

The NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Thursday, 18 December, 2003

Four political objectives

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

Four economic objectives

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

Four social objectives

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

The power of unity

The anti-colonialist struggles and the national independence struggles the people had daringly launched in unity at the risk of their lives and with courage and firm Union Spirit and patriotism have always been prominent. The ever shining victories of the heroes of Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine, Shan and other national races of the Union have already been recorded in the Myanmar history. So also in our time, the Tatmadaw members, who are the good sons of the national people, and all the people of the Union including service personnel have safeguarded the independence at the risk of their lives. They should be honoured and documented for their oneness, discharge of duties based on the strength of unity and dutifulness.

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
(From 55th Anniversary Independence Day message)

Independence Day commemorative features on
Pages 6, 7 and 11.



Senior General Than Shwe gives guidance to local authorities of townships in Pakokku District, departmental officials and local people.— MNA

Government will carry on exerting strenuous efforts with goodwill

in the interest of the entire people and for regional and national development

Senior General Than Shwe inspects construction projects in NyaungU and Pakokku townships

YANGON, 17 Dec — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, accompanied by member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Kyi Min, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Hein, ministers, senior military officers, officials

of the State Peace and Development Council Office and the respective departments, left here by Tatmadaw aircraft and arrived at Bagan-NyaungU Airport in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Division, on 15 December morning.

They were welcomed at the airport by Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Brig-Gen Than Tun of Kyaukpadaung Station, Chairman of Magway Division Peace and Development Council Col Zaw Min and officials.

Senior General Than Shwe and party proceeded by

helicopter to the Ngathayauk Dam Construction Project being undertaken by the Irrigation Department in the township. Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin reported to Senior General Than Shwe on average annual rainfall of the region, and implementation of the project for year-round cultivation of crops and greening in the area in accordance with the guidance of the Senior General. Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint and Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung gave supplementary reports.

(See page 8)



General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party, officials and local people at the meeting to receive guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe.— MNA

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

PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 18 December, 2003

Towards development of Myanma traditional medicine

The State Peace and Development Council has been striving for the development of the State by laying down the 12 political, economic and social objectives and systematically implementing them. Uplift of health, fitness and education standard of the entire nation is embodied in the four social objectives as health and educational standard of the people plays a crucial role in our drive to develop and modernize the nation. This being the case, traditional medicine, priceless national heritage of ours, is being encouraged as a means of promoting public health care services.

The opening of the Fourth Myanma Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference was held at the Pyidaungsu Hall in Kyaikkasan Ground on the morning of 16 December with the objectives of developing and standardizing Myanma traditional medicine and of promoting public health care services through Myanma traditional medicine. Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe sent a message to the conference and Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attended it and delivered an address at the ceremony. In his message to the conference, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe urged all the traditional medicine practitioners to make concerted efforts to preserve and promote the field of traditional medicine especially at such a time when the State is encouraging it and people believe in it. He also said that it required no small effort to develop such a deep and wide branch of study for long. Myanma traditional medicine has a large collection of detailed treatises, potent medicines and effective therapies discovered and invented by traditional medicine practitioners of successive eras.

Therefore, the government has opened an international-level university of traditional medicine to systematically teach Myanma traditional medicine. Moreover, the Traditional Medicine Law has been enacted in order to ensure that Myanma traditional medicines are standardized and safe.

We would like to urge all the traditional medicine practitioners to collectively and energetically strive for the development of Myanma traditional medicine till it can be accepted all over the world.

4th Jade Sales conclude in Phakant

YANGON, 17 Dec — The Jade Sales, which were launched on 13 December at the Jade Hall (Lonkhin) in Phakant, Kachin State under the supervision of the central committee of the jade sales founded by the Myanma Gems Enterprise of the Ministry of Mines, concluded successfully yesterday. Out of 488 jade lots, 373 were sold for K10,286.62 million at the sales. A total of 428 jade merchants from 100 national-owned companies visited the sales. On the occasion, an official presented a gem-studded painting to U Than Lwin of Seintalon Taungtan Jewel Co, the biggest buyer at the sales. — MNA



TALKS ON AIDS: Talks were given to students of BEHS-1 in Insein Township under the title of "Help Fight AIDS" on 17 December. Township Anti-Narcotics Association Chairman U Aye Thein seen giving talks. — IPRED

Soccer Tournament opened

YANGON, 17 Dec — The opening of the five-district soccer tournament in Ayeyawady Division took place at the Monument Sports Ground in Patheingyi on 15 December.

Among the spectators were Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Chairman and South-West Command Commander Maj-Gen Soe Naing, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Tint Swe, senior officers, officials, students and fans were present on the occasion and enjoyed the match. — MNA

Information Minister receives Indian guest

YANGON, 17 Dec — Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan received Indian film director Mr Shyam Sundar Benegal this afternoon at his office on Theinbyu Street here.

Also present at the call were Information Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein, the directors-general and managing directors under the ministry, the chief editor of the New Light of Myanmar daily and officials. — MNA



Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan receives Indian film director Mr Shyam Sundar Benegal. — MNA

Paper reading session of 4th MTMPC held

YANGON, 17 Dec — The paper reading session of the 4th Myanma Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference was held at the Pyidaungsu Hall in Kyaikkasan Ground here this morning.

It was attended by directors-general, deputy directors-general and directors of the departments under the Ministry of Health, member physicians of the Traditional Medicine Council, members of Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association (Central), traditional medicine practitioner delegates from States and Divisions, members of the leading committee of the conference, officials of the Traditional Medicine Department and the Institute of Traditional Medicine, resource persons and guests.

Director-General Dr Maung Maung Wint of the Medical Research Department presided over the morning session together with members of TMC U Soe Hlaing and U Maung Nyan. Daw Kyi Kyi Oo of the Institute of Traditional Medicine, Daw Mar Mar Nyein of the Medical Research Department (Lower Myanmar), U Mya Than of Yangon, U Min Tin Maung of Mawlamyine, U San Hein of Aungmye, U Phone Myint of Pyaw, and U Tha Yin of Upper Myanmar submitted papers on traditional medicine.

Director-General Dr Thein Swe of the Traditional Medicine Department

chaired the first part of the afternoon session together with member of TMC U Htay Myint and delegate U Hla Tun of Bago Division. Dr Hla Myat Mon of the Ministry of Science and Technology, U Pyi Sein of Mandalay, and Daw Tin Moe Khaing of Zu Zun Za traditional medicine production submitted papers on traditional medicine.

Director Dr Tun Pe of the Medical Research Department (Lower Myanmar) presided over the second part of the afternoon session together with delegate U Kyaw Sein (Mogoke) of Yangon Division and staff officer U Thein Win of the Traditional Medicine Department. Physician Lt-Col Lwin Ko of No 1 Defence Services Hospital (500-bed) in Meiktila and U Than Myint Tun of Hlegu submitted papers on traditional medicine.

Those present also took part in the discussions. The paper reading session continues tomorrow.

MNA

Objectives of the 56th Anniversary of Independence Day

- All the national people to collectively safeguard the national independence and ensure perpetuation of sovereignty
- All the national people to be united to ensure non-disintegration of national solidarity
- All the national people to strive for the emergence of enduring State Constitution and for the building of a new, modern and developed nation
- All the national people to participate with full sense of Union Spirit and Patriotism in the successful implementation of the seven-point roadmap of the State.

Drug dealer sentenced

YANGON, 17 Dec — The combined team made up of members of local intelligence unit, Mandalay Special Anti-drug squad and Meiktila Police Station 1, acting on a tip-off, searched the house of Ma Khin Moe of Kantha Aye village, Meiktila Township, and seized 14 grams of dried poppy, four grams of marijuana and 163.2 grams of raw opium on 21 October 2002.

Regarding the sei-

zures, the authorities took action against Ma Khin Moe, daughter of U Thang Sein, of Kantha Aye village under Section 15/19(A)/20(A) of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

The Meiktila District Court (branch) heard the case and sentenced her to 20 years' imprisonment under Section 19 (A) and 20 years' under Section 20 (A), to run concurrently.

MNA

Poppy plantations destroyed in Pinlaung

YANGON, 17 Dec — A combined team comprising members of Pinlaung Township Myanmar Police Force and the Special Region 6 and departmental staff destroyed 7.25 acres of poppy plantations in the west of Targo village, Htipaung village-tract, Pinlaung Township, at estimated map references of R 347461 and R 349465 on 18 November this year.

In 2003-2004 poppy cultivation season, a total of

2,245.17 acres of poppy — 2,179.85 in Shan State (South), 13.48 in Shan State (North), 48.84 in Shan State (East) and three in Kachin State — have been destroyed.

MNA

TV programmes broadcast through Reed Khawdar retransmission station

YANGON, 17 Dec — Under the Myanma Radio and Television (MRTV) broadcasting extension programmes, a television retransmission station is being built in Reed Khawdar of Chin State.

Commencing on 15 December 2003, MRTV programmes are being broadcast through the station.

MNA

Narcotic drugs seized in Monywa

YANGON, 17 Dec — A combined team comprising members of local intelligence unit, Myanmar Police Force and special anti-drug squad in Monywa on 6 October seized three packages of raw opium weighing 11.41 kilos hidden in two boxes at the jetty on Strand Road in Yongyi Ward, Monywa, and arrested the two drug traffickers.

In connection with the case, the police station concerned filed the drug traffickers — U Than Hlaing, son of U Hla Aung, of Maetaw Village in Pyin Oo Lwin Township and Daw Mu Saung, daughter of U Sayaung, of Ward-3, Langkho — under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

MNA

Experts say despite Saddam's capture, Iraq war was wrong

WASHINGTON, 17 Dec — As the excitement settles over the capture of Saddam Hussein, questions remain about the validity of the US presence in Iraq.

