Maj-Gen Tha Aye on inspection tour of Kayin State

NAV Pyi Taw, 25 Dec—Maj-Gen Tha Aye of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of South-East Command Maj-Gen Thet Naing Win and officials, left Mawlamyine for Kayin State by car on 22 December and they were welcomed there by Chairman of Kayin State Peace and Development Council Brig-Gen Zaw Min and officials.

On arrival at Hpa-an, Maj-Gen Tha Aye and party inspected the development tasks and then proceeded to Bethizza Muni, Maj-Gen Tha Aye supplicated on the religious matters to the Sayadaw who gave Ovadakatha to him.

Afterwards, Maj-Gen Tha Aye and party met the farmers of Kanni Village of Hlaingbwe Township and gave instructions, saying that efforts are being made for self-sufficiency in rice in line with the guidance of the Head of State. He went on to say that edible palm oil has to be imported due to the excessive consumption of the item. And, if the farmers strive for self-sufficiency in edible oil their income will increase and the country will be able to save foreign currency, he noted.

Next, Maj-Gen Tha Aye inspected Sinpadethabin-7 strain groundnut, Hisnyadana-3 strain sesame, fertilizer and pesticides on display by Myanmar Agriculture Service and the plantations of farmer U Thaung Sein.

Next, he met officers and other ranks of Mawlamyine 1st Police Station, giving necessary instructions. —MNA

Maj-Gen Tha Aye of Ministry of Defence inspects sunflower plantation in Shwegun Village.

MNA

Shwenyaung-Nyanyshwe road section renovated

NAV Pyi Taw, 25 Dec—Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Thaung Aye, superintendent engineer U Myint Aung of Shan State Public Works and departmental officials arrived at Shwenyaung-Taunggyi junction in Shwenyaung Township on 20 December.

The commander inspected renovation of the roads and he gave instructions on timely completion of the work and meeting the set standards.

Next, the commander inspected waterway in Inlay Lake and plantations.

The commander inspected progress of work of Toga Hong-Peinnegon-Myaapylaingyingon road section, conditions of Intein-Tantaung-Khaungdaing-Taunglaylone road section, plantation of seasonal crops, renovation of Hupin Hotel (Khaungdaing), conservation of Inlay Lake and visited new hot spring in Khaungdaing. Next, the commander looked into construction of retaining wall near Taunggyi on Meiktla-Taunggyi-Namhsan-Kengtung-Tachileik road.—MNA

INSIDE

Myanmar is also a land of pleasant beaches, and Chaungtha, Ngwehsaung and Setse Beaches, for instance, are popular attractions of local and foreign visitors. Ngapali Beach is the most beautiful one of its kind in Myanmar as well as the cleanest one in Southeast Asian region.

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

Wednesday, 26 December, 2007

**Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views**

**Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation**

**Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State**

**Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy**

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**Promote Myanmar tourism industry**

Myanmar has a large number of scenic natural beauties. It wins global reputation for its cultural sites and edifices in abundance.

Now, the open season has begun in the nation, so the number of tourist arrivals is growing. Types of Myanmar tourist attractions include impressive geographical features, archaeological regions, and beach resorts.

The beauty of Bagan’s glorious sunset is popular in the international tourist industry. Interesting pagodas and stupas put Mrauk U, an archaeological city of Rakhine State, on the world map. The Kyaik-hi-ti-yo Pagoda in Mon State is a religious wonder.

Myanmar is also a land of pleasant beaches, and Chaungtha, Ngwehsaung and Setse beaches, for instance, are popular attractions of local and foreign visitors. Ngapali Beach is the most beautiful one of its kind in Myanmar as well as the cleanest one in Southeast Asian region.

Pyin Oo Lwin National Gardens is a place where flowers of various species are in bloom. Inlay Lake, the showcase of Shan State, is located among mountain ranges. Rowing boats with legs is a cultural symbol of Inlay Lake.

A large number of Myanmar’s cultural sites and natural beauties are attractive to local and foreign tourists.

Therefore, it is needed to make collaborative efforts to improve the nation’s tourism industry and make the nation’s tourist attractions more popular in the world.

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**Mayor inspects drainage system in Thingangyun Township**

 Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspects sanitation works in Thingangyun Township.—YCDC

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**Health Deputy Minister attends meeting of UN AIDS Control Programme Coordinating Board**

NAY PYI TAW, 25 Dec—The 22nd meeting of UN AIDS Control Programme Coordinating Board was held in Geneva, Switzerland on 17 and 18 December, attended by Deputy Minister for Health Dr Paing Soe.

Also present at the meeting were Permanent Representative of Myanmar to UN Ambassador U Wunna Maung Lwin and party.

At the meeting, Chairman of the Coordinating Board the Minister of Health of Thailand made an opening speech, and the report of the meeting was discussed and approved.

Afterwards, the Managing Director of UN AIDS Control Programme presented his report, and this was followed by a general round of discussions. And Deputy Minister Dr Paing Soe took part in the discussions.

Deputy Minister Dr Paing Soe and party arrived back here on 20 December. They were welcomed back at Nay Pyi Taw Airport by Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo, the directors-general and deputy directors-general.

Deputy Director Dr Min Thwe who accompanied the deputy minister also arrived back here on the same flight.—MNA

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**Mayors visit**

YANGON, 25 Dec—Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspected drainage system in Thingangyun Township and gave instructions on proper flow of drains in the township yesterday.

During his tour, he inspected dredging of the drains and extended construction of concrete drain channels in the township.

Afterwards, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin went to South Okkalapa Township and inspected paving asphalt on roads in Ngwekayan Pariyatti Monastery. He also paid homage to Sayadaw of the monastery Vice-Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Rewata.

Later, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspected paving of asphalt on the road connecting the junction of International Airport in Mayangon Township and Thirimingala Road in Insein Township.

The mayor also visited Myanmar Convention Centre in Mayangon Township and inspected the construction of buildings in and extended construction of the compound of MCC and called for timely completion of the construction works meeting the set standard. —MNA
China grain producers urged to make new contributions

BEIJING, 25 Dec—Chinese Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu on Sunday encouraged individuals and groups involved in grain production to make new contributions to the stabilization of yields and supplies of other agricultural products.

While attending a ceremony honouring advanced grain producers, he urged those recognized to exert more efforts to push forward agricultural modernization, to help farmers increase income and to promote development of the rural economy.

A total of 820 individuals and 210 prefecture and county governments as well as two provincial grain bureaus were honoured for their contributions to grain production.

Rural work has been at the top of the government’s development agenda in recent years.

Agriculture Minister Sun Zhengcai announced on Saturday that China produced more than 500 billion kilograms of grain in 2007, the fourth consecutive year of yield growth.

He added that farmers saw their annual per-capita net income increase by 7 percent to 4,000 yuan ($540 US dollars), largely due to price rises for farm produce, a larger number of rural migrant workers and more government subsidies for agricultural production.

India, France working on N-cooperation agreement

NEW DELHI, 25 Dec — India and France are working on a proposed civil nuclear agreement on the lines of Indo-US deal, visiting French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said on Monday.

