11th AGM of Myanmar Fisheries Federation held

YANGON, 2 Jan—The 11th Annual General Meeting of Myanmar Fisheries Federation was held in conjunction with the opening ceremony of Myanmar marine products sales 2009-2010 at the federation in Insein Township here this morning, with an address by Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence.

It was attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of

Hailing the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day:
Sufficient irrigation by dams, reservoirs shows signs of development of agricultural sector

In the past, powerful and far-sighted kings had encouraged building dams and reservoirs to irrigate farmland as part of efforts for fulfilling sufficiency of food in the country.

During the period of Bagan Era, Zawgyi, Panlaung, Samon and Dokhtawady rivers in Kyaukse comprising nine districts in central Myanmar were dammed up for irrigation purposes, and today, Kyaukse bears the testimony to the rice basket of Bagan Era.

Today, while the country is stable, the socio-economic of the people is thriving showing some signs of improvement. One of the positive signs that have happened in Myanmar within two decades is a growing number of dams and reservoirs for irrigation across the country.

Four political objectives
- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
- National recomposition
- Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

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

Four social objectives
- Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
- Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
- Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
- Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

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Photo shows Ma Mya Dam and its control tower.
A&I Minister attends work coord meeting for boosting agricultural products

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan — The work coordination meeting for boosting agricultural products in Nay Pyi Taw Pyinmana, Nay Pyi Taw Tatkon and Nay Pyi Taw Lewe in Nay Pyi Taw District was held at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation on 1 January.

It was attended by Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo, departmental heads and officials concerned.

The minister said that the ministry is applying two agricultural methods — boosting agricultural production, and per acre yields of crops; that the first method covers not only extensive reclamation of vacant lands but also launching mixed cropping patterns; that to meet the second method, high-yield strains, introduction of hybrid strains, and advanced methods are used; and that steps are under way to figure out issues triggered by changes in climate pattern to avert adverse effects on outputs of crops. The minister underscored the thrifty practice to minimize loss and wastage. He stressed the need for those responsible to collect correct figures and data for development in the agricultural sector, and meeting the targeted output of summer paddy. In conclusion, the minister called for exerting goodwill to improve the socio-economic life of local farmers.

He also called for improving the agricultural sector, after hearing the reports presented by departmental heads. He discussed matters on boosting agricultural production with departmental heads and those in-charge from districts and townships. — MNA

State Flag saluting ceremony to be broadcast live

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan — Myanmar Radio and Television will screen live the ceremony to salute State Flag on the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day from the square of Nay Pyi Taw City Hall at 6:45 am on 4 January 2010. — MNA

Minister Maj-Gen Thein Swe inspects Nay Pyi Taw International Airport construction project

NAY PYI TAW, 2 Jan — Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Thein Swe inspected progress in building of entrance road to the airport, main passenger lounge, laying of concrete and welding work, progress of work of sanitation department and construction of north pier and construction of runway at the worksite of Nay Pyi Taw International Airport Construction Project this evening. The minister gave necessary instructions.

At the briefing hall of the airport, the minister heard reports on construction of VIP Lounge, car park, control tower, earthwork of the entrance road, drains and laying of concrete presented by the managing director of Asia World Co Ltd and officials and gave instructions on worksite safety, supply of adequate water to the airport building and construction of water treatment plants meeting set standards. — MNA
US airstrike kills 3 in NW Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 2 Jan—A suspected US missile struck a car in northwest Pakistan’s tribal region on Friday, killing at least three men in a second attack in less than a day, local TV channels reported.

The morning attack by a drone aircraft struck a vehicle carrying militants in Navana village in North Waziristan. This was the second drone attack in the area during the last 24 hours.

At least three people were killed and two others wounded on Thursday in a US drone attack.

Sources said that shortly after Friday’s attack, Taleban arrived at the scene of the attack and shifted the bodies to an undisclosed location.

Iraq disappointed by US judge dismissal of Blackwater case

BAGHDAD, 2 Jan—The Iraqi government said on Friday it regretted the decision by a US judge to dismiss the charges against five Blackwater security guards who allegedly killed innocent Iraqi civilians in 2007.

“The Iraqi government regrets and is disappointed by the decision,” said Ali al-Dabbagh, spokesman for the Iraqi government in a statement.

“The investigations conducted by the Iraqi authorities confirm clearly that the Blackwater guards committed murder and violated the rule of only using arms under the circumstances of being threatened,” he said.

The spokesman added that the Iraqi government would continue its procedures to prosecute the criminals and protect the rights of the victims, their families and others who suffered losses in the incident.

Ricardo Urbina, the US federal judge, dismissed the charges against the five on Thursday, citing circumstantial evidence.

The airstrikes, he said, were conducted by the Iraqi authorities confirm clearly that the Blackwater guards committed murder and violated the rule of only using arms under the circumstances of being threatened,” he said.

Iraqi security forces had not said who the casualties were, but disclosed that the number injured was 766, most of them in traffic and firework accidents.

New Year’s Day celebrations result in 129 deaths, 1,315 injuries in L America

MEXICO CITY, 2 Jan—While people all over the world are enjoying the New Year’s Day celebrations, feelings in Latin America, however, are mixed because of 129 deaths and 1,315 injuries associated with different tragedies.

Rodolfo Palomino, director of the Road Police of Colombia, said on Friday that during the New Year’s Day celebrations in his country, 36 people died and 45 were injured.

According to Paraguay’s National Police, at least 13 people were killed during the celebrations. Worse still, the figure could rise during the weekend.

In Argentina, authorities have not reported the death toll during the New Year’s Day celebrations, but disclosed that the number injured was 766, most of them in traffic and firework accidents.

Somali pirates hijack Singapore-flagged chemical tanker

LONDON, 2 Jan—A Singapore-flagged chemical tanker was hijacked in the Gulf of Aden on Friday, the European Union naval force (EU Navfor) said.

The 20,000 deadweight-ton MV Pramoni was seized when it was heading to Kandla in India, the Northwood-based EU Navfor said in a statement. The ship has a crew of 24.

It was the first attack in the new year by Somali pirates who have made tens of millions of dollars from seizing ships for ransom in the Gulf of Aden.

“The ship’s master reported by radio that the ship was hijacked and all the crew are well,” the EU Navfor said.

On Monday, Somali pirates seized a British tanker with 26 crew members and a Yemeni freighter with a crew of 15.

Heavy fog causes flight delays at Los Angeles Airport

LOS ANGELES, 2 Jan—Heavy fog caused flight delays at the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) on Friday, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said.