"Saddam's capture is further evidence that if a threat was posed by Iraq, and that certainly is debatable, the threat has been removed," said Charles Pena, director of Defence Policy Studies at the Washington-based CATO Institute, in an interview yesterday.

Because no weapons of mass destruction have been found, Pena said it is time for the US to remove its troops and "hand the government back to the Iraqi people and let them determine their own future."

The US, he said, should "get back to the real threat which is the Al-Qaeda terrorist network."

Pena said the US is responsible for a "huge" vacuum in Iraq. "We created it when we removed Saddam Hussein from power. We are part of the problem as opposed to part of the solution."

The Bush administration has waged an unnecessary war to dispose a dictator: "we started with weapons of mass

destruction, then tried the Al-Qaeda angle, but in the end decided to focus on democracy.

"This is all about installing a government in Baghdad that is friendly to the US. Strip off the veneer and rhetoric — and this is all about putting a regime in Baghdad that will be friendly to the US," said the CATO director.

Bush's definition of democracies is ironic, he said. "We are using democracy as an excuse for everything that is going on in Iraq, and at the same time the president told the Taiwanese that they can't be independent. How can you do that? If you truly believe in democracy, democratic values and giving people their liberties — which is what the president is saying about Iraq — then how can you tell another group of people who feel they are being repressed by a communist regime in Beijing that they can't have independence? The administration's policies are laced with hypocrisy," said Pena. —Internet

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Saddam's sister says US forces drugged him

DUBAI, 17 Dec — Saddam Hussein's sister said on Monday her brother would never have surrendered meekly and that US forces must have used drugs or gas to paralyze him.

"Saddam Hussein, hero of Arabs, would never surrender like this. He must have been subjected to drugs or nerve gas to paralyze him, for he is not one to surrender in this humiliating manner," Nawal Ibrahim al-Hasan told London-based newspaper *al-Quds al-Arabi* by telephone from an unidentified Arab capital.

The 66-year-old former Iraqi leader was caught on Saturday in a pit hideout near his northern Iraqi home town of Tikrit without firing a shot. A grubby Saddam was later shown by video submitting to medical exams at the hands of US soldiers.

"Is it possible for a president to be humiliated like this and for the Americans to comb through his hair for nits?" al-Hasan said in the interview, to be published in the Arabic-language daily's Tuesday edition.

"This is not the Saddam Hussein we know. He must have been drugged or injected with illegal chemicals. What happened is an insult to all Arabs and Muslims," the paper quoted her as saying as she wept.

Al-Hasan said Arab leaders should ensure that her brother had a fair trial in an international court and not in Iraq.

The US-backed Iraqi Governing Council said Saddam would go on trial facing a possible death penalty. US President George W Bush said it was up to Iraqis to decide his fate provided the court hearing was fair.

MNA/Reuters

Zebari urges UN to return to Iraq

NEW YORK, 17 Dec — Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari urged the United Nations on Tuesday to return to Iraq.

However, Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he needed a clearer picture of what the international body's role would be so he can decide whether to risk the lives of UN staff.

Speaking three days after Saddam Hussein's capture, Zebari said the Iraqi Governing Council is ready to help provide security for the United Nations to return and play "an expanded role" as the country moves toward the establishment of a provisional government.

Annan pulled all UN international staff out of Iraq in October following two bombings at UN headquarters and a spate of attacks targeting humanitarian organizations.

The first bombing on August 19 killed 22 people, including top UN envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello.

Internet



Iraqi police inspect the wreckage of a truck after an explosion in Baghdad, on 17 December, 2003. The bomb beside a fuel truck set off a huge fireball in which at least 17 people were killed in Baghdad on Wednesday, as violence gripped Iraq in the wake of the capture of Saddam Hussein. —INTERNET

457 US soldiers killed since start of military operations in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 17 Dec — 457 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, according to the Department of Defence. Of those, 313 died as a result of hostile action and 144 died of non-hostile causes, the department said.

The British military has reported 52 deaths; Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Denmark, Ukraine and Poland have reported one each.

On or since 1 May, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 319 U.S. soldiers have died 198 as a result of hostile action and 121 of non-hostile causes, according to the Defence Department's figures. Since the start of military operations, 2,259 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department's figures as of Tuesday. Non-hostile injured numbered 363. The latest deaths reported by the military: A soldier was fatally injured in a vehicle accident near al Asad. —Internet

CNN says Saddam being held in Qatar

LONDON, 17 Dec — CNN reported on Monday that Saddam Hussein had been moved from Iraq to a US installation in the Gulf state of Qatar.

"CNN has learned that Saddam Hussein is being held in a US installation in Qatar," the US-based network said in a broadcast monitored in London.

The United States Central Command has its war headquarters in Qatar.

The US commander in Iraq, Lieutenant-General Ricardo Sanchez, declined comment on Saddam's whereabouts in an interview with CNN.

MNA/Reuters



An Iraqi man gestures as he speaks about a bomb explosion with a US soldier in Tikrit, Iraq on 16 Dec, 2003. Three US soldiers were wounded Tuesday in a roadside bomb explosion in Saddam Hussein's hometown. —INTERNET

Nine die in Baghdad-area bomb attacks

BAGHDAD, 17 Dec — Homicide car bombs killed nine Iraqis on Monday, underlining President Bush's warning that Saddam Hussein's capture would not end strife.

One car bomb ripped through a police station north of Baghdad. The bomber and seven victims died and more than 20 people were wounded. A second explosives-laden car blew up in Baghdad by another police station, killing the bomber and wounding eight police and four passers-by.

In the captured leader's hometown of Tikrit, US soldiers used batons to disperse protesters chanting, "We sacrifice our blood and souls for you, Saddam."

If anyone imagined Saddam's arrest would bring swift peace, the words of US-trained Iraqi policeman Ahmed Ali may cause a rethink. "We want this to lead to more attacks on the Americans. There will be a holy war against them. It will be much worse. We all love Saddam," he said. —Internet

Daughter wants international trial for Saddam

DUBAI, 17 Dec — Saddam Hussein's daughter Raghda said on Tuesday she and her sisters wanted an international trial for their father caught by US troops this week.

"He should not be tried by the (Iraqi) Governing Council which was put in place by occupiers," Raghda Saddam Hussein told Dubai-based Al Arabiya television by telephone from Jordan.

"We want an international, fair and legal trial," she said in a voice chock-full of emotion, adding that his family would appoint a lawyer to defend him.

Raghda and her sister Rana, who fled Iraq shortly after US troops took control of Baghdad in April, now live in Jordan which has granted them asylum. The whereabouts of her mother and another sister, Hala, are not clear.

Raghda, Saddam's eldest daughter, said she could not bear to see the images the US administration in Iraq had broadcast of her father, the former Iraqi president who appeared grubby and submissive after his capture on Saturday.

Raghda said her father must have been drugged before his capture — her explanation for the humiliating pictures of a man who was seen by many Arabs as a hero for his anti-Western stance. "A lion remains a lion even in captivity. Do you think they would have been able to capture him if they had not drugged him? I am sure that they could not have done so," she said. —MNA/Reuters

Iraqi leaders see international role in Saddam trial

PARIS, 17 Dec— Top members of Iraq's Governing Council said on Monday Saddam Hussein should be tried by Iraqis but that there should be some form of international involvement in the process.

Abdelaziz al-Hakim, president of the US-appointed Council, cited the special tribunal set up by the Council last week as the proper court for a trial which many believe would lead to a death penalty.

"It is natural that there is an international presence at this tribunal," Hakim, speaking through an interpreter, told reporters during a visit to Paris with other members of the Governing Council.

Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council

for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, a Shiite party, did not specify how such involvement would work but said the hearings of the tribunal would be public, and Saddam and any co-defendants would enjoy full legal rights.

Interim Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari called for "a formula where Iraqi grievances can be addressed and international grievances can be addressed." "We believe he should be

tried by an Iraqi court, but many of his crimes have an international dimension — like war crimes, like crimes against humanity. So there could be an international dimension," Zebari said. The Governing Council set up the special tribunal last Wednesday to try Saddam and his key associates, saying the United States had agreed to hand over those in its custody.

MNA/Reuters

Syrian President says Damascus is not Iraq

ATHENS, 17 Dec — Visiting Syrian President Bashar al Asad asserted here Monday that the situation in Iraq will never happen to Syria, stressing that Syria is not Iraq.

"What happened in Iraq is an issue concerning Iraq and not Syria. It does not concern us. Syria is not Iraq," the Syrian President told reporters after meeting with Greek Parliament Speaker Apostolos Kallamantis.

He made the remarks on the US capture of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein on Sunday.

"We are a country that maintains relations with all countries in the world and that has an active role in all things concerning international politics," Al Asad added.

The Syrian President arrived here Sunday for a four-day official visit and is also expected to sign the Olympic Truce on Tuesday.

MNA/Xinhua

Britain opposes death penalty for Saddam

LONDON, 17 Dec— Washington's closest Iraq war ally Britain said on Monday it would play "no part" in any trial of Saddam Hussein that might lead to his execution.

But London — which abolished capital punishment 40 years ago — also made clear it would reluctantly accept death for the captured ex-leader if that was what an Iraqi tribunal ruled. "The United Kingdom is against the death penalty," Britain's senior envoy to Iraq Jeremy Greenstock said.