The issue of civil nuclear cooperation will be discussed during the visit of French President Nicolas Sarkozy to India in January but finalization of the agreement will have to await till India gets a nod from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), local news agency Press Trust of India reported.

“We are working on an agreement on civil nuclear power,” Kouchner said as he wound up his four-day visit to India during which he met Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and held talks with Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee.

Asked whether the two sides had finalized the text of the proposed agreement, he said, “No, we are working on it. We cannot sign it, but we can conclude the agreement.”

He said discussions are underway on details and particular proposals of the agreement which would be on the lines of the Indo-US deal.

Still no shelter for one mln B’desh “Sird” victims

DHAKA, 25 Dec—The International Red Cross says more than a million people are without basic shelter five weeks after a devastating cyclone struck Bangladesh’s low-lying coast.

Cyclone Sidr hit the impoverished South Asian country on 15 November with winds of 250 kilometres per hour (155 miles per hour) and a five-metre storm (17-foot) surge, killing more than 3,300 people.

“An alarming assessment has shown that more than one million storm survivors remain in need of basic, preliminary shelter assistance,” said the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in a statement.

“This finding is the result of a comparison between the extent of Sidr’s damage and existing commitments from the international community to address shelter needs,” the Red Cross said on Friday in the middle of the Muslim Eid holiday.

According to government figures, more than 1.5 million houses were fully or partially damaged by Sidr, the deadliest storm since 1991 when a cyclone killed about 143,000 Bangladeshis.—MNA/Reuters

Indonesia to buy two mln gas cylinders from Thailand

JAKARTA, 25 Dec—Indonesia’s state-run oil and gas firm PT Pertamina will start importing three-kilogramme tubes of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for stoves from Thailand early next year.

Pertamina spokesman Wisnuntoro said Monday that around two million LPG tubes would be imported from Thailand in January and February next year.

“Pertamina should have started importing the tubes this week but because of long holiday, it will be started early January 2008,” Wisnuntoro was quoted by the national Antara news agency as saying.—MNA/Reuters

Man shot dead in Birmingham pub dispute

LONDON, 25 Dec — A 33-year-old man was shot outside a pub in Birmingham on Sunday and died later in hospital, police said.

The unidentified man was shot after an altercation inside the King of the Road pub in the Newtown District of Birmingham shortly after 7.45 am, a police spokeswoman said.

“Following a disturbance inside the pub, several shots were fired outside and a 33-year-old man was hit in the chest,” she said. — MNA/Reuters

Eithad to introduce “A320” full-flight simulator

ABU DHABI, 25 Dec—Eithad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), will introduce an Airbus A320 full-flight simulator to its pilot training facilities, the Emirates News Agency reported on Sunday.

Eithad has placed an order for a CAE 7000 series A320 full-flight simulator from the Canada-based CAE, which provides simulation and modeling technologies and integrated training solutions for the civil aviation industry and defence forces. The A320 full-flight simulator, which costs 15 million US dollars at list price, is scheduled to be delivered in February 2008 and can be adapted to recreate the flight deck of any aircraft in the Airbus A320 range.

In this photo released by Fincantieri, the Queen Victoria passenger ship is shown in this 24 Nov, 2007 file photo. Italy’s state-owned shipbuilder Fincantieri built the new 90,000-ton vessel for Cunard Line, a unit of Carnival Corp.—INTERNET

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Rescue workers stand amongst the rubble of a collapsed building in Alexandria, 230 km (140 miles) north of Cairo, on 24 Dec, 2007.—INTERNET
China evolving into a pole in multi-polar world

MOSCOW, 24 Dec—Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told Russian media on Friday that China is evolving into a pole in the world which is in the process of transforming into a multipolar one.

Lavrov said his observation was based on China’s vigorous economic growth and its growing political influence worldwide.

Russia and China has cooperated closely within the United Nations Security Council and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and through bilateral channels, the top Russian diplomat said. Lavrov stressed that the year of 2007 has witnessed significant achievements in Russia-China cooperation, including the successful holding of the “Year of China” in Russia and the signing of a treaty on long-term good-neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation among the SCO members.—MNA/Xinhua

Wildlife park to be re-opened in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, 25 Dec—Sri Lanka’s Yala National Park in the deep south is to be re-opened on 28 December after several incidents related to suspected Tamil Tiger rebels have been reported recently, the military said Sunday.

Brigadier Sudantha Ranasinghe, the Army’s area commander in charge of Yala area told reporters in the southern town of Tissamaharama that Block 1 of the park would be re-opened following a security assessment in the area.

However, blocks 2, 3 and 4 would remain as high security zones with no one permitted to enter the areas.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels attacked a military detachment in the national park on 15 October and 16 October, killing seven soldiers.

Thereafter several land mine explosions and gun battles have taken place inside the park. The government set up a special military coordinating unit to ensure safety in the park as well as the surrounding villages.

At least five killed in car pileups in central US

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—At least five people were killed and dozens more injured in weather-related car accidents in the central United States on Saturday as a severe snowstorm hit the region. The snowstorm was blamed for numerous car pileups on highways that killed three people in Minnesota, one in Kansas and one in Texas. Portions of several major highways were closed.

The Texas pileup, believed to be caused by blowing snow and zero visibility, involved more than 50 vehicles and 18 people were taken to hospitals, two of them seriously injured, police said. In Kansas, at least one person was killed in a 30-car pileup on a highway, and authorities closed a 65-kilometre section of the highway.

The storm also affected flights at airports in some Midwestern states as the busy holiday travel was getting underway.

In Chicago, flights at O’Hare International Airport, one of the busiest in the country, were delayed for about an hour and about 170 flights were cancelled, airport authorities said.—MNA/Xinhua

Bus accident in Bolivia kills 20

LIMA, 25 Dec—At least 20 people were killed and 22 others injured when a coach overturned in southwestern Bolivia on Friday, according media reports from La Paz. The accident occurred when the coach, which was on inter-city travel in the southwestern province of Oruro, suddenly lost control in a curve and overturned, killing 20 people on the spot, police said.

A preliminary investigation showed the driver improperly operated the vehicle at the curve of the road, which caused the accident.

Two earthquakes hit Bengkulu, Indonesia

JAKARTA, 25 Dec—Two moderate earthquakes respectively measuring 5.3 and 5.1 on the Richter scale shook Indonesia’s Bengkulu Province, on Sumatra island, on Tuesday morning, but there was no immediate reports of casualties and material damage.

The epicentre of the first earthquake, which hit at 3.56 am Western Indonesian Time (WIB), was located at 4.44 degrees southern latitude and 101.16 degrees eastern longitude, at a depth of 10 km, around 170 km southwest of Lais subdistrict, North Bengkulu District, Antara news agency quoted Coordinator of the Bengkulu meteorological and geophysics office Adjat Sudrajat as reporting on Tuesday.

The second earthquake at 4.21 am WIB was located 4.29 degrees southern latitude and 101.16 degrees eastern longitude, at a depth of 40 km around 130 km southwest of Lais subdistrict, he said.

Bengkulu was devastated by a 7.9-magnitude earthquake on 12 Sept. 2007, killing at least 15 people, seriously injuring 13, and slightly wounded 38 others.

