Secretary-1 receives President of Export-Import Bank of China Exim Bank of PRC

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council General Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo received President Mr Li Ruogu of the Export-Import Bank of China Exim Bank of China and party at the SPDC Office here at 4 p.m. today.

Also present at the call were Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha and Minister for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun.—MNA

Mount Pleasant Hotel opened

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—Mount Pleasant Hotel on Phoe Zaung mountain range near Nay Pyi Taw Ottara Thiri was formally opened this morning at Mount Pleasant Tower of the hotel.

The opening ceremony was attended by Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Wai Lwin, ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, the Nay Pyi Taw Mayor, deputy ministers, departmental heads, guests, personnel of G-4 Group of Companies, the MD and staff of Mount Pleasant Hotel.

Minister for Hotels and Tourism Maj-Gen Soe Naing, Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Nay Pyi Taw Mayor Col Thein Nyunt, MD U Yan Win of G-4 Group of Companies cut a ribbon to open the hotel.

The Commander pressed the button to open the archway of the hotel. Next, the commander, the ministers and guests looked round the hotel. Mount Pleasant Hotel which lies on Phoe Zaung mountain range about1600 feet above sea level near Nay Pyi Taw Ottara Thiri has the same weather as Pyin U Lwin, a hilly resort station and is a four-star hotel.

The hotel is built on 25-acre hill and composed of three-story Mount Pleasant Tower from which one can enjoy the scenic views of the surrounding of Nay Pyi Taw, Zabu Thiri Hall which can cater about 150 customers, Ottara Thiri Hall which can hold about 200 customers, a meeting hall with space for about 70 persons, and Bamboo Garden Restaurant where one can enjoy Eastern and European foods. It is an international hilly resort hotel formed with modern buildings such as reception & function rooms, Mount Pleasant Suite, Junior Suite, Deluxe bungalows and about 70 bedrooms.

The hotel, to mark its opening, offers 40 % discount for local and foreign customers for first six months. The hotel (See page 7)
Popa region will be covered with lush and green tea plantations

Greening projects have been systematically undertaken in the regions of Central Myanmar such as Monywa and Sagaing Districts in Sagaing Division, Myingyan, Yamethin and Mekitha Districts in Mandalay Division and Pakokku, Minbu, Magway and Thatay Districts in Magway Division.

A tea growing project was launched in Naytekantung region in Ngaphe Township, Minbu District and in Popa Mountain Garden region in Kayaukpadawng Township, Myingyan District, Mandalay Division.

Popa Mountain Garden region has favourable soil and climate to grow tea. National entrepreneurs have been given permission to grow tea as model tea plantations were successful.

With the thriving tea plantations, the surrounding areas of Mount Popa in Central Myanmar will have new job opportunities and be able to conduct mass production of pickled tea and dried tea.

The tea plantations established in the eastern part of Mount Popa are thriving. Moreover, a private-owned plantation near Yaynge Camp on the mountain has grown over 700,000 tea plants on 200 acres.

Although Popa region is arid, the region and its surrounding areas can conserve natural resources and have become lush and green thanks to the Popa Mountain region greening project. Besides, with its favourable soil and climate, the region now can establish thriving agricultural businesses.

As tea can grow well not only in Shan, Kachin, Chin and Kayin States but also in Popa region, the local people are urged to extend cultivation of globally marketable tea to an outstanding trainee.—

Minister Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint addresses opening of paper reading session.—MNA

Papers read on “Our Three Main National Causes, a reality proven by history”

Minister Col Thein Nyunt presents award to an outstanding trainee.—MNA

Basic Domestic Science Special Course conclude in Ayeyawady Division

The minister also attended the ceremony to conclude the Basic Domestic Science Special Course No. 2 organized by Education and Training Department at the Mawlayeya Hall in Mawlamyineygyun Township, Ayeyawady Division on 14 December morning. The minister made a speech on the occasion and presented prizes awarded by National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee to first, second, third prize winners.

All this needs to be known

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

Basic Domestic Science Special Course No. 2 or- ganized by Education and Training Department at the Mawlayeya Hall in Mawlamyineygyun Township, Ayeyawady Division on 14 December morning. The minister made a speech on the occasion and presented prizes awarded by National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee to first, second, third prize winners.

The minister also attended the ceremony to conclude the Basic Domestic Science Special Course No. 2 at the Ywady Nadi Hall in Labutta and made a speech on the occasion. Afterwards, he presented prizes awarded by the National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee to winners, and observed clothes and handicrafts made by the trainees.

After that, the minister inspected Third-mile new ward in Labutta, construction of 200-bed hospital, construction of tarred road, progress in construction of departmental office buildings.

The minister inspected construction site of office buildings of Development Affairs Committee and construction site of Basic carpentry, crafts of mason, steel work training school.

* 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

Myanmar will have new job opportunities in Mandalay Division and Pakokku, Minbu, Magway and Thayet Districts in Magway Division.

Natyekantaung region in Ngaphe Township, Minbu District, and Popa Mountain Garden region in Kayaukpadawng Township, Myingyan District, Mandalay Division.

Kachin, Chin and Kayin States but also in Popa region, the local people are urged to extend cultivation of globally marketable tea.

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As tea can grow well not only in Shan, Kachin, Chin and Kayin States but also in Popa region, the local people are urged to extend cultivation of globally marketable tea.
US and Russia: nuclear deal ‘very close’

COPENHAGEN, 19 Dec — The United States and Russia said on Friday they were on the verge of clinching a sweeping new nuclear disarmament pact, but signalled the bid to smooth final technical issues would slip into January.

US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev held their latest summit on the sidelines of the UN climate talks in Denmark, but dashed speculation that the long-awaited deal would be signed by the end of the year.

Obama said the two sides were “quite close” to clinching a framework to decommission hundreds of nuclear arms, and replace the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) which expired on 5 December.

“I’m confident that it will be completed in a timely fashion. And I just want to thank President Medvedev for being a very effective partner in these negotiations,” he said.

Medvedev made clear that only “a few technical details” now blocked the agreement, which will see further deep mutual cuts in the nuclear arsenals of the former Cold War foes.

“Our positions are very close and almost all the questions that we discussed over the last months have been closed,” Medvedev said.

“A few technical details have remained which nevertheless need to be finalized in such an important agreement and I hope that we will do this in quite a short time.” —Internet

NATO kills three civilians, wounds four others in air strike in S Afghanistan

KANDAHAR, 19 Dec — A NATO helicopter killed three civilians and wounded four others during an air strike in Kandahar Province in southern Afghanistan, provincial government said on Friday.

The helicopter stroke a minibus on the Kandahar-Oruzgan highway in Shwayli Kot District of Kandahar Province at about 11 pm on Thursday, killing three men and wounding one woman and three children, according to a Press release issued by the provincial governor house on Friday.

The NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) said in a statement it was sending a team to investigate reports of civilian casualties in the operation.