"So we would have no part of tribunal or a process that had the death penalty as one of its penalties," MNA/Reuters



Iraqis shout anti-American slogans while holding pictures of captured former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, during a rally in Mosul, on 16 Dec, 2003. —INTERNET

Iraqi interim leaders ask for French role in reconstruction

PARIS, 17 Dec — Iraq wishes to have a strong relation with France and France has a role to play in Iraq's reconstruction, Iraq's interim Governing Council (IGC) leader Abdel Aziz al-Hakim said here Monday.

"It is essential for the Governing Council to have a strong relationship with France," said Hakim after meeting with Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin.

"The French people and government have always been and are today at the side of the Iraqi people. France has been one of the first countries to insist on the transfer of authority as quickly as possible to the Iraqis," he said.

Hakim arrived here Sunday from Spain, leading a delegation of top IGC members on a European tour that will also take them to Germany and Italy.

Another member of the delegation, Jalal Talabani, outgoing rotating leader of the United States-installed IGC, also said the interim authorities want a French presence, notably in the political field.

"We ask for the advice and support of France in order to affirm Iraq's sovereignty and independence," he said.

He also thanked the French Government for its decision to consider to partially cancel Iraq's 120-billion-dollar debt in liaison with other members of the Paris Club.

"We wish that other European countries will act like France," said Talabani. — MNA/Xinhua

Bidding for Iraq contracts delayed again

WASHINGTON, 17 Dec— The Pentagon said on Monday it had delayed until early January a conference for companies wanting to bid for 18.6 billion US dollars in US-funded contracts to rebuild Iraq that was scheduled for this week.

The Pentagon has also delayed several times the issue of tenders for the deals, which have been clouded with controversy after the US military limited competition for prime contracts to nations that supported the US war effort.

The bidding conference, which had been set for Friday near Washington DC,

will now be held early in January, said Robyn Powell of the National Defence Industrial Association, which coordinates meetings between industry and the military.

"I don't know why the conference has been cancelled again," Powell told Reuters.

MNA/Reuters

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French lawyer says ready to defend Saddam if asked

PARIS, 17 Dec— French lawyer Jacques Vergas said on Monday he would be ready to defend Saddam Hussein and that the former Iraqi leader must be presumed innocent at any trial.

"If he had to be prosecuted tomorrow, he would have to be presumed innocent," Vergas told French radio station Europe 1, adding that Saddam should be allowed to receive visitors if he is held as a prisoner of war.

Asked if he was ready to defend Saddam, Vergas said: "Yes." But he made clear he was only speaking hypothetically.

Saddam could be tried by a special tribunal set up last week by Iraq's US-appointed Governing Council with a mandate covering war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Charges against him could focus on the campaign against Iraqi Kurds in the 1980s, the use of chemical weapons on Iranian troops and Kurdish civilians, the suppression of the Kurdish and Shiite uprisings in 1991, the punishment of the Marsh Arabs and the forced expulsions of ethnic minorities in the north.

Vergas warned such charges could implicate Western leaders who once backed Saddam.

MNA/Reuters

Oil prices turn higher despite Saddam capture

NEW YORK, 17 Dec— Oil prices turned higher on Monday amid warnings that the capture of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein would not put an end to sabotage attacks on Iraq's oil infrastructure.

US light crude on the New York Mercantile Exchange settled up 14 cents to 33.18 US dollars a barrel after two car bombs exploded at police stations in Baghdad, killing nine and dashing hopes that Hussein's capture would slow a persistent resistance.

Prices had initially dropped 1.30 US dollars after US soldiers on Saturday found the former Iraqi leader hiding in a pit at a farm near his hometown Tikrit in northern Iraq.

In London, Brent crude added 5 cents to 30.42 US dollars a barrel.

"There should be an

improvement in security, but we can't eliminate any other possible (pipeline) attacks in the future," Iraqi Oil Minister Ibrahim Bahr al-Uloum told Reuters by telephone from Teheran.

Sabotage attacks have kept the northern line from Iraq's Kirkuk fields to the Turkish Mediterranean closed since the war, cutting oil export revenue funds for reconstruction.

Iraq's sole oil export option for now is the southern Basra oil terminal in the Gulf, which has been shipping just under 1.5 million barrels per day of Basra

crude so far this month.

"We plan to reopen the northern pipeline when the security situation permits," Uloum said. He said there was no immediate alteration to the timetable for increasing oil exports, forecasting sales of 2 million bpd seen by the end of March.

The attacks on Iraq's oil infrastructure have helped hold oil prices strong this year, with OPEC's reference crude price averaging 27.99 US dollars up to December 11 — right around the top end of the cartel's 22-28 US dollars target price band.

MNA/Reuters



US soldiers from 1-8, 3rd Brigade, of the 4th Infantry Division search a store in the industrial section of Samarra, Iraq, on 17 December, 2003. —INTERNET

CONTINUING RESISTANCE AGAINST US TROOPS



Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Division carry a wounded soldier to the casualty evacuation station, in Tikrit, Iraq, on Tuesday, 16 December, 2003. Three soldiers were wounded in a roadside bomb explosion in Saddam Hussein's hometown.

INTERNET



Smoke and fire rise from a container after a train was attacked near Fallujah, on 16 December, 2003. An outburst of violence on Tuesday showed Saddam Hussein capture offered no quick fix to Iraq woes.

INTERNET



An American soldier from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Regiment, (1-22) of the 4th Infantry Division secures an area near the government building in Tikrit, north of Baghdad, on Tuesday, 16 December, 2003. —INTERNET



Iraqis shout anti-American slogans at US soldiers, while holding pictures of arrested Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein during a rally supporting him in Mosul, on 16 December, 2003.

INTERNET



Iraqi women are seen through the broken window of their car after a car bomb suicide attack at a neighbouring police station, on the outskirts of Baghdad, on 15 December, 2003. Two car bombings in Iraq on Monday killed nine people and shattered hopes that the capture of Saddam Hussein would bring a quick end to violence—INTERNET



An Iraqi girl, Heba Hachem Hussein, injured in previous night's clashes between supporters of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and Iraqi police and US troops, is held by her mother in a Baghdad hospital on 16 December, 2003. —INTERNET

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Blood is thicker than water

It has been so many years since Myanmar emerged as a nation in the world. With firm evidence, Myanmar can also prove to the world that she is the place where human beings originated.

Since many years ago, Myanmar already had the territory, religion, advanced architecture and civilization, irrigation works, abundant supply of food, and the modern armed forces that had warded off all the intruders. Besides, Bagan State stands as the sound proof to the fact.

England began to start with the Anglo-Saxon race when the Bagan was famous as the First Myanmar Empire in the world. England was not a country yet when King Anawrahta ascended the Bagan throne in 1044 AD.

King Anawrahta was able to unite the Bagan State and form a strong army comprising various national races and heroes to defend the nation. Unity and a strong army are the essential strength for the nation.

The most important thing is that blood must always be thicker than water in every critical moment. Moreover, if there is no solidarity and unity among the national races in times of emergency, if the united strength, an essential requirement, becomes weak or is in a state of decline, it

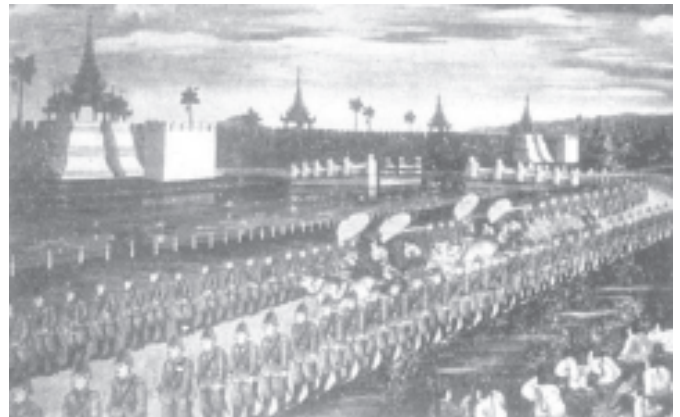
is sure that we are going to lose our independence.

The State will exist forever and be always strong if all uphold Our Three Main National Causes. But if we fail to do so, the nation is doomed to collapse.

For example, the crises during the reign of King Thibaw of the Yadanabon period were the reasons behind the loss of independence.

If we study the First Anglo-Myanmar War and the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, we can know the fact that the colonialists wanted to seize Myanmar long before the start of the first war. But they could not realize their scheme as Myanmar people were able

Since the end of the Second Anglo-Myanmar War, the colonialists were trying to find an excuse to justify their act to occupy Myanmar. At that time, the problem of Bombay-Burma timber company arose. The company cut 80,000 trees within a two-year period, while presenting an account statement showing that the company fell only 30,000 trees during the period. Thus the Myanmar government fined the company K 2.3 million. Instead of paying the fine, the company lodged a complaint with the Governor of India. The



Artist Saya Chone depicted the loss of freedom when King Thibaw, the last king of Konboun Dynasty, and his queen Suphayalat was taken away by the colonialists on 29 November 1885.

Myint Thurein



The strength of Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine and Shan national races who fought the colonialists unitedly.

to ward off their attacks with strong Union Spirit and patriotism. However, they were waiting for an opportune time when the administration and unity the Yadanabon State began to decline.

governor gave an ultimatum which included acts to violate sovereignty of Myanmar. Although the Myanmar Government withdrew its punishment, the colonialists started the Third Anglo-Myanmar War to seize Myanmar by force. The Governor of India ordered the colonialist army to march to Myanmar on 11 November 1885.

