respond to either Dutch or Japanese using food as reward. Then they were separated into four groups — one that heard each language spoken by a native, one that heard synthesized speech, one that heard sentences read in either language by different speakers and a fourth that heard the languages played backwards.

Heavy rains, blizzards slam California

SAN FRANCISCO, 9 Jan — Heavy rains and blizzards slammed California on Saturday, triggering floods and mudslides and tying up traffic from southern California to San Francisco and into the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

As much as 8 feet of snow was expected through Tuesday in the northern Sierra Nevada. Wind gusts on some mountaintops reached 160 miles per hour, said Gay Barbato, hydrologist with the National Weather Service in Reno, Nevada.

Hundreds of cars were stranded by heavy snow in the San Bernardino National Forest east of Los Angeles, and by a mudslide on Saturday morning. Forecasters predicted as much as 3 inches of rain in the San Francisco Bay Area over the weekend and as much as 6 to 8 inches in some areas around Los Angeles.

Napa and Marin Counties north of San Francisco were particularly hard hit, with floods closing highway exits and swamping parked cars, authorities said.

“What concerns us is the large amount of rain in a very short period of time,” said Wendy Sellers, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Monterey.

“Combined with the already saturated ground and high tide with the new moon, there’s an increased risk of flooding and mudslides.”

The storm system, which swept to California on Thursday from Alaska, is not expected to let up until Monday, Sellers said.

Across the country, after days of rain and snow, the Ohio River flooded its banks from Huntington, West Virginia, to Cincinnati, triggering widespread power outages and causing hundreds of residents to flee their homes.

Meteorologists predicted the river would reach its highest level in eight years.

The Ohio governor has declared a state of emergency in 49 of the state’s 88 counties.

About 101,000 people in Ohio were without power on Saturday for a third day due to flooding as well as ice and snow storms. Utilities estimated that most of those customers should have power back by Sunday night although some outages will continue into next week.

Satomi Kawaguchi, a diver at Tokyo’s Sunshine International Aquarium, wearing Japan’s traditional kimono embraces a giant moray during the annual new year’s feeding performance Monday, 10 Jan, 2005. —INTERNET

Smart cars. Owners of two half-size small cars should pay only one parking fee if both of them fit into a parking space. —INTERNET

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Fire lose control in gas field of northeastern Bangladesh

DHAKA, 10 Jan — A staged-fire to avert a major blowout in a gas field went out of control in northeastern Bangladesh, and the spreading blaze is feared to blow out more facilities.

According to the official Bangladesh News Agency Saturday, operators of the Tengratila gas-field in the northeastern district of Sunamganj Friday night lit a fire at a point 500-metre off the well being drilled, to avert a major blow out when noticing some leaks and excessive gas pressures.

The technique to set fire near the gas well is to exhaust the “pocket gas” to ease the dangerously increasing gas pressure, but the fire went beyond control on Saturday morning when the well blew with a huge bang.

The raging fire with big bangs engulfed the entire complex rapidly and spread over a large area, quickly destroying the infrastructure.

So far there is no report of casualties, but it is feared that the blaze can blow out two huge oil tankers kept at the gas-field complex containing 51,000 litres of petroleum, Magistrate Khalid Hassan of Sunamganj Town was quoted as saying.

Officials and witnesses said the raging flames as high as 500 feet amid big bangs prompted authorities to order evacuation in nearby villages, while paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) troops and police cordoned off five-square-kilometre area around the spot for security.

Witnesses said mild tremors were being felt around the scene while officials have cut off electrical supplies to avoid any further disaster.

With helicopters hovering over the skyline near the flame to assess the situation, the panic-gripped people living in neighbouring villages keep fleeing their houses for safety, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain was quoted as saying that luckily the fire was still raging mainly towards the upward direction instead of spreading in horizontal direction.

Energy Ministry officials said the Tengratila field is containing at least 300 billion cubic feet gas, and the fire is destroying gas worth million dollars in every second.

Marine biologists carry a 50-year-old Green turtle off the back of a truck and release him back into the area in Takuapa district, about 130 km (81 miles) north of the Thai resort island of Phuket on 10 Jan. 2005 — INTERNET

Flooding hits Britain amid high winds

LONDON, 9 Jan — Flooding triggered by high winds and torrential rains has been sweeping over Britain throughout Saturday, inundating houses, blocking roads and cutting off electricity.

