

Senior General Than Shwe on inspection tour of Delta

Local people themselves to put more efforts into rehabilitation and reconstruction tasks

Senior General Than Shwe inspects aids for agriculture to be used in rehabilitation and reconstruction in Thiri Annawa Hall in Pyapon Township.

MNA



NAY PYI TAW, 28 Dec—Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, accompanied by member of SPDC General Thura Shwe Mann, Chairman of Natural Disaster Preparedness Central Committee Prime Minister General Thein Sein, member of SPDC Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Rear-Admiral Nyan Tun, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, Maj-Gen Ko Ko and Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence, Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thura Myint Aung, Lt-Gen Myint Hlaing of the Ministry of Defence, members of Natural Disaster Preparedness Central Committee ministers, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence, the deputy ministers, the director-general of the Government Office and officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, arrived at Pyapon by helicopter at 9.45 a.m. yesterday.

Senior General Than Shwe and party were welcomed by Chairman of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Commander of South-West Command Maj-Gen Kyaw Swe, Minister for Hotels and Tourism Maj-Gen Soe Naing and departmental officials.

The Head of State and party inspected development of Pyapon, rebuilding of houses, offices and Pyapon Bridge and its environs in a motorcade.

(See page 8)



A bird's eye view of houses built in Setsan Village, Bogale Township.— MNA

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

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 29 December, 2008

Create better conditions for turning out good citizens

High qualification of teachers contributes towards turning out human resources that can maintain stability and enhance development in the time of building a new nation based on education.

With a view to ensuring equal development in states and divisions, the government has built basic infrastructures such as roads, railroads and bridges and created education and health opportunities and favourable conditions.

The government has opened basic education schools and established universities and colleges in states and divisions in order to produce human resources and provided schools and classrooms with modern teaching aids.

Teachers are to be well-versed in educational theories and they are to equip themselves with management and leadership skills. They also are to improve their knowledge of information and communication technology and international languages in view of social and economic challenges in the 21st century. By doing so, they can nurture younger generation to become national forces capable of facing the challenges of the 21st century.

It is necessary for the teachers to train younger generation to become good citizens with high qualifications and to propagate the Union spirit among the young.

Therefore, it is the duty of teachers to make efforts to help perpetuate the Union, ensure peace and tranquility in the nation and hand down favourable conditions to the younger generation.

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

Export Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement inked

YANGON, 28 Dec— Sellers Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise of the Ministry of Energy, Daewoo International Cooperation of the Republic of Korea, ONGC Videsh Ltd and GAIL (India) Ltd of India and Korea Gas Corporation of the Republic of Korea and purchaser China National United Oil Corporation held a ceremony to sign the Export Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement, Shwe Project, Myanmar, at Sedona Hotel, here, on 24 December evening.

Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi delivered an address. Managing Director U Myint Htay of MOGE, Chairman of Daewoo International Corporation Mr. Jae-Yong Kim and Vice-Chairman of China National Petroleum



Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi attends signing ceremony of export gas sales and purchase agreement.— ENERGY

Corporation Mr. Liao Yongyuan gave introductory speeches.

Managing Director U Myint Htay, Chairman of Daewoo International Corporation Mr. Jae-Yong Kim, ONGC Videsh Ltd Vice-Chairman Mr. Sharad Terway, Korea Gas Corporation Executive Vice-Chairman Mr.

June-Sun Kil and Chairperson Mdm Wang Lihua of China National United Oil Corporation and Director-General U Soe Aung of Energy Planning Department signed the agreement and exchanged notes.

The agreement was signed to export natural gas to China from Shwe natural gas project at Block A-1 and A-3 at Rakhine coastal region

through pipelines.

Also present on the occasion were Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Attorney-General U Aye Maung, Deputy Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Than Htay, Korean Ambassador Mr Key-Chong Park, Chinese Ambassador Mr Guan Mu and officials.—MNA

Foreign-made shoes on sale at Wai Di shoe store

YANGON, 28 Dec— Way Di shoe store Launched the sale of

foreign-made shoes such as Scholl, Walker, Ferrize, Maldeni, Kito, Adda, Lily, Patti, Ragazzo and Louise Dollar as part of pre-Christmas period. It is selling various kinds of shoes at 10 to 50 per cent discount from 15 December to 5 January.

Unique programs will also be launched for the customers. The interested customers may buy shoes of Various descriptions at Yuzana plaza, Junction-8, Dagon Centre, La Pyae Wun Plaza, Junction Zawana, Capital Hypermarket, China Town Point Center and Ga Mone Pwint Store (Kaba Aye) during the sales promotion period.—MNA

Basic driving course concluded

YANGON, 28 Dec — Fire Services Department of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Road Transport concluded No. 23/2008 basic driving course at the department here on 26 December. Director-General of the department U Myint Tun

delivered an address at the concluding ceremony. A total of 30 trainees from states and divisions took the six-week course. Present on the occasion were officials concerned of the Fire Services Department and Road Transport.

MNA

All this needs to be known

- * Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
- * Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
- * Do not be softened whenever appeased



Sales promotion of Wai Di shoe store in progress.— MNA



An Afghan man talks in front of the media representative after a rocket was fired into a house in Kabul. A suicide car bomber killed five people at a police checkpoint in southern Afghanistan on Saturday and a rocket attack in the capital killed three civilians, officials said.—INTERNET

Three teen sisters killed in Kabul rocket attack

KABUL, 28 Dec—A rare rocket attack in the Afghan capital on Saturday night demolished two rooms of a mud-brick home and killed three teenage sisters, the family and police said.

The rocket attack on the southern end of Kabul landed on a house adjacent to an Afghan police training centre. The attack crushed a mud home and killed three sisters, ages 13, 15 and 16, said Sayed Farah Muz, the girls' uncle.

"There are 40 countries

in Afghanistan, and still we are hit by rockets. What is the benefit?" said Sayed Shah Barat, a cousin of the three girls. "The Iraqi people hit (President George W) Bush with their shoes, but we should do the same with our leaders."

There are 41 nations involved in NATO's security coalition in Afghanistan.

The house hit by the rocket was a simple six-room, mud-brick home that housed some 20 people,

said Barat. Men swept up the shattered bricks of mud while women mourned out loud in another room.

Gen Ali Shah Pak-tiawal, the head of criminal investigations for the Kabul police, said two rockets were fired into Kabul after nightfall Saturday. Kabul once suffered greatly from rocket fire, during the country's 1990's civil war, but such attacks have been a rarity the last several years.—Internet

As Taleban nears Kabul, shadow Govt takes hold

WARDAK PROVINCE, 28 Dec—Two months ago, Mohammad Anwar recalls, the Taleban paraded accused thieves through his village, tarred their faces with oil and threw them in jail.

The public punishment was a clear sign to villagers that the Taleban are now in charge. And the province they took

over lies just 30 miles from the Afghan capital of Kabul, right on the main highway.

The Taleban has long operated its own shadow government in the most dangerous parts of Afghanistan, but its power is now spreading north to the doorstep of Kabul, according to Associated Press interviews with a

dozen government officials, analysts, Taleban commanders and Afghan villagers. More than seven years after the US-led invasion, the Islamic militia is attempting — at least in name — to reconstitute the government by which it ruled Afghanistan in the late 1990s.

Internet



An Iraqi policeman secures the site of a car bomb attack in the Shi'ite neighbourhood of Kadhimiyah in Baghdad. A massive bomb tore through a crowd gathered near a bus station in a Shi'ite neighbourhood of Baghdad on Saturday, killing at least 22 people and wounding 54, security officials said.—INTERNET



Three-year-old Nerjis Thamir lies next to her mother Iman Kadim in a hospital after they were hurt in a car bombing in Baghdad, Iraq, on 27 Dec, 2008. At least 22 people died in the blast and 54 were wounded, the Iraqi army said. INTERNET

Pakistan seeks to reduce tensions after troop move

ISLAMABAD, 28 Dec—Pakistan told India on Saturday it did not want war and was committed to fighting terrorism — a move apparently aimed at reducing tensions after Pakistan moved troops

toward their shared border.