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Russia likely to become world’s fifth largest economy by 2020

MOSCOW, 24 Dec—Russia will become the world’s fifth largest economy by 2020, should its gross domestic product (GDP) keeps an annual growth rate of 6 to 7 percent, said Russian Minister of Economic Development and Trade Elvira Nabiullina on Monday.

“If we maintain the GDP growth at 6 percent to 7 percent per year, we’ll join the group of the world’s five largest economies,” the minister was quoted as saying by Russia’s RIA Novosti news agency.

“We are setting our-selves this goal,” she said. Under a forecast drawn up by her ministry in November for Russia’s economic development until 2020, the country’s GDP is expected to exceed 5 trillion US dollars in 2020 given a foreign exchange rate of 30 rubles equivalent to 1 dollar.

The forecast also put Russia into the position of the world’s fifth largest economy measured by the GDP by 2020 while overtaking all the other European countries.

Obama retreats from call for China toy-import ban

WASHINGTON, 24 Dec—US Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama on Sunday stepped back from a pledge to halt US imports of Chinese-made toys because of safety concerns. Instead, the Illinois senator, who is in a tight race with Senator Hillary Clinton of New York to win the Democratic presidential nomination,

reiterated his long-standing call for barring toys with more than a trace amount of lead.

“No, don’t get me wrong: As president, I’ll work with China to keep harmful toys off our shelves,” he said in Greenfield, Iowa, according to a statement from his campaign for the November 2008 election.

On Wednesday, Obama had told voters in New Hampshire: “I would stop the import of all toys from China,” which supplies about 80 percent of US toys. A spokesman for Obama, Josh Earnest, said the candidate had been referring in New Hampshire to banning “toys that contain more than a trace level of lead, coming from China or anywhere else.”

Sri Lanka says floods displace 175,000, most in east

COLOMBO, 25 Dec—Flash flooding in east and central Sri Lanka has forced 175,000 people from their homes, with many seeking refuge in makeshift welfare centres in schools and temples, officials said on Monday.

Heavy rains on Sunday and Monday caused a reservoir to burst its banks in the eastern district of Batticaloa, where more than 40,000 families comprising around 150,000 people were displaced, said Ramya Siriwasana, deputy director of emergency operations at the National Disaster Management Centre.

The inundation comes a week after 20,000 people were flooded out of their homes mainly in the eastern district of Ampara, when a depression over the Bay of Bengal intensified monsoon rains. Most of those people have since returned home.

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Chinese police seek Siberian tiger killer

BEIJING, 24 Dec—A rare Siberian tiger was skinned and beheaded in a Chinese provincial zoo and police are offering a reward for information leading to the killer or killers.

The remains of the female tiger, a critically endangered species, were found on Thursday in the zoo in central China’s Yichang City, the official Xinhua news agency said on Sunday, citing a local forestry bureau official. Police told local media they found the cage locks and the door to the tiger room broken, and also found four self-made anaesthetic rifles nearby, Xinhua said.

The tiger’s pelt was peeled off and the limbs were chopped off from the knees, suggesting a professional slaughter, an unnamed person involved in the investigation was quoted as saying.

“It is highly possible that the killer or killers broke into the room, anaesthetized the tiger, opened the cage and then dragged the animal out of the room and butchered it,” the person said. China breeds Siberian tigers as a way to protect one of the world’s most endangered species, which mostly live in northeast China and Russia.

Of the just 400 estimated to live in the wild, only 10 to 17 live in China, Xinhua said. Many hundreds live in captivity where they are popular in zoos.

Five killed, 32 injured in Colombia truck crash

BOGOTA, 24 Dec—At least five people died and 32 others injured in the Santa Lucia neighbourhood, in the south of Colombia’s capital Bogota, when a drunk truck driver drove his vehicle into a home, the nation’s civil defence authorities said on Sunday.

An 8-year-old girl, who was passing by, died during the crash, which took place on Saturday night. Rescuers have since found the dead bodies of two women, one man and one minor in the rubble, said civil defence chief, Colonel Eugenio Alarcon. Rescuers said the dead in the rubble were all members of one family who lived in the home.

Eleven bodies had been recovered and the rescue teams were still trying to recover the rest in the mishap, the report added.

11 killed as bus falls into river in Egypt

CAIRO, 24 Dec—A minibus fell into the Nile River while it was driving aboard a ferryboat in the Southern Egyptian Minya governorate on Saturday, killing 11 Egyptians, security sources told Xinhua.

The minibus was carrying a total of 14 Egyptian passengers when the accident took place at a village in Minya governorate, about 220 kilometres south of Cairo, said the sources who declined to be identified.

However, Egyptian MENA news agency reported that 11 were killed, three wounded and five others still missing during the accident as the minibus was trying to board a ferry to move passengers from the eastern bank of the river to the western bank.

Several insurgents killed in central Afghanistan

KABUL, 25 Dec—Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) backed by the US-led Coalition forces killed several insurgents on Sunday while patrolling in the central Afghan province of Uruzgan, said a coalition statement.

The insurgents attacked the ANSF-led forces with mortars, recoilless rifles and small-armfire from a tabletop ridge when the joint forces were patrolling between the villages of Pasaw and Dosang in Shahidi Hasas District of Uruzgan Province, the statement said.

Russian Foreign Minister starts Libya visit

MOSCOW, 24 Dec—Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov left here for Libya for a two-day visit on Sunday to discuss closer bilateral cooperation, regional and international issues. Lavrov will hold talks with his Libyan counterpart, Abd al-Rahman Muhammad Shahgham, on international and regional issues, including cooperation in multilateral areas, especially in the United Nations.

Also on the agenda will be the situation in Iraq and the Middle East as a whole, Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin was quoted by news agencies as saying. Libya is Russia’s long-time partner in the Arab world and Africa. The two countries have maintained political dialogue and cooperation in various areas, Kamynin said, adding it is important to focus on boosting cooperation in the oil and gas sector.

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Russia ready to host Mideast conference

MOSCOW, 25 Dec — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Monday his nation is ready to hold a Mideast peace conference if all concerned sides are interested in the matter.

“We will be ready whether other gamers are prepared for it and whether this meeting makes it possible to push towards moving forward,” ITAR-TASS quoted the top diplomat as saying.

“Russia’s position on the Palestinian-Israeli settlement is neutrally positive. The Annapolis meeting put on all obligations assumed by the sides and they should be carried out,” he said, noting the Syrian-Lebanese relations should also be focused on.

“Though, the sides, primarily Palestinians and Israelis, must fairly comply with the earlier reached agreements,” Lavrov said.

“No one can create additional obstacles to the solution to this problem. For example, this is related to Israel’s attacks on the Gaza Strip. Unfortunately, Mahmoood Abbas cannot exert restraint because there is no unity among Palestinians. We are calling for the unity consistently,” he said.

Gunmen kill 4 French tourists in Mauritania

NOUAKCHOTT, 25 Dec — Gunmen armed with assault rifles shot dead four French tourists from the same family and seriously injured a fifth in Mauritania on Monday, local police and French officials said.