During the time, the administrative machinery of King Thibaw was in a state of decline. As the colonialist troops were marching towards Thayet via Yangon, King Thibaw held a conference with his ministers. But there were sharp differences among the ministers. The split appeared between the two groups — one led by Kinwun Mingyi U Kaung and the other by Taingta Mingyi. Kinwun Mingyi did not want to fight the colonialists, while Taingta Mingyi was insisting on repulsing the intruding army. Unity was weak in the country.

Because of the weakness in the administration and unity,

knew the situation. They did not permit the King to pay homage to the Maha Muni Buddha Image while on the way to the jetty, for, they were afraid that Myanmar might rescue their King.

Myanmars are a kind of people whose blood becomes thicker in times of emergency. They got hold of whatever available weapon to attack the colonialists to liberate the nation.

On the Shan plateau, Prince Lin Pin (Son of Crown Prince Kanaung), the Mongnai Sawbwa, Yaksawk Sawbwa, Mongpon Sawbwa and Kengtung Sawbwa fought for national independence; on the Kayah mountains the Kayah patriots including Saw Phya and Saw Laphaw were battling against the occupiers. Others fighting

Myat who led Shan, Kachin and Bamar anti-colonialist forces fighting against the intruders for independence. His troops launched daring attacks on the colonialist troops in Hmankin Hill, Kawlin and Wuntho regions. Because of the unity among the national races, the independence fighters under the command of Wuntho Sawbwa U Aung Myat were able to launch fierce attacks against the colonialists.

Despite the difference in the places they are residing in, the national races warded off the colonialist armed intrusion in oneness as a single consolidated force at the same time. It is one of the examples of the national races whose blood is thicker than water in every critical moment.



Myanma patriots attacked the colonialists all over the nation from 1886 in order to make the motherland, Myanmar, stand as a sovereignty State for ever.

gallantry of the national races in facing the colonialists during the First and the Second Anglo-Myanmar Wars. Patriotism would be high among them as it would be so heart-rending for them to see the King taken away by the enemy.

And the colonialists

for national independence were Kachin ethnic people led by Phonkan Duwa, Chin ethnic people led by Kyun Beek and Prince Shwe Gyobu and Kayin ethnic people of the Ayeyawady delta region.

An eminent patriotic leader among them was Wuntho Sawbwa U Aung

In this regard, all the national races are required to join hands firmly for perpetuation of national independence and the nation to ever exist as an independent Union. Thus, our blood must be thicker than water in times of emergency.

(Translation: TMT)



Leaders of Chin national race who waged war against the British colonialists with unyielding spirit.

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

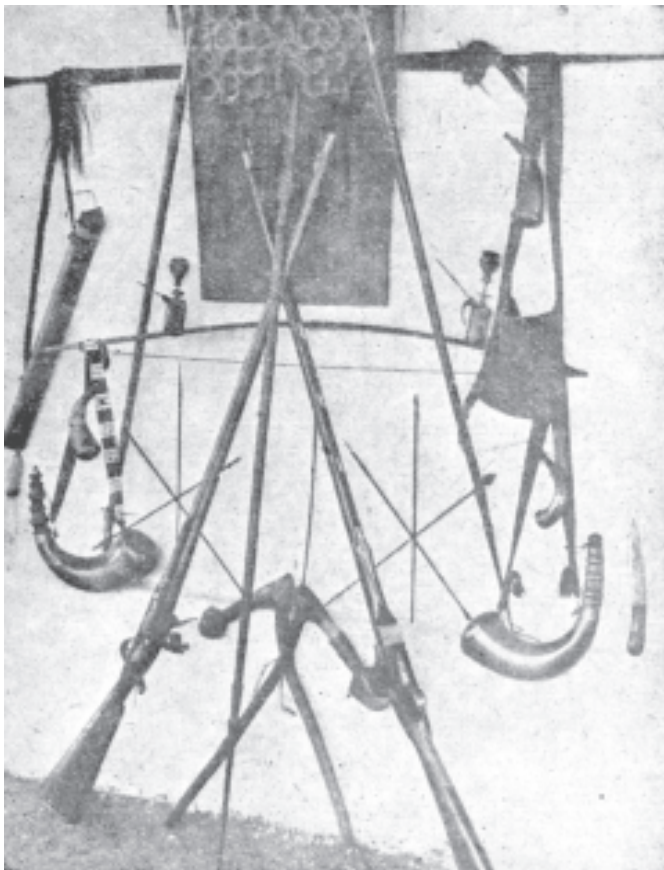
Images of Myanma history



The Prince of Linpin, patriotic hero, fought the colonialists in Shan State (South) since King Thibaw was taken away.



Wuntho Sawbwa U Aung Myat, a patriotic hero who received the 'Maha Vamsa Sirijaya Sohambva' title, drove the colonialists out of Wuntho.



Weapons used in fighting against the colonialists

Chin nationals used the kind of weapons shown in above photo in launching brave attacks on the colonialists.

Daipha Duwa

Kachin nationals also took part in the attacks against the British colonialists. Daipha Duwa was among the leaders of Kachin nationals.



Bo Ya Nyunt

Bo Ya Nyunt was one of the heroes fighting the colonialists in Welaung area from 1886. He was also the one who bravely fought the colonialists.





Senior General Than Shwe inspects works in progress of Ngathayauk Dam Project in NyaungU Township.— MNA

Government will carry on exerting strenuous ...

(from page 1)

In response to the reports, Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance, saying that in NyaungU Township, water supply projects are being implemented for agricultural purpose including Ngathayauk Dam Construction Project and Ngathayauk River-water Pumping Project. He added that such water supply projects do not economically benefit the State.

However, the government with goodwill spends a huge sum of money on the projects for regional development and raising the living standard of local people. In this regard, Senior General Than Shwe noted that officials concerned are to make efforts to meet the standard set and to complete the project as soon as possible and local people to endeavour to achieve agricultural success and to grow trees for greening of the region.

Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected the chosen site, earth work carried out and heavy machinery for the project.

The dam will be constructed on Chaungmagyi Creek, three miles north-west of Ngathayauk, NyaungU Township. On completion, the earthen dam will be of 7,550 feet in length and 64 feet in width. And with the water storage capacity of

7,000 acre feet, it will benefit some 2,000 acres of cultivable land.

Next, they headed for Lawkananda River-water Pumping Project site. Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin reported on 95 per cent completion of the project that will be able to irrigate around 11,000 acres of cultivable land, related water pumping projects, conditions of cultivable sown acreage thanks to the projects, and similar projects being implemented in Myingyan District; Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe, on arrangements made for ensuring constant water flow of Ayeyawady River for the project; Minister U Aung Thaung, Minister for Electric Power Maj-Gen Tin Htut and Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi, on providing of cement, electricity and fuel for water pumping projects; and the commander, on success achieved in pilot cultivation of paddy in the irrigated areas and per acre yield. Lt-Gen Ye Myint gave a supplementary report.

Regarding the reports, Senior General Than Shwe said that water pumping projects must be completed by the coming cultivation season, calling for extended cultivation of monsoon paddy as much as possible for local rice sufficiency.

Officials reported on samples of paddy and rice produced for the first time in the cultivable areas benefited by the project.

Senior General Than Shwe and party looked into the main water pumping station and the floating pump.

The Government is heavily investing in irrigation projects, part of irrigation projects and important for the agricultural sector. Altogether 265 river-water pumping stations have been constructed across the nation from 1988 to November 2003. In NyaungU region, Lawkananda, Kyaukku, Auknyint, Ngathayauk and Letpan Chepaw water pumping stations are being built and on completion, they will be able to benefit over 32,200 acres of land.

Yesterday morning, Senior General Than Shwe and party flew to Pakokku Textile and Garment Factory Project in Pakokku, Magway Division, where they were welcomed by Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Deputy Minister for Industry-1 Brig-Gen Thein Tun, No 101 LID Commander Col Sein Win and officials. Minister U Aung Thaung reported on location of the project, work progress, arrival of machines for the factory and preparations made for cultivation of long staple cotton. Senior General Than

Shwe left necessary instructions.

The Senior General and party inspected progress in construction of the main building and preparations for installation of the machines to the factory. They also inspected progress in construction of the buildings and collection of the machines.

The project is situated in Kywete village-tract, three miles from Pakokku and test running is scheduled to be in May 2005.

Senior General Than Shwe and party looked into progress of the project and development of the region, where they were welcomed along the way by local people, service personnel, members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association and social organizations.

Later in the morning, they

held a meeting with local authorities, departmental officials, USDA and social organization members and townsenders at Pyaythaya Hall in Pakokku. On the occasion, Col Zaw Min presented a report, saying that Magway Division is carrying out extended cultivation of paddy with the use of water supply facilities constructed by the Government. In 1988-89, sown acreage of monsoon and summer paddy was about 0.36 million and now it has increased to 0.63 million. And the rate of local rice sufficiency has been 72 per cent, he added. Cultivation of cotton, beans and pulses and edible oil crops is being extended reaching up to over 5.9 million acres. He also reported on per capita income of the division, building of dams and reservoirs of

Pakokku District and economic growth of the region.

District Chairman Lt-Col Kyi Tun reported on population, land and water resources, cultivation of respective crops, efforts made for ensuring regional rice sufficiency, livestock breeding tasks, development of education, health, economic sectors, and requirements for greater progress and regional rice sufficiency of the district. In connection with the reports, Senior General Than Shwe said that he has got knowledge of Pakokku for he was assigned duties in Pakokku when he was young. The rural areas of the region encountered poor conditions. It once was like a remote region which lagged behind in development due to poor transport.