Intelligence officials said on Friday that the army was redeploying thousands of troops from the country's fight against militants along the Afghan border to the Indian frontier — an alarming scenario for the West as it tries to get Pakistan to neutralize the al-Qaida threat.

Islamabad also announced it was canceling all military leave — the latest turn of the screw in the rising tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours following last month's terror attack on the Indian financial capital of Mumbai.

India has blamed Pakistani militants for the terrifying three-day siege.

Pakistan's recently elected civilian government has demanded that India back up the claim with better evidence but has also said it is committed to fighting the "cancer" of terrorism.

"We ourselves have accepted that we have a cancer," said Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari in a televised speech on Saturday. "They are forcing their agenda on us."

Zardari has pledged to battle militancy, repeatedly reminding critics that his wife, Benazir Bhutto, was herself killed in a gun-and-suicide bomb attack blamed on terrorists.

Tens of thousands of Pakistanis visited her grave on Saturday to mark the first anniversary of her assassination.—Internet

Bomb near Sri Lankan capital kills at least five

COLOMBO, 28 Dec—A suicide bomber killed at least five people in a blast near the Sri Lankan capital on Sunday, police said.

The attack happened in Wattala town, a few miles (kilometres) from Colombo on Sunday morning, police spokesman Ranjith Gunasekara said. He gave no other details, but said there could be more deaths and casualties.

Gunasekara did not say who was suspected to be behind the blast and no one claimed responsibility.

Sri Lankan authorities have accused Tamil separatist rebels for suicide bombings in the past.

The Tamil Tigers have been fighting for an independent state for ethnic minority Tamils since 1983, after suffering decades of marginalization by successive governments controlled by the Sinhalese majority. The conflict has killed more than 70,000 people.—Internet



A young Afghan man (C) cries after a rocket was fired into his house in Kabul. A suicide car bomber killed five people at a police checkpoint in southern Afghanistan Saturday and a rocket attack in the capital killed three civilians, officials said.—INTERNET

Power blackout in Hawaii left Obama family in dark

HONOLULU, 28 Dec —US President-elect Barack Obama was without electricity for 12 hours at his vacation home on Oahu after a suspected lightning strike blacked out Hawaii’s most populous island, an aide said on Saturday.

The outage on Friday night left hundreds of thousands of people, including Obama and his family, in the dark as an electrical storm rolled over the island. The Obamas are staying at a heavily guarded beachfront villa in eastern Oahu.

“Power was restored to the residence during the 6 o’clock hour this morning. The Obama family is grateful for the offers of assistance from local officials,” said Ben Labolt, a spokesman for Obama.

Those offers included a generator from the Hawaiian Electricity Company, but an Obama aide said the family did not use one. It was not immediately clear why.

No additional security measures were visible on Friday night at the compound, which is guarded by Secret Service agents, and no attempt was made to move the Obamas through darkened streets to a nearby Marine Corps military base.



US President-elect Barack Obama talks with onlookers as his daughter Sasha and a friend sit down with their shave ice at Hawaii Kai shopping centre, on 26 Dec, 2008.—INTERNET

Hawaiian Electricity Company spokesman Peter Rosegg said power had been restored to most of the island, home to about 900,000 people, by Saturday afternoon. Full restoration should be completed by nightfall, he said.

The cause of the outage was still not known, but it may have been due to an electrical storm that knocked out four power transmission lines, he said. Bill Brennan, spokesman for Honolulu, said Mayor Mufi Hannemann relayed a message to the president-elect’s beachfront villa between 9 pm and 10 pm on Friday asking whether the Obamas needed anything.—Internet

An Israeli medic tends to a man, who later died, after he was injured by a rocket fired by Palestinian militants in Gaza, in the southern Israeli town of Netivot, near Gaza, on 27 Dec, 2008. Israeli warplanes retaliating for rocket fire from the Gaza Strip pounded dozens of security compounds across the Hamas-ruled territory in unprecedented waves of airstrikes on Saturday, killing more than 200 people and wounding nearly 400 in the single bloodiest day of fighting in years.—INTERNET



Japan likely to drop plan to buy F-22 fighters

TOKYO, 28 Dec — Japan is likely to drop its attempts to buy state-of-the-art US F-22 Raptor stealth fighter planes since

it expects the United States to stop producing them, a newspaper reported on Sunday.

The Japanese government had been trying to persuade the United States to sell it F-22 Raptors to replace its own aging F-15 fleet, despite Washington’s reluctance.

Tokyo, however, is now abandoning the plan amid signs that US President-elect Barack Obama’s new administration may halt production of the aircraft, the *Daily Yomiuri* said, quoting government sources. “We have a firm impression that its production likely would be halted,” a high-ranking official at the defence ministry was quoted by the daily as saying.

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates, reappointed to stay in the post under Obama, has said publicly that he favours halting production of the F-22.

Internet

Malaysia’s former king dies

KUALA LUMPUR, 28 Dec — Malaysia’s former king Tuanku Jaafar Tuanku Abdul Rahman, who was the longest serving ruler of his southern state, has died at age 86, a report said on Sunday.

He died in hospital on Saturday after complaining of dizziness and chest discomfort, state secretary Norzam Mohamad Nor was quoted as saying by the *Sunday Star* newspaper.

“Tuanku Jaafar was still conscious when two doctors reached the palace. He was rushed to the hospital’s intensive care unit,” the secretary said.

Norzam said he was given emergency treatment and several attempts were made to revive him, but he was pronounced dead about three hours later.

Tuanku Jaafar, who took over the state throne after his brother Tuanku Munawir’s death in 1967, leaves behind his wife, consort Tuanku Najihah Tunku Besar Burhanuddin, three sons and three daughters.—Internet



Cows in a field. The European Union on Monday launched a fresh challenge at the WTO against sanctions imposed by the United States and Canada on the EU for its ban on hormone-treated beef from the two countries.—INTERNET

China’s first road tunnel under Yangtze River opens to traffic

WUHAN, 28 Dec—China’s first road tunnel beneath the Yangtze River was open to traffic on Sunday in central China’s Hubei Province.

The 3.63-km, bi-directional four-lane road tunnel started a three-month trial operation at about 10 am in Wuhan City.

The tunnel cuts travel time to seven minutes from half an hour between the city’s major areas—Wuchang, where government offices and universities are based, and Hankou, the business centre.

The tunnel will allow 50,000 vehicles to travel at 50 kilometres per hour each day. It can withstand flooding (300 year-flood plain) and an earthquake measuring up to six on the Richter Scale, Yin said.

The 1.7-billion yuan (250 million US dollars) project began in November 2004 as one of the city’s efforts to improve transportation infrastructure and relieve congested roads.

Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, is one of the largest cities in central China with a population of eight million.

Internet

Malaysia’s AirAsia X to expand routes amid economic crunch

KUALA LUMPUR, 28 Dec —Malaysian budget carrier AirAsia X said it can weather the storm of a sharply deteriorating global economy and is hiring pilots to expand its routes to China, India, South Korea and Japan.

Chief Executive Azran Osman Rani told *AFP* that while it was a challenging period for the aviation industry as many countries slip into a recession and carriers go bust, there were “a lot of business opportunities for us.”

Bookings for its direct London flight on its leased Airbus 340-300, due to begin 11 March, were overwhelming, he said, with 30,000 seats sold.

Demand was great as ticket prices cost about 2,000 ringgit (580 dollars), less than half the price of a regular non-budget flight. AirAsia X will fly five times a week between the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur and Stansted Airport on the outskirts of London.

Azran said AirAsia X was looking to



An AirAsia X aircraft at Kuala Lumpur’s international airport. The Malaysian budget airline has said it can weather the storm of a sharply deteriorating global economy and is hiring pilots to expand its routes across Asia.—INTERNET

expand its routes in 2009 into northern India including New Delhi, Amritsar and Mumbai, and to Beijing.