Due to the bad weather, homes have been deluged and some houses evacuated in parts of Wales, Scotland and northern England, the BBC reported.

Cumbria County in northern England experienced its worst weather in almost 40 years, with power cut off in about 50,000 homes in its northern and western parts, Carlisle in Cumbria is awash with water and cut off with no safe routes in or out, local police were quoted as saying.

Spates of accidents have shut roads on some sections of the M1 and M6 motorways while a ferry to Italy was rerouted off the west coast of Scotland, but no one was injured among the 43 passengers and 57 crew.

In Northern Ireland, strong gales have uprooted trees across the province, with Enniskillen and Downpatrick particularly affected.

Winds are likely to continue in the coming days in central and southern Scotland, with heavy rains in northern England predicted to turn into squally showers, reports said. — MNA/Xinhua

US nuclear submarine runs aground off Guam

WASHINGTON, 9 Jan — A US nuclear submarine ran aground while conducting underwater operations about 350 miles south of the island of Guam on Friday, the Navy said Saturday.

Several people were injured, including one critical injury, in the incident, which occurred at approximately 4 pm Friday Hawaii Standard Time (0200 GMT Saturday), the Navy said in a Press release.

The extent of the injuries and damage aboard the Los Angeles-class submarine USS San Francisco was still being assessed, but there were no reports of damage to the reactor plant which was operating normally, the release said.

The submarine was on its way back to their homeport in Guam, and US military and Coast Guard aircraft were enroute to monitor and assist in the situation, according to the release.

News reports said however that about 20 crew were injured in the accident, which happened when the submarine, with a 137-member crew, was heading for a port visit in Brisbane, Australia.

Zimbabwe strengths research on horticultural varieties

HARARE, 10 Jan — The Zimbabwe Agricultural Research and Extension Service Research (ARESR) is carrying out trials aimed at beefing up the horticultural sector, Director of ARESR Shadreck Mlambo said here Sunday.

“We have a research component that is carrying out trials on high yielding varieties that it will distribute to farmers,” he said.

Mlambo said the move would enable farmers to realize good yields.

Zimbabwe floriculture production had declined to below 20,000 tons in 2004 compared with 24,000 tons worth 86 million US dollars produced in 2002.

Horticultural Promotion Council Chief Executive Basilio Sandamu said “volumes have gone down to the extent where we are even failing to satisfy traditional markets.”

“We are, therefore, concentrating on building volumes to fulfill the demands we used to export. Only then can we start looking at alternative markets,” he said.

About 100 per cent of cut flowers, 89 per cent of vegetables, herbs and spices and 75 per cent of citrus fruits find a ready market in the European Union.

Mlambo said the ARESR officers would be geared to providing necessary information on horticultural production to the farmers.

Zimbabwe had been one of the world’s leading growers of flowers that were not genetically modified as was the case with flowers from other countries. However, the horticulture sector had been on a downward slide over the past four years due to changes that had been taking place in the agricultural industry.

Plane crash claims pilot’s life in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, 10 Jan — A man died and his daughter was seriously injured when their light aircraft crashed near De Doorns, Western Cape province of South Africa, local SABC radio news reported Sunday.

Johan and Solette Malan had been flying over mountain peaks near the town in a two-seater plane when the accident took place. The cause of the crash had not yet been established, the report added.

Western Cape police spokesperson Inspector Elliot Singamhla said that details of the crash were still sketchy. He said Solette had been airlifted by helicopter to Worcester Medipac. — MNA/Xinhua
Pitt, Aniston separated after 4-1/2 years

LOS ANGELES, 9 Jan—Superstar Hollywood couple Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston have separated after 4-1/2 years of marriage, but they remain “committed and caring friends,” they said on Friday.

The announcement of their split followed months of tabloid stories about spousal ups and downs, including reports that Pitt, 41, wanted to become a father but Aniston, 35, was reluctant to start a family.

Aniston had been photographed recently without her wedding ring, but just two days ago the New York Post splashed a picture of the couple on its front page with a cliche around Aniston’s hand and the headline: “The Ring’s Back On!” Pitt, one of Hollywood’s most sought-after leading men, and Aniston, who became a household name on the long-running NBC television comedy “Friends,” met on a dinner date in 1998.