“Initial operational reports indicate that men were placing an IED next to the road,” ISAF said in the statement. “After firing the men from a helicopter, ISAF forces discovered civilians in a car adjacent to the IED site.”

Civilian casualties have increased in Afghanistan in 2009. Both militants and troops are held responsible for harming non-combatants in Afghanistan.

On 8 Dec, hundreds of Afghans protested in eastern Laghman Province over a NATO operation in which the Afghan government said six civilians were killed. ISAF rejected the claim, saying all those killed were militants.

Eight killed in US drone strike in NW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 19 Dec — US drone aircraft on Friday killed at least eight people in northwest Pakistan’s North Waziristan tribal region, locals said.

Four missiles were fired in Datta Khel area on houses and a graveyard where people were burying victims of another US drone attack on Thursday, they said. Officials in the region confirmed the strike but said they do not know about the number of casualties.

Locals said that missiles also struck tents of nomads mainly Afghans who migrated to Pakistan in summer.

It was the third strike in North Waziristan in two days. On Thursday, US drones carried two attacks and killed 17 people.

A/H1N1 pandemic death toll exceeds 10,000, says WHO

GENEVA, 19 Dec — The death toll of A/H1N1 influenza continues to increase worldwide, reaching at least 10,582 by 13 Dec, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a latest update on Friday.

Of all the deaths, some 6,335 occurred in the Americas, and at least 1,654 occurred in Europe. The other four WHO regions, Western Pacific, South-East Asia, East Mediterranean and Africa reported 1,020, 892, 572 and 109 deaths respectively.—Xinhua

Eight passenger trains get stuck under English Channel

LONDON, 19 Dec — British media say four trains with more than 2,000 passengers aboard have broken down in the Channel Tunnel due to wintry weather.

Eurostar spokesman Bram Smets told Sky News and the BBC early on Saturday that all the passengers are safe, though some of the trains were without heating or lighting in the tunnel connecting England and France.

Smets says two of the trains are being pushed by diesel trains toward London and passengers on the other trains were being transferred onto shuttles. Eurostar told the BBC that the trains broke down because of the temperature difference between the cold air outside the tunnel and the warm air inside.—Internet

US attack kills Afghan soldier

KABUL, 19 Dec — A US soldier in southern Afghanistan, pushing the death toll of foreign troops to close to 500 during the war this year, NATO said Saturday.

A Eurostar train is pictured travelling through the Kent countryside in south-east England, on its way to London. Four Eurostar passenger trains are reportedly stuck in the rail tunnel between Britain and continental Europe as they broke down due to the cold weather snap affecting the region.—Internet
Honda to build fifth plant in China

Tokyo, 19 Dec—Japan's Honda Motor plans to build its fifth car plant in China to cope with mounting competition in the fast-growing auto market, according to a Press report released on Saturday.

The new plant, with an annual capacity of 120,000 units, will boost Honda's production in China by 20 percent to 730,000 units a year, the business daily Nikkei said.

It will be built next to the existing factory of Honda's Chinese joint venture Dongfeng Honda Automobile in the central city of Wuhan and is due to be operational by 2011, the report said.

Initial investment in the project is estimated at 20-30 billion yen (220-330 million dollars), the report added.

No one was immediately available at Honda's head office in Tokyo to confirm the report. Car sales in China are forecast to exceed 13 million units this year with the Communist nation replacing the United States as the world's biggest auto market, Nikkei said.—Internet

Regulators shutter 2 big Calif banks, 5 others

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec—Regulators on Friday shut down two big California banks, as well as banks in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Michigan and Illinois, bringing to 140 the number of US banks brought down this year by the weak economy and mounting loan defaults.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp took over all seven.

Regulators shuttered First Federal Bank of California, based in Santa Monica, with $6.1 billion in assets and $4.5 billion in deposits, as was as Imperial Capital Bank of La Jolla, Calif, with about $4 billion in assets and $2.8 billion in deposits.

California was one of the states hardest hit by the real estate market meltdown and many banks there have suffered under the weight of soured mortgage loans.

First Federal and Imperial Capital brought to 17 the number of California banks to fail this year. Also closing their doors on Friday were Atlanta-based RockBridge Commercial Bank, with $294 million in assets and $291.7 million in deposits; and New South Federal Savings Bank, based in Irondale, Ala, with $1.5 billion in assets and $1.2 billion in deposits.

China's King Long bus company sets up assembly plant in Hungary

BUDAPEST, 19 Dec—King Long, a bus production company based in Xiamen in southeast China's Fujian Province, will build its first European vehicle assembly facility in Hungary, announced Janos Kelemen, manager of King Long Hungary, at a news conference on Friday.

Kelemen did not give the amount of the investment, but said that the Chinese firm had signed a declaration of intent and the project was already on the drawing board. The assembly plant will be in eastern Hungary, he added, although the specific venue has yet to be decided. He named the southern great plain region and the cities of Gyongyos and Miskolc as possible sites for the plant.

EU survey reveals wary British consumers see a bumpy ride ahead

LONDON, 19 Dec—A poll for the European Union released on Friday shows that British consumer confidence fell for the second month in a row.

The month-on-month fall of two points in the GfK NOP Consumer Confidence poll to -19 is still massively better than the -37 in January this year, but a decline from October's optimism which saw the Index at -13.

Nick Moon of GfK NOP Social Research said: “After a dramatic increase in the index from August to October it has now fallen back for two months in a row, and another month of falls could see all of the gains since August disappear.

This must be concerning for the government, although the index is still massively better than it was a year ago.”

“What will be particularly worrying for Gordon Brown is that the index for the state of the economy, which had crept into positive territory, has fallen by a substantial nine points to -6,” said Moon.

The lack of consumer confidence was also evident in the retail figures for November, released on Thursday. Experts expected a modest rise month on month, but saw a 0.3-percent decline last month on October’s figures. October had seen a 0.6-percent month-on-month rise.—Xinhua

EU survey reveals wary British consumers see a bumpy ride ahead

Aerial view of the Suncor oil sands extraction facility near the town of Fort McMurray in Alberta. Green groups on Friday named Canada “Fossil of the Year” — an award that carried the additional honorific of “Catastrophic Fossil” — for what they said was a strategy to sabotage efforts to tackle climate change.—Internet

Deepening EU-China ties conforms to interests of both sides: EU official

STRASBOURG, 19 Dec—The European Union (EU) and China share common interests and the deepening of bilateral ties will bring benefits to both sides, Louis Michel, member of the European Parliament and former European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, said here on Friday.

The ever deepening EU-China relations have produced many positive results, Michel told Xinhua in an interview, adding that the two sides should strengthen economic cooperation and political dialogue to promote the overall development of bilateral ties.

China and the EU are economically complementary to each other to some extent, Michel said, citing the fact that the EU has 500 million consumers with strong purchasing power while China has a big domestic market, 1.3 billion consumers and increasing gross domestic product (GDP).