(See page 9)



Head of State Senior General Than Shwe inspects implementation of Pakokku Textile Factory Project.— MNA





Senior General Than Shwe hears reports on Lawkananda River Water Pumping Project by Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin.— MNA

People's Desire

- * 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

Government will carry on ...

(from page 8)

That is why the Government has been constructing new railroads, roads, river-crossing bridges for better transportation phase by phase for development of the regions along the west bank of Ayeyawady River including Pakokku region. Assistance has been provided in all spheres for upgrading Pakokku into the capital of the west bank of Ayeyawady River. He added that at the same time, it has been implementing the 24

regions development project, rural development tasks and border areas development plans for equitable development of all parts of the nation.

The construction of basic infrastructures are being extended for all-round development of Pakokku, one of the development regions. And the Government has also been taking systematic measures for harmonious development of the regions of Chin State adjacent to Pakokku.

It can be witnessed that

Pakokku has enjoyed fruitful results of unprecedented development in all sectors and it will further develop in forthcoming years.

Pakokku is a region where water is scarce and so the Government is trying utmost to provide more water for agricultural purpose.

With the improvement of the agricultural sector, the living standard of the local residents will rise.

The Government is giving encouragement to the industrial sector in addition to the agricultural sector

based on the financial resources.

And it is building new factories for creating job opportunities for local people.

Moreover, it is taking measures for bringing about highly-qualified human resources of new generations capable of building the nation.

At a time when the Government has been striving with goodwill for development of the entire nation, departmental personnel, on their part, are to take a leading role for ensuring timely



Senior General Than Shwe inspects Lawkananda River Water Pumping Project.— MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Assistant Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China

YANGON, 17 Dec— Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Assistant Minister of Commerce Mr Chen Jian and party of the People's Republic of China

at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmyinthta at 4 pm today.

Also present at the call were Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Minister for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun, Minister

for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Brig-Gen Khin Maung, Deputy Minister for Industry-1 Brig-Gen Kyaw Win,

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Mines U Myint Thein and Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of For-

eign Affairs.

The Chinese guests were accompanied by Chinese Ambassador to the Union of Myanmar Mr Li Jinjun and high-ranking officials.

MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Assistant Minister of Commerce Mr Chen Jian and party of China.— MNA

completion of the projects laid down by the State.

The people are to take part in the tasks being undertaken by the Government for building up a modern developed nation.

Myanmar is endowed with natural resources and so what is the most important is to make endeavours, and at the same time it is necessary for producing human resources on whom the State can rely for the development of the nation.

The Government will always keep on making strenuous efforts with goodwill in the interest of the entire people and for regional and national development.

Senior General Than Shwe cordially greeted those present.

After the meeting, Senior General Than Shwe and party arrived back at Bagan-NyaungU.

MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hosts dinner in honour of delegates to Fourth Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference

YANGON, 17 Dec—Chairman of National Health Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hosted a dinner in honour of the delegates from states and divisions to the Fourth Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference at Mya Yeik Nyo Royal Hotel in Bahan Township, here, at 6.30 pm today.

The dinner was attended by Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Yangon Mayor, deputy ministers, members of the National Health Committee, officials from the SPDC Office, the director-general of the Indigenous Medicine Department, departmental heads, members of the Traditional Medicine Council, executives of the Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association, members of the Traditional Medicine Inspection Central Committee, the members of the Leading Committee and the Work Committee for holding the conference, delegates from the states and divisions to the conference, officials from Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, Myanmar Red Cross Society, Myanmar Medical Association, Myanmar Nurses Association, Myanmar Dental Surgeons Association, Myanmar Health Assistants Association, Myanmar Traditional Medicine Practitioners Association and Myanmar Academy of Medical Science, officials and invited guests.

Before and during the dinner, A-1 Soe Myint musical group presented entertainment programmes. After the dinner, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt cordially greeted the traditional medicine practitioners. —MNA



General Khin Nyunt cordially greets delegates to the Traditional Medicine Practitioners Conference.—MNA

Environment of ASEAN is . .

(from page 16)

ASEAN countries are fully aware that of the prime causes of environmental degradation is poverty. Poverty eradication is therefore an important challenge that ASEAN

must address.

Myanmar is making sustained efforts to conserve its rich natural resources and environment. In 1997 the National Commission for Environmental Affairs developed and adopted a development strategy. Sustainable management of land, forest, agriculture, mineral, marine and fresh water resources has been promoted in keeping with the strategy. Sectoral laws relating to environmental protection have also been enacted and environmental considerations are increasingly being integrated into the sectoral development plans and programmes.

Myanmar is also party to many international environmental conventions and has strictly adhered to its international obligations. Over 70 per cent of Myanmar's population live in rural areas. In order to improve the quality of life of the rural people, including those living in the remote border areas, integrated rural development programmes are being implemented. In addition to promoting education, health, transport and communication, these programmes also address land degradation, deforestation, availability of water for agricultural purposes as well as safe drinking water and rural poverty.

As a result of these endeavours, the environmental situation remains stable. Forest cover in Myanmar amounts to more than 51 per cent of the total land area. We are committed to bring economic development and higher standard of living for our people. But we are also committed to protecting our environment.

One of the most successful environmental projects carried out by the Government is the "Greening Project". The project was initiated in 1993-1994 as a pilot project for greening 9 critical districts in the arid areas of central Myanmar. Afforestation, reforestation, water supply, agricultural extension and income generating activities were carried out under the project. As the project has proved to be a success, the scope of the project has been extended to include 4 more districts. I am happy to learn that some of you will be going to Bagan and Popa region later in the week. The trip will afford you not only with an opportunity to observe our ancient cultural heritage but also the success of the greening project. Just as ASEAN countries are making efforts to successfully implement national development strategies, they are actively involved in addressing global environmental problems. The task is Herculean and no country acting alone can overcome it. There is need for close cooperation and collaboration among member countries as well as sustained support from international organizations. In this respect, ASEAN environmental forums are useful as they provide a platform for member countries and donors to discuss ways and means for achieving sustainable development.

The 9th AMME will provide an opportunity for ASEAN member countries to renew and strengthen their resolve to protect the environment and implement sustainable strategies. You have before you a comprehensive and important agenda. I am confident that with your experience, you will be able to achieve results that will have positive impacts on the environment of our region. To conclude, I would like to wish you every success and a pleasant and fruitful stay in Myanmar.

Then, Chairman of National Commission for Environmental Affairs Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung made a speech.

Next, ASEAN Secretary-General Mr Ong Keng Yong gave a speech. Afterwards, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt had a documentary photo together with Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, leaders of the delegates ministers and deputy ministers of ASEAN countries and the ASEAN Secretary-General. —MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Penang State Ministers of Malaysia.—MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Penang State Ministers and party of Malaysia

YANGON, 17 Dec—Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Penang State Minister for Housing and Entrepreneur Development Dato Abdul Rashid Abdullah, Penang State Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development Dato Hj Azhar, Penang State Minister for Trade and Consumer Affairs Dato Dr Loh Hock Hun and Members of the Penang State Assembly Dato Hilmi Abdul Rashid, Dato Lim Gim Soon and Dato Lai Chew Hock at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmyinthar at 3 pm today.

Also present at the call were Minister for Commerce

Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Brig-Gen Khin Maung, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu, Deputy Minister for Transport U Pe Than and Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Malaysian guests were accompanied by Malaysian Ambassador Dato Cheah Sam Kip.

MNA

9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Environment commences

YANGON, 17 Dec — The Ninth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment hosted by Myanmar commenced at the Sedona Hotel here this morning.

It was attended by Chairman of the National Commission for Environmental Affairs Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, delegations led by Minister of Development Dato Seri Setia Dr Awang Hj Ahmad Hj Jumat of the Brunei Darussalam, Environment Minister Dr Mok Mareth of Cambodia, Environment Minister Mr Nabil Makarim of Indonesia, Minister at the Prime Minister's Office of the Lao People's Democratic Republic Dr Bantim Phissamay, Minister of Science, Technology and Environment Dato Seri Law Hieng Ding of Malaysia, Secretary of Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources of the Republic of Philippines Ms Elisea G Gozun, Environment Minister of the Republic of Singapore Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Mr Prapat Panyachatraksa of Thailand, Permanent Joint Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation Dr Pham Khoi Nguyen and Secretary-General of the ASEAN Mr Ong Keng Yong

and officials.

Leader of Myanmar delegation Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung presided over the meeting, together with Secretary of Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources of the Republic of the Philippines Ms Elisea G Gozun.

First, leaders of the delegations of the ASEAN countries and the secretary-general of the ASEAN made speeches on the occasion.

In the afternoon session, Mr Demetrio L Ignacio of the Department of Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources of the Philippines submitted matters included in the minute of the Senior Officials' Meeting on the Environment. The ministers took part in the discussion concerning the matters. Afterwards, the minister discussed and adopted the Yangon Resolution on Sustainable Development. The meeting was adjourned in the evening. The meeting continues tomorrow.

Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung hosted a dinner in honour of the delegations to the 9th AMME at the Sedona Hotel. —MNA

Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Development trend of health sector in the time of the State Peace and Development Council



Four-storey Paediatric Ward of the General Hospital (West Yangon).



New Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital in Mandalay.



Emergency Ward of the 200-bed Pyay Hospital in Bago Division.



Newly-opened 200-bed Myeik General Hospital in Myeik.