A check with several airlines serving LAX showed northbound flights were delayed by about 35 minutes at midmorning, but southbound flights appeared to be on schedule, said the FAA. Aircraft flying into San Francisco International Airport at midmorning were delayed an average of 51 minutes, with many planes kept idling on the ground before departing for the Bay Area, the FAA said.

Air travel to and from the rest of the nation appeared to be moving smoothly, the FAA’s Web site said. The delays ended with the dissipation of the San Francisco Bay Area fog at noon.

A woman makes red lanterns in YangZhao Village of Jifeng Township in Yuncheng City, north China’s Shanxi Province, on 31 Dec, 2009. The handmade red lanterns sell well as the New Year nears. —Xinhua

The brides react during a group wedding ceremony in Tianyuhaijiao, or “the end of the earth”, a famous scenery site in Sanya, south China’s Hainan Province, on 1 Jan, 2010.—Xinhua

2010.—Xinhua
Ethiopia rejects warning of hunger after drought

Addis Ababa, 2 Jan — An Ethiopian minister has denied reports that millions of people need urgent food aid after failed rains. Disaster Prevention Minister Mikitu Kassa told the BBC that the government was helping those hit by the drought.

He was speaking after the US-funded Famine Early Warning System warned of increased hunger in parts of the country in the coming months. Ethiopia has been extremely sensitive to images showing its people as starving since the famine of 1984-5.

Mr Mikitu said the report was “not evidence-based”. “It is baseless, it is contrary to the situation on the ground,” he told the BBC’s Focus on Africa programme.

He admitted that 5.7 million people were currently getting food aid but argued that “in the Ethiopian context, there is no hunger, no famine” and that the situation was not as bad as in recent years.

“The government is taking action to mitigate the problems,” he said. The latest Famine Early Warning System (Fewsnet) projections show parts of the country in the extreme east, north-east and south-west as “extremely food insecure” — one level below that for a famine — in the period January-March 2010.

The UN has already said it is aiming to feed 20 million people in East Africa over the next six months. — Internet

China finds 8,500 tons of smugled tyres

GUANGZHOU, 2 Jan — More than 8,500 tons of tyres illegally shipped from the United States to China for disposal have been found at a Chinese port, officials said.

Huangpu Customs officials found the tyres in late December in 366 containers at Dongjiangku Port in South China, Xinhua, the official government news agency, said. Chen Wen, a Customs official, said investigators believe the tyres were shipped between December 2008 and February 2009 and may have been at the port for almost a year.

Importing waste tyres to China is illegal, officials say. But the profits from shipping tyre materials for oil refining and retreading can be significant, while the cost of shipping the tyres from the United States is no more than $10 a ton. Three suspected smugglers were arrested, Cai Huangyu of Huangpu Customs said. — Internet

French reporters kidnapped in Afghanistan ‘alive’

KABUL, 2 Jan — Two French journalists kidnapped in Afghanistan are alive and in good health, French media have reported. The reporters were kidnapped along with three Afghan assistants in Kapisa Province north-east of Kabul earlier this week, officials said.

A spokesman for the journalists’ employer, French TV Channel FR3, said they were in good condition. French news agency AFP also quoted a source involved in efforts to free them as saying they were well. “The two French journalists appear to be alive, in good health and being well treated,” said the source. There was no word, however, on the condition of the three Afghans.

Suspected Taleban militants ambushed the reporters as they were being driven through the war-torn region between Surobi and Tagah on Wednesday, a French colleague told AFP. Italian news agency Ansa quoted a spokesman for the local Afghan governor as saying the group had been taken to a remote Taleban stronghold. — Internet

Sweden culls its resurgent wolves

Stockholm, 2 Jan — Sweden is to launch its first wolf cull in 45 years, following a decision by Parliament to control the species’ numbers.

Some 10,000 hunters are expected to be planning to take part — hoping to get a rare opportunity to bag a wolf. But it is thought there are only about 180-220 wolves in Sweden, and the Environment Protection Agency has said only 27 can be shot. Hunters insist there are measures to prevent them shooting too many: “There’s a lot of regulation, hunters have to check the quota every hour,” Gunnar Gereisson, of the Swedish Hunters Association, told Radio Sweden.

Nevertheless, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation is critical of the decision, claiming it is against EU legislation as the Swedish wolf population has not reached a healthy level. A formal complaint will be issued to the EU Commission, Radio Sweden says. — Internet

Scientists report finding a lunar hole that might make a good candidate for a moon colony.

WASHINGTON, 2 Jan — Building a home near a moon crater or a lunar sea may sound nice, but moon colonists might have a much better chance of survival if they just lived in a hole on the moon’s near side, scientists say.

That’s the message sent by an international team of scientists who say they’ve discovered a protected lunar “lava tube” — a deep, giant hole — that might be well suited for a moon colony or a lunar base.

The vertical hole, in the volcanic Marius Hills region on the moon’s near side, is 213 feet wide and estimated to be more than 260 feet deep, according to findings published in Geophysical Research Letters, a journal of the American Geophysical Union.

More important, the scientists say, the hole is protected from meteorite strikes by a thin sheet of lava. That makes the tube a good candidate for further exploration or possible inhabitation, the article says.

“Lunar lava tubes are a potentially important location for a future lunar base, whether for local exploration and development, or as an outpost to serve exploration beyond the Moon,” writes the team, led by Junichi Haruyama, a senior researcher with the Japanese space agency JAXA. — Internet

Moon hole might be suitable for colony

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PFLP militants fire two rockets from Gaza at southern Israel

GAZA, 2 Jan — The armed wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) claimed responsibility on Friday of firing two rockets from the Gaza Strip at southern Israel on Thursday night. Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades, the PFLP armed wing, said in a leaflet sent to reporters on Friday that its members fired two (Grad) Russian-made rockets on Thursday night from Gaza at the southern Israeli town of Nitzov.

“Firing the two rockets is to reiterate that armed resistance will continue against the Israeli occupation and its massacres and wars against our innocent people,” said the leaflet.

It added that “the armed resistance and the national Palestinian unity are the shortest way to liberate the occupied territories and get rid of the military occupation,” calling on other factions to strongly hit Israel by all means.

Meanwhile, Israeli Radio reported that two Grad rockets fired from the Gaza Strip landed on Thursday night at an opened area in Negev in southern Israel causing no harms or casualties. — Internet

Grey wolves have made a comeback since hunting was banned. — Internet

Sweden culls its resurgent wolves

Stockholm, 2 Jan — Sweden is to launch its first wolf cull in 45 years, following a decision by Parliament to control the species’ numbers.