On political relations, Michel said he is optimistic about the prospects of EU-China ties as the development of the partnership with China is a priority in EU’s foreign policy.

Michel said the two sides should hold political dialogues on a higher level to discuss issues including how emerging economies can play a bigger role in international institutions such as the Bretton Woods Institutions.

China and the EU could work together to help bring major reforms to international institutions including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, he said.—Xinhua
President Hu arrives in Macao for 10th anniversary celebrations

MACAO, 19 Dec—Chinese President Hu Jintao arrived in Macao on Saturday at about 12:00 pm by special plane to attend the celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the city’s return to the motherland.

Hu, also general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and chairman of the CPC Central Military Commission, will also attend the inauguration of the third-term government of the Macao Special Administrative Region.

This is the second time the President came to Macao. Hu attended the 5th anniversary celebrations in 2004. Edmund Ho Hau Wah, the SAR chief executive and his wife Taniana Lau went up to the special plane to welcome Hu Jintao and his wife Liu Yongqing.

Chief executive-elect Fernando Chui Sai On and his wife Fok Waifun as well as other senior SAR government officials were also present greeting Hu and his wife Liu Yongqing at the Macao International Airport.

When President Hu and his wife went down the ramp with smiles, the Macao Police Band began to strike up a tune of welcome and two lovely primary school pupils presented bouquets of flowers to them.

Chinese President Hu Jintao(L) waves upon his arrival at Macao International Airport in Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) in south China on 19 Dec, 2009. —Xinhua

14 Filipino seamen freed by Somali pirates

MANILA, 19 Dec—Fourteen Filipino seamen on board a Greek vessel were freed by ransom-seeking Somali pirates this week, the Philippine embassy in Nairobi reported on Friday.

The Filipino crew of MV Delvina are “safe and in good health.” The vessel and its crew are now heading to Mombasa.

The latest release has reduced the number of hijacked Filipino seamen off the coast of Somalia to 56, involving five vessels. Philippine foreign affairs and labour officials are coordinating with concerned manning agencies and their shipping principals on the release and repatriation of Filipino seamen.

The Philippine government is stepping up efforts to address the rising incidence of piracy and hostage-taking involving Filipino seamen off the coast of Somalia.

400,000 workers to ban bullfighting

MADRID, 19 Dec—The Spanish region of Catalonia voted on Friday to proceed with a bill aimed at banning local bullfighting.

The vote in the 135-seat regional Parliament was on whether to take up the bill formally for debate. It passed by a 67-59 vote, with five abstentions and four absences.

The bill was accompanied by around 180,000 signatures against bullfighting. The bill will be formally debated and voted on by Parliament in the new year.

Bullfighting is considered by those who support it to be an event of historic and cultural significance and even a form of art.

Xinhua
Some orphanages provide loving care

DURHAM, 1 Dec — A study tracking 3,000 orphans in five Asian and African countries has found those in orphanages do as well as those in community settings.

The research was done at Duke University’s Global Health Institute. Researchers used data from Cambodia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania and two locations in India, Hyderabad and Nagaland.

Duke announced the results on Thursday.

Kathryn Whetten, director of the Centre for Health Policy at the institute, said the findings contradict other studies that have suggested children in institutions fare less well. But she said the researchers looked at less formal orphanages and not just those identified by the government.

“What people don’t understand is that, in many cases, the institutions are the community’s response to caring for orphaned and abandoned children,” she said. “These communities love kids and as parents die, children are left behind. So the individuals who love children most and want to care for them build a building and that becomes an institution.”

74,000 Africans crossed Gulf of Aden in 2009

GENEVA, 19 Dec — The UN refugee agency says a record number of Africans fleeing war, droughts and poverty have crossed the Gulf of Aden into Yemen this year.

UNHCR says an estimated 74,000 Africans, mainly from Ethiopia and Somalia, have fled to Yemen as refugees or economic migrants. That’s a 50 percent higher fare this year.

The findings contradict other studies that UNHCR spokesman Andrej Mahecic said on Friday that Ethiopians were the top for Health Policy at the institute, said the largest group of travellers.

Book 99 years overdue

The book returned to the New Bedford Public Library in Massachusetts this week wasn’t overdue by a week, a month or even a year. It was nearly a century overdue, and the fine came to $361.35.

“Facts I Ought to Know about the Government of My Country” was due about 10 years ago. He decided that returning the book to the city was the right thing to do.

The overdue book fine was a penny a day in 1910. But Dudek wasn’t asked to pay it.

The library plans to display the book in its special collection.

Kitten apparently rides 120 miles in wheel well

An Oregon man says a 3-month-old kitten apparently hitched a cold, 120-mile ride in the wheel well of his SUV.

Marc Lichty left Olympia, Wash, after finishing a day of work on Wednesday. He heard meowing when he stopped at a rest stop along the way home but couldn’t see a cat.

When he reached his home in Tualatin, Ore., he heard the meowing again and grabbed a flashlight. Sure enough, he says, “the cat was up underneath in the spare tire spot.”

Daughter Jenna helped coax the passenger out with a bit of salmon.

Lichty says he can’t imagine making that trip at 70 mph in this week’s subfreezing temperatures.

The family called Olympia businesses in the area where he was working Wednesday but didn’t find the kitten’s owner.

An area view shows the Maldives capital Male. Maldives has a population of some 400,000 islanders, whose livelihood from fishing and tourism is being hit by climate change. Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed said in November that 2 degrees Celsius warming would risk swamping the sand-rimmed coral atolls and lagoons, dotted with palm trees and mangrove clumps, that form his small country.

Nigerian militants attack oil pipeline

LAGOS, 19 Dec — Militants in the oil-rich Niger Delta say they attacked an oil pipeline overnight, breaking a cease-fire agreement with the government.

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta said in a statement issued on Saturday that its members attacked a major crude oil pipeline operated by Shell and Chevron.

Spokesman Jomo Ghomo says in the statement that the group attacked because government officials delayed ongoing peace talks over the absence of President Umaru Yar’Adua.

For weeks, Yar’Adua has been hospitalized in Saudi Arabia for what staffers say is a serious heart condition.

Finland reports slow economic growth

HELSINKI, 19 Dec — Finland’s economy had hit the bottom and started to grow slowly, according to an economic review released by the Finnish Finance Ministry on Friday.

The export-oriented Finnish economy has declined sharply during the end of 2008 and the first half of this year, as the world economy slumped due to the global financial crisis. According to the review, Finland’s gross domestic product will thus shrink by 7.6 percent in 2009.

However, the Finnish Finance Ministry said that the country’s economy had already hit the bottom and began to grow slowly as the GDP in the third quarter of 2009 increased by 0.3 percent compared with the previous quarter, thanks to the growth of public investment and private consumption.

Shirtless man, woman in handcuffs belt rob bank

Authorities in South Florida are searching for a man who held up a Fort Lauderdale bank shirtless then fled with a woman who sported a belt made of handcuffs.