Subject	1988	2003
Hospital	631	774
Dispensary	247	429
Rural health centre	1,337	1,404
Regional health centre	64	84
Traditional medicine clinic	99	214
Doctor	12,268	16,570
Dentist	857	1,211
Health Assistant	1,238	1,719
Dental nurse	96	103
Health in-charge-1	487	529
Health supervisor	1,557	2,550
Nurse	8,349	15,482
Midwife	8,121	14,094
Health in-charge-2	674	1,094
Traditional medicine practitioner	290	606
Expenditure (million in kyat)	117.00	11,590.30



Obstetric and Gynecological Ward of the People's Hospital in Lashio.



Outpatient Department of the People's Hospital in Haka, Chin State.

FREE ENTRY

WELCOME TO VISIT

The First

KOREAN PRODUCTS SHOW 2003

18-20 December

Yangon Trade Center

Upper Pazundaung Road

Yangon

Organized by ;

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Myanmar

KOTRA < Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency >

VARIETY OF KOREAN PRODUCTS WILL BE ON DISPLAY

LUCKY DRAW PROGRAM INCLUDED

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MNA/Reuters

Dated: 18 December 2003

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Underground heater uncovered in Qing Dynasty general's home

Hohhot, 17 Dec— While present-day Chinese have replaced coal-burning stoves with geothermal heaters to minimize pollution, their ancestors over 200 years ago had learned to build fireplaces underground to keep their home clean and tidy.

Workers at the former residence of a Qing Dynasty (1644 —1911) general in Hohhot city, capital of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, recently found a complex underground heating system during their repair work in the compound, which has been listed as a cultural heritage site for special protection by the local government.

The heating system consists of a zigzagging tunnel

some 33 centimetres underground that still has trails of flames and ashes inside and interconnects the living room with the two wing-rooms on the east and west.

At the end of the tunnel are two burners by the main entrance of the western room, which "could have been the bedroom of the general himself or his daughter", said Tong Jingren, a specialist on the history of the Manchu, the

dominant ethnic group of the Qing Dynasty.

"The heater is a prototype of the geothermal heaters we use today, and is the first fireplace ever found underground," he said. Throughout China's history, people in the north used to warm themselves by fireplaces built inches above the floor to survive severe winters, said Tong.

MNA/Xinhua

Reeve's Superman suit to be auctioned in London

LONDON, 17 Dec— A "Superman" suit worn by actor Christopher Reeve and a "Star Wars" stormtrooper's helmet and blaster gun are due to sold at an auction of Hollywood memorabilia in London on Tuesday.

The famous four-piece red and blue flying outfit worn by Reeve in the 1978 "Superman" blockbuster has an estimated value of 8,000 pounds (13,950 US dollars) to 12,000 pounds (20,900 US dollars) at Christie's annual sale of film and entertainment memorabilia, the auction house said.

The Imperial Stormtrooper's helmet made for the 1977 "Star Wars" movie by award-winning British costume designer John Mollo is valued at between 3,000 and 5,000 pounds, Christie's said.

The Stormtroopers blaster gun from the same film is estimated to fetch 1,500 to 2,500 pounds.

A necklace and earrings worn by Kathy Bates in the 1997 film "Titanic" was also going under the hammer.

The sale features other items from a collection of work by Mollo, including his original costume designs for "Star Wars", "The Empire Strikes Back" and "Alien".

MNA/Reuters

SARS virus looks like part bird, part mammal

WASHINGTON, 17 Dec— The SARS virus looks like a combination of viruses from birds and mammals, Canadian researchers said on Monday.

The finding suggests that Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome arose just as many new strains of influenza do — when a bird virus recombines with a virus in a mammal to take on a form that can infect humans.

SARS swept across China and was exported as far as Canada between November 2002 and May 2003, killing 774 people and infecting as many as 8,000.

Experts eventually identified a new kind of coronavirus as the cause of the disease, essentially an unusually severe form of pneumonia. Such viruses cause a range of veterinary

diseases but usually nothing worse than the common cold in people.

David Guttman, a professor of evolutionary genomics at the University of Toronto, compared the SARS virus genome to related coronaviruses.

About half the DNA looked like coronavirus sequences taken from mammals, while half looked like coronaviruses normally found in birds, Guttman reported in the January issue of the *Journal of Virology*.

A key gene called the spike gene looked to be a mix. This gene seems to be important in allowing the

virus to infect cells, experts have said.

The merging of mammalian and avian viruses probably allowed the spike gene to sneak past immune system sentinels. "These recombination events have the potential to create an entirely new structure essentially instantaneously," Guttman said in a statement. "Since our immune systems have never seen this new viral form, it is more difficult for them to respond to it in a timely and effective manner." SARS coronavirus was found in raccoon-like animals called civets in wildlife markets. —MNA/Reuters



A group of men dressed as Father Frost, the Belarus equivalent of Santa Claus, and women dressed as Snow Maidens dance around the Christmas tree in Belovezhskaya Pushcha national reserve near the village of Kamenets during a show, southwest of Minsk on 16 Dec, 2003. The locale is the official residence of Father Frost in Belarus. —INTERNET

Museveni urges mayors to spearhead fight against "AIDS"

KAMPALA, 17 Dec— Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has urged city and town authorities to spearhead the fight against HIV/AIDS through making strategic plans to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

Museveni made the call in a speech read by Third Deputy Premier and Minister of Public Service Henry Kajura on Monday at the opening of the annual general assembly of the Alliance of Mayors and Municipal Leaders on HIV/AIDS at Hotel Equatoria in Kampala.

Museveni said since AIDS spreads faster in urban centres, the role of leaders in confronting the scourge is crucial.

He noted that in the past, leaders did not play a key role in the fight against AIDS. "Fighting the epidemic calls for continued effort and diversification of preventive strategies and involvement of new partners in the crusade against this pandemic," Museveni added.

About one million Ugandans have been killed by AIDS since the first case found in the country in 1982. There are still 1,050,500 Ugandans living with HIV/AIDS now, according to the Ministry of Health. — MNA/Xinhua

China's major cotton grower forecasts slight drop in output

URUMQI, 17 Dec— China's leading cotton producing area is expected to produce 782,700 tons of cotton this year, close to that of 800,000 tons for last year, local official said on Tuesday.

Officials with Agriculture Bureau of the Xinjiang

Production and Construction Corps, which dominates commercial farming in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, said the acreage under cotton for this year was close to 450,000 hectares, 13,300 hectares more than last year.

MNA/Xinhua

China to hold exposition, forum promoting national brands

BEIJING, 17 Dec — A grand exhibition will be held from December 19 to 23 in Beijing to display hundreds of products developed since China started to establish its own top brands in the mid 1990s.

With the theme "Enhance national confidence, create world-famous brands", the exhibition is jointly organized by China's Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ), the State Development and Reform Commission and other related departments.

"It is the largest event of its kind we have organized," said

Yu Xianzhong, director of the quality and management department under AQSIQ.

Yu said that as many as 161 top-brand products from light industry, textile, construction materials, machinery, food, tobacco, electronic and petrochemical industry, will be shown during the five-day event. —MNA/Xinhua



Don Lindburg, PhD, giant panda team leader at the San Diego Zoo, unveils the name of the zoo's four-month old male giant panda cub, on 16 Dec, 2003, at a news conference in San Diego. The second giant panda cub born at the San Diego Zoo has been given the name Mei Sheng, which translates into "Born in the USA." —INTERNET

Thailand inseminates 30 elephants

BANGKOK, 17 Dec— Thai researchers would go ahead with a project to inseminate 30 elephants after two cases of insemination showing no signs of pregnancy, local Press reported on Tuesday.

The researchers were closely monitoring the 30 elephants for the right moment to carry out the insemination, newspaper *The Nation* quoted a veterinarian named Nikorn Thongtip from a university as saying.

The Kasetsart University would cooperate with researchers on elephants in the northern Thai province of Chiang Mai to carry out the project. — MNA/Xinhua

SPORTS

FIFA World Player of the Year since 1991

BASEL (Switzerland), 17 Dec— Following are the winners of FIFA's World Player of the Year Award since its introduction:

- 1991 - Lothar Matthaus (Germany) Inter Milan
- 1992 - Marco van Basten (Netherlands) AC Milan
- 1993 - Roberto Baggio (Italy) Juventus
- 1994 - Romario (Brazil) Barcelona
- 1995 - George Weah (Liberia) AC Milan
- 1996 - Ronaldo (Brazil) Barcelona
- 1997 - Ronaldo (Brazil) Inter Milan
- 1998 - Zinedine Zidane (France) Juventus
- 1999 - Rivaldo (Brazil) Barcelona
- 2000 - Zinedine Zidane (France) Juventus
- 2001 - Luis Figo (Portugal) Real Madrid
- 2002 - Ronaldo (Brazil) Real Madrid
- 2003 - Zinedine Zidane (France) Real Madrid

MNA/Reuters

Former European Footballer of the Year Stoichkov retires

MADRID, 17 Dec— Former European Footballer of the Year Hristo Stoichkov announced on Monday that he had decided to retire as a player and that he now hoped to dedicate his time to helping his old club Barcelona.

"I am no longer going to play professional football," the 37-year-old former Bulgarian international forward told a news conference in Barcelona. "I wanted to announce this decision here in the city that has given me everything and where I really grew up as a person and as a footballer."

Stoichkov, who joined Barca from CSKA Sofia in 1990, became a favourite at the Nou Camp for his aggressive approach to the game and for his outspoken criticisms of rivals Real Madrid.

He was a key member of the so-called "Dream Team", coached by former Dutch international Johan Cruyff, that won the Spanish league title four years in succession in the early 1990s.