Some 10,000 hunters are expected to be planning to take part — hoping to get a rare opportunity to bag a wolf. But it is thought there are only about 180-220 wolves in Sweden, and the Environ-mental Protection Agency has said only 27 can be shot. Hunters insist there are measures to prevent them shooting too many: “There’s a lot of regulation, hunters have to check the quota every hour,” Gunnar Gereisson, of the Swedish Hunters Association, told Radio Sweden.

Nevertheless, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation is critical of the decision, claiming it is against EU legislation as the Swedish wolf population has not reached a healthy level. A formal complaint will be issued to the EU Commission, Radio Sweden says. — Internet
A girl glances at a sign reading “High Risk of Terrorist Attack” as she stands in the departure security line at Reagan National Airport in Washington on 29 Dec, 2009. A failed attempt to blow up an airplane over Detroit has reignited debate about airport security and the role of new technology such as full-body scanners.—INTERNET

All items from Xinhua News Agency

China’s FDI policies aim to boost industry upgrading

BEIJING, 2 Jan—China’s efforts to boost more foreign investment in high-tech and new energy sectors were congruent with the nation’s industry upgrading goals, Chinese economists said.

Zuo Xiaolei, chief economist with the Galaxy Securities, said when China started its reform and opening-up drive three decades ago, the inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) played an important role in boosting economy growth and creating jobs.

“However, with the rapid development of Chinese economy, if foreign investment is only pooled into low-end manufacturing industries, that is not in agreement with China’s efforts to change its economic growth pattern,” Zuo said. China encouraged overseas investors to invest in new energy, environmentally protection, high-tech, modern service, advanced manufacturing sectors, according to a statement issued on Wednesday after an executive meeting of the State Council, or the Cabinet, chaired by Premier Wen Jiabao.—Xinhua

Mudslide kills 16 in Brazil

MANILA, 2 Jan—After voluntarily spending the holidays away from home, residents in the Albay Province of the Philippines were allowed to go home to the foothills of Mount Mayon on Saturday after state volcanologists declared that an eruption was no longer imminent.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) lowered the alert level around Mayon Volcano from “4” to “3” on Saturday morning as a result of decreased volcanic activity recorded from Mayon Volcano. But Alert Level 3 still means Mayon is in a state of “relatively high unrest” and if it continues, an eruption is still “possible within weeks,” said a local volcanologist.

After the change in status, Albay Governor Joey Salceda ordered the partial decampment of evacuation centres, which are located mostly in public schools set to resume classes after the holidays. In its Jan. 2 bulletin, the Phivolcs said “a declining trend in Mayon volcano’s activity” includes no more “shock ejections” from the crater.

Mudslide in Angra dos Reis

An aerial view of Pousada Sankay hotel buried by a mudslide in Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro state on 1 Jan, 2010. —Xinhua

Evacuees head home as Mayon volcano eruption less imminent

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NATO tankers attacked in west Pakistan’s Quetta

ISLAMABAD, 2 Jan—Unknown militants damaged two NATO tankers in west Pakistan by opening fire on one of them and torching the other, local TV channel reported on Friday.

Police sources said that the incident took place early Friday on the outskirts of capital city Quetta, Baluchistan. The tankers were on their way to the border town of Chaman carrying fuel from the south port city of Karachi for NATO forces in Afghanistan.

The militants opened fire on one of the tankers, smashing its windscreen, the private TV DAWN News reported. They torched the other truck and damaged seriously the vehicle’s front.

However, loaded fuel remained safe and no casualty has so far been reported, the channel said. Police rushed to the site and cordoned off the area. An investigation was underway.—Xinhua
Hailing the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day:

Work in concert to achieve goal of building new nation

Yan Gyi Aung

Safeguard independence and sovereignty through might of patriotism

How long does it take to build a nation into a developed one? We cannot realize such a very demanding plan in a couple of years — it is out of the question. In my opinion, however, a nation can enjoy remarkable development over a couple of decades if the people work hard in harmony with tenacity.

In this regard, I would like to present some instances, referring to experiences of some of neighboring regions. Japan, for instance, is a land where natural resources are scarce with harsh climate and frequent outbreaks of natural disasters such as earthquake and tsunami. In the agricultural sector, it has to make all-out efforts to ensure even food security, let alone food surplus. It joined the World War II, exploiting its natural resources at the highest degree. But, nuclear bomb and incendiary bomb attacks reduced the country to ash and tsunami. In the agricultural sector, it has to make all-out efforts to ensure even food security, let alone food surplus. It joined the World War II, exploiting its natural resources at the highest degree. But, nuclear bomb and incendiary bomb attacks reduced the country to ash and tsunami.

In the post-war period, Japan did not have much resources at the highest degree. But, nuclear bomb and incendiary bomb attacks reduced the country to ash and tsunami. In the agricultural sector, it has to make all-out efforts to ensure even food security, let alone food surplus. It joined the World War II, exploiting its natural resources at the highest degree. But, nuclear bomb and incendiary bomb attacks reduced the country to ash and tsunami.

Another country to which I would like to refer is the People’s Republic of China, which was reconstructed on 1 October 1949. At that time, the majority of the people were in the mire of sufferings triggered by the World War II and very long civil war. The majority of the Chinese farmers, who had just liberated themselves from feudal lords, had to start their new life with one-fourth or half of an acre of land each without harrows, ploughs and draught cattle. Millions of people died in the Great Leap Forward due to food shortage resulting from the defects in the policies. The nation was even on the point of collapse due to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Amidst the deteriorating conditions, the nation in 1978 launched modernization in far aspects and reforms under the guidance of visionary leader Deng Xiaoping. In compliance with his policy that a cat was acceptable so long as it catches mice regardless of its colour, the nation launched Socialist Market Economy. For about 30 years in a rain, China’s economic growth rate stood at more than 10 per cent yearly, accounting for the highest rate in the world. In 2008, the whole world came under global financial crisis. But, China did not suffer much, except fairly slow economic growth. It even provided widespread forecast that China will become the world’s largest economy by 2050.

China, which once used to be branded “Sick Man of Asia”, is now poised to reach world’s superpower position. It is much, except fairly slow economic growth. It even provided widespread forecast that China will become the world’s largest economy by 2050.