According to a news release from the Fort Lauderdale Police Department, the man demanded money from a teller at a Bank of America branch on Friday afternoon and implied he had a weapon. The teller gave the man an unspecified amount of cash, and he then fled on foot with the woman.

The man was wearing blue jeans, while the woman wore a blue hat, black shirt and jeans.

An aerial view shows the Maldives capital Male. Maldives has a population of some 400,000 islanders, whose livelihood from fishing and tourism is being hit by climate change. Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed said in November that 2 degrees Celsius warming would risk swamping the sand-rimmed coral atolls and lagoons, dotted with palm trees and mangrove clumps, that form his small country.

Germans flee into container after wild boar scare

German police have rescued four frozen walkers who called up from a waste container begging to be saved from roving wild boars. Police in Darmstadt, south of Frankfurt, said they received an emergency call at nearly 3 a.m. Sunday from a man who said he and three companions had fled into the container after being surprised by a group of boars during a nighttime walk in the woods. He said they didn’t dare to emerge.

The number of registered vehicles in Beijing topped four million this week, state media reported, meaning a quarter of the 16 million permanent residents in China’s capital have a car. — Internet

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INTERNET
Mount Pleasant Hotel…

(from page 1)

offers superior services such as high speed wireless Internet access, 24-hour room dining and healthcare service, Internet surfing and laptop rental and thus, is suitable to serve special guests, international businessmen, delegates and representatives from organizations, and tourists at home and from abroad.

The hotel is now adding such new facilities as swimming pool, fitness centre, playground, spa & massage, and adventure tour at the second phase.

The contact address of the hotel is www.mountpleasanthotel-npt.com and Ph: 067-431155.

MNA

Ministers Maj-Gen Soe Naing and Col Thein Nyunt and Director U Yan Win of G-4 Group of Companies inaugurating Mount Pleasant Hotel.—MNA

Myanmar sports team arrives back

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—Chairman of the Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint together with the Myanmar sports team to the XXV SEA Games in Vientiane, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, arrived back at Yangon by special flight this afternoon.

The minister, Secretary of MOC, Director-General of the Sports and Physical Education Department U Thaung Htak and team members received a rousing welcome at Yangon International Airport by MOC members, officials from the ministry, Chairperson of the Myanmar Women’s Sports Federation (Central) Daw Aye Aye, patrons in-charge of sports federations, presidents and secretaries of Myanmar sports federations, relatives of the athletes, and students from the Sports and Physical Education Institute (Yangon).

Of the Myanmar sports contingent track and field, Wushu, archery, martial arts, and judo teams arrived back in Myanmar by air yesterday.

MNA

MPMEEA to hold annual meeting

YANGON, 19 Dec—Myanmar Pharmaceuticals & Medical Equipment Entrepreneurs’ Association will hold its 8th annual meeting on the first floor of UMFCCI Office Tower in Lanmadaw Township, here, from 1 pm to 3 pm on 22 December.

Members of the association have been invited to attend the meeting without fail.—MNA

Letpadan students to pay respects to old teachers

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—Alumni of Letpadan Township will organize a ceremony to pay respects to old teachers aged 70 and above who retired from Basic Education High Schools (1) and (2) and basic education middle schools, at Nawade Hall of the BEHS (1) at 9 am on 26 December.

The old teachers aged over 70 who have not signed up are requested to contact old students. Those wishing to participate in the ceremony are to get registered. And those wishing to make cash donations in Yangon may contact Daw San Nwe (Ph: 664641), U Tint Lwin (291463), Daw Khin Thit Swe (642979), U Tin Maung Oo (516564), and U Thein Hlaing (222278); in Letpadan, U Maung Aung (Yang Ni Oo Photocopier) (053-32165), U Maung Maung Htay (Tantaya) (053-32065) and U Tin Khaing.

MNA

F&R Minister meets Chinese guests

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—Minister for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun received Chinese guests led by President Mr. Li Ruogu of the Exim Bank of China at his office here this afternoon.

They held discussion about finance and monetary matters.

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

MNA
The best policy

Maung Shwe Ni

In this age, an important question has sprung up, and the people have been awaiting it. Which will be chosen, cooperation or confrontation? Which is wanted? Want cooperation? Want confrontation?

The prevailing conditions have paved the way for cooperation. This decision is the best, isn’t it? It is clear that cooperation benefits the two sides as well as the nation and the people. All have understood that only cooperation can shape a better future rather than self-interest. The people will earnestly welcome it. Sticking to confrontation and coercion by upholding old ideologies can only beget delays and hindrances. It cannot be successful at all. Then it will deviate from the public desire. The people will shake their heads with disappointment. Look at international incidents. Tragedies stemming from threatening, fighting and arguing are a lesson to learn. But, unity and cooperation have achieved fruits of success. Arrogance, grudge and worries came after trying to suppress others and it is a lesson to be taken. Forgiveness, loving-kindness and goodwill can only generate peace.

Future cannot be built with self-centredness and egoism. Don’t try to destroy the world only because of your very desire. It is impossible. The period of 20 years has proved that utter devastation and confrontation are useless. Why continue to stick to it? Let’s take a lesson.

Future can well be shaped with vision only. Future will surely reach soon. At present, who is the most honest? Who has the ability to serve the best interests? Who is the most farsighted? Who considers most to serve the interests of the State and the people?

It is certain that the good or evil legacies of the answer have to be experienced only by our nation. Can anyone from outside be dependable?

Over the last two decades, the State has been able to forge peace and cooperation with almost all the groups of our national brethren fighting for many years amidst various difficulties. History reflects the goodwill and loving-kindness of the existing government. Its capability to make peace should not be underestimated. Is it appropriate to collude with the one from distance whose interest is different from your own by showing hostile to the nearest one? The one from distance might be clever. But it is unlikely that he is good to you. Surely, he will give priority to the interests of his nation and his own. There may be criticism because of different ideologies. But assistance cannot come because of the same ideology. Despite being in the same group, one may not help sacrificing oneself. Now is a time when anyone is working for his own national interest. He will not do anything that is not beneficial to him. He will dare to threaten even coming from the western to eastern hemispheres if it is in his own interest. He has no shame, no fear, no ethics. He only seeks his interest. Might is right.

In order to safeguard our independence and sovereignty in this age of hegemony, the only military power, the only political power or the only economic power is not enough. It is important for the people to have strong patriotism and Union Spirit with awareness.

Anyone dare not invade our country if the people will remain united. It is not time to argue who is important and who is not important.

It is high time the entire people remained united in doing their bit in the national interest. The State constitution drawn without any outside influence has been approved with the support of the entire people.

The demand for amendment to the constitution through discussions and a dialogue with them is beyond fulfillment. A group of people alone has no exclusive right to amend the constitution that has been approved in a democratic way by the people. Should the ruling government fulfill the wishes of the public or to yield to the demand of a group of people who are highly conceited and critical?