In 2010 it aims to target South Korea and to Tokyo, Hokkaido in northern Japan and Kyushu in the south. Azran said it was taking on new staff for its expansion.—Internet



Residents show paper-cuts made by themselves to mark the coming Year of Ox in Chinese lunar calendar, at Siping Street Community in Shenyang, capital of northeast China's Liaoning Province, on 27 Dec, 2008. — XINHUA

Russia urges India, Pakistan to prevent use of force

Moscow, 28 Dec — Russia on Saturday asked India and Pakistan to show restraint to prevent the use of force amid the raising tension between the two South Asian neighbours.

“Russia urges India and Pakistan to show maximum restraint and prevent the use of force on the border,” the Foreign Ministry said in a statement posted on its

official website. Tensions between the two nuclear rivals increased since the Mumbai attacks, as New Delhi accused Pakistan-based Islamic extremists of carrying out the attacks and elements within the Pakistani government and army of complicity in supporting terrorism in the region.

The Pakistani government has denied the accu-

sations, warning India to refrain from waging any strikes against Pakistan.

Moscow is “extremely concerned” by reports that massive concentration of troops and military hardware is under way on both sides of the India-Pakistan border, said the statement, adding that tensions in that region have reached a dangerous level.—Xinhua

All items from Xinhua News Agency

Arab League, Egypt push for Arab unified measures

CAIRO, 27 Dec—The Cairo-based Arab League (AL) has been busy preparing for an emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers set to be held next Wednesday following deadly attacks by Israeli troops in the Gaza Strip that killed more than 200 Palestinians on Saturday.

Earlier in the day, AL Secretary General Amr Moussa told reporters the Arab foreign ministers' meeting will be held either

on Sunday or Monday to discuss the situation after Israeli strikes.

Meanwhile, Moussa's spokesman Abdel-Aleem al-Obayyed also told Xinhua later in the day that the Arab foreign ministers' meeting is likely to be held on Sunday evening, also calling for an urgent meet-

ing of the UN Security Council to adopt a stance on the Israeli raids on Gaza. But after a meeting of AL permanent delegates in Cairo on Saturday evening, the pan-Arab body decided to hold the foreign ministers' meeting next Wednesday.

Xinhua

Photo taken on 22 Dec, 2008 shows the plant of Shanxi Lu'an Group in Tunliu county, north China's Shanxi Province. China is forecast to produce 189 million tonnes of crude oil in 2008, a growth of 1.61 percent over the 186 million tonnes last year. —XINHUA



UN Security Council to meet on Israel-Palestine conflict

UNITED NATIONS, 28 Dec—The UN Security Council is scheduled to meet behind closed doors at 10:00 pm EST on Saturday (03:00GMT on Sunday) to discuss the latest violence and bloodshed in the Israel-Palestine conflict, diplomatic sources said here.

The 15-member council's meeting came after Israeli warplanes pounded dozens of security com-

pounds across the Hamas-ruled territory in unprecedented waves of airstrikes on Saturday to retaliate for rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, killing over 200 people and wounding many more in the single bloodiest day of fighting in years.

Earlier on Saturday, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for an immediate halt to the violence in Gaza and

southern Israel, condemning excessive use of force leading to civilian casualties and ongoing rocket attacks by militants.

In a statement issued by his spokesperson, Ban said that he is “deeply alarmed” by the heavy violence and bloodshed in Gaza, and the continuation of violence in southern Israel, and called for “an immediate halt to all violence.”—Xinhua



Members of the Macau Flying Eagle Association work on the field with the local students at Shatian Township of Hezhou City, southwest China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 26 Dec, 2008. More than 30 members of the association came to Hezhou to experience the farm life. —XINHUA

Security beefed in Nepali capital's Intl airport

KATHMANDU, 28 Dec—Security has been beefed up at the Tribhuvan International Airport in Nepali capital Kathmandu following a minor explosion at the entrance gate of the airport on Saturday morning.

According to Sunday's The Rising Nepal, the Gaushala Metropolitan Police Circle said that a woman sustained injuries in the incident and it caused minor damages to the counter of Buddha Air's office in the airport, the only international airport in the country. According to Ganga Pant, Inspector at the Gaushala Metropolitan Police Circle, investigation of the criminals involved in the incident was intensified.—Xinhua

China to produce 189 mln tonnes of crude oil this year

BEIJING, 28 Dec—China is forecast to produce 189 million tonnes of crude oil in 2008, a growth of 1.61 percent over the

186 million tonnes last year, according to a recent report released by the nation's leading oil producer, PetroChina.

The production would rank the nation fifth among all the oil producing countries around the world. The report said China had verified oil deposits of 20.7 billion tonnes over the past 30 years.

In the three decades, Daqing Oilfield in north-eastern China pumped out 1.576 billion tonnes of crude oil, or more than 40 percent of China's total onshore crude output for the period. It kept annual crude oil output at more

than 50 million tonnes for 27 consecutive years.

Shengli Oilfield on the eastern coast produced 805 million tonnes of crude in the 30 years, or more than 20 percent of the onshore crude output nationwide for the period. In 2007, it continued to maintain annual crude production at 27.7 million tonnes.

The report said China's annual natural gas output increased from 13.9 billion cubic metres in 1978 to 69.8 billion cubic metres in 2007. This year the production would reach 76 billion cubic metres, the report predicted.—Xinhua

Racial disparities in hospice use

PHILADELPHIA, 28 Dec — Rules on hospice care for those with limited life expectancy restrict usage by those most in need, disproportionately affecting blacks, US researchers said. The study, scheduled to be published in the 1 Feb issue of Cancer, said eligibility criteria for hospice services should be reconsidered.

To enroll in hospice, patients must have a prognosis of six months or less if their illness runs its usual course. They must also accept the palliative nature — reducing the severity of symptoms instead of striving to cure the disease — of hospice care.

Dr David Casarett and colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania interviewed 283 patients who were receiving cancer

treatment at six oncology clinics. Patients were asked about their perceived need for five hospice services and their preferences for continuing cancer treatment, and they were followed for six months or until death.

Casarett’s team found that African-American patients had stronger preferences for continuing their cancer treatments as well as greater perceived needs for hospice services — poorer patients wanted more services.—Internet



Palestinian youths throw stones towards Israeli border police officers in the village of Issawiya in Arab East Jerusalem in Gaza on 27 Dec, 2008.
INTERNET

Malaysia uses satellite to fight illegal logging

KUALA LUMPUR, 28 Dec — Malaysia is zooming in forests with a satellite in order to fight illegal logging which its government says is harming the major timber exporting country, a report said on Sunday.

Darus Ahmad, deputy director-general with the Malaysian Remote Sensing Agency, said the “eye in the sky” programme was put in place in October.

“There is always criticisms that our forests are diminishing,” he was quoted as saying by the *New Sunday Times* newspaper. Darus said that using satellite images the authorities can establish a national forest inventory of the country’s total area of forest cover.

They can then check whether logging in a particular area is legal or not, he said, adding that the facility was currently available in the western peninsular part of Malaysia only.

Darus also said the system can be used to prevent air pollution by detecting forest fires and illegal land clearing.—Internet

Quintuplets born at New York hospital

NEW YORK, 28 Dec — A set of quintuplets was born on Saturday at Staten Island University Hospital, spokesman Christian Preston said. He said the four girls, one boy and their mother were doing well.

Preston declined to give the family’s name, but Tony Scherillo told the Staten Island Advance the parents are his daughter and son-in-law, Jamie and Kevin Ferrante.

“Everybody was ecstatic” on learning that the new parents were expecting five babies, said Scherillo, 67. “Nobody could believe it.”

The babies — delivered within 6 minutes of each other by Caesarean section — ranged in weight from 1 pound, 8 ounces, to about 2 pounds, 4 ounces, the newspaper said. It gave their names as Allesia Louise, Amanda Frances, Ella Lilliana, Emily Ann and Matthew Sabatino.—Internet

Man sets self on fire during stunt to impress date

STOCKHOLM, 28 Dec — A Swedish man’s attempt to impress his date went horribly awry on Friday, as he ended up lighting himself on fire and going into shock.