Myanmar regained independence in 1948. Myanmar President Sao Shwe Thaik in Declaration on government’s policy and objective delivered at the Constituent Assembly says that “…The initial objective of the people of us who constantly make reviews is to revoke the capitalism of the Union of Myanmar and to build a Socialist country in which the people have exclusive right to manage responsibilities of the State. Socialism is meant to bring prosperity to the people without any discrimination, not to forcibly nationalize public property. Ours will be a good country only if the entire people, regardless of status, have a prosperous future. “…Our government has drawn plans systematically to bring economic prosperity to the entire nation, and to avert unnecessary mistakes in reconstructing war-torn industries. Our government will try to reconstruct the nation in accordance with the plans and to expedite the tasks for economic development of the nation.”

The objectives of the nation in the post-independence period reflected the government’s benevolent attitudes toward economic growth of the nation, irrespective of status, to reconstruct the war-torn nation, and generate a better future of the nation. (See page 7)

POEM:

Our independent country

* Our independent country…
Sovereignty it has
And ruling government also
So powerful is our country
In interest of people
Building nation we
Country we are safeguarding
Ensuring its perpetuity
Exerting efforts by ourselves
Food we are producing
Safeguarding nation
Enhancing our own dignity
Glory we have

* Our independent country…
Running its own economy
Prospering we all are
On own way we are marching
Possessing dignity
Also high is our pride
Never relying on others
Myanmar, the Thadoe Thaki
We in this world
Endeavouring with dignity
To reach the new age

* Our independent country…
Never divided we are
Because of outsiders
Believing in internal strength
Own way we are paving
Uplifting our society
Unity till future
We are the national races
Helping one another
In amity and undivided
Consolidated we are

By blaming one another, we cannot build a developed nation in a short time.

Only when the people work hard in concert will it be possible for our country to catch up with regional countries that are now much more developed than ours. And we can bring a prosperous future to the entire people, as aspired by the nation founders.

Hailing the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day

Zaw Min Min Oo (Trs)
Hailing the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day:
Work in concert to achieve goal of building new nation

Yan Gyi Aung

Objectives of the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day (2010)

* All the national people to cooperate in
  harmoniously strive for non-disintegration of the Union
  and non-disintegration of national solidarity,
* All the national people to collectively
  make all-out efforts to build up a modern,
  developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation
  in accordance with the new State Constitution
  that has been approved by the votes of the great
  majority of the people,
* All the national people to cooperate in
  realizing the States seven-step Road Map
  with Union Spirit and patriotic spirit.

The taste of Independence
U Ba Galay

Thank you Grandpa for securing Independence for
us. Now we are enjoying the fruits of Independence—
we can dress as we like freely; we can sing whatever
songs we like, and during the Thingyan water festival
we can enjoy it freely, hi... hi...

We have fought to regain Independence but that’s not
for you to dress, shout and behave wildly and madly.
It’s for you to try to develop the country on
self-reliance and to shape own destiny, remember!

In fact, according to the experiences of the countries
above, a period of 60 years is much more
than enough for development of a nation. But, the nation
lagged behind other countries in the region
in development due to various reasons.

Here, I do not want to put all the blame
on any particular person. By blaming one another,
we cannot build a developed nation in a
short time.

Only when the people work hard in concert will it be possible
for our country to catch up with regional
countries that are now
much more developed
than ours. And we can bring a prosperous future
to the entire people, as
aspired by the nation
founders.

Myanmar is gifted with fertile soil, temperate climate pattern,
rich natural resources, a reasonable size of
population, a large area,
and a strategic location.
According to many experts, Myanmar has the
potential for economic
growth.

Yet, the nation has not been able to
embrace the golden
opportunity for
development for more
than 60 years.

In this regard, it is not wise to hold any
particular person
responsible for that. The
people are all responsible
for their brighter future.
They are required to
remain cohesive. Putting
blame on others can
cause nothing more than
irresponsibility and
disunity among the
people. Today is the most
opportunet time to build a
new nation. It is time the
entire people work hard
with renewed vigour
to achieve the lofty goal.
Let’s do our bit in the
noble drive.

Translation: MS
The country has enjoyed the sufficient supply of irrigation and water resources which is the lifeblood for the farming sector. Though successive governments had made endeavours for development of the farming sector for nearly 40 years after the country gained the independence, they could only build 138 dams including reservoirs from 1948 to 1988 due to unstability of the State and some circumstances.

Only 1.3 million acres had been fed by irrigation and over 3.8 million acres had been used for double cropped farming. After 1988, new dams and reservoirs have been built across the country. The new dams, reservoirs, river water pumping projects, underground water pumping projects have boosted the agricultural production in the country.

Farmland and water resources play a vital role in boosting agricultural production. As the government has made efforts for reclamation of farmland and irrigation, the number of farmland has increased 23.8 million acres in 1988 to 56.9 million acres in 2008-2009.

As part of efforts for irrigation, the government built a total of 228 dams, 322 river water pumping projects and sank 8001 wells and renovated reservoirs from 1988 to 2009.

**Dam Projects**

Thaphanseik Dam located in Kyunhla Township, Sagaing Division and inaugurated on 17 April, 2001 is the largest one in Myanmar and the longest in south-east Asia. The earthen-type dam is 108ft high and 22,587ft long and it is considered as an inland sea. The dam has enough water storage capacity to irrigate over 500,000 acres in Shwebo, KhinU, Kanbalu, Taze, YeU, Dabayin, Butalin and Ayadaw townships all-year round.

There were only 138 dams built before 1988 could irrigate 1.3 million acres in total. As 228 dams were built from 1988 to November, 2009, the number of farmland has reached 2.82 million acres and total number of farmland has reached over 4.152 million acres.

A total of 27 dams are under construction by the Irrigation Department. Upon completion, those dams will irrigate more farmland and can produce 2,136.30 Megawatts of hydro electric.

**Kadatpana sluice gate near Kadatpana village in Kyauktan Township, Yangon Division.**

**Mone Yin Dam in Namtu Township, Kyaukme District, Shan State (North).**

Hailing the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day:

**Kadatpana sluice gate near Kadatpana village in Kyauktan Township, Yangon Division.**

**Mone Yin Dam in Namtu Township, Kyaukme District, Shan State (North).**

**Dam projects which are underway in states and divisions for development of agricultural sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>State/Division</th>
<th>Number of dams</th>
<th>Benefited area (acre)</th>
<th>Water storage capacity (acre feet)</th>
<th>Hydropower that can be generated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Kachin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25586</td>
<td>36000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kayin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>106455</td>
<td>27550809</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sagaing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>220780</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Taninthayi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>117000</td>
<td>848530</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bago</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12840</td>
<td>2474971</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Magway</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6400</td>
<td>6038000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mandalay</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.30 megawatts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Rakhine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>704900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Shan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>148800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ayeawady</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total 27** 1236990 32627976 (2036.30) megawatts

With the increase in population, demand for food also increases. Hence, it is necessary to boost crop production and to extend land reclamation. It is learnt that Irrigation Department has planned to implement 100 irrigation projects as supply of irrigation water plays an important role in boosting agricultural production.