He was also part of the Barcelona side that won the European Cup in 1992 and was named European Footballer of the Year two years later after leading Bulgaria to a surprise third place finish in the 1994 World Cup.

He left Barcelona in 1998 after a dispute with then coach Louis van Gaal and has spent the last few years playing in the United States for MLS teams Chicago Fire and D.C. United.

Barcelona president Joan Laporta, who was present at the news conference, told reporters that he was looking at ways of incorporating Stoichkov into the club either in a coaching or advisory capacity.

MNA/Reuters

Delighted Zidane happy to beat Ronaldo to top award

BASEL (Switzerland), 17 Dec— Zinedine Zidane grinned with pleasure on Monday as he accepted his award as FIFA's World Player of 2003 — and said he was delighted to have taken the prize off his Real Madrid team-mate Ronaldo.

The Frenchman and the Brazilian are now level in the record books with three wins each in the 13-year history of this prestigious prize, awarded this year in front of a television studio audience in an exhibition hall in Basel.

Zidane is 31 and Ronaldo, who came third, only 27, while the man who finished as runner-up to "Zizou" this year, Thierry Henry of France and Arsenal, is 26.

"He is a fantastic player and he will do great things in future," said Zidane, of the highly-rated Henry.

Ronaldo, who starred in Brazil's World Cup winning team last year and won the award for the third time when it was awarded to him in Madrid, said: "I am happy to be here — but third is not the same as first, is it? I would prefer to have won it, but I am happy for Zidane."

MNA/Reuters



Mahyar Monshipour of France, raises his arms after winning his bout against Venezuelan Jairo Tagliaferro during their WBA super-bantamweight world title fight in Levallois, Paris, on 16 Dec, 2003. Monshipour retained his title.—INTERNET

Owen ruled out of Christmas matches

LONDON, 17 Dec— Liverpool and England striker Michael Owen has been ruled out for the rest of the year with a thigh injury, the Premier League club said on Monday.

Owen, who has not played since Liverpool's 1-0 UEFA Cup win over Steaua Bucharest on November 27, will miss three further Premier League matches against Wolverhampton Wanderers, Bolton and Manchester City.

Owen has been dogged by shin and ankle injuries this season and tore a thigh muscle late in the Steaua match.

Frenchman Florent Sinama Pongolle is likely to deputise for Owen alongside Emile Heskey.

Of the six first-team players sidelined in the 2-1 defeat by Southampton at Anfield on Saturday, only Australian forward Harry Kewell has a chance of being fit for Saturday's clash against Wolves at Molineux, Liverpool's official web site said.

MNA/Reuters

Arsenal, Bolton through to League Cup semis

LONDON, 17 Dec— A second string Arsenal side beat First Division West Bromwich Albion 2-0 and Bolton Wanderers edged Southampton 1-0 after extra time to reach the League Cup semi-finals on Tuesday.

Nigerian Nwankwo Kanu gave Arsenal a 25th minute lead and French strike partner Jeremie Aliadiere was gifted the other after a howler by West Brom goalkeeper Russell Hoult in the 57th minute.

Danish striker Henrik Pedersen grabbed the winner for Bolton with just five minutes left of extra time at the Reebok Stadium in the night's other quarterfinal.

Though Arsenal finished up as comfortable winners, they led a charmed life in the first half as two penalty appeals against defender Martin Keown were dismissed by referee Matt Messias. West Brom midfielder James O'Connor had a header disallowed for offside and teammate Neil Clement hit the bar.

Arsenal took their only chance when Lauren's deflected cross was met with a powerful header by Kanu, Hoult parried but the Nigerian snapped up the loose ball from point blank range.

West Brom squandered further chances after the break before Hoult collected a simple backpass from Danish defender Thomas Gaardsoe, made a complete hash of his attempt to pass the ball on and allowed Aliadiere to intercept and rifle home.

"The experience we had in the side got us through but as well for the young players it was a great experience," manager Arsene Wenger told Sky Sports.

West Brom boss Gary Megson said: "The first goal we gave away was awful defending... and the last thing we needed was to concede a second goal, and in the manner we did."

Bolton had the lion's share of their first half but Southampton, FA Cup finalists last season, stepped up a gear after the break as chances fell at both ends.

But the matchwinner was once again Pedersen, whose last-minute cross on Saturday became an own goal by Chelsea defender John Terry in Bolton's shock 2-1 away victory.

Bolton manager Sam Allardyce said: "It's a fantastic result. Four years ago, we were in the semi-finals and lost to Tranmere. Let's try and make sure this time round we go all the way".

League Cup action continues on Wednesday when Aston Villa host Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur entertain Middlesbrough.

The final is on February 29 at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium.

MNA/Reuters

Leeds chairman McKenzie to stand down

LONDON, 17 Dec— Leeds United chairman John McKenzie is to stand down from the post to avoid a conflict of interest in negotiations with any potential investors.

The club announced on Monday that McKenzie will not stand for re-election to the Leeds board at their annual general meeting on December 23.

"He has determined on this course of action to ensure there will be no possible conflict of interest were he to represent potential new investors in negotiations with the club's advisors or creditors during the next few critical weeks," the club said in a statement.

"However, the board wishes to make it clear that media comments regarding the identity and status of any potential new investor is speculation."

Industry sources said that McKenzie, 65, could spearhead a takeover bid by a group of wealthy Chinese investors as the club attempt to find a way to cut their 80 million pounds (139.3 million US dollars) of debts.

Earlier this month Sheikh Abdulrahman bin Mubarak al-Khalifa, a member of Bahrain's royal family, was linked with a deal to buy the club on behalf of a group of Arab investors.

MNA/Reuters



Dominican's player Yudelkys Bautista, left, blocks the ball against Anne-Marie Lemieux from Canada during their game in the Women's Continental Olympic volleyball qualification championship in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic on 16 Dec, 2003. Dominican won 3-1.—INTERNET

Alaves knock troubled Sociedad out of King's Cup

MADRID, 17 Dec— Second Division Alaves caused the first major upset of the second round of the King's Cup on Tuesday, coming from behind to beat Real Sociedad 2-1 at home.

Trailing 1-0 with just eight minutes to go, Alaves scored twice in the space of two minutes to inflict a demoralizing defeat on last season's Primera Liga runners-up who only a week ago booked their place in the last 16 of the Champions League.

Sociedad, who have struggled in the league this season, fielded a largely second-string side against their Basque neighbours, although the gamble appeared to have paid off when midfielder Mikel Alonso put them ahead after 17 minutes.

But Alaves fought back in the second half and finally got their reward when Ruben Navarro cracked in from close range after a corner.

Fellow striker Kiko drilled in from the edge of the area in the very next attack and they even had time to spurn a third when Navarro missed a penalty three minutes from time.

Atletico Madrid left it even later to claim a narrow 1-0 win over rugged Third Division opponents Cultural Leonesa, who had upset Albacete in the first round.

Leading striker Fernando Torres poked in at the far post just two minutes from the final whistle to score his 10th goal of the season and save the First Division side's blushes.

MNA/Reuters

The anthropoid status of a primate from the late middle Eocene Pondaung Formation (Central Myanmar): Tarsal evidence

Laurent Marivaux¹*, Yaowalak Chaimanee², Stéphane Durocq³, Bernard Marandat⁴, Jean Sudre⁵, Aung Naing Soe⁶, Soe Thira Tan⁷, Wanma Htoon⁸, and Jean-Jacques Jaeger¹

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Edited by Danya L. Sussan, Duke University Primate Center, Durham, NC, and approved September 16, 2003 (received for review April 28, 2003)

The paper prescribes fossilized tarsal evidence of anthropoid primate found by Myanmar-French team at Hsechauk Kyitchaung near Mogaung Village, in November, 2002.—MNA

New finds in Pondaung region further strengthens theory—anthropoid primates originated in Asia

YANGON, 17 Dec—A Myanmar-French team and a Myanmar-Japanese team conducted survey to find primate fossils in Myaing, Pale, Seikpyu and Pauk townships in Pondaung region from 17 November to 8 December.

The Myanmar-French team comprised Myanmar geologists and Prof Dr Jean Jacques Jaeger (leader), Dr Laurent Marivaux and Dr Bernard Marandat of France, Dr Yaowalak Chaimanee of Thailand, Dr Christopher Beard of the US.

magyi Kyitchaung, Tawya-kyaung Kyitchaung, and Hsechauk Kyitchaung, with Mogaung village, Pale Township, as the base, from 3 to 7 December.

The Myanmar-Japanese team conducted geological survey in the areas near Chaingsauk village, and rock layers west of Pauk, with Pauk as the base; from 17 to 21 November; Kyitchaung near Gwebin village, Seikpyu Township, from 22 to 24 November; Bagan Kyitchaung, Taungnikyin Kyitchaung, Minthakya Kyitchaung, Thanudaw Kyit-

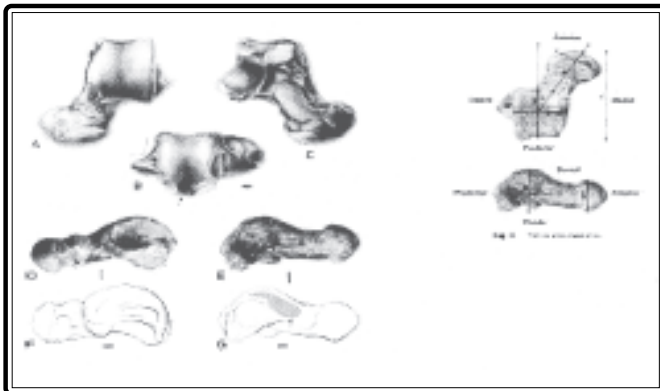
Bahin village as the base, from 28 November to 7 December.