Why are they demanding for many things impossible? Their real intention is nothing more than to mar the democratic process. If a person is repeatedly claiming that he is in favour of democracy, and he wants flourishing democracy in the nation, but in practice, he is demanding for amendments to and revocation of the democratic system, then what he claims and what he does are opposing against each other.

Here, I do not mean that the constitution approved by the public shall never be amended. Necessary amendments should be made to the constitution when the occasion arises. Who should amend it? The Hluttaw (parliament) comprising members of parliament elected by the people should take that responsibility. And when should it be amended? It should be done in an opportune time. The people of us have to introduce and exercise the democratic system in which the people have ultimate authority.

The Head of State had great patience and benevolent attitude; did not harbour any grudge; and still restored his loving-kindness and friendship toward them. He and they are somewhat like parent and children, so it was impossible for him to terminate his attachment for them.

An editor of a local journal in the editorial of the 5-12-2009 issue reminded that showing all hands was the key to national reconciliation. They should have quit disguising themselves.

If a person says he wants to make friends, but sticks to the policy of sanctions against the nation, he will never put his words into deeds. If so, he will never achieve success.

Some people found to their dismay when they learnt the demand for amendments to the constitution through dialogue between the government and them. Then, the people made comments that why they wanted to amend the constitution approved by the public, and are they crazy out of conceit?

However, the people showed their maturity. The people showed their maturity. The Head of State had great patience and benevolent attitude; showed consideration; fulfilled some of their demands; exercised forgive and forget policy to them; did not harbour any grudge; and still restored his loving-kindness and friendship toward them. He and they are somewhat like parent and children, so it was impossible for him to terminate his attachment for them.

The people are to collectively generate their better future. If they really favour national reconciliation and democracy, they should not apply any trickery for political gains. All should deal with each other without any political tricks and devious means. And they should have stopped practising circulomovement and coercing the government.

The people should show honesty and uprightness. We live in the saying that goes “Honesty is the best policy”.

Translation: ST + MS
MR always trying for convenience…

(from page 16)

Chairman of Magway Division PDC Col Phone Maw Shwe also addressed the opening ceremony of the railroad section. The chairman thanked staff of MR under Ministry of Rail Transportation for their work and stressed the need for durability of the railroad. Next, a local spoke words of thanks.

Next, Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min, Chairman of Magway Division PDC Col Phone Maw Shwe and Managing-Director U Thein Swe of MR cut a ribbon to open the railroad and posed for documentary photos together with local people.

Afterwards, the ministers, the chairman and personnel sprinkled scented water on special train for opening ceremony of the railroad. They then presented commemorative gifts to passengers who were taking the special train and greeted local people at stations along the railroad.

In accordance with the guidance of the Head of State for rapid and harmonious development of the regions on the eastern bank of Ayeyawady river, MR of the Ministry of Rail Transportation today inaugurated Magway-Kanpya railroad section of Magway-Natmauk-Pyawbwe railroad con-

ngwegu (Education College) Station on Magway-Kanpya railroad section. — MNA

A train running on Magway-Kanpya railroad section. — MNA


2nd round of Tatmadaw Football Tourney (2009) continues

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—The second round matches of the 48th Defence Services Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy (Army, Navy and Air) Football Tournament continued at designated places this evening.

In No.1 Sports Ground in Nay Pyi Taw, the match between Western Command (A) and Camp Commandant Office of the Ministry of Defence ended 2-2 draw. In Paunglong Sports Ground, North-West Command won over No.11 LID 2-0.– MNA

Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency Business Forum held


Chairman of Myanmar Industries U Paw Hein spoke on the occasion. Chairman of Kaung Kyaw Say Co U Tun Naing Aung explained the purpose of forum and the facts about energy. Managing Director Daw Thet Thet San expressed thanks to the resource persons of the papers submitted to the forum, companies that displayed their products at the booths and attendees.

Resource persons formally opened the renewable energy booth. Resource persons submitted seven papers at the forum and replied to the queries raised by those present. The booths on renewable energy were displayed at the forum. — MNA

University of Medicine (Magway) Station on Magway-Kanpya railroad section. — MNA
El Salvador, Israel sign cooperation agreement

SAN SALVADOR, 19 Dec — The governments of El Salvador and Israel have signed a cooperation agreement to promote the exchange of technical and scientific knowledge in agriculture, local media reported on Friday. The agreement was signed on Thursday by Salvadoran Foreign Minister Hugo Martinez and Israeli Ambassador to El Salvador Mattanya Cohen.

The agreement is aimed to boost the cooperation among the two countries’ official agencies as well as public and private agriculture associations, and to promote El Salvador’s agriculture-livestock development.

China Merchants, Qingdao Port form JV

BEIJING, 19 Dec — Port operator China Merchants Group and Qingdao Port would be setting up a $2.2 billion (911 million US dollars) joint venture to build and operate a container terminal in Qingdao of China’s east Shandong province, China daily reported on Saturday.

Qingdao Port and China Merchants Holdings (International) Ltd. will hold stakes of 50 percent each in the new venture.

The venture called Qingdao Qianwan United Container Terminal Co. Ltd, will develop, operate and manage a total of nine berths with a shoreline of 3,163 m in Qingdao.

It would benefit China’s second-largest trade port during worldwide industry restructuring amid the global financial crisis, said Chang Dechuan, chairman of the board of Qingdao Port Group. The Qingdao Port, the world’s seventh largest in terms of trade volume, shipped more than 300 million tons of goods in the year to Dec 13, a year-on-year increase of 5 percent.

Container throughput rose 2.3 percent in the first 11 months to 9.4 million twenty-foot equivalent units. The new venture is a combination of strength, which will not only increase its ability to deal with the economic crisis but promote the development of Qingdao port,” said Fu Yuning, president of China Merchants Group.

Needles successfully extracted from Brazil boy

SÃO PAULO, 19 Dec — Surgeons successfully removed the four most life-threatening needles from the lung and heart area of a Brazilian toddler, and are evaluating when to extract dozens more allegedly stuck deep into the boy by his stepfather.

Police say 30-year-old bricklayer Roberto Carlos Magalhaes confessed by his stepfather.

Late Friday, the child was in stable condition after nearly five hours of surgery to remove the four needles, which were up to 2 inches (5 centimeters), said Susy Moreno, a spokeswoman for the hospital in the northeastern city of Salvador where the boy was in intensive care. “He’s OK, the surgery was a success, he’s doing fine,” she said in a telephone interview.

Dozens more needles remain inside the boy’s body, but the four removed were considered the most life-threatening.

Doctors will evaluate the boy’s recovery before deciding when to perform at least two more surgeries to remove more needles, she said.

Police say they believe the lover, Angelina Ribeiro dos Santos, told Magalhaes the ritual would keep them together, but she was really seeking revenge on Magalhaes’ wife by having him hurt her son.