**River Water Pumping Projects**

Up to the end of December, 2009, Water Resources Utilization Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation built 322 River Water Pumping Projects that can irrigate 467028 acres of farmland including special projects. Among them were a total of 188 River Water Pumping Projects including 16 special projects in order to benefit 326795 acres of farmland in Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay Divisions, central part of Myanmar.

**Underground Water**

Likewise, major agricultural projects for availability of underground water have been implemented. A total of 8001 wells — 5022 tube wells and 2979 pumps including 99 artisan wells in Yinnabin, Monywa District, Sagaing Division, artisan wells in Aydaw-KhinU region and artisan well in Meiktila-Thazi region in Mandalay Division and some artisan wells in Pyawbwe-Phaya Ngahsu region have been built with the aim of benefiting 98355 acres of farmland and supplying drinking water.

Moreover, 377 tube wells and pumps that can benefit 5410 acres of farmlands in Meiktila-Thazi region and 30 tube wells that can benefit 450 acres in Pyawbwe-Paya Ngahsu region supply water to 5860 acres.

(See page 9)
As planned river water pumping projects, 41 projects that can benefit 262,781 acres of farmlands including 20 special projects that can benefit 232,300 acres of farmland, 21 projects of the department that can benefit 30,481 acres of farmland are under way. For ensuring irrigation water sufficiency through underground water, construction of tube wells and manual pumps are being implemented in Meiktila-Thazi region and Pyawbwe-Phaya Ngabu region.

Under the arrangement of the State, Myanmar agriculture has developed as infrastructures have been constructed in agricultural sector within a short period of time. Agricultural production capacity jumped from 120 per cent in 1988 to 171.1 per cent in 2008-2009.

Projects being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and work programmes for long term benefit are foundations of the future of the nation. Lush and green plantations irrigated by dams, lakes and creeks, houses roofed with CI sheets, worksites of farmers with the use of farm machinery and their higher living standards can be seen all parts of the nation.

I would like to urge all national people, in response to the goodwill of the government, to grasp the opportunity for promotion of living standards and for boosting production in agricultural sector through the effective utilization of god-given natural resources.

Translation: AMS+YM
11th AGM of Myanmar...

Yangon Command Maj-Gen Win Myint, Patron of Myanmar Fisheries Federation, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa, heads of departments, the presidents and members of the federation, chairmen and members of brother associations.

Li-Gen Myint Swe gave a speech, calling for achievement of guidance of the Head of State on extended distribution of pedigrees, striving for development of prawn breeding tasks with added momentum and for breeding tasks in rural regions.

Minister Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein also spoke on the occasion. Next, the president of MFF elaborated on works and progress of the federation.

Li-Gen Myint Swe presented cash awards to outstanding offspring of members of the federation. The commander, the minister and the vice-mayor presented cash awards and gifts to those who had written theses on fishery for PhD, technicians, and the CEC member of the federation who got PhD.

Li-Gen Myint Swe, the commander, the minister, the vice-mayor and responsible persons accepted cash presented by donors and presented certificates of honour to them. The commander, the minister, the vice-mayor and the president of the federation opened Myanmar Marine Products Sales 2009-2010. Li-Gen Myint Swe and party then looked round the booths, documentary photos, sea foods and stalls selling ready-made marine products.—MNA

Monywa-Bawditahtaung railroad...

Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min thanked the commander for his close supervision and workers of MR for their efforts. Next, a local spoke words of thanks. Afterwards, the commander and the ministers formally opened Monywa-Bawditahtaung railroad section. The commander unveiled the archway and posed for documentary photos together with locals.

Next, the commander, the ministers and the deputy minister and back to local people welcoming them at stations along the railroad.

Aungthathaya-Bawditahtaung railroad section on Monywa circular railroad is 5.25 miles in length and there are six railway stations and three bridges along this railroad section. The railroad was constructed from Monywa railway station to Aungtha station and then to Bawditahtaung railway station. The construction of railroad section started on 23 June, 2009 and it was inaugurated today.—MNA

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Soe unveils signboard of Monywa-Bawditahtaung railroad section.—MNA

Lt-Gen Myint Swe of Ministry of Defence delivers an address at 11th Annual General Meeting of Myanmar Fisheries Federation.—MNA

Lt-Gen Myint Swe of Ministry of Defence visits Myanmar Marine Products Sales 2009-2010.—MNA

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Soe sprinkles scented water on special train.—MNA

Lt-Gen Myint Swe of Ministry of Defence visits Myanmar Marine Products Sales 2009-2010.—MNA
Cancer cure hope for Tasmanian devils

London, 2 Jan — Scientists fighting a cancer that threatens to wipe out Australia’s Tasmanian devils say they have made a breakthrough. A contagious facial tumour has cut the number of the animals by more than half in 10 years. But researchers say they have now identified the cell type that prompts the cancer and are developing a test to diagnose tumours at an early stage. Tasmanian devils are named for their spine-chilling shrieks and bad temper. They are the world’s largest marsupial carnivores and only found on the island state of Tasmania. Tumours spread among groups of devils through biting, and infected animals die within months of the symptoms first appearing.

An international team of researchers has been working on finding a cure and their breakthrough was reported in the latest edition of the journal Science. “Our findings represent a big step forward in the race to save the devils from extinction,” Elizabeth Marchinton, of the US Cold Spring Harbour Laboratory and the Australian National University, wrote in the study.

Illusionist Hezi Dean emerges from Tel Aviv ice cube

Tel Aviv, 2 Jan — An Israeli illusionist gave an icy reception to the New Year, emerging at midnight from a 7-tonne block of ice, breaking the record of American magician David Blaine.

Hezi Dean, 29, had himself sealed into a specially constructed transparent ice cube in Tel Aviv’s Rabin Square, where he apparently stayed for nearly three days wearing just jeans and a thin T-shirt. At the stroke of midnight, assistants cut open the ice block and removed a weak-looking Dean, taking him straight to a waiting ambulance. His condition was not immediately clear.