Members of the family were attacked in their car on the road 15 kilometres from Aleg, in a popular sightseeing area 250 kilometres (160 miles) southeast of the West African country’s capital, Nouakchott, said a police officer who declined to be named.

The fifth tourist, the father of the family, was injured in the leg and taken to Aleg’s hospital, and was in a serious condition, he said.

The three attackers were armed with semi-automatic assault rifles and drove two Mercedes saloon cars, he said.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy confirmed the deaths, but said details of the incident were still unclear and an investigation was under way.—MNA/Reuters

12 Indonesian state firms to go public in 2008

JAKARTA, 25 Dec — The Indonesian Government plans initial public offering of at least 12 state-owned enterprises (SOEs), including three leading plantation firms, under the massive privatization programme next year.

State-run plantation firms PTPN 3, PTPN 4 and PTPN 7 are expected to sell their stakes by a maximum of 40 per cent in the first quarter of 2008, economic daily Bisnis Indonesia reported Monday.

The privatization list also includes trading firm Sucofindo, metal industry Krakatau Steel, construction firms Waskita Karya and Adhi Karya and five other companies in Jakarta, Medan, Semarang, Makassar and Surabaya.

The three plantation firms are set to become the centre of gravity in the upcoming privatization drive as they are currently benefiting largely from the surging prices of agricultural commodities such as palm oil, sugar, tea and coffee.

But the newspaper said the privatization issue would not reach the House of Representatives.

The government said earlier it planned to privatize 28 SOEs next year with an aim to raise 1.5 trillion rupiah (160 million US dollars) to help cover the 2008 budget deficit.—MNA/Investha

Vietnam to spend over $1.1b on safe water

HANOI, 25 Dec — Vietnam is expected to pour over 1.1 billion US dollars into a programme on increasing access to safe water and ensuring rural sanitation, the Vietnam Investment Review newspaper reported Monday.

Some 15 per cent of the fund will come from international assistance, 14 per cent from the central budget, 10 per cent from provincial budgets, and the rest from public contribution.

Under the 2007-2010 National Programme on Safe Water and Rural Sanitation, nearly nine million rural people would benefit from the construction of millions of sanitary water closets and wastesteadments for villages.

Some 30 per cent of the Vietnamese population currently face shortage of clean water, said Le Van Can, director of the Rural Water and Sanitation Centre under the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

This year, more than three million rural people accessed clean water. Around 85 per cent of the Vietnamese rural population is expected to use clean water in 2010, he said.—MNA/Investha

Small quake jolts eastern Russian peninsula

MOSCOW, 25 Dec — A small earthquake jolted Russia’s Kamchatka Peninsula on the Pacific coast overnight Monday, local media reported.

The quake, measuring 4.9 on the Richter Scale, caused no casualties or damage, the Ria-Novosti news agency quoted seismology officials as saying.

The epicentre was 205 kilometres northeast of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski, the administrative centre of Kamchatka and about 35 kilometres under the ocean floor, officials said.—MNA/Kinhua

Train-bus collision kills 9 in Tajikistan

ALMATY, 25 Dec — A passenger bus collided with a railroad locomotive in Tajikistan on Monday, leaving nine people dead and several others injured, said the Tajik authorities.

According to news reaching here from Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan, the accident occurred in southwestern Dushanbe when the driver of a minibus was attempting to get over a level-crossing while the diesel locomotive was nearby, said government officials.—MNA/Kinhua

Small plane, US passengers missing in Panama

PANAMA CITY, 25 Dec — Rescuers in Panama searched for survivors on Monday after a small plane carrying three Americans and their Panamanian pilot went missing in foul weather.

The Cessna airplane disappeared from radar on Sunday during a 45 minute flight between Islas Secas, in the Gulf of Chiriqui, and Volcan, a mountainous coffee-growing region, the government said.

US businessmen Michael Klein and his children, aged 9 and 11 years old, were on the plane, along with their pilot, the government said.—MNA/Reuters

Police say gunmen kidnap 14 members of Iraqi family

BAGHDAD, 25 Dec — Gunmen posing as Iraqi security forces kidnapped 14 members of one family in the volatile Diyala Province north of Baghdad on Monday.

They said the gunmen stopped a minibus carrying the 14 and a fake checkpoint near the town of Muqadiya, 90 kilometres (55 miles) northeast of the capital. Those kidnapped included women and children, police said.—MNA/Reuters

Workers decorate a 46-metre (151 feet) Christmas tree in the centre of Russia’s Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk on 24 Dec, 2007. The artificial Christmas tree is the highest in Russia, local media reported.—INTERNET
NAY PYI TAW, 25 Dec—A six-storey building in the compound of Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Bahan Township was inaugurated, here, this morning.

Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win unveiled the building.

The ceremony to inaugurate the new building of the hospital was opened with three-time recitation of Namo Tassa and Chairman of the administrative board of the hospital U Maung Tin extended greetings.

Yangon Division Religious Affairs Department Deputy Director U Soe Naing, Head of Yangon Division Health Department Dr Hla Myint and U Maung Tin formally opened the building.

The ceremony ended with three-time recitation of Buddha Sasanam Ceram Tithatu. After the opening ceremony, the commander and party visited the outpatient ward and the eye department of the hospital and donated cash to Buddhist monks receiving treatment at the hospital.

Yangon Division Religious Affairs Department Deputy Director U Soe Naing, Head of Yangon Division Health Department Dr Hla Myint and U Maung Tin formally opened the building.

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Yangon Mayor opens Phyo Cetena Free Clinic

NAY PYI TAW, 25 Dec—CEC Member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (Yangon In-Charge) Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin attended a ceremony to open Phyo Cetena Free Clinic and present donations to the medical funds, organized by Yangon Division USDA in order to provide free health care service for the workers from industrial zone in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, Yangon East District yesterday and accepted cash donations. First, the ceremony was held at the junction of Panlong road and Dokhtawady road.

CEC Member Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Yangon Division USDA Secretary U Aye Myint, Clinic In-Charge Dr Nay Linn, Chairman of Industrial Zone-2 Management Committee U Aung Myint and Chairman of Industrial Zone-3 Management Committee U Aung Than formally opened and inspected the clinic.

Next, the CEC member made a speech on the occasion and accepted 2100 USDA membership applications presented by officials of Industrial Zone Nos 1, 2 and 3. Afterwards, the CEC member and secretary received K3,770,000 and medicines worth K471,900 from the wellwishers. After that, an industrial zone representative spoke words of thanks and the ceremony ended. After the ceremony, the CEC member inspected upgrading tasks of 2000 feet long Thanlwin Road. The CEC member inspected production of small transformers at Earth electrical appliance manufacturing factory located in the industrial zone 1.

CPT Deputy Minister receives Deputy Foreign Minister of Vietnam

NAY PYI TAW, 25 Dec—Deputy Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Maj-Gen Thein Tun received Deputy Foreign Minister Mr Dao Viet Trung of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Vietnamese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Tran Van Tung and party at his office here at 4.15 pm yesterday.