They were married in a lavish, celebrity-studded wedding in the seaside California resort of Malibu on 29 July, 2000. News of their breakup came in an understated announcement released late on Friday afternoon through People magazine. “We would like to announce that after seven years together we have decided to formally separate,” they said. “For those who follow these sorts of things, we would like to explain that our separation is not the result of any of the speculation reported by the tabloid media.”

“This decision is a result of much thoughtful consideration. We happily remain committed and caring friends with great love and admiration for one another. We ask in advance for your kindness and sensitivity in the coming months.”

Aniston’s spokesman said the pair spent the New Year’s holiday weekend vacationing together in the Caribbean with her former “Friends” costar Courteney Cox and her husband, David Arquette.

Pitt, currently starring in the crime caper “Ocean’s Twelve,” and Aniston, best known for her TV role as Rachel Green in “Friends,” also are partners in film production company, Plan B, whose first movie, “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory,” is due out later this year from Warner Bros. —INTERNET

State of alert declared in Guatemala over activity of 3 volcanoes

MEXICO CITY, 10 Jan — Guatemala declared Saturday a state of alert after volcanoes Pacaya, Santiaguito and Fuego became active again, almost simultaneously, in recent days, according to reports from the Guatemalan capital of Guatemala City.

Hugo Hernandez, spokesman for the National Disaster-Management Coordination, said that the preventive alarm is meant to keep a permanent vigilance over the three volcanoes.

Since last week, the three volcanoes have been spewing out lava, ashes and rocks in a low magnitude, making local inhabitants evacuated out of the region, he added. Santiaguito is located in Quetzaltenango department, 150 kilometers west of the capital, while Pacaya lies between Sacatepequez, Escuintla and Chimaltenango. The two became active last Sunday.

Fuego, 60 kilometers southwest of Guatemala City, became active several days earlier.

It is rare for the three volcanoes to become active almost simultaneously over the past 31 years, MNA/Xinhua.

US crewman dies after submarine ran aground

WASHINGTON, 10 Jan—A crewman died on Sunday from injuries sustained when the US nuclear submarine USS San Francisco ran aground on Saturday off Guam in the Pacific Ocean, the US Navy said.

Medical personnel rushed to the submarine continued to treat 23 other injured crewmen, some critically, suffering from broken bones, lacerations and bruises, a Navy spokesman said.

Lieutenant J G Adam Clampitt, a spokesman for the US Pacific Fleet, said the name of the sailor was being withheld for a 24-hour period following notification of the next of kin.

He said there was no damage to the nuclear reactor that powers the submarine nor the ship’s weapons systems in the accident that occurred at noon on Saturday Guam time (1020 GMT) (9 pm EST on Friday).

Though the ship’s hull is intact, external damage to it was being investigated, he said. —MNA/Ruters

Briton swept away in River Aire

LONDON, 10 Jan—A man has been swept away in a river in the north of England on Saturday as gales and heavy rain battered many parts of Britain, police said on Sunday.

The man was carried away down the River Aire at Appleby Bridge, near Bradford. “Police, fire brigade and ambulance attended and even though police did see the man briefly he was carried away by the fast-flowing river,” said a West Yorkshire Police spokesman on Sunday.

“Unfortunately, due to access problems and the dangerous state of the river nobody was able to get close enough to render any assistance. We plan to start searching again at first light on Sunday morning.” In Cumbria emergency services rescued hundreds of people from their houses after a local river burst its banks on Saturday, swamping Carlisle with its worst floods for 40 years and cutting electricity to 76,000 homes.

Royal Air Force helicopters were called in to air-lift families from the tops of farmhouses and waterlogged vehicles after floodwater knocked out the city’s main electricity sub-station.

Cumbria police were also investigating three deaths in the Carlisle area, though they were unable to confirm whether they had died due to extreme weather conditions.