The 33-year-old man also faces allegations of endangering the public as he recovers from serious burn injuries in a hospital in Vastervik, The Local reported. The unidentified man’s girlfriend said he was attempting a stunt when he poured gasoline over his arm and set the fuel on fire.

“It obviously didn’t go well. He burned his arm and other parts of his body and was in a state of shock,” Kalmar police spokesperson Reine Johansson told the TT news agency. “Don’t ask me what the point of the trick was supposed to be.” Police told The Local the man will likely need specialized care at the burn clinic of Linköping University Hospital.—Internet



A huge abacus made of sandalwood is displayed at China Abacuses Museum in Nantong, east China’s Jiangsu Province. The abacus, 781 centimetres in length and 1.81 centimetres in height, has been on display here since Saturday.

Mexican woman fights off 500-lb lion with machete

A Mexican woman said she used a machete to fight off a 500-pound lion that attacked her donkey on Monday near the resort city of Acapulco.

Celsa Aleman, 35, said she and her 7-year-old niece were riding a donkey along a road when the lion went after the animal’s legs.

The woman says she found the courage to fight the lion because she thought it would attack her niece. She hit the animal with a machete until the beast ran away. Aleman and her niece were unharmed.

Pocket-sized ultrasound breakthrough

An inexpensive, pocket-sized therapeutic ultrasound device has been developed by a graduate student at Cornell University in New York. The university said the device “packs enough punch to stabilize a gunshot wound or deliver drugs to brain cancer patients.”

George Lewis, a PhD student in biomedical engineering, said the pocked-sized prototype he designed can be built with \$100, compared to current ultrasounds that can weigh 30 pounds and coast \$20,000. His goal is to see therapeutic ultrasound machines in every hospital and medical research lab.

The device is detailed in the journal *Review of Scientific Instruments*.

Lewis said the ultrasound could be used to treat conditions as prostate tumors or kidney stones. It could also be used to relieve arthritis pressure and help treat brain cancer by pushing drugs quickly through the brain following surgery.

His new devices are currently being tested at Weill Cornell Medical College.



A girl in a typical dress stands next to a giant cup containing the typical Mexican cocktail “margarita”, made with 200 liters of tequila, lemon and sugar, in Los Cabos, Baja California state, northern Mexico, during an attempt to break a Guinness record of the biggest margarita in the world.

Hanna the mermaid swims in the new Mermaid Lagoon display at the Sydney Aquarium in Sydney, Australia, during the introduction of two dugongs. It is said that dugongs, an aboriginal word meaning young child, in olden times were mistakenly identified as mermaids to mariners that had been at sea for a long time.

Arkansas family welcomes 18th child, a girl

An Arkansas woman has given birth to her 18th child. Michelle Duggar delivered the baby girl by Caesarean section on Thursday at Mercy Medical Centre in Rogers. The baby, named Jordyn-Grace Makiya Duggar, weighed 7 pounds, 3 ounces and was 20 inches long.

“The ultimate Christmas gift from God,” said Jim Bob Duggar, the father of the 18 children. “She’s just absolutely beautiful, like her mom and her sisters.”

The Duggars now have 10 sons and eight daughters.

Jim Bob Duggar said Michelle started having contractions on Wednesday night. She needed the C-section, her third, because the baby was lying sideways. Jim Bob said both baby and mother were doing well on Thursday night. “We both would love to have more,” he said.

The cable network TLC broadcasts a weekly show about the Duggars, called “17 Kids and Counting.” Chris Finnegan of TLC — which handles public relations for the Duggar family — said the show’s name would be updated to account for the latest addition to the family. He said TLC also will air a show on Monday on the baby’s delivery.

NEWS ALBUM

Newly opened concrete sleeper factory will help meet local demand

YANGON, 28 Dec—A ceremony to open the Concrete Sleeper Factory (Mottama) built by Myanma Railways under the Ministry of Rail Transportation in Mottama, Paung Township, Mon State took place in front of the factory this morning with address by Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of South-East Command Maj-Gen Thet Naing Win and Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Ministers for Rail Transportation Thura U



Commander Maj-Gen Thet Naing Win and Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min view production process of concrete sleeper factory.—MNA

Thaung Lwin and U Pe Than, senior military officers, departmental officials, social organizations, local people and others.

In his address,

Commander Maj-Gen Thet Naing Win said that the opening of a concrete sleeper factory in Mottama, Paung Township, Mon State will satisfy the demand for

sleepers in building a network of railroads the length and breadth of the nation in line with the guidance of the government. The emergence of the facility is something to be proud of not only for Mon State but also for the State, he added.

The Head of State has given guidance, saying that only when there is better transport will economic, social and administration sectors between one region and another improve; and that better transport between one region and another will contribute a lot to boosting socio-economic status of the people and forging friendships among national brethren, he said.

In view of the guidance of the Head of State, it is found that better transport plays an important role in building a modern and developed nation. It is safe to say that the factory will contribute much towards ensuring better transport as it will produce a large number of sleepers needed in construction of railroads, he disclosed.

In conclusion, the commander stressed the need for local people in Mon State to strive together for regional development by doing their bit.

In his address, Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min said that as the construction of the concrete sleeper factory started on 15-7-2007 and the facility was opened today, the project took one year and five months in total.

The life of wooden sleeper is three years and its one square inch can bear 800 pounds of weight while the life of concrete is 60 years and its one square inch can bear 7,000 pounds of weight. As the life of concrete sleeper is 20 times the wooden sleeper and its bearing capacity is nine times more than that of the latter, steps were taken to substitute concrete sleepers for wooden sleepers, he said.

In accord with the guidance of the Head of State, three more sleeper factories each of which in Khin U, Sagaing Division, Pakokku, Magway Division and Otshitpin, Bago Division are being constructed, he said.

He said that the Myanma Railways has already opened the concrete sleeper factory (Myitngwe) and the concrete sleeper factory (Pyontaza), and the opening of the concrete sleeper factory (Mottama) today adds the total number of sleeper factory to three.

Next, U Ye Kyaw Ya, on behalf of local people, expressed thanks for the opening of the new sleeper factory.

At the auspicious time, Commander Maj-Gen Thet Naing Win and Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min formally opened the new concrete sleeper factory and had a documentary photo taken together with local people.

After the opening ceremony, the commander and the minister and guests inspected the production line of sleeper factory.

The Myanma Railways has been constructing a network of railroads and is renovating the old ones for regional development and better transport in accord with the guidance of the Head of State. As a result, the current total length of railroads has reached 4288.9 miles, thereby needing 9,332,646 sleepers in total. The use of concrete sleepers has helped prevent the deforestation.

The newly opened sleeper factory will be able to produce 600 sleepers per day on average and 200,000 sleepers per year on average. The factory will supply sleepers to Bago, Mawlamyine, Ye and Dawei where sleepers are required.

MNA

Information Minister hosts dinner in honour of literary award winners



Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan greets literary award winners at the dinner.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Dec—Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan hosted a dinner in honour of life-time achievement literary award and Sarpay Beikman manuscript award winners for 2007 and members of

prize scrutiny and selection committee at Shwenantaw Hotel of Nay Pyi Taw Hotel Zone, here, this evening.

Present at the dinner were Minister for Labour U Aung Kyi, heads of department under the

Ministry of Information, doyen literati, Chairman of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association U Hla Myaing (Ko Hsaung), the Vice-Chairmen and CEC members, committee members, winners and guests.—MNA

Prizes presentation for Yangon Division School Sports Competitions

YANGON, 28 Dec—A prize presentation ceremony of Yangon Division School Sports Competitions of No 3 Basic Education

Department for 2008-09 academic year was held at Aung San Stadium here yesterday.

At the ceremony, students demonstrated

their skills and officials concerned presented championship shields to winning schools of the districts and townships.