Some 200 onlookers celebrated the arrival of the new decade with Dean, many of them carrying signs - from the encouraging “Hezi the great” to the more practical “Don’t die Hezi Dean”. Dean had been attempting to break the record of Blaine, who spent 63 hours in a similar ice cube in New York’s Times Square in 2000.

Bangladesh bans ‘painful’ greeting practice

Bangladesh has ended a British colonial era practice that forces children to line the streets in front of their schools every time a senior official visits, a minister said on Wednesday.

Last month, a government official came under fire in the Bangladeshi media when hundreds of students were made to wait more than two hours under a scorching sun to greet him. Many Bangladeshis recall similar experiences from their school days and visits from senior bureaucrats and other dignitaries can be frequent in rural areas.

“We’ve stopped this practice because it does not set a good example. It’s unnecessary. It’s painful for the students and it makes their guardians angry,” Nural Islam Nahid told AFP.

“Get away from me! I’m a penny pincher of a thief!”

A thief stole 3.5 yuan (50 cents) from a woman, but wound up calling for help from the police in Xi’an, capital of Shaanxi Province.

Zhang, a 19-year-old migrant worker, grabbed a woman on the morning of 9 August, but was soon followed by his victim and five others. Scared for his life, he fled to police for help. He ended up being detained for 15 days.

Glass chessboard

A high-speed train stops at Wuhan Railway Station, in Wuhan, capital of central China’s Hubei Province.

Australian mother charged for locking baby in 60-degree Celsius car

An Australian mother was charged on Wednesday after leaving her little boy locked inside her vehicle in extremely hot conditions while she went shopping.

The woman, who had admitted making a “stupid mistake”, was charged with leaving a child unsupervised in a motor vehicle.

The 18-month-old was rescued by shopkeepers who used a hammer to smash their way into a four-wheel drive in the car park of a shopping centre at McGraths Hill in northwest Sydney.

The temperature inside the vehicle was estimated to be more than 60 degrees Celsius.

The boy’s 34-year-old mother, who has five children, had been contacted by her coworkers investigating the matter, authorities said.

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INVITATION FOR TENDER
TENDER NO. BRIDGE/PU2009-2010/NTST-004
1. Sealed Tender is invited by Public Works, Ministry of Construction, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar for the supply of Steel Trusses and Accessories for AYEYAWADY BRIDGE (PAOKKU) Motor-cum-Rail Construction Project across Ayeyawady River on Nyaungu-Pakokku Road in Magway Division.
2. Tender application form of PAOKKU BRIDGE (including Technical Specifications, Terms of Tender, Tender Schedule and Offer Form) can be purchased with USD 3000.
3. The Payment for tender application must be paid to Public Works’ Account No. SE 20183581# through Myanmar Economic Bank (2) through Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank.
4. The Tender Document can be obtained from Bridge Division, Building No. (11), Public Works, Ministry of Construction, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar only with the Payment Receipt to Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank.
5. Tender should be submitted to the above address not later than 16:30 hours on 5th March, 2010.
6. For further detail information, Please contact to Telephone No. 067-407276, 407466.
Managing Director
Public Works

United flight lands over security concern
ST LOUIS, 2 Jan—A United Express jetliner returned to the St Louis airport shortly after takeoff on Friday because of security concerns about a passenger, officials said.

United Express Flight 7445 was about 15 minutes into its 8 am flight to Chicago with 66 passengers when it returned without incident to the St Louis airport, St Louis Globe-Democrat.com reported.

“After the flight took off, there was a security concern and the flight returned to St Louis were the issue was resolved,” Megan McCarthy, a spokeswoman for the Transportation Safety Administration, were unable to provide specifics of the security concern, St Louis Airport spokesman Jeff Lea said there may have been a concern about getting information from a passenger.

The aircraft was back in the air by 9:40 am and arrived in Chicago at 10:27 am.

“Ultimately, everything was fine,” said Fred Oxley, vice president of communications for Trans States Holdings, which operates United Express flights under the Gojet name.

A swarm of carps scramble for banana at the Zoo of Nanning, southwest China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 31 Dec, 2009. The swarm of carps who especially like eating bananas attracts lots of visitors in recent days. — XINHUA

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV XIANG XIU VOY NO (1010)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV XIANG XIU VOY NO (1010) are here by notified that the vessels will be arriving on 3.1.2010 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon. Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel. No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claim Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR MS CHINA SHIPPING (MALAYSIA) AGENCY SDN BHD
Phone No: 256068/378316/376799

Myanmar Port Authority Holiday Notice
As the wharves warehouses and chellan Offices of Yangon Port will be closed on 4th January 2010 (Independence Day) being the public holiday. Goods will be received shipped or delivered on payment of Holiday Fees.

UK twins turn 102 on New Year’s Day
LONDON, 2 Jan—Britain’s oldest twins, Betty Richards and Jenny Pelmore, celebrated birth- day No. 102 on New Year’s Day with family and friends.

The doctor who delivered them in Manchester, England, arrived on horseback on 1 Jan, 1908, when King Edward VII was on the throne, the Daily Express reported on Friday.

Jenny and Betty, both widowed, live near each other in Cornwalt, Betty, a secretary, married Brandon Richards in 1936 and had two children. Jenny was a teacher who married Hugh Pelmore, an RAF pilot who also raced Bentleys, the newspaper said.

Others may make their age an issue, but it’s not for Jenny.

“We never think about our age much,” she said.

“Life is much faster now but the only thing I don’t understand is computers,” Betty added.

The secret to longevity is simple, Jenny said:

“Having a busy life and not sitting still for too long is the key. The secret is to keep smiling and keep going.”

PART ONE OF TSUNAMI SYSTEM COMPLETED
JAKARTA, 2 Jan—Indonesia has completed the first part of a three-part system to provide rapid early warnings against tsunamis, officials said.

The first part determines earthquake sizes and scopes “and the potential for tsunami generation,” said Fauzi, head of the Tsunami and Earthquake Centre in Jakarta.

The second part, scheduled for completion in April, monitors the sea level. And the third part, projected to be in place by 2011, will include computer modeling of tsunamis, said Fauzi, who goes by only one name like many people in Indonesia.

His update comes five years after a 9.1-magnitude undersea earthquake on 26 Dec, 2004, triggered a series of devastating tsunamis, killing nearly 230,000 people in 13 countries and inundating coastal communities with waves up to 100 feet high.