The Environment Agency issued over 100 flood warnings as gales of up to 120 miles an hour swept across the country. —MNA/Reuters

Don’t smoke

Renee Zellweger holds the award for favourite leading lady at the 31st Annual People’s Awards, on 9 Jan, 2005, in Pasadena Calif. —INTERNET

Academy Awards

Winner Kate Winslet to appear in “The Office”

LONDON, 9 Jan—“Titanic” star Kate Winslet is to appear in British comedian Ricky Gervais’s new BBC sitcom “The Office”. The Sun newspaper reported on Saturday.

British actor Jude Law will also star in the sitcom “Extras”, which is set in the world of bit-part movie players and sees Gervais playing ageing film extra Andy Millman.

“IT’s great to have Kate Winslet and Jude Law on board as we have so few British people who have made it big in Hollywood, but these aren’t two of them,” Gervais told The Sun.

“In Extras Jude and Kate play twisted versions of themselves,” Gervais added. Winslet, 29, has been nominated for Academy Awards for her roles in “Titanic”, “Sense and Sensibility” and “Iris.”

Last year “The Office” won two Golden Globe awards as well as dominating Britain’s BAFTA television awards for a third consecutive year.

The Daily Mirror newspaper also reported Gervais had been offered a part in “Mission Impossible III” by director Jeffrey Abrams. “I know the director well and he said: ‘Do you want a part?’ I just replied: ‘Yeah, that will be great’,” Gervais told The Daily Mirror. —MNA/Ruters
Kipchoge wins cross country race in Kenya
NAIROBI, 10 Jan — The sixth and final Athletics Kenya cross country weekend meeting of the 2004 season in Eldoret lived up to the high quality predictions, with a fine field and some superb performances on Saturday. The event attracted two medallists from last summer's Athens Olympics who lived up to their reputations.

Eluid Kipchoge, the world 5000-metre champion and the bronze medallist in Athens, strode to victory in the senior men's short course race (4 kilometres) after posting 12:19. Just behind, a second down, came former world youth 1500-metre champion Isaac Songok, and Brimin Kipruto, the winner of the Olympic silver medal in the 3000-metre steeplechase in Athens was another five seconds adrift (12:25) in third.

Augustine Choge, the world junior 5000-metre champion, was fourth in 12:34. "This was my first race on the local circuit this season and I am happy with my form," said Kipchoge. "We are now planning to defeat Kenenisa Bekele in France. We all send our sympathy to him following the sudden death of his fiancee. But that does not make us blind to our number one priority: beating him in France in March," he added. — MNA/Xinhua

Newcastle to end Yeading's FA Cup run with 2-0 victory
LONDON, 10 Jan — Newcastle United were made to wait for a 2-0 victory over minor league Yeading and champions Arsenal had to come from behind to beat Stoke City 2-1 in the FA Cup third round on Sunday.

Despite six divisions separating the two clubs, the biggest gap in FA Cup history, Newcastle needed second-half goals from Lee Bowyer and Shola Ameobi to shatter Yeading's FA Cup hopes at Loftus Road.

A shock was also on the cards at Highbury, where second division Stoke had a goal disallowed before taking the lead through defender Wayne Thomas just before half-time.

Arsenal's equaliser came from Spanish forward Jose Antonio Reyes on 50 minutes but Stoke had a goal disallowed before taking the lead through defender Wayne Thomas just before half-time.

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Jose Antonio Reyes (l.) of Arsenal celebrates his equaliser against West Bromwich Albion during their third round F.A. cup match at Highbury in north London. — INTERNET

Federer wins Qatar Open
DOHA, 10 Jan — World number one Roger Federer continued his spectacular run at the Qatar Open by beating Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia 6-3, 6-1 in the final on Saturday.

Federer's 21st consecutive victory brought his 23rd win in 31 finals and his 14th final triumph in a row since 2003. The Swiss top seed dominated the sixth-seeded Ljubicic from the start, putting on a scintillating display of accurate serves, fluent backhands and punishing forehands.

"I was expecting a tough match because he (Ljubicic) is a big guy with a good serve," Federer told reporters.

"He has been a dangerous proposition to all big players. But as it turned out, it was an easy match for me."

"But in a way it was surprise win too for me because at the start of a new season you really don't know where to focus — on your backhand, forehand or serves. It will take a few matches to know where you stand."

Ljubicic, who had beaten Federer three times in 16 matches, folded as the pressure mounted and too many unforced errors.