MNA

SAY NO TO DRUGS

Senior General Than Shwe on inspection ...

(from page 1)

At the Thiri Annawa Hall, Minister Maj-Gen Soe Naing, who is closely supervising the rehabilitation and reconstruction tasks, reported on population of Pyapon, location of villages and wards in the townships, loss and damage during the storm, accomplishment of relief and rehabilitation tasks, resuming of agriculture, fisheries and salt industry, reconstruction of buildings in education and health sectors, measures taken for ensuring better transport in the region,

In his guidance, Senior General Than Shwe said the storm-hit areas have now much improved. Achievements have been made in relief and resettlement and care services with the efforts of all the national people. Measures could be taken to prevent the outbreak of infectious diseases.

Moreover, resettlement tasks are being carried out with greater momentum.

He spoke of the need to complete the construction of schools, hospitals, dispensaries, houses, cy-



Senior General Than Shwe greets local people at Thiri Annawa Hall in Pyapon Township.— MNA



Machinery at work at construction project of Cyclone Shelters at Kadonkani Village in Bogale.— MNA

Storm-hit areas must develop more than the condition before the storm. Rehabilitation and construction and preparedness of natural disaster are the national project and systematic arrangements are to be made.

comparison of conditions after the storm and present conditions, output of monsoon paddy for 2008-2009, cultivation of summer paddy, establishment of villages and construction of houses with the contribution of well-wishers and assistance of World Food Programme (WFP), UNICEF, non-governmental organizations such as Save the Children, World Vision, Care International in Myanmar, IOM and PACT Myanmar.

Commander Maj-Gen Kyaw Swe reported on harvesting of monsoon paddy in the township and arrangements for summer paddy to meet targets and rehabilitation tasks.

clone shelters, establishment of road networks in time in the open season.

Storm-hit regional businesses such as agriculture, fishery and salt industry have resumed and the businesses are in the positions that it should be. Therefore, efforts are to be made for business conditions to return to normal, he said.

Continuing, he said, the objective is that the storm-hit areas must develop more than the condition before the storm. Rehabilitation and construction and preparedness of natural disaster are the national project and systematic arrangements are to be made, he added.

(See page 9)



Houses at Kadonkani Village.— MNA

Senior General Than Shwe on inspection ...

(from page 8)

All-out efforts are to be made for boosting production and improving economy with the combination of natural resources and workforce and harmonious cooperation of the government, the people and



A bird's eye view of houses in Kadonkani Village in Bogale Township.—MNA



New buildings of primary school in Kadonkani Village, Bogale Township.—MNA



A library in Kadonkani Village.—MNA

the Tatmadaw as Ayeyawady Division is rich in land and water resources. He said after the storm, the people from all parts of the country including entrepreneurs provided assistance in relief and resettlement tasks with goodwill, humanitarian spirit and patriotism.

He said strenuous efforts are to be made for regional development, increase of per capita income and security of social life in cooperation with the government, the people and the Tatmadaw.

He also spoke of the need for not only the government but local people themselves to put more ef-

forts into the tasks.

Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected Pyapon-Bogale Road and cultivation of crops and arrived in Bogale by helicopter.

They were welcomed by Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung and departmental officials.

Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected conditions of Bogale and rehabilitation tasks in a motorcade.

At the office of Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association, the minister reported on progress of work, area of the township, losses, reconstruction of houses, yield

of monsoon paddy for 2008-2009, cultivation of summer paddy, provision of power tillers, fuel and cattle, maintenance of embankments that prevent flowing of salt water, cultivation of cold season crops and stockpiling of seeds, cultivation of kitchen crops, distribution of poultry and pigs, fishing boats and nets, repair of storm-hit schools, reoperation of rice mills and hullers, supply of drinking water, construction of Bogale-Kyeingyaung-Kadonkani Road, arrangements for construction of cyclone shelters and recultivation of mangrove and study tour of diplomats and delegates of INGO and

ASEAN.

Commander Maj-Gen Kyaw Swe and Minister Maj-Gen Htay Oo gave supplementary reports.

Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance on full development of agriculture and fisheries in the region, cultivation of kitchen crops for sufficiency of households, creation of basic data that can be counted for regional economic growth, completion of houses and cyclone shelters in time, construction of roads in the township as shelter embankments and recultivation of mangrove.

Senior General Than Shwe and party left Bogale for Kadonkani Village by helicopter. They inspected development of Sethsan, Kyonkadon, Kalahteik, Dawnyeik, Naukmye, Seikma and Amar Villages, construction of Sethsan-Kyonkadon road, Pyapon-Kyonkadon-Amar road, thriving of paddy and cold season crops and mangrove and windbreak plants from the helicopter.

On arrival at the village, Senior General Than Shwe and party were wel-

All-out efforts are to be made for boosting production and improving economy with the combination of natural resources and workforce and harmonious cooperation of the government, the people and the Tatmadaw.

comed by officials and entrepreneurs.

They inspected reconstruction of the village and construction tasks by Dagon International Co and Htoo Trading Co and cordially greeted the local people.

Senior General Than Shwe and party went to the briefing hall where Minister Brig-Gen Thein Aung reported on arrangements for natural disasters preparedness and shelters and the chairman of Htoo Trading Co on model of cyclone shelters and land preparations.

Commander Maj-Gen Kyaw Swe and Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Rear-Admiral Nyan Tun reported on requirements

for construction of cyclone shelters.

Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance on some points to be careful in connection with tidal waves in construction of cyclone shelters and offices near the sea and resuming of businesses of the local people.

They inspected development of the village and the villagers welcomed them.

Senior General Than Shwe and party left the village and inspected Eya, Kyeingyaunggyi and Hlaingphone villages, allotment of houses and construction of Kyeingyaung-Kadonkani Road, mangrove, windbreak plants from the helicopter.

MNA



A clinic in Kadonkani Village.—MNA



Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo presents Life-time Achievement National Literary Award to U Kyi Aye (Hsinbyukyun Aung Thein) through Secretary of National Literary Award Scrutinizing Committee U Maung Hlaing (Maung Swe Nge).—MNA



Chief Justice U Aung Toe gives first prize to Lu Mon (Pakokku).—MNA

Throughout history, Myanmar has existed...

(from page 16)

Being able to publish more Myanmar journals and magazines that have been good in terms of both quality and quantity year after year are the efforts of the Myanmar literati. Throughout the long history, Myanmar has existed in the world with her own literature, culture, customs and traditions. The fact that Myanmar is able to stand firm in the world with her own national character is thanks to the Myanmar literature achievements.

The Secretary-1 went on to say that owing to the efforts of the patriotic literati including monks and lay people of all successive periods, the national people have been filled with thoughtfulness and good morale and morality. Even in the period of independence struggles, the literati organized the national people with the might of literature, and that led the entire nation to regain independence after the national people fought back the imperialists unitedly.

Nowadays, some powerful countries are attempting to influence the global nations in various ways taking advantage of the advancing information technology. They are trying to export their cultures and life



Commander Maj-Gen Wai Lwin gives award to Maung Myint Tun.—MNA

styles which are not fit for other sovereign nations. Therefore, the national literati are to be vigilant and defend against their instigation and ill attempts with national awareness. Likewise, they also need to promote and maintain the national culture.

The Secretary-1 added that the government is striving in all aspects for perpetuity and peace and development of the nation. Physical infrastructures are being built nationwide to promote the living standard and socio-economy of the people. At the same time, measures are being taken for human resource development and physical and spiritual development of the people.

In accord with the motto of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association 'to promote the national prestige and literature, the association is found to be striving for the successful realization of its motto in collaboration with other social organizations. In doing so, it is incumbent upon them to produce their works of literature that are filled with national essence helping the people to develop both technologically and mentally.

The journalists, writers, cartoonists, artists, designers and publishers are to make all-out efforts for development of the Myanmar literary world. The literati are also to participate in development projects, national level education and health plans being undertaken in respective regions of the union while implementing the aims and objectives of the Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association, he said.