Also present at the call were officials of the ministry. They discussed matters to improve bilateral communication ties between the two countries. — MNA

Ministry of Industry-1 launches special sales

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Ministry of Industry-1 conducted its special sales at People's Sports Ground in Mityikya Township on 20 December.

Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Commander of Northern Command Maj-Gen Ohn Myint, the deputy commander, senior military officers and their wives and officials of the ministry attended the ceremony. First, Secretary U Maung Maung Win of Kachin State PDC and Col Win Myint of the ministry opened the special sales and the commander unveiled the signboard. After opening the sales, the commander visited the shops of clothes, ceramics, foodstuff, medicine, paper and stationery, sewing machine, electric bicycle and handicraft of national races. — MNA

Thamainbayan Road in Mudon commissioned into service

NAY PYI TAW, 24 Dec—Thamainbayan Road was commissioned into service in Mudon Township, Mon State, on 19 December. Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of South-East Command Maj-Gen Thet Naing Win and officials attended the ceremony.

Deputy Director of Mudon Township Development Affairs Committee U Maung Aye reported on opening of the road and launching of water supply. Secretary of Township Union Solidarity and Development Association U Zaw Myint and officials formally opened the 1,820-foot tarred road. The commander formally unveiled the signboard of the archway. The road was built with the contribution of K17,490,000 by the Township Development Affairs Committee and local people. The road leads to Kya-in-Beikkyi and Phaythonau Townships.

The commander and party inspected brick pond for water supply in Myoma Ward 4 and 150 KVA paddy-husk-powered station in Kyun Village that supplies power to 275 households in the village. They also inspected free treatments given by specialists in the village. — MNA

Deputy Attorney-General visits new office in South Okkalapa

YANGON, 24 Dec—Deputy Attorney-General Dr Tun Shin inspected South Okkalapa Township law office and the new training centre building of the Attorney-General Office in the compound of the law office in South Okkalapa Township, this morning.

He met with district and township law officers at Yangon Division (East) law office.

He also had a meeting with law officers of division and district law offices and of the Attorney-General Office (Yangon).

At the meetings, he called on the law officers to have goodwill in taking charge of duties and to deal with their subordinates with family spirit. — MNA
Bronze Buddha Image consecrated in Minbya

NAY PYI TAW, 25 Dec—A consecration ceremony of Bronze Buddha Image and merit-sharing ceremony for Silavisodhani ordination hall were held at Kyeintaungzihwa Dattawmyat Pagoda in Minbya Township on 21 December.

The Bronze Buddha Image was donated by Minister for Electric Power No 2 Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint and wife Daw Win Win Nu and family. Chairman of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Commander of Western Command Maj-Gen Maung Shein and officials attended the ceremonies.

First, 15 members of the Sangha consecrated the Bronze Buddha Image. Commander Maj-Gen Maung Shein, Minister Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint and wife donated provisions to Chairman of Minbya Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Sayadaw Agga Maha Saddhamajotikadhaja Bhuddanta Ghosittaramha of Myomamyauk Monastery and members of the Sangha.

The commander, the minister and wellwishers took the Five Precepts from the Sayadaw and they presented offerings to members of the Sangha. The minister and wellwishers donated K 1,450,000 to the pagoda funds through Pagoda Board of trustees.

Aafter cash donation, Sayadaw Agga Maha Gandhavasaca Pandita Bhaddanta Zhaminda delivered a sermon followed by sharing of merits gained. MNA

Respect paying ceremony of Botataung BEHS-4

YANGON, 25 Dec—The 10th ceremony to pay respects to retired teachers by old students of No 4 Basic Education High School, Botataung Township was held at the school this morning.

Firstly, the old students prayed for late headmistress for one minute and they introduced the old teachers to those present. And old student Daw Than Than spoke words of thanks while old student Daw Tin Tin Aye read out the list of donors.

Afterwards, the old students presented household items to Headmistress Daw Mya Mya Thein. Retired Headmistress Daw Khin May Myint and Headmistress Daw Mya Mya Thein gave speeches and the old students paid respects to teachers presenting cash and kind to them.

Later, old student Daw Wai Wai Oo presented cash to U Kyaw Myint who served as a school watchman for 30 years and retired teacher Daw Htu Htu Khin gave words of advice. MNA

Commander, Minister take part in December mass walk

NAY PYI TAW, 25 Dec—A December mass walk was held in Monywa of Sagaing Division on 22 December morning. Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Brig-Gen Myint Soe, Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint, Patron of Sagaing Division Women’s Sports Organization wife of the commander Daw Khin Mya Oo, departmental officials at division, district and township levels, members of social organizations, students and enthusiasts totalling over 14,000 actively participated in the walk.

The minister inspected minor repairs in Bahtoo Stadium of Mandalay and left necessary instructions. Upon arrival at Sports and Physical Education Institute (Mandalay), the minister met with the principal and coaches. The minister looked into progress in repairing Chanmyaethazi Sports Ground and building the football academy of Myanmar Football Federation and gave instructions on timely completion of the construction tasks meeting the set standards.—MNA

Residents in Pyapon District urged to maintain libraries

PYAPON, 25 Dec—Pyapon District Information and Public Relations Department on 4 December urged residents in Kundaing Village in Pyapon Township to participate in maintaining the village’s library and in reading sessions. At the meeting residents and officials of Pyapon Township IPRD read and discussed excerpts from articles and novels.—PYAPON DISTRICT IPRD

KYAUKSE, 25 Dec—Assistant Engineer U Shwe Tun on 1 December inspected a tube well sunk by Kyaukse Township Development Affairs Committee in Nyaungwun village.

GYOBINGAUK , 24 Dec—Officials of Gyobingauk Township Development Affairs Department supervised storage of water to supply to residents in Gyobingauk recently.—MNA

All this needs to be known

- Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
- Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
- Do not be softened whenever appeased
China’s cotton imports down substantially

BEIJING, 25 Dec—China bought from abroad 2.04 million tons of cotton for 2.83 billion US dollars in the first 10 months of this year, down 37.3 per cent and 34.8 per cent respectively from the same period of last year. Customs sources said the United States and India were two leading suppliers, who combined to account for 70.8 per cent of China’s total arrivals. Between January and October, China imported 1.02 million tons of cotton from the United States, down 37.7 per cent, and 424,000 tons from India.

Three killed as car plunges into water in E Canada

OTTAWA, 25 Dec — Three young men from Eastern Canada’s New Brunswick Province were killed after their car lost control on a sharp turn and plunged into waters, reports reaching here said Monday.

The men, all in their 20s, were found dead Sunday with their bodies in the water of Chignecto Bay near Harvey Parish in New Brunswick. Their car were submerged and upside down in the water.

They had left a party late Saturday night. Police believed their car lost control on a sharp turn and plunged over a dam and into the water.

The icy and slippery road could have been a factor in the accident, police said. — MNA/Xinhua

Philippine journalist shot dead on Christmas Eve

MANILA, 25 Dec — A radio anchorman was shot dead Monday morning in southern Philippine city of Davao, adding to a long list of media fatalities in recent years in this archipelago.