Federer broke Ljubicic in the sixth game to jump to 4-2 lead and held his next two service games to take the first set 6-3 in 35 minutes. The second set lasted only 27 minutes as the holder of three Grand Slam titles blasted his opponent off the court.

Federer broke Ljubicic in the first and fifth games as the Croatian continued to make unforced errors.

Federer's victory ended the poor record of top seeds in the tournament, except in 1995 when Sweden's Stefan Edberg won the title.

Ljubicic paid tribute to his opponent.

"I didn't serve well at all," he said. "I was running around a lot in the first set, but the match progressed it became increasingly difficult for me."

"He (Federer) knows how to deal with each player and has a knack of winning big points. He is a great player." — MNA/Reuters

Moya retains Chennai Open title
MAURITIUS, 10 Jan — World number five Carlos Moya of Spain retained the ATP Chennai Open here, then donated his entire 52,000-dollar prize money to tsunami victims.

The top seed Monday emerged unscathed after a three-hour slugfest against Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand to win 3-6, 4-7, 7(5) in a repeat of last year's final before a sell-out crowd of 6,000 at the Nungambakkam tennis stadium.

"I want the money I have earned here to help the survivors of one of the worst tragedies of our times," said the 28-year-old Moya after winning his 18th ATP title in a rousing final.

More than 156,000 people were killed across Asia in the December 26 tsunami disaster -- nearly 10,000 of them in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu of which Madares is the capital.

"It is a small contribution which I hope will help the affected ones," said Moya. "They deserve all the help they can get."

Moya, who led Spain's victory against the United States in the Davis Cup final in December, said he was delighted to start the season with a win.

"There is no better way to start the new year," he said. "Last year, too, I won here in January, ended the year by winning the Davis Cup and have now begun the year with another win." — MNA/Reuters

Germany to lose Athens Olympics team Showjumping gold medal
LONDON, 10 Jan — Germany will lose the Athens Olympics team showjumping gold medal after the International Equestrian Federation (FEI) said it had disqualified Goldfever and rider Ludger Beerbaum for doping.

"The Judicial Committee has agreed that the horse Goldfever and the (rider) must be disqualified from the event and that all prizes and prize money won at the event must be forfeited," a statement on the FEI web site said.

"The FEI will modify the team results at the Olympic Games."

Ointment containing the banned substance Betamethasone, a type of steroid, was used to treat eczema on the horse before the Games. Although independent vets said there would have been no impact on the animal's performance, the FEI has applied the rules of strict liability.

"It bodes well for the tough contests ahead in the Australian Open (news - web sites)."

Paradorn, seeded second, appeared to have the title in his grasp when he served for the match at 5-2 in the final set, but Moya showed his undoubted class with a stirring comeback.

The Spaniard reeled off four games in a row to lead 6-5 before Paradorn, playing his fourth successive final here, forced the tie-breaker after saving a match point.

Moya wasted two more match points following a 6-3 lead in the tie-breaker, but then sealed the match as Paradorn returned a serve beyond the baseline.

Paradorn pocketed 30,000 dollars, once again narrowly missing out on the title after a similar tie-breaker loss in the third set had cost him the final against Moya last year.

"I had my chances but did not take them," said Paradorn. "But I have to take the positives from the match. "I could have lost in the first round, but at least I made the final." — INTERNET

Spanish tennis player Carlos Moya holds the winner's trophy aloft after winning the final of the Chennai Open. — INTERNET
Maldivian Foreign Minister meets Chinese delegation
MALDIVES, 10 Jan — Maldivian Foreign Minister Fathulla Jameel met here Sunday with Wu Dawei, Chinese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, who is heading a Chinese official delegation to review the aftermath of the tsunami and express the Chinese Government’s condoleance to the government and people of the Maldives.

On behalf of the Maldivian Government, Jameel expressed thanks to the Chinese Government for providing aid to the Maldives after the country was hit by the tsunami.

Jameel also briefed the Chinese delegation on the rescue and relief operations being taken by the Maldivian Government after the tsunami.

Wu said China is standing with the Maldivian Government and the Maldivian people in their efforts to rebuild the country after the tsunami.

He said as a developing country, China will provide aid to the Maldives within its own capacity.