The Secretary-1 added that at a time when the new nation is being built by centring the education sector, the education learning centres have been opened to contribute to livelihoods of the people and development of the regions. With the assistance of the Ministry of Information, the self-reliant village libraries have been established for widening the scope of knowledge of the people and for enabling them to better serve the interest of the State.

He continued to say that indeed, the literature is the national and cultural character portraying the livelihoods of the people. All the people took the lessons from the historical events through the literature. Therefore, the literati are to compile their works with the national outlook.

He said that the development or downturn of a nation and the people depends on the quality of the literati who are disseminating the educative knowledge to the nation and the people concerned. The preservation of cultural heritage that had been handed down by the forefathers through the variety of literature is the historical duty of all the literati. At the same time, they are to try hard to disseminate the classical literature of Myanmar and the world to the Myanmar readers for widening their knowledge scope. Moreo-



Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan presents award to Maung Than Swe (Dawei).—MNA

ver, the literati are also to strive for enabling the national people to realize the changing world events with the national outlook and for enabling the new generation youth to have access to advancing technology. Therefore, the literati are always to uphold the national duties for serving the interest of the people.

In conclusion, the Secretary-1 urged them to hand down the Myanmar cultural heritage to the new generation while preserving the fine traditions; for the literati to harmoniously try hard for progress of the Myanmar literary world; to strive for serving the interests of the State and the people in the national culture sector; and to make utmost efforts for flourishing of the Union Spirit among the national people by upholding Our Three Main National Causes.



Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Myint presents third prize to Aung Kyaw Hsan.—MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo presented Life-time Achievement National Literary Award to U Kyi Aye (Hsinbyukyun Aung Thein) through Secretary of the National Literary Award Scrutinizing Committee U Maung Hlaing (Manug Swe Nge).

The Secretary-1 also presented prizes to Hsu Hngat in the novel genre, Nay Win Myint in the collective short stories genre and Than Aung (Anyamye) in the collective poems genre.

Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Wai Lwin awarded prizes to Tekkatho Sein Tin in the belles-letters genre, Sanda Khin in the Myanmar culture and fine arts genre, Manug Myint Tun in the child literature genre and Linkar Yikyaw in the youth literature genre.

Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan gave prizes to Hlaing Thin in the translation (general knowledge) genre, Tin Maung Myint in the translation (aesthetics) genre, Maung Than Swe (Dawei) in the (See page 11)



Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo presents prize to Than Aung (Anyamyay).—MNA

Throughout history, Myanmar has existed...

(from page 10)

general knowledge (arts) and Dr. Chit in the general knowledge (applied science) genre of the National Literary Award.

Next, the winners were awarded in the Sarpay Beikman Manuscript contest. Minister for Industry-2 Vice-Admiral Soe Thein presented first, second and third prizes to Thu Theim, Min Bay Dah (Pwintbyu) and Myaylat Min Lwin in the novel genre; and Thwe Htar Nyo (Thakkala), Khin La Pyae Wun and Myat Noe Ein (Zwegabin) in the collective short stories genre.

Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint handed first, second and third prizes to Aye Kyi Sein, Kyaw Zeyar Hlaing (Institute of Economics) and Maung Ni Hmaing (Kyauktan) in the collective poems genre, Htin Lin Kyaw, Saw Kyu Maung (Yawmyay) and Maung Yin Hline (Pynmamyaing) in the general knowledge (arts) genre.

Minister for Labour U Aung Kyi presented first, second and third prizes to Aung Soe (Agriculture-107), Maung Maung Myint Thein (Sethmu Takkatho) and Goal Hla Maung (Myoma) in the general knowledge (science and applied science) genre; Aung Soe, Thaung Nyunt Thit and Aung Min Myint in the belles-lettre genre.



Minister U Aung Kyi gives third prize to Goal Hla Maung (Myoma).—MNA



Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and party pose together with literati.—MNA

Chief Justice U Aung Toe gave first, second and third prizes to Ma Aye Chan (Myanmarsar), Thein Than Win (Mahlaing) and Aung Nyein Chan (Mann University) through U Khin Soe in the Myanmar culture and fine arts genre; and Lu Mon (Pakokku), Tekkatho Taw Thar through U Nyunt Han and Myat Wai Toe (Institute of Education) in the child literature genre.

Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Brig-Gen Kyaw Myint awarded first, second and third prizes to Maung Kyi Thant, Maung



Minister Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint presents third prize to Maung Ni Hmine (Kyauktan).

MNA

Soe Htaik (Thonze) and Aung Kyaw Hsan in the youth literature genre; first prize to U Aung Soe Oo in the translation genre; and second and third prizes to Zin Min (Thameinhtaw) and Maung Hsanda (Lewe) in the drama literature genre.

On behalf of the winners, Dr. Chit spoke words of thanks.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party posed for documentary photo together with the winners in the National Literary Award and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award.

Afterwards, the Secretary-1 and party greeted the award winners and literati.

Later, they viewed the documentary photos of the Life-time Achievement National Literary Award winners, National Literary Award and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award winners for 2007, prize winning books, winners of Myanmar movie outstanding award from 1952 to 2005, the documen-



Minister Vice-Admiral Soe Thein gives third prize to Myaylatt Min Lwin.—MNA

tary photos on prize presentation of the Myanmar motion picture outstanding award and academy statuettes.

MNA

Documentary film “Nanook of the North” screened to mark the World Film Day

YANGON, 28 Dec—Under the aegis of Myanmar Motion Picture Asiayon, a documentary film entitled “Nanook of the North” marking the World Film Day was screened at the hall of Myanmar Motion Picture Asiayon on Wingabar Street, Bahan Township, here this afternoon.

In 1920, director Robert J. Flaherty, script writer, cameraman and producer, went to the north of Canada where Eskimo are residing, and made himself the documentary film at his own risk.

MNA

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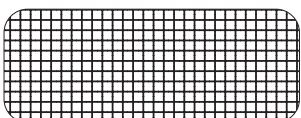


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Worshippers walk past the gate of the Asakusa Sensoji temple in downtown Tokyo, Japan, on 28 Dec, 2008.—INTERNET

'Imad the killer' shot dead by cops

RAMADI, 28 Dec—A member of al-Qaeda in Iraq who broke out of jail has been killed in a firefight while two other prisoners on the run have been surrounded by police.

"We killed 'Imad the killer' and he is lying on the street in front of me," an officer said. "We are exchanging gunfire with the other two who are hiding in a house in Street number 20 in the centre of the city."

The man killed by Iraqi forces, Imad Ahmed Farhan, was nicknamed "Imad the killer" because police say he has admitted to murdering at least 100 people.

Internet

Train derailment in Nevada to disrupt rail service

NEVADA, 28 Dec—A freight train derailed in northern Nevada, triggering a bridge collapse and major disruptions in rail service on one of the country's main east-west lines, Union Pacific officials said.

The derailment occurred on Saturday morning in a remote area along the Humboldt River about 10 miles west of Carlin and 260 miles east of Reno, UP spokeswoman Zoe Richmond said.

She said 13 cars containing grain were involved in the derailment, and she was unsure how many cars the westbound locomotives were hauling. No injuries were reported.

The 102-year-old bridge spanning the river collapsed a couple of hours after the derailment, Richmond said, and railroad officials are unsure how long it'll take to restore it. —Internet

MP3 player saves lost tourists

ZURICH, 28 Dec—The light from an MP3 player saved two lost tourists from a chilly night stuck out in the snowy Swiss mountains, rescue authorities said on Saturday.

The two — a skier and snowboarder, both from France — had got lost late in the day on Friday outside marked runs near the resort of Savognin in south-east Switzerland, said Gery Baumann, spokesman for mountain rescue service Rega.

They were able to alert authorities using a mobile phone, but it then ran out of battery power, Baumann said.—Internet

A young boy dies in grass slasher accident

BRISBANE, 28 Dec—A young boy has been killed after being run over by a grass slasher on a farm west of Brisbane. Police were called to the farm just outside Gatton today.