According to local television network ABS-CBN, 51-year-old Ferdie Lintuan was driving a green motorcycle-riding gunmen approached the vehicle and shot him. Police said the incident occurred at 9.50 a.m. and Lintuan died after sustaining two gunshot wounds to the head. — MNA/Xinhua

Traffic accident kills 4 in Philippines

MANILA, 25 Dec — A multi-cab rammed into a bus in northern Philippines on Monday, killing four people and injuring two others.

The mishap occurred at about 5 p.m. at San Francisco Village in Tagkawayan Town in Quezon Province when the charcoal-loaded multicab blew a tire and collided with a public bus, pushing it to the side of the road, local radio dZBB said.

The report said all four fatalities were passengers of the multicab, while two of the injured were from the bus. — MNA/Xinhua

Vietnam finds 150 rare langurs

HANOI, 25 Dec — German and Vietnamese scientists have recently detected 150 grey-shanked douc langurs, an endemic kind of primates in Vietnam and one of 25 kinds of most endangered primates in the world, in the central highlands province of Kon Tum.

The grey-shanked douc langurs, whose scientific name is Pygathris nemaeus cinerea, have been spotted in Ngoc Linh wildlife reserve in Kon Tum Province, according to local newspaper Labour on Monday. — MNA/Xinhua

Russian President to visit Libya

MOSCOW, 25 Dec — Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to visit Libya and meet with his Libyan counterpart Moammar Kadafi, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Monday, without specifying the dates.

“The leaders of the two countries intend to discuss a large package of agreements on economic, political and military-technical cooperation.”

ITAR-TASS and RIA news agencies quoted Lavrov as saying.

Lavrov has conveyed a message from Putin to Kadafi during his Monday’s meeting with the Libyan leader in Tripoli, capital of the oil-rich African country.

Following warming relations with the West, Libya is becoming more attractive to foreign investors than its great reservation of oil and gas.

Russian gas giant Gazprom and oil company Tatneft have started field development in Libya. The two countries are also considering joint projects in power generation, pipelines, housing and railway construction.

— MNA/Xinhua

Senators special sessions to prevent appointments by Bush

WASHINGTON, 25 Dec — The US Senate will hold special one-man sessions throughout Christmas and the New Year in order that President George W. Bush cannot make appointments without the legislature’s approval, US media reported Monday.

On Sunday morning, a Democratic Senator held the first special session by himself, which lasted only a few seconds.

Similar ceremonies would be held every two or three days until January 18 when lawmakers resume their work.

Bush, from the Republican Party, has the authority to appoint ambassadors, judges and other key posts without the Senate’s confirmation if it is completely in recess. But by holding special sessions, the Senate, which is now controlled by Democrats, would prevent him from doing so.

Previously Bush had used this power to battle Democratic foes over disputable nominations including John Bolton’s appointment as Washington’s ambassador to the UN in 2005. — MNA/Xinhua

Passengers stranded after fog clears in London

LONDON, 25 Dec — Dozens of flights were cancelled on Monday as the weekend fog continued to cause travel chaos for hundreds of passengers.

Heathrow Airport said 30 departures were grounded as a knock-on effect of the weekend disruption, while a handful of flights were hit at Gatwick. The bulk of the affected journeys are British Airways short-haul flights. Stranded passengers said their holiday plans had been thrown into disarray.

“Maybe next year I’ll tell my family we’ll have a white Christmas in Canada because this Christmas is looking grey.” one North American passenger told the BBC at a cloudy Heathrow.

On Saturday and Sunday, thick fog forced the cancellation of hundreds of flights during the Christmas getaway. Up to 1,000 stranded passengers were forced to spend the night at Heathrow on Sunday waiting for alternative flights, while others slept in nearby hotels.

— MNA/Reuters
Images of the Day

Two seagulls vie for food near a bank of the Dianchi Lake in Kunming, Southwest China’s Yunnan Province on 24 Dec, 2007. — XINHUA

A little girl measures the dessert rolls in Budapest, Hungary, on 16 Dec, 2007. Hungarian Industrial Association of Dessert Chefs displayed a 500-meter long dessert roll in Budapest trying to set a new Guinness World Record of the longest dessert. — XINHUA

Members of Czech’s Image Theater perform during a photo session for “The best of image” at a theater in Seoul on 23 Dec, 2007. — XINHUA

A wooden sailing ship from the 17th century has been discovered in the Southeast Sea of Sweden. A Swedish TV station is going to make an exploring program about the wreck. — INTERNET

A hat in the shape of the Bird’s Nest, the Beijing National Stadium of China, was on display in Beijing on 12 Nov. It might lead a new fashion trend when the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games opened. — INTERNET
China to spend more on education for urban children in '08

Beijing, 25 Dec—China will continue to spend more on education next year and spread the free nine-year compulsory education to urban children, said Finance Minister Xie Xuren. The government would continue to improve the funding system to guarantee free nine-year compulsory education currently enjoyed by 150 million rural children, while spreading it to their urban counterparts next year, Xie told an annual conference of the Ministry of Finance in Beijing. Starting from the spring term, China would increase the funding for free textbooks used for the national compulsory courses, and the local governments would provide more money for free textbooks for local compulsory courses, he said. Local governments would also provide scholarships to cover the living costs of boarding students from poor families. The central government would provide half of the education funding for areas in central and west China, while provincial governments in those areas would cover the rest of the costs. MNA/Xinhua

Dubai’s Nakheel acquires stake in Australian Co

ABU DHABI, 25 Dec—The Dubai-based real estate developer Nakheel has entered an agreement to acquire 6.51 per cent stake in Australian property company Mirvac Group, local newspaper Khaleej Times reported on Sunday. The move is part of overseas expansion plans of Nakheel, which currently has 30 billion US dollars worth of major projects under development. “We believe there are many potential opportunities for Mirvac and Nakheel to work together,” Nakheel’s CEO Chris O’Donnell was quoted as saying. Nakheel did not reveal how much it paid for the stake, which was worth about 347 million dollars at the closing price of Mirvac’s shares on Friday. As a developer, fund manager and manager of properties, Mirvac is developing residential properties in Australia and manages hotels in Australia, New Zealand and on Pacific islands. Nakheel is a subsidiary of Dubai World, a holding company created and wholly owned by Dubai Government. Its major portfolio includes the Palm Trilogy, three man-made palm tree shaped islands on the coast of Dubai, Dubai Waterfront and the World Islands, a man-made archipelago of 300 islands in the shape of a world map. MNA/Xinhua

EU officials, leaders mark Schengen zone enlargement

BRUSSELS, 24 Dec—Senior EU officials, leaders of Austria, Hungary and Slovakia inaugurated Saturday a memorial column marking the enlargement of the Schengen area at Hegeshalom, Hungary’s main border crossing to Austria, the Hungarian news agency MTI reported.