The Indian Ocean tsunami was one of the deadliest natural disasters in history, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India and Thailand were the hardest hit.

Under Indonesia’s early-warning system — supported by the United States, Germany, France and China, along with United Nations agencies—a tsunami warning is issued for an undersea earthquake with a Richter scale magnitude of 7.0 or higher and a depth of less than 44 miles, the Integrated Regional Information Networks reported.

A Tarantula spider is examined by a scientist. Tarantula lovers be warned: if you are going to get up-close-and-personal with your hairy eight-legged friend, do it from the other side of an aquarium pane or wearing a pair of glasses. —INTERNET

Spider attacks owner with ‘mist of hair’
LEEDS, 2 Jan — Tarantula lovers be warned: if you are going to get up close and personal with your hairy eight-legged friend, do it from the other side of an aquarium pane or wearing a pair of glasses.

That’s a lesson that a 29-year-old man from Leeds in Britain learned the hard way, the British medical journal The Lancet has reported. In February of 2009, the man turned up at St James’s University Hospital in Leeds after three weeks of stinging pain in one eye, which had become red, watery and light-sensitive.

Doctors prescribed antibiotics, assuming he was afflicted with a particularly stubborn case of conjunctivitis, but the treatment did not relieve the symptoms.

When they re-examined the patient with high-magnification lenses, doctors spotted ultra-thin, hair-like projections sticking into the cornea.

INTERNET
Canadian country music sensation Shania Twain lights the Olympic Cauldron with the Olympic Flame at Hollinger Park in her hometown of Timmins, Ontario on 1 Jan, 2010. The Olympic flame is passing through more than 1,000 communities on a 106-day journey before arriving in time for the Vancouver Games on 12 Feb.—INTERNET

Calif police building rigged to explode

HEMET, 2 Jan—Police officers and other members of a gang task force in Southern California found their building had been rigged to explode on Thursday, authorities said. At the headquarters of the Hemet-San Jacinto Valley Anti-Gang Task Force, a gas line had been rerouted through the office, said Hemet police Lt Duane Wisehart. Given the amount of gas that had accumulated, a spark could have ignited the building.

Wisehart told KABC-TV, Los Angeles, "It could have easily leveled that building—that's about a 1,700-square-foot building—and killed anyone inside," he said. "It was planned to blow up the building and anyone in it. We're not really sure why it didn't." When officers arrived for work on Thursday "they immediately smelled natural gas very thick within the office," Wisehart said. Authorities evacuated the building and shutdown the gas as investigators examined the office.

Wisehart told the Los Angeles Times it's "an educated guess" that gang members are responsible. The gang task force, formed five years ago, includes members of the Hemet Police Department, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, the county probation office, the state parole office and the district attorney's office.—INTERNET

650 militants killed in Pakistan in three months

ISLAMABAD, 2 Jan—Pakistan security forces have killed some 650 militants in operation in South Waziristan tribal region in three months, the military said on Thursday.

Thousands of Pakistan troops launched a major offensive against the militants in South Waziristan in October.

Some 30,000 troops took part in the operation and the army has now taken control most of the areas and the militants have fled.

Military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas said that Pakistan Army is carrying out successful operation against terrorists in tribal areas and have killed 650 militants so far in South Waziristan.

"The Army has achieved tremendous success in very short time in the on-going war on terrorism and has taken control of major towns in South Waziristan," General Abbas said, according to state radio. He said operation is continuing as militants have fled into other areas and the Army is chasing them.

Arabic study may have been cover for bomb suspect

SANAA, 2 Jan—The Nigerian suspected of trying to bring down a US airliner with explosives might have used Arabic studies as a pretext for entering Yemen before disappearing for months, perhaps into one of the lawless country’s al-Qaeda strongholds, fellow students and teachers said.

Interviews with staff and students at the Institute for the Arabic Language this week have revealed that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was frequently absent from classes and spent at most one month at the school in Yemen’s capital, San’a, starting in late August before vanishing. Authorities say he didn’t leave the country until December and that his whereabouts during that period remains a mystery.

Adding to the notion that his studies were a ruse, one teacher at the institute said the young man stood out because he already spoke Arabic with a considerable degree of fluency. “I noticed he understood the language very quickly and he was eloquent and convincing in his speech,” Ahmed Moajjib said.

The San’a Institute for the Arabic Language in Sanaa, Yemen is seen on 29 Dec, 2009.—INTERNET

Degas artwork stolen from museum

MARBLES, 2 Jan—An artwork by Impressionist artist Edgar Degas has been stolen from a Marseilles museum, police have said. Les Choristes (The Chorus) was missing when staff at the Catini Museum opened the premises on 6 February.

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The museum claim the artwork was stolen by an intruder, a visitor or a museum insider.

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CIA probes Afghan base security after bomber kills seven

WASHINGTON/KABUL, 2 Jan—The CIA vowed on Thursday to avenge the deaths of seven officers in a suicide bombing in Afghanistan and to investigate security breaches that allowed the second deadliest attack in agency history. The Taleban claimed the attacker was a sympathizer from the Afghan army who detonated a vest of explosives at a meeting with CIA workers on Wednesday. An Afghan was also killed and six CIA employees were wounded, US officials said.

"This deadly attack was carried out by a valorous Afghan army member," Taleban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told Reuters. In a letter to CIA employees, US President Barack Obama mourned the deaths of those he said "served in the shadows." The death toll was the intelligence agency’s highest since eight employees were killed in a bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut in 1983.

INTERNET

22 Koreans land at shoreline of N Philippines after ship capsized

MANILA, 2 Jan—Twenty-two Koreans swam to safety on Friday after their cargo ship capsized off the waters of Claveria town in northern Philippine province of Cagayan, a police official reported.

Cagayan Valley police director Chief Supt Roberto Damian said one of the Koreans was injured and was taken to a hospital in Claveria town for treatment. The 21 others stayed at the residence of the village chief. The group led by the ship captain Jon Ki Ung—landed at the shoreline of Tagatt Norte village in Claveria town around 7 am after abandoning ship, Damian said.

The ship, carrying 2,615 magnetite, left the port of Apparit at 6 pm on Thursday. At around 9 pm while at approximate 6 nautical miles off Tagatt Norte, the ship leaned on the left side listed because of the unbalanced wet magnetite.—Xinhua
Mancini salutes Tevez as United clash nears

MANCHESTER, 2 Jan—Manchester City coach Roberto Mancini hailed Carlos Tevez’s goal-scoring record on Saturday as the Argentine striker eyed an emotional cup clash with former club Manchester United. Tevez has hit 12 goals since leaving Old Trafford last year and will get the chance to add to that total when the Manchester rivals clash in the League Cup semi-finals on Wednesday.