The four-year-old boy had been run over by a grass slasher at about 5.30pm (AEST) and died at the scene, ABC radio reported.

The boy's family and emergency service workers who went to the farm were receiving counselling, the report said.—Internet



Australian supermaxi 'Wild Oats XI', skippered by Mark Richards, enters Storm Bay as it approaches the finish line of the 64th annual 628-nautical mile Sydney Hobart Yacht Race, on 28 December. 'Wild Oats XI' won Australia's premier blue water classic for a record fourth consecutive year in an elapsed time of one day, 20 hours, 34 minutes and 14 seconds.—INTERNET

Bird flu found in poultry in northern Vietnam

HANOI, 28 Dec — Bird flu has resurfaced in poultry in northern Vietnam after many months without any cases, killing ducks and chickens at two farms, a state-run newspaper reported on Sunday. Animal health officials confirmed on Saturday the H5N1 virus had killed several birds among a flock of more than 100 ducks in Thai Nguyen city, 80km (50 miles) north of Hanoi, the Ho Chi Minh City Communist Youth

league-run *Tuoi Tre* newspaper said.

Officials had also detected the virus in dead chickens at a farm in the same city and nearly 4,200 chickens had been slaughtered to prevent the virus from spreading, the report said without giving a timeframe.

Deputy Health Minister Trinh Quan Huan said this week that there was a very high risk of bird flu returning during the winter and spring in northern

Vietnam. The H5N1 strain seems to thrive best in low temperature.

Five Vietnamese have died of bird flu so far this year out of six reported H5N1 infections and all were found in northern Vietnam during the first quarter of the year.

Vietnam has 106 infections, the second highest number of cases among 15 countries with known human cases after Indonesia.

Internet



Elderly people chat in Tokyo's Sugamo district. The area's retailers are focusing on the interests and needs of the elderly with shops aimed at an increasingly ageing population where one in five of Japan's 127 million people is 65 or older.—INTERNET

Missing nurse was stuffed in car boot

LONDON, 28 Dec — A nurse found in the boot of her car suffering from hypothermia and dehydration could have been there for up to 10 days, British police said today.

Magdeline Makola, 38, was wearing nightclothes and had been tied up so she could not escape. She was discovered in her vehicle in the town of Airdrie, east of Glasgow, on Friday.

The nurse, a South African-born British citizen, was said to be suffering from minor injuries and “extremely traumatised” by her ordeal, making it difficult to interview her.

Ms Makola, from Livingston, east of Edinburgh — 37km from Airdrie — had not been seen since she left work at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on 15 December. She was reported missing

after failing to turn up for work on 18 December. Her bank card had been used in Airdrie and a police officer searching the town's streets heard her cries for help. Officers smashed the car windows to get to the boot.

He said police believe Makola could have been in the boot for up to 10 days. Police said it was fortunate that temperatures last week had been reasonably mild for winter time.

Internet

People dance through the streets in Santiago de Cuba on 27 Dec, 2008. Thousands of people paraded through the streets to the rhythms of the Conga in celebration of the year's end and the 50th anniversary of the Cuban revolution to be celebrated on 1 Jan, 2009.—INTERNET



Rescuers suspect shark grabbed missing snorkeler

PERTH, 28 Dec — A full-scale search is on for a man in Australia believed to have been taken by a shark while outsnorkelling with his son.

Brian Guest, 51, was looking for crabs early on Saturday morning with his 24-year-old son off a beach in Port Kennedy, about 30 miles south of Perth, when he suddenly disappeared.

His son told police he saw a “commotion” in the water before his father vanished. He quickly

swam to shore and sounded the alarm. “It's believed he's been taken by a shark,” Western Australia state police Sergeant Greg Lambert said. Witnesses spoke of seeing flashes of fins in the area and the water was coloured by blood.

The beach was immediately closed, and police on jet skis, several marine rescue patrols and at least three helicopters began scouring the waters for the missing father of

three. Searchers have found a piece of a wet suit believed to be that of the missing swimmer in the water, not far from where he vanished, Sgt Lambert said. The 6-mile beach is a popular swimming location and there were many people out because of the early morning warm weather conditions. If Guest has been taken by a shark, it would be the second such incident in Australia this year.

Internet



File photo shows a White Pointer shark. Australian authorities have said they will not attempt to hunt down a shark believed to have killed a swimmer, as reports said the victim would not have wanted the predator to die.—INTERNET

Too much beer, wine linked to cancer

LONDON, 28 Dec — Downing a pint of beer or large glass of wine every day increases the risk of liver and bowel cancer, says the World Cancer Research Fund in Britain.

While some studies suggest moderate alcohol consumption can reduce heart disease, the same amount of alcohol may damage a person's DNA, increasing their risk of cancer by 20 percent, said Dr Rachel Thompson, a spokeswoman for the cancer research fund.

“When you consider how many cases of these types of cancer are diagnosed in the (United Kingdom) every year, it is clear that drinking even relatively small amounts of alcohol can make a significant difference,” Thompson said.

Internet

Erratic weather hurts Britain's wildlife

LONDON, 28 Dec — Britain's puffins are among the wildlife suffering from a second year of erratic weather, the National Trust said on Saturday.

This year's cold spring, wet summer and dry autumn have made tough going for puffins, the marsh fritillary butterfly and lesser horseshoe bats, the media reported. A wet summer in 2009 could be disastrous for insects — an integral part of the wildlife food chain, the National Trust said.

Bees struggled though frost and snow in April, while birds, including blue and great tits, failed to nest because of heavy rain in late May and a lack of insects for food. The puffin population of the Farne Islands was reported down by 35 percent while the common autumn crane fly was nearly non-existent, the organization said.

“Climate change is not some future prediction of what might happen, it's happening now and having a serious impact on our countryside every year,” said Matthew Oates, a spokesman for the National Trust.—*Internet*

SPORTS



Wanderlei Silva begins to fall after a knock out punch by Quinton Jackson, right, during their UFC light heavyweight mixed martial art match on 27 Dec, 2008 at The MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.—INTERNET

Capello shrugs off Ramsey comparisons

LONDON, 28 Dec—Fabio Capello insisted on Saturday that he does not yet deserve to be compared to Sir Alf Ramsey, the man he hopes to emulate by transforming England into world-beaters.

Ramsey coached England to their only World Cup success back in 1966 but Capello's impressive first year in charge of the national squad already has many observers tipping the Italian's team as champions in South Africa in 2010.

But Capello says there is plenty of work ahead if the England of Rio Ferdinand, John Terry, Theo Walcott and Wayne Rooney are to be kings of the world.

"Someone spoke to me about this big manager (Ramsey) but we have to wait. He's up here - I'm still down here," said Capello.

"It's a very long way to arrive at the level of Sir Alf Ramsey — it is difficult and very, very long."



Fabio Capello, insisted on Saturday that he does not yet deserve to be compared to Sir Alf Ramsey, the man he hopes to emulate by transforming England into world-beaters.—INTERNET

Answers to yesterday's Crosswords Puzzle

1	W	A	R	T		3	A	F	F	R	O	N	T	S				
	E		I		8		A		R		E		A		E			
9	A	N	D	E	S		10	A	M	N	E	S	I	A				
	R						T		N		E		T		P			
11	Y	E		12	N		13	I	N	C	O	G	N	I	T	O		
			E					E	8	U	8	N	8	R				
14	S	I	P	H		15	O	N	8	D	E	C	E	N	T			
	U	8	H	8	V	8	17	M	8	8	8	S	8	8				
18	T	O	R	P	E	D	O	E		19	S	8		20	S	A	21	W
	U	8	I	8	R	8	M	8	A	8	8	8	A					
22	R	A	T	R	A	C	E		23	S	H		24	O	R	T		
	E	8	I	8	W	8	N	8	H	8	W	8	C					
25	S	U	S	P	E	C	T	S	8		26	I	N	C	H			

Redknapp rules out Defoe return

LONDON, 28 Dec—Tottenham coach Harry Redknapp said on Saturday that he will not be forced to pay an inflated transfer fee to bring England striker Jermain Defoe back to White Hart Lane from Premier League rivals Portsmouth.