Video gamers sharpen speed

ROCHESTER, 19 Dec — Avid video game players get faster not only on their game of choice, but on a variety of unrelated laboratory tests of reaction time, US researchers say.

Psychological scientists Matthew Dye, Shawn Green and Daphne Bavelier of the University of Rochester in New York examined research on video gaming and found gamers don’t lose accuracy — in the game or in laboratory tests — as they get faster.

The researchers say they believe this is a result of gamers’ improved visual cognition. Playing video games enhances performance on mental rotation skills, visual and spatial memory, and tasks requiring divided attention, the researchers said.

Baby car seat carriers recalled

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec — A baby product manufacturer recalled on Friday about 447,000 of its infant car seat carriers, including some branded with Eddie Bauer and Disney logos, after dozens of reports of the carrier’s handle coming loose.

There have been at least three injuries to babies, including bumps, bruises and a head injury.

The recall involves Safety 1st, Cosco, Eddie Bauer and Disney branded infant car seat carriers with certain model numbers. They were sold at department and children’s product stores nationwide from January 2008 through this month.

The recall was announced on Friday by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Dorel Juvenile Group.

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The researchers say they believe this is a result of gamers’ improved visual cognition. Playing video games enhances performance on mental rotation skills, visual and spatial memory, and tasks requiring divided attention, the researchers said.
World air travel falls record 3.1 percent in 2009

MONTREAL, 19 Dec — World airline passenger traffic fell 3.1 percent in 2009, the biggest drop in aviation industry history, fuelled by the global financial downturn, the International Civil Aviation Organization said.

Preliminary figures for airline travel this year showed that international traffic declined by about 3.9 percent and domestic traffic by 1.8 percent, despite sharp growth in some regions. Total passenger traffic — both domestic and international — fell in all regions except the Middle East, which posted 10 percent growth.

All other regions recorded negative growth. With Africa hardest hit at minus 9.6 percent overall, the ICAO said.

The 3.1 percent drop in passenger traffic this year compared to 2008 was the largest on record for the industry and “reflects the one percent drop in the world gross domestic product for the year,” the organization said in a statement.

“The double-digit domestic passenger traffic growth in the emerging markets of Asia and Latin America, and the relative strong performance of low cost carriers in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific helped curtail the decline in total traffic.”

ALBA rejects documents of UN climate conference

CARTAGENA, 19 Dec — The countries of the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas (ALBA) on Friday rejected the climate change document the UN Climate Change Conference is discussing in Copenhagen.

The rejection, led by Venezuela and Bolivia, was announced during a press conference broadcast live by Venezuelan TV.

During the joint Press conference, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said the document was “tricks” supported by the United States.

The ALBA representatives, also including Bolivian President Evo M Orales, Cuban Vice President Esteban Lazo and Ecuadorian National Patrimony Minister M aria Fernanda Espinoza, criticized the Capitalist model dominating the world’s economy which put human life at risk.

“It is about the hegemonic model, and that is why the United States made a tricky proposal, offering money as if that was the problem,” Chavez added.

According to Chavez, 40 percent of the vehicles in the world are in the United States, which has five percent of the world’s population consuming 25 percent of energy on the planet.

“Obama said he did not come here to talk but to take action. But, first he should fulfill the Kyoto Protocol and use the money for saving lives instead of killing. Then we will believe him,” said Bolivian President Evo MOrales.

“What we are discussing here is if we are going to live or die,” he added.

“We know how to do things, but we ask them to take action. But, first he should fulfill the Kyoto Protocol and use the money for saving lives instead of killing. Then we will believe him,” said Bolivian President Evo MOrales.

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Pa Capitol cafeteria closed due to mice

HARRISBURG, 19 Dec—The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture said it ordered the state Capitol to shut down its cafeteria due to a rodent infestation and other violations.

Justin Fleming, a spokesman for the department, said inspectors found numerous violations at the cafeteria, including the presence of droppings indicating a rodent infestation, The Patriot News in Harrisburg reported on Friday.

“There were mouse droppings around the facility too numerous to mention,” Fleming said.

Fleming said other violations at the cafeteria, which is operated by food service company Aramark, included dishwashing lacking the necessary heat to sterilize.—Internet

Ministry of Information
Myanmar Radio and Television
Invitation to Tender

1. Sealed tenders are invited for Myanmar Radio and Television for the following equipment:

   (1) 3KW UHFTV Transmitter System (Dual Cast) 2 Sets
   - Dual Power Amplifier (Analog & Digital)
   - Output Coaxial Equipment & Channel Combiner
   - Programme Input and Monitoring Equipment & Audio/Video Power & RF Cabling Material
   - Antenna System for 3 KW TV TX & RF Feeder Cable 2 Sets
   - 100 Metre Guyed Tower Complete Set 1 Lot
   - Automatic Voltage Regulator & Power Distribution Board for TV TX 2 Nos
   - Generator (Diesel Open type, 65KVA, 380V/50Hz) 2 Nos
   - Supervision Commissioning and site training 2 Lots

2. Tender closing date/time will be on 30.12.2009 at 16:30 hrs.

3. Tender documents are available at the below mentioned address.

   Procurement Committee
   Ministry of Information
   Myana Motion Picture Enterprise
   No.28, Kokkine Yeiktha Street,
   Bahan Township, Yangon
   Ph: 534574, 536029


Lebanon ship rescuers find 14 survivors, 11 bodies

TRIPOLI, 19 Dec—Rescuers on Friday battled rough seas off Lebanon in the hunt for survivors from a freighter which went down in a storm, finding 14 more people alive but also retrieving 11 bodies.

Teams from three countries and the United Nations were taking part in the rescue operation after the Palestinian-flagged Donny F II capsized and sank in bad weather late on Thursday with its cargo of livestock, officials said.

“So far we have recovered (in total) 11 bodies and rescued 39 people” from among the passengers and crew, Tripoli port authority chief Ahmad Tamer told AFP.

Tamer said rescue operations were still under way for 32 people unaccounted for, amid “very difficult work conditions” as storms continued to lash Lebanon. On Thursday waves were reported to be three metres (10 feet) high.

“We hope that more survivors will be found,” Tamer said. Ukrainian cattle boat went down in half an hour: survivors

A statement from the Lebanese Red Cross said that most of the survivors now in hospital were suffering from “exhaustion, broken bones and concussion.”

The army had said earlier that nine bodies were plucked from the sea on Friday and 14 people were rescued, but two more bodies were recovered later in the day.—Internet

Two girls of the Miao ethnic group play the reed flute together in Rongshui Miao Autonomous County of southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 17 Dec, 2009, as the Miao people welcome their new year according to their own calendar.—Xinhua

Low omega-3 linked to schizophrenia risk

BETHESDA, 19 Dec—Deficiencies in omega-3 fatty acids may be a factor in mental illnesses, US researchers suggest.