Before that, City travel to Middlesbrough on Saturday for an FA Cup third-round tie. “Carlos Tevez has been outstanding,” said Mancini. “He is a world-class striker who is in top form. ‘He is playing with a smile on his face and to score eight goals during December was an incredible effort.’

Wenger rules out Chamakh swoop

LONDON, 2 Jan—Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger on Friday ruled out a transfer window swoop for Moroccan international striker Marouane Chamakh, a long-time Gunners target. “Chamakh is in the Champions League with Bordeaux and at the top of their league, so he will not move now,” said Wenger. “He has four months of his contract to go with Bordeaux and they have no interest in selling him.”

Twelve months ago, Wenger concluded a January deal for Russian playmaker Andrey Arshavin, but with Robin van Persie out for most of the rest of the season, the Frenchman desperately needs a new striker. But as yet he insists he has no specific target in mind.”For now I am like I was when I was a student and I had to study for an exam, and I do not know what I will write,” he said.—INTERNET

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger on Friday ruled out a transfer window swoop for Moroccan international striker Marouane Chamakh, a long-time Gunners target.—INTERNET

FA Cup out to prove its worth again

LONDON, 2 Jan—How much the FA Cup still matters is a much discussed topic of conversation among English football fans. It is a subject brought into even sharper focus at this time of year when the world’s oldest senior knockout football tournament reaches the third round stage, the point when teams from England’s top two divisions enter the event.

Conventional wisdom has it that the FA Cup has now lost much of its lustre. The advent of the Champions League concentrates the minds of sides at the top of the English Premier League, whose domestic focus is on winning the league title or at least finishing in the top four to guarantee themselves a place in European club football’s elite competition.

AnHELJ backs Ceoh

LONDON, 2 Jan—Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech, in the firing line for some recent error-prone showings, Friday received a vote of confidence from coach Carlo Ancelotti, who described him as one of the best keepers in the world. Cech’s relative loss of form in recent weeks was highlighted by Chelsea taking just nine points from a possible 18 in December, but Ancelotti rode to his defence.

“I said Petr Cech is one of the most important players for this team, one

Tennis star Nadal wins,

Abu Dhabi, 2 Jan—Rafael Nadal gets an early New Year opportunity to avenge the worst defeat of his career Saturday when he tackles bitter rival Robin Soderling, the man who dumped him out of the French Open.

World number two Nadal was defeated for the first time at Roland Garros in 2009, where he was four-time champion, by the towering Swede, a setback which sent his season into a downward, injury-hit spiral.

Nadal, who also lost to Soderling at the ATP World Tour finals in London, gets his chance for revenge when the two meet in the final of the Capitala World Tennis Championship, an exhibition tournament, here on Saturday.

Soderling made the final by beating world number one Roger Federer 6-7 (8/10), 7-6 (7/11), 6-2 in his semi-final on Friday. “I’m very happy to be here in Abu Dhabi, it’s the perfect place to prepare for Doha and the Australian Open,” said Nadal who heads for the Qatar Open next week before defending his title in Melbourne.— INTERNET

Barcelona’s Dani Alves (right), captain Carles Puyol (left) and Bojan Krkic are seen during a training session at Ciutat Esportiva Joan Gamper, near Barcelona, in November.—INTERNET

High-flying Barcelona hope for more joy in 2010

MADRID, 2 Jan—After a memorable 2009 in which they won a record six trophies, league leaders Barcelona hope for more success in 2010 and aim to start on the right note with a home win over Villarreal on Saturday.

Champions Barca lead the table by two points from Real Madrid after going the first 15 league games unbeaten and should be full of confidence after winning the World Club Championship before the Christmas break.

“We don’t know how things will go in 2010 but with the coach (Pepe Guardiola) we’ve got there is no way we are going to relax,” said Brazilian defender Dani Alves.

“We are hoping to start the year well, like we finished this one.”

INTERNET

Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson

Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson confidently expects FA Cup opponents Leeds United to be back in the Premier League and rekindle one of English football’s most bitter rivalries.

Leeds, former English champions and one-time Champions League semi-finalists, have endured a spectacular fall from grace but are currently topping League Two, the third tier of English football. On Sunday, they will play at Old Trafford for the first time since 2004 and will have an opportunity to see how they measure up against the English champions.

INTERNET

Manchester United boss Sir Alex Ferguson
Russia announces anti-crisis program for 2010

MOSCOW, 2 Jan—The Russian government has announced an anti-crisis program that lists social stability, improvement in social security and continued economic growth as priorities.

According to the program posted on the government’s website Friday, the government plans to inject 36.3 billion rubles (about 1.21 billion U.S. dollars) in the job market and continue to fulfill the economic stimulus packages announced in 2009. It will also maintain measures in support of regional credit markets and facilitate major enterprises’ debt restructuring.

To reform the economic structure, the government will set up a fund to provide subsidies and loans in order to resolve the problem of single-industry cities. The government also intends to map out measures to tap the potential of the pension and insurance systems to activate the financial market. —Xinhua
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

VOA, BBC-sowing hatred among the people
RFA, DVB-generating public outrage
Do not allow ourselves to be swayed
By broadcasts designed to cause troubles

Monywa-Bawditahtaung railroad section inaugurated

Nay Pyi Taw, 2 Jan—Hailing the 62nd Anniversary Independence Day 2010, Myanma Railways today opened Monywa-Bawditahtaung railroad section of Monywa circular railroad project in Monywa, Sagaing Division, at Aungtha railway station in Monywa. It was attended by Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Myint Soe, Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min, Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint, Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation Thura U Thaung Lwin, departmental personnel, members of social organizations and locals.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Soe in his speech said that Tatmadaw Government had been upgrading old railroads and building new ones and Aungtha-Bawditahtaung railroad, the first phase of Monywa circular railroad, would contribute to smooth and secure transportation for students of Technological University and 11,411 residents of seven villages.

(See page 10)

Special Train runs on Aungtha-Bawditahtaung railroad section of Monywa circular railroad.—MNA

SPECIAL FEATURES TO HAIL 62nd ANNIVERSARY INDEPENDENCE DAY

Work in concert to achieve goal of building new nation

Yan Gyi Aung

* Our independent country,…
Sovereignty it has
And ruling government also
So powerful is our country

Yan Gyi Aung