Philippine NPA rebels to halt attacks for holidays

MANILA, 24 Dec—Communist rebels in the Philippines said on Sunday they would hold off from attacking military and police on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and also on 31 December and 1 January, in view of the attainment of peace negotiators’ agreement to hold a 22-day ceasefire with the rebels. The Philippines is a largely Catholic country and the centre of Christianity in Asia. Christmas holidays in the Philippines start with dawn masses from 16 December and end on 6 January. Earlier on Sunday, the military said NPA guerrillas had attacked a town hall in the central province of Samar, killing a part-time policeman and seizing several assault weapons. The Philippine Government declared a 22-day ceasefire with the NPA earlier this month but the rebels refused to recognize it and killed three Marines in an ambush in the western province of Palawan on the first day of the ceasefire. MNA/Reuters

China underscores traffic safety amid thick fog

BEIJING, 24 Dec—China’s central government called for local governments to ensure traffic safety as thick fog continues to plague major parts of the country, according to a circular released on Friday by the General Office of the State Council. The circular called for related organizations to cooperate in the work of weather monitoring and to take effective measures to prevent casualties and financial loss. Many parts of central and eastern China have suffered heavy fog for more than five days since this autumn, posing great danger to air, road and water traffic, the circular said. Most of the central and eastern parts of the country would continue to suffer foggy weather and road visibility in some areas would be less than 100 metres, according to the Central Meteorological Observatory.

Recently, heavy fog forced six expressways to close in central China’s Hubei Province. In the northern Tianjin Municipality, one expressway was closed due to visibility of less than 100 metres. In addition, most flights were delayed in Heifei City in the eastern Anhui Province. MNA/Xinhua

Vietnam reports over 50,000 criminal cases in 2007

HANOI, 25 Dec—Vietnam has detected more than 50,000 criminal cases since the beginning of this year, local newspaper Pioneer reported Monday. The number of serious cases, including those of murder, rape and robbery has increased against the same period last year, the paper quoted a report of the General Office of the State Security Department of Vietnam. Vietnam’s Ministry of Public Security urged agencies to investigate, get in contact with people and provide recommendations on the needs of the people. The report showed 228,175 criminal cases detected in the first ten months this year, an increase of 4.3 per cent against the similar period of 2006. Among the cases, 9,558 cases of serious crimes, including murder, drug trafficking, sexual offenses and weapons and explosives, were detected, an increase of 12.2 per cent.

A farmer harvests lettuce in the field on the outskirts of Yingtian, Jiangxi Province, on 24 Dec, 2007. —INTERNET

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Mars, moon shining at X-mas Eve

Christmas Eve,” said Jack Horkheimer, a Miami Museum of Science and Planterium astronomer. “Plus it will be followed by a spectacular full moon,” Horkheimer said. “They will track across the sky together all night long until some time before Christmas morning.” Mars comes into opposition with the sun every 26 months, but it is also currently at its closest to Earth — about 64 million km.

The planet will not be as noticeable for another nine years, astronomers said. Mars came nearest to Earth on Dec. 18, but is now more visible because of its angle. The full moon will also be considerably brighter than normal, as it will reach a height, which is not expected again for another 16 years.

Japanese PM wants to help all hepatitis patients

BEIJING, Dec. 24 — Japan’s Prime Minister said on Sunday his party will draft legislation aimed at helping thousands of Hepatitis patients, the latest development in a high-profile scandal that has drawn voter anger.

At least 10,000 people are believed to have contracted Hepatitis C from tainted products, most notably fibrinogen, a coagulant used to stop haemorrhaging during surgery or childbirth. The drug was used in Japan even after it was withdrawn from the United States in 1977. The emotive scandal has been instrumental in further eroding Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda’s approval ratings, already suffering from the government’s mishandling of a public pensions crisis and a defence procurement scandal. “Steps will be taken to provide aid to all the Hepatitis sufferers,” Fukuda told reporters. On Thursday, Hepatitis patients rejected a government compensation proposal.

Oral anti-diabetic substance discovered

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24 — Research at the University of Haifa in Israel has discovered a substance that may become an oral treatment for diabetes and its complications, US media reported on Monday.

The substance, which is derived from yeast, is called Glucose Tolerance Factor (GTF). The research is now at the stage where the substance has been successfully tested on diabetic rats and was found to reduce sugar and lipids in the blood of the treated animals. “The next stage of the research is to evaluate GTF efficacy in humans,” said Nitsa Mirsky, lead researcher.
Struggling Metz appoint Pouliquen as new coach

Paris, 25 Dec — Yvon Pouliquen was appointed coach of struggling Ligue 1 club Metz on Monday, the club said on its website (www.fcmetz.com).

A former professional player, Pouliquen, 45, replaces Francis De Taddeo, who was sacked on Sunday following a string of poor results which have left Metz bottom of the league. Metz have picked just seven points from 19 matches and are heading towards Ligue 2.

— MNA/Reuters

Ronalinho, Rijkaard in media’s crosshairs

BANGKOK, 25 Dec — Barcelona’s Frank Rijkaard and Ronaldinho were in the media’s crosshairs Monday after Real Madrid’s psychologically crushing 1-0 victory at the Nou Camp sent them seven points clear in the Primera Liga.

Brazilian international Julio Baptista scored the game’s only goal after 36 minutes as he runs in the first quarter during their NFL game against the Giants.

With the score locked 0-0 for the first 11 minutes, Barca were left out-thought a Barca side which has been playing with a superior play," said Barca sports daily Sport.

An out-of-shape Ronaldinho was reduced to throwing himself to the floor for dead-ball opportunities -- a far cry from the player who had the Bernabeu on their feet applauding when Barca hammered Real 3-0 there in 2005.

"This is the Ronaldinho of 2007-- he wants to but he can’t, he tries but it doesn’t happen," Sport added.

— MNA/Reuters

Abid error hands Thailand King’s Cup win over Iraq

BANGKOK, 25 Dec — A bizarre own goal seven minutes from time by Iraq’s Ahmad Abid gave Thailand a 2-1 victory on Monday and it will take place in the final of the King’s Cup tournament.

With the score locked at 1-1, Abid tried to clear a powerful low cross from Narongchai Vachiraban but found his own net instead, handing the header but found his own goal to Thai striker Abid, right, as he runs in the first quarter during their NFL game in San Diego, on 24 Dec, 2007. — INTERNET

Man Utd, Chelsea win to keep up the chase

LONDON, 24 Dec — Cristiano Ronaldo scored an 88th-minute penalty to give Manchester United a 2-1 victory over Everton at Old Trafford on Sunday that kept them within a point of Premier League leaders Arsenal.

Third-placed Chelsea also kept up the chase when a first-half Joe Cole goal gave them a 1-0 win at Blackburn Rovers.

Arsenal, who beat Tottenham Hotspur 2-1 on Saturday, lead the way on 43 points with United second on 42 and Chelsea on 37. Manchester City, who drew 1-1 at Aston Villa, have 34 while Liverpool, 4-1 home winners over Portsmouth, are fifth on 33. Everton remain sixth on 30, ahead of Portsmouth on goal difference.

Manchester United, seeking a ninth successive home league win, went ahead in the second minute when Ronaldo cut in from the right and clipped in a left-footed shot.

EVERTON hit back when Tim Cahill showed great determination to power in an 88th-minute winner.

United looked lively and inventive but found Everton difficult to break down despite the wealth of attacking talent on show.

That changed when Steven Pienaar thrust out a leg behind him in a play-ground tackle on Ryan Giggs that handed Ronaldo the decisive penalty.