The study, published in the journal of Neurology and named two omega-3 fatty acids — docosahexaenoic acid and eicosapentaenoic acid — as key to maintaining a nervous system capable of avoiding sensory overload.

The researchers suggest low omega-3 may be linked to the information-processing problems found in people with afflictions of the nervous system including schizophrenia and bipolar, obsessive-compulsive, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorders.

The researchers looked at nervous system function in the offspring of four groups of pregnant mice that had been fed different diets with no or varying types and amounts of omega-3s. Only the mice raised on the two omega-3 fatty acids showed normal, adaptive sensorimotor nervous responses that did not result in the animals being perpetually startled and easily overwhelmed by sensory stimuli.—Internet

Jury awards $100 million verdict against BP in chemical case

HOUSTON, 19 Dec—A federal jury in Texas on Friday ordered BP Plc (BPL:BP) to pay $100 million to 10 workers who were sickened by a 2007 chemical release at its Texas City refinery.

BP spokesman Ronnie Chappell said the company was “shocked and outraged” by the verdict and would appeal.

“We believe the evidence showed that BP did not cause harm to anyone on 19 April, 2007,” Chappell said in a statement. “The verdict, and punitive damages award in particular, is utterly unjustified, improper and unsupportable.”

“They’re like an ostrich with its head in the sand,” said Tony Buzbee, the workers’ attorney, of BP.

“They don’t understand the meaning of responsibility.”

The workers said they were exposed to the chemicals while repairing two refining units damaged in a plantwide 2005 shutdown prior to Hurricane Rita’s strike on the Texas Coast.—Internet

Fighting obesity with food aromas

EST, 19 Dec—A new weapon in the war on obesity may be the satiating effect of food aromas, Dutch researchers suggest.

Rianne Ruisjopch and colleagues at NIZO Food Research in Ede, the Netherlands, report in the Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry that certain food aromas released during chewing activate areas of the brain that signal fullness. That contribution to the feeling of being satiated possibly helps people decide to stop eating, they say.—Internet
**Invasive species threaten Great Lakes**

*Milwaukee, 19 Dec—* A call to re-establish the natural barrier between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River to restrain non-native species is gaining ground, officials say.

Fifty members of Congress representing the Great Lakes states wrote to the US Army Corps of Engineers and US Environmental Protection Agency on Friday urging them to “immediately consider” such a project.

**Gene identified for deafness in boys**

*Bethesda, 19 Dec—* The discovery of a gene linked to a form of hearing loss primarily in males could lead to early treatment, US scientists said.

The gene, PRPS1 is linked to a form of deafness in boys between the ages of 5 and 15, said the study published on Thursday in the American Journal of Human Genetics.

Mothers who carry the defective PRPS1 gene may experience hearing loss as well, but much later in life and in a milder form, said James Battey, Jr., director of the Mary-Coffin Killam Fund of the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders.

“Mother’s deficit cannot be attributed to her offspring,” Battey said. “The gene is not hereditary, it is an acquired condition.”

**Celebrex may affect low-dose aspirin use**

*Ann Arbor, 19 Dec—* US researchers suggest celecoxib or Celebrex may keep low-dose aspirin from limiting blood clots.

Researchers at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor say their study used biochemical measurements and X-ray crystallography to discover Celebrex binds to COX-1 — an enzyme that promotes clotting — and slows aspirin’s COX-1 blocking action.

“The study suggests that Celebrex, a COX-2 inhibitor, may not have any adverse effect on the anti-clotting properties of aspirin,” one researcher said.

**A/H1N1 kills three in Abkhazia**

*TBILISI, 19 Dec—* Three people have died of A/H1N1 and the number of infected now exceeds 1,000 in Georgia’s breakaway republic of Abkhazia.

Abkhazian health authorities said the situation was alarming and local health care facilities had been strained in dealing with rising infection numbers. Five suspected cases were now in a grave state, they said.

Officials urged local residents to seek medical treatment in Zugdidi, a Georgian Province bordering Abkhazia.

**H1N1 flu tests down 75 percent**

*Madison, 19 Dec—* H1N1 flu is on the decline, but close to 4-in-10 US children tested positive last week for the pandemic, officials of a laboratory testing company say.

A report by Quest Diagnostics Inc., a leading provider of diagnostic testing services, released on Friday said the rates of H1N1 influenza virus testing in the United States has declined more than 75 percent since the second peak in late October.

Dr Jay M Lieberman, medical director of infectious diseases at Quest Diagnostics, said the data suggests the “second wave” of virus infection that began four months ago may be coming to an end.

**Death toll of A/H1N1 flu rises to 47 in Costa Rica**

*San Jose, 19 Dec—* The Costa Rican Health Ministry announced here on Friday that A/H1N1 flu death toll in the country had reached 47, while the number of the flu infected patients rose to about 1,500.

Costa Rican Health Minister Luisa Avila, in an interview with Xinhua, also said that the Costa Rican government has established a special commission to review the records of the dead who had the symptoms of the disease.
**SPORTS**

**Rangers’ best to come, says Novo**

GLASGOW, 19 Dec— Nacho Novo has warned the rest of the Scottish Premier League that the best is yet to come from Rangers as they bid to increase their lead at the top of the table.

Walter Smith’s side leapfrogged leaders Celtic when they won their game in hand against Dundee United on Tuesday.

Rangers produced their best performance of the season in the 3-0 win at Tannadice with striker Novo playing a starring role in a win that puts them one point clear of Cletic.

The Ibrox side now have a crucial run of games over the Christmas period starting with Saturday’s visit of Motherwell but Spaniard Novo insists the squad are getting better all the time. “I think we are coming into form at the right time. It is a crucial series of games and we need to be up for them,” Novo said.

“We were delighted to beat United, but we need to hit that level every game, and look to be even better as we have so many tough matches. The boys have been working really hard to get it right after some bad performances. I think the signs are better now, but we can improve.— Internet

**Antic extends Serbia deal to 2012**

BELGRADE, 19 Dec— Serbia coach Radomir Antic has extended his contract with the Serbian Football Federation (FSS) until 2012, to lead the national squad to the 2012 European championships.

Antic said after signing the contract at the FSS offices in Belgrade.

“Thank you for your trust and I hope that both myself and the players I lead will live up to it,” Antic said after signing the contract. Antic has coached the national team since 2005 and has led them to the World Cup finals.

Last month, the FSS said they had decided to extend Antic’s deal until 2011 based on his results which were “on the whole excellent and positive.”

Antic who once coached Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid and Barcelona, was also awarded with the “Golden Ball” for the best coach in Serbia.