Marine disasters cost China
BEIJING, 10 Jan — Storm tides and other marine disasters cost China 5.4 billion yuan in direct economic losses in 2004, with 140 people left dead or missing, China’s State Oceanic Administration said here Sunday.

“The situation of marine disasters was normal last year and storm tides are still the main cause of ocean disasters,” said the administration in a report on marine disasters in 2004.

The economic losses in 2004 drastically dropped compared with that in 2003, when the figure stood at 8 billion yuan. In 2004, China’s coastal areas were hit by 10 typhoon and eight extra tropical storm tides, causing direct economic losses of 5.2 billion yuan and leaving 49 people dead or missing.

Britons warned to be wary of scam artists diverting donations
LONDON, 10 Jan — British police have warned people donating to the Britain’s tsunami relief fund to be wary of scam artists trying to divert some of the millions of pounds flowing to relief efforts.

The scams include the sending of unsolicited e-mails asking for money to be deposited in overseas bank accounts to support relief efforts as well as false web sites using the disaster to spread computer viruses.

“We urge people to exercise vigilance in order to prevent and disrupt these and other possible criminal scams,” said a statement from the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) on Saturday.

Britons have donated at least 100 million pounds to the Asian tsunami appeal in the country’s fastest ever charity appeal. NCIS cautioned people only to use web sites of recognized charities and aid organizations.

“We do not in any way wish to dissuade members of the public from donating money to the registered charity tsunami appeals,” the statement added.

Poll shows more Britons want Brown to be PM than Blair
LONDON, 10 Jan — More people want Chancellor Gordon Brown to be the Prime Minister than Tony Blair, according to a poll on Sunday.

The ICM poll for the News of the World also showed the ruling Labour Party was well ahead of their main Conservative rivals, by 38 per cent to 31 per cent just four months ahead of an expected election.

In a week in which the long-running tensions between Britain’s two most powerful men resurfaced over the timing of Blair’s monthly news conference, 27 per cent of those polled said they wanted Brown in the top job — against 26 per cent for Blair.

On Thursday, Blair met journalists at exactly the same time as Brown delivered a major speech on helping the world’s poorest countries, sparking speculation of a delib- erate snub.

Korea tries to verify report on citizens kidnapped in Iraq
SEOUL, 10 Jan — The South Korean Foreign Ministry on Sunday was trying to verify a report that one or two South Korean citizens have been kidnapped in Iraq, reported the South Korean national Yonhap news agency.

The South Korean local MBC and other television stations earlier carried the report, but did not provide further details.

外交官 Foreign Minister Choi Young-jin presided over an emergency meeting on Sunday night attended by officials in charge of consular affairs.

Meanwhile, Yonhap quoted sources of the Ministry of National Defence as saying that all the 3,800 South Korean troops currently deployed in northern Iraq are in their own bases.

In June 2004, a South Korean worker was beheaded in Iraq after Seoul rejected the kidnappers’ demand of withdrawing South Korean troops from the Middle East country.

WEATHER

Monday, 10 January, 2005
Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours

MST: During the past 24 hours, except for the light rain which has been isolated in Kakhin State and weather has been generally fair in the whole country. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Rakhine State, Magway, Bago and Ayeawady Divisions, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Shan, Kayah States and Tantinhtai Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were Namsam and Hakha (4°C) each, PynoTodwin (6°C), Pinlaung, Moekoe and Ann (7°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 9-1-2005 was 91°F. Minimum temperature on 10-1-2005 was 58°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 10-1-2005 was 73%. Total sunshine hours on 9-1-2005 was (8.3) hours approx. Rainfalls on 10-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed was recorded at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 13 mph from northwest at (14:30) hours MST on 9-1-2005.

Bay Influence: Weather is generally fair in the North and East and partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 11-1-2005: Except for the possibility of isolated light rain in Kakhin State and weather will be generally fair in the whole country. Degree of certainty is (40%).

The state of the seas: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight increase of night temperatures in the Central Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 11-1-2005: Generally fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 11-1-2005: Generally fair weather.
Minister U Nyan Win extends New Year greetings at the dinner hosted in honour of diplomats and UN officials. — MNA

Minister Maj-Gen Thein Swe inspects bank erosion near Bo Myat Tun Bridge in Nyaungdon. — TRANSPORT