Sunday’s double made the Portuguese winger the league’s leading scorer with 11. “This game was very tough, Everton played very well,” Ronaldo told Setanta Sports TV. “It’s an important win with many games to come and not too much time to rest.”

EVERTON manager David Moyesrued Pienaar’s late lapse, saying: “It was a moment of madness for Steven. The players have worked really hard to take something from the game but it is just one of those things.”

— MNA/Reuters

Thailand, Indonesia to host 2008 ASEAN ‘c’ships

BANGKOK, 24 Dec — Indonesia and Thailand have been picked to jointly host next year’s ASEAN soccer championships, the ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) said on Monday.

The two countries were chosen ahead of Vietnam to stage the biennial Southeast Asian tournament following the withdrawal of Malaysia and Myanmar.

Formerly known as the Tiger Cup, the tournament will take place in December next year.

“A secret ballot took place to decide the two hosts. Thailand and Indonesia won outright,” Yap Nyim Keong, executive secretary of the AFF, told Reuters.

“However, a decision on who should host has rarely been a matter for competitive bidding in the AFF. Hosts are chosen more by consensus.”

Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam will automatically qualify for the eight-nation contest. The region’s five lowest-ranked teams -- Laos, Cambodia, the Philippines, East Timor and Brunei -- will take part in qualifying tournament in Cambodia in October to decide the remaining two places.

Thailand and Singapore are the only countries to have won the ASEAN championship, famed for comedy as much as controversy.

— MNA/Reuters

Adriano lands in fresh controversy

RIO DE JANEIRO, 25 Dec — Brazilian striker Adriano, who last week promised to turn over a new leaf and get his career back on the rails, has landed in fresh controversy after being photographed at a pop concert holding a can of beer.

Brazilian newspapers Estado de Sao Paulo, O Dia and Lance all published the photographs of the player, which they said were taken on Saturday night in Rio de Janeiro.

AC Milan's injury-prone striker also appeared in the pictures.

Adriano last week joined Brazilian champions Sao Paulo on loan from Italy’s Inter Milan, where he has barely featured in the last two seasons after battling fitness and mental problems.

On Friday, Adriano, once one of Serie A’s most feared strikers, told a news conference that was determined to get his career back on track and win back his place in the Brazil team.

“I want to make the most of this chance to recreate,” he said. “Everyone here wants to help me. Now it just depends on me.”

Adriano has been undergoing a fitness and psychological recovery programme at Sao Paulo’s training centre for the last month.

Sao Paulo’s players are now on holi-day and are due to report back on January 7 for the new season. Sao Paulo director Marco Aurelio Cunha played down the incident.

— MNA/Reuters
Somali kidnappers free French journalist

BOSASSO (Somalia), 25 Dec — Somali gunmen released on Monday a French journalist who had kidnapped eight days ago in the northern Puntland region, local officials said.

“The French journalist has just been released and is now staying with officials, local elders and some diplomats in the hotel,” Puntland trade and industry minister Abdshakur Yusuf Awlan told Reuters.

Witnesses said the kidnappers handed Gwen Le Gouil to French diplomats at a hotel in Bosasso earlier on Monday. “I’m well. I’m happy,” Le Gouil told a brief news conference in Puntland’s main port. “I’m very happy to be free to go back to France and see my family.”

MNA/Reuters

Somali capital receives more foreign tourists

BUENOS AIRES, 25 Dec — Some 2.3 million foreign tourists visited Argentine capital Buenos Aires in 2007, roughly 200,000 more than a year earlier, the Buenos Aires Tourism Organization said on Monday.

Food, shopping, soccer and tango were the main attractions for the bulk of the tourists from the United States and European countries, it said.

They spent an average of 150 US dollars a day during an average week-long stay there.

International travel publications, including the New York Times, have recommended Buenos Aires, boosting visitor numbers, the body said, adding that hotel occupancy rates are around 80 per cent at the year-end.

In 2006, some 2.1 million tourists visited the city and in 2005 this number was around 1.8 million.

MNA/Xinhua

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MNA/Xinhua

WEATHER

Tuesday, 25 December, 2007

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours

MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kachin and Shan States, upper Sagaing and Tanintharyi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (7°C) to (4°C) below December average temperatures in Magway and Tanintharyi Divisions, (5°C) below December average temperatures in Chin, Rakhine and Kayin States, Yangon Division and about December average temperatures in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant night temperatures were Haka (-1°C), Pinlaung and Mogok (-3°C) each, Namhsan and Heho (-4°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 24-12-2007 was 30°F. Minimum temperature on 25-12-2007 was 56°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hours MST on 25-12-2007 was 87%. Total sunshine hours on 24-12-2007 was (8.4) hours approx.

Rainfall on 25-12-2007 was (nil) at Mingladon, Kaba-Aye and Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2007 was (136.57) inches at Mingladon, (141.38) inches at Kaba-Aye and (144.29) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) mph from Southwest at (12:30) hours MST on 24-12-2007.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 26-12-2007:

Weather will be partly cloudy in Kachin and Shan States, upper Sagaing and Tanintharyi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas.

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Continuation of decrease of night temperatures in the Deltaic areas.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring areas for 26-12-2007: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 26-12-2007: Fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring areas for 26-12-2007: Generally fair weather.

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THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 26 December, 2007
People’s Desire

🌟 We favour stability.
🌟 We favour peace.
🌟 We oppose unrest and violence.

Commander attends Buddha Pujaniya of Arahan Pagoda in Ela

NAV PYI TAW, 25 Dec—Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Wai Lwin and wife Daw Swe Swe Oo attended the third Buddha Pujaniya of Arahan Pagoda and provisions offering ceremony at Thayettaw Pariyatti Sarthintaik in Ela, Nay Pyi Taw Lewe Township this afternoon.

Member of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Presiding Sayadaw Agya Maha Gandhavacaka Pandita Bhaddanta Vimalabuddhi of Mingalar Zayyon Pali Tekkatho Kyaungtaik in Nay Pyi Taw Pyinmana administered the Five Precepts. Members of the Sangha recited Parittas.

Next, Thayettaw Pariyatti Sarthintaik Presiding Sayadaw Sasanadhaja Dhammacariya Bhaddanta Kumara delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merits gained.

The commander, wife and the guests presented offerings to the members of the Sangha.— MNA

Objectives of the 60th Anniversary Independence Day

(a) All the national people to constantly join hands for safeguarding the perpetuation of independence and sovereignty of the State;
(b) All the national people to collectively strive for non-disintegration of the Union and non-disintegration of national solidarity;
(c) To ensure emergence of an enduring constitution in line with the fundamental principles and detailed basic principles adopted by the National Convention that has been completed successfully;
(d) All the national people to harmoniously make all-out efforts for building of a modern, developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation;
(e) All the national people to cooperate in realizing the State’s seven-step Road Map with Union Spirit, patriotic spirit and the spirit of sacrifice.

Skyful liars attempting to destroy nation

🌟 BBC lying
🌟 VOA deceiving
🌟 RFA setting up hostilities
🌟 Beware! Don’t be bought by those ill-wishers