Former player for a number of Serbian, Turkish, Spanish and English teams, Antic took over the helm of the national squad in August 2008 after two disastrous campaigns by Serbia for the 2006 World Cup and the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Under his guidance Serbia qualified directly for the 2010 World Cup and face Germany, Australia and Ghana at the finals. Internet

**Soni sets new world record on 200m breast stroke**

LONDON, 19 Dec— US swimmer Rebecca Soni set a new 200m breast-stroke world record in Manchester, clocking 2 minutes 14.57 seconds at the “Duel in the Pool” event.— Xinhua

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**Whitney sets new world record on 100m medley**

LONDON, 19 Dec— US swimmer Rebecca Whitney set a new 100m medley world record in Manchester, clocking 58.57 seconds.

Whitney, who won the 200m breaststroke at the 2007 World Championships, is currently training for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Internet

**Chelsea seek to consolidate lead at West Ham**

LONDON, 19 Dec— Chelsea, who are currently at the top of the Premier League, meet West Ham at Upton Park on Sunday, trying to extend their lead over Manchester United. Chelsea have a lot of financial difficulties and have to sell a lot of players. Internet

**Chelsia’s Frank Lampard (right) vies with Portmouth’s Aaron Mokosena during their Premier League match at Stamford Bridge in London, on 16 December. Chelsea travel to West Ham on Sunday while Portmouth play Liverpool on Saturday. Internet**

**Smit marks 400 individual medley world record**

LONDON, 19 Dec— Julia Smit of the United States has set a new world record in the 400m medley on the short-course at the “Duel in the Pool” exhibition meeting in Manchester on Friday. Smit clocked four minutes, 21.04 seconds to win the race and broke the mark of 4:22.88 set by Kathryn Mekklin of South Africa in Singapore last month.— Xinhua

**Phelps helps US set new world record on 4x100m medley**

LONDON, 19 Dec— Michael Phelps helped US team set a new short course world record in 3 minutes 20.71 seconds in the 4x100m medley relay at the “Duel In the Pool” event in Manchester on Friday. The previous record of 3:23.33 was set by Canada in August this year in Leeds.— Xinhua

**Olympic champion Cielo sets 50m freestyle world record**

RIO DE JANEIRO, 19 Dec— Brazil’s Olympic champion Cesar Cielo completed his sprint record double on Friday by setting a new world mark in the men’s 50m freestyle at the Brazilian swimming championships in Sao Paulo.

The 22-year-old Cielo marked 20.91 seconds to better the previous world record of 20.94 achieved by France’s Frederick Bousquet on 26 April, 2009 in Montpellier, France.— Xinhua

**Michael Phelps of the US swimming team competes in the men’s 4 X 100m medley relay during the Duel in the Pool competition at the Manchester Aquatics Centre in northern England on 18 Dec, 2009.— Xinhua**
Health declarations for arriving passengers cancelled in HK

HONG KONG, 17 Dec — Incoming passengers will not be required to fill in Health Declaration Forms at the Hong Kong International Airport and boundary control points from next Monday, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region authority announced here Thursday.

A government spokesman said the move took into consideration the spread of A/H1N1 flu around the world and in Hong Kong. “It is an opportune time to fine-tune Hong Kong’s boundary prevention and control measures and redeploy resources,” he said.

The Department of Health (DH) will continue to conduct temperature screening for all incoming passengers at the airport and boundary control points while health messages on A/H1N1 flu will also be posted and broadcast, the spokesman said. — Internet

Barcelona’s coach Pep Guardiola speaks with Zlatan Ibrahimovic (R) during a training session in Abu Dhabi 18 December 2009. Lionel Messi’s match-winning gene can inspire European champions Barcelona to victory over Estudiantes in the Club World Cup final on Saturday (1600 GMT), according to the Spanish European champions Barcelona to victory over Estudiantes in the Club World Cup final on Saturday (1600 GMT), according to the Spanish

FORECAST VALID UNTIL EVENING OF 20TH DECEMBER 2009:

Possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin and Chin States, Taninthayi Division and generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions. Night temperatures were (5°C) below December average temperatures in Upper Sagaing Division, (3°C) below December average temperatures in lower Sagaing and Yangon Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above December average temperatures in Shan, Kayah and Mon States, Magway, Bago and Taninthayi Divisions and about December average temperatures in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant night temperature were Hakha (2°C), Loikaw (4°C), Namhsan and Lashio (5°C) each and Pinlaung (6°C).

Maximum temperature on 18-12-2009 was 94°F. Minimum temperature on 19-12-2009 was 59°F. Relative Humidity at (09:30) hours M.S.T on 19-12-2009 was 69%. Total sun shine hours on 18-12-2009 was (8.6) hours approx. Rainfall on 19-12-2009 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, at Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2009 was (111.69) inches at Mingaladon, (122.09) inches at Kaba-Aye and (129.41) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (4) mph from Southeast at (12:30) hours MST on 18-12-2009. Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 20th December 2009:

Possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin and Chin States, Taninthayi Division and weather will be partly cloudy in Rakhine and Shan States, Sagaing; Magway and Mandalay Divisions generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions. Degree of certainty is (40%). State of the sea: Strong easterly wind with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coast. Surface wind speed in strong wind may reach (35) mph. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight decrease of night temperatures in Eastern Myanmar areas.

5th Waxing of Pyatho 1371 ME

★ Only with stability and peace will the nation develop
★ Only with stability and peace will democratization process be successful

★ Anarchy begets anarchy, not democracy
★ Riots beget riots, not democracy
★ Democracy can be introduced only through constitution

People’s Desire

- We favour peace and stability
- We favour development
- We oppose unrest and violence
- Wipe out those inciting unrest and violence

MR always trying for convenience of passengers, improving facilities

Magway-Kanpya railroad section inaugurated

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—Hailing the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day in 2010, Ministry of Rail Transportation opened Magway-Kanpya railroad section of Pyawbwe-Natmauk-Magway railroad construction project at Magway railway station in Magway Township, Magway Division this morning.

It was attended by Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min, Chairman of Magway Division Peace and Development Council Col Phone Maw Shwe, departmental personnel, guests, officials and staff of Myanmar Railways, social organizations, teachers, students and local people.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min said that 7.68 miles long Magway-Kanpya railroad section opened today was first part of the 95 miles long railroad construction project linking Magway, Natmauk and Pyawbwe.

He said that the railroad section was composed of eight big and small bridges and three railway stations; that Magway-Natmauk-Pyawbwe railroad would emerge as railroad network linking Mandalay Division, Sagaing Division, Kachin State, Shan State, Kayah State, Bago Division, Yangon Division and Taninthayi Division.

He went on to say that before 1988, there were only 1976.35 miles of railroad, but 1336.98 miles had been extended in the time of Tatmadaw Government and, thus 3313.33 miles of railroad had so far constructed; that there were only 487 railway stations before 1988 but the number now had reached 843 including three opened today; that there were only 5,650 big and small bridges before 1988, but the number had reached 10,635 as 4,985 more bridges were built; that MR had always been trying for convenience of its passengers and improving its facilities.

(See page 9)

The opening ceremony of Magway-Kanpya railroad section in progress.—MNA