During the 2003 survey at different places of Paukchaung Kyitchaung, the Myanmar-French team found a molar (milk tooth) of a Bahinia primate; a piece of the molar of Pondaungia primate; a molar of Myanmarphithecus; lower jaw including two molars of an Amphipithecus; and parts of a tarsal bone No.1 of a primate. The team also found teeth of mammals; molars of original pig species, molars of the original species of rats,

original species of camels; molars, jaws, horns, and bones of primitive cow; lower jaws and teeth of the original species of hippopotamus; teeth of crocodiles; jaws of turtles in the Ayeyawady rock layers near Gwebin village, Seikpyu Township, and Chaingsauk village in Pauk Township; a piece of an upper molar of a Myanmar phithecus primate; a right lower molar, a part of a right upper molar, an arm bone, a right lower molar and a part of a front tooth of a primate; in the Pondaung rock layer. The team also found a pair of full-teeth jaws and molars of the original species of a pig; molars of the original species of a rhino; jaws and teeth of the original species of a mountain goat, jaws of the original species of a rat, squirrel and rabbit; lower jaws and teeth of flesh-eating animals; teeth of fishes; teeth of crocodiles and turtle shells.

Both teams surveyed the upper layer of the Kyitchaungs and also used the filtering method in finding small teeth and body parts of the fossilized primates. The finds have further strengthen the theory—the primates originated in Asia—than in the previous years. The teams will continue their work.

The French scholars found the fossilized ankle and lateral malleolus of a primate at Hsechauk



Fossilized ankle and lateral malleolus of anthropoid primate found by Myanmar-French team at Hsechauk Kyitchaung near Mogaung Village, in November, 2002.—MNA

The Japanese of the Myanmar-Japanese team were Prof Dr Nobuo Shigehara (leader), A Prof Dr Maranaru Takai, Dr Naoko Egi, Dr Takehisa Tsubamoto, Dr Takeshi Nishimura and Dr Hiroaki Ugai.

The Myanmar-French team conducted geological survey at Paukchaung Kyitchaung, Yashe Kyitchaung, and in the surrounding areas of Thadok and Nyauk-g-binaing villages, with Bahin village in Myaing Township as the base, from 17 to 28 November; Pagan Kyitchaung, Thaminkyauk Kyitchaung, Taungnikyin Kyitchaung and Thanudaw Kyitchaung, with Magyigan village as the base, from 29 November to 2 December; Lema Kyitchaung, Thandaung Kyitchaung, Kyauk-

chaung, with Magyigan village, Myaing Township, as the base from 25 to 27 November; Yashe Kyitchaung, Paukchaung Kyitchaung, Sattwachaung Kyitchaung, Sabapontauk Kyitchaung, and Kyitchaung near Thadok village, with

squirrels and rabbits; fossilized remains of insect-eating bats and mountain goats. The Myanmar-Japanese team found fossilized jaws, teeth, tasks and bones of primitive elephants; jaws and teeth of primitive pigs; skulls of the



Myanmar-Japan team comb Pondaungia fossilized evidences.—MNA

Commuter Bus Transport Service holds anniversary

YANGON, 17 Dec—The fourth anniversary of Parami Commuter Bus Transport Service of Bandoola Transport Service Co Ltd was held at Parami Hall of the service in South Okkalapa Township this morning. Present were Vice-Chairman of the Transport Service Police Brig-Gen Aung Ngwe (Retd), Managing Director Col Myo Myint and officials and workers. Officials presented prizes to 41 workers, drivers and conductors of the bus line.—(H)



Parami Commuter Bus Transport Service Vice-Chairman Police Brig-Gen Aung Ngwe (Retd) presents model bus line award to an official.—H

WEATHER

Wednesday, 17 December, 2003

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain has been isolated in Chin State, upper Sagaing Division and weather have been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Kayin, Mon States, Bago, Mandalay, Yangon Divisions, (5°C) below normal in Ayeyawady Division, (7°C) below normal in lower Sagaing Division, (3°C) above normal in Rakhine State, (5°C) to (6°C) above normal in Chin State, upper Sagaing Division and about normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 16-12-2003 was 32.0°C (90°F). Minimum temperature on 17-12-2003 was 14.5°C (58°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 17-12-2003 was 74%. Total sunshine hours on 16-12-2003 was (8.7) hours approx. Rainfall on 17-12-2003 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2003 was 2211 mm (87.05 inches) at Yangon Airport, 2315 mm (91.14 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 2394 mm (94.25 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 16 mph from Northeast at (10:55) hours MST on 16-12-2003.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 18-12-2003: Isolated rain are likely in Kachin, Shan, Rakhine States, Magway, Mandalay, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

State of the sea: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. **Outlook for subsequent two days:** Likelihood of isolated rain in Western Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 18-12-2003: Partly cloudy to cloudy. **Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 18-12-2003:** Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

“UNTIMELY RAINFALL WARNING”

(Issued at 11:30 hours M.S.T on 17th December, 2003)

According to the observations at (09:30) hours M.S.T. today, isolated rain are likely in Kachin, Shan, Rakhine States, Magway, Mandalay, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions within next (48) hours commencing noon today.

Kyitchaung near Mogaung village while conducting survey together with Myanmar experts in November 2002. The French and Myanmar scholars compiled a paper on their finds. The paper was featured in the Volume 100, No 23 of Proceedings of National Academy of Science journal issued on 11 November 2003 under the heading “The Anthropoid Status of a Primate from the late middle Eocene Pondaung Formation

(Central Myanmar): Tarsal evidence....”. The paper has reconfirmed the fact that human beings originated Myanmar in Asia. The paper has also proved that the fossils found in Myanmar were of the Anthropoid Primates, leading to overwhelming the opinion—human beings started in Africa. Both teams conducted research at the National Museum from 8 to 12 December. The French and Japanese scientists left Myanmar for home on 13 December.—MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attends opening ceremony of Fourth Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition

YANGON, 17 Dec— A ceremony to open the Fourth Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition, organized by the Traditional Medicine Department of the Ministry of Health, was held at Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road at 7.30 am today, attended by Chairman of National Health Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, the Auditor-General, deputy ministers, members of the National Health Committee, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads, diplomats of foreign missions in Yangon, officials of UN agencies, members of social organizations, directors-general of departments under the Ministry of Health, members of the Traditional Medicine Council, traditional medicine practitioners, delegates, members of the Traditional Medicine Inspection Central Committee, traditional medicine producers and dealers and guests.

At the ceremony, traditional medicine practitioners U Nyan Tun, U Tan Kay and U Hla Htay formally opened the exhibition.

Then, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party viewed booths of the exhibition displayed at the Tatmadaw Convention Hall.

There are 134 booths including that of Traditional Medicine Department, Medical Research Department (Lower Myanmar), the booth of Traditional Medicine Research, that of the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Industry-1, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, traditional medicine producers and medicine raw material dealers and the booth of modern machines for producing traditional medicines.

The exhibition will be kept open from 6 am to 9 pm daily up to 26 December. Admission is free. — MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt views booths of Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition.— MNA

Environment of ASEAN is comparatively better than most of regions of the world Myanmar is party to many international environmental conventions and has strictly adhered to its international obligations

YANGON, 17 Dec— Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt delivered an address at the inauguration ceremony of 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and the 2nd ASEAN+3 Environment Ministers Meeting, hosted by the Union of Myanmar, at Grand Ballroom 2 of Sedona Hotel on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road at 9 am today.

Also present on the occasion were ministers of the Union of Myanmar, ministers, deputy ministers and members of ASEAN member countries, the ASEAN Secretary-General and officials, ambassadors and officials of embassies of ASEAN countries, resident

representatives of UN agencies, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental officials who are members of the National Commission for Environmental Affairs, journalists from local and abroad and guests.

First, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt delivered an address. He said:

I am pleased and happy to inaugurate the 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment and to extend a warm welcome to all delegates. We in Myanmar consider it a privilege and honour to host this AMME meeting in our country.

Environmental protec-

tion is an imperative of our times. The world today is faced with numerous and diverse environmental problems. It is therefore encouraging to note that ASEAN countries have committed themselves to protect and promote the environment. Our countries, realizing that economic development cannot be sustained without protecting the environment, have established environmental protection agencies and ministries. We took these measures even before the historic 1992 Earth Summit. Our countries displayed strong political will to pursue sustainable development path by formulating and implementing national development strategies.

Concrete actions have also been taken to realize development goals.

ASEAN Vision 2020 and the Hanoi Plan of Action provide the basic framework for promoting sustainable development in the region. I am happy to note that ASEAN countries are making significant progress in the implementation of environment strategies contained in the Hanoi Plan of Action.

In this regard, I wish to acknowledge the important role played by the ASEAN Secretariat.

Similarly the UN and other international organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations have also extended valuable support to us.

ASEAN can be justifiably proud that the state of the environment of the region is comparatively better than most of the regions of the world. Forest cover in the ASEAN region exceeds 48 per cent as compared to the world's average of below 30 per cent. Three ASEAN countries figure among the world's 17 mega biodiversity countries. The region contains 35 per cent of the world's mangrove forests and 30 per cent of the world's coral reefs.

The majority of ASEAN population still depends on natural resources for their livelihood. It is therefore vitally important that these resources are managed and used in a sustainable manner.

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Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt poses for documentary photo together with delegates of ASEAN countries to 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment.— MNA