Redknapp took Defoe to Portsmouth in January when he was in charge at Fratton Park, but admitted he may now switch his attention to Middlesbrough's international winger Stuart Downing.

"I think they have a massive offer from somebody for him (Defoe). I paid about nine million pounds for him," Redknapp said.

"He is a good player but we're not going to pay over

the top for anyone. I like Downing but I don't know whether Middlesbrough want to sell him."

Internet



Tottenham coach Harry Redknapp said on Saturday that he will not be forced to pay an inflated transfer fee to bring England striker Jermain Defoe, back to White Hart Lane from Premier League rivals Portsmouth.—INTERNET

Berbatov voted best Bulgarian footballer, again

SOFIA, 28 Dec—Dimitar Berbatov has been voted best Bulgarian footballer for the third time in a row. The Manchester United player beat Levski Sofia keeper Georgi Petkov and Slavia Sofia midfielder Blagoy Georgiev.

Berbatov, who is only 27 years old and has a whole future ahead of him, has now won the trophy five times and moves into joint first place with Bulgarian legend Hristo Stoichkov.

Berbatov began his career at CSKA Sofia in 1999 and moved to Bayer Leverkusen in January 2001. While not that successful in the Bundesliga during his first months in



Dimitar Berbatov Germany, he did help to lead Bayer to the Champions League final. After five years, the forward tried his luck in the Premiership where he joined Tottenham Hotspur. With 27 goals in 70 games, he eventually attracted the interest of Manchester United this summer.—Internet

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

(28-12-2008)		
Arsenal	1 - 0	Portsmouth
Blackburn	2 - 2	Manchester City
Bolton	0 - 1	Wigan Athletic
Everton	3 - 0	Sunderland
Fulham	2 - 2	Chelsea
Newcastle	1 - 5	Liverpool
WBA	2 - 0	Tottenham
West Ham Utd	2 - 1	Stoke City

Man City owners target Inter Milan boss Mourinho

LONDON, 28 Dec—Inter Milan coach Jose Mourinho is a target for Manchester City's Abu Dhabi owners.

The Mail on Sunday says current manager Mark Hughes is believed to have until the end of the season to convince Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed, of Abu Dhabi's ruling family, that he is the man to satisfy their lofty football ambitions.

But if Hughes fails, then City will make serious efforts towards securing a big-name appointment.

City's new target is former Chelsea boss Mourinho, now in Italy with Inter Milan. —Internet

Great Scott leads Aussie SPL charge

GLASGOW, 28 Dec—was phenomenal", Strachan said whose team are comfortably on course for a fourth successive league title. McDonald said he couldn't describe his memorable strike as the best goal of his career.

Meanwhile, Invincible marked his return from injury with two goals for 10-man Kilmarnock in a 4-2 victory at Hibernian.

Celtic manager Gordon Strachan described McDonald as "phenomenal" after seeing the Australian score in the 58th minute after linking with Georgios Samaras before turning Kirk Broadfoot and volleying past Rangers goalkeeper Allan McGregor.

"I thought McDonald

was phenomenal", Strachan said whose team are comfortably on course for a fourth successive league title. McDonald said he couldn't describe his memorable strike as the best goal of his career.

Meanwhile, Invincible marked his return from injury with two goals for 10-man Kilmarnock in a 4-2 victory at Hibernian.



Scott McDonald

Sbragia is new coach at Sunderland

LONDON, 28 Dec—English Premier League side Sunderland on Saturday appointed Ricky Sbragia as manager following a successful short spell in charge as caretaker coach. The 52-year-old Scot has won an 18-month contract from chairman Niall Quinn on the back of his four games in charge since the resignation of Roy Keane earlier this month.

Those games saw Sunderland claw their way out of the relegation zone with two victories, a draw and a single defeat, away to Manchester United.

Former Manchester United skipper Keane stood down after 27 months in charge at the Stadium of Light saying he had taken the club as far as he could.

"Ricky Sbragia is a thoroughly professional football person," Quinn said.

The appointment comes had on the heels of Friday's Boxing Day 0-0 home draw with Blackburn, which followed victories over West Brom and Hull.—Internet



Ricky Sbragia (right) shakes hands with Blackburn Rovers manager Sam Allardyce before their match on 26 Dec, 2008.—INTERNET

PSV Eindhoven and FC Twente play out goalless draw

EINDHOVEN, 28 Dec—PSV Eindhoven and FC Twente both failed to make a significant gain on the Eredivisie leaders AZ Alkmaar after playing out a goalless draw.

In the first half, both sides had many opportunities to win the match but they both proceeded to hit the woodwork more often than they did the goal netting. The second half saw far fewer chances as they both settled for a point each.—Internet

Philippine rebel bomb expert nabbed

COTABATO, 28 Dec—A suspected Muslim rebel bomb expert was caught by Philippine security forces in the restive southern Mindanao region, local police reported on Saturday.

Badrudin Ambao Balawag, 45, believed to be working with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) commander Ameril Ombra Kato, was nabbed in a raid at his hideout in the township of Lambayong in Sultan Kudarat on Wednesday, said local police commander Superintendent Joel Limson.

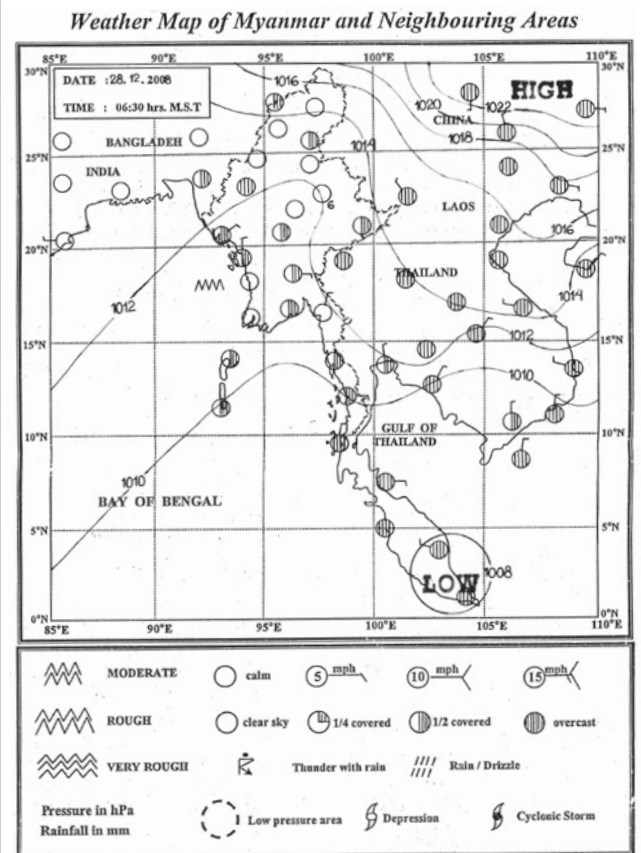
“He is a suspect in previous attacks in the region. A fragmentation grenade was also recovered from his possession,” Limson said. Manila has suspended peace talks with the MILF and ordered a massive assault after two rebel commanders launched a string of deadly attacks all over Mindanao.

The military authority on Saturday said the most wanted rebel leader Kato might have been killed in one of the recent military operations.

Internet



The newly built Bobrovnytska gas compressor and holding station near Kiev on 16 Dec, 2008. There is a “50-50” chance that Russia will cut off gas supplies to Ukraine on January 1 over Kiev’s failure to pay its debts, Russian energy giant Gazprom said on Saturday.—INTERNET



WEATHER

Sunday, 28 December, 2008

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hr MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain or thunder-showers has been isolated in Shan State and Mandalay Division, weather has been partly cloudy in Rakhine and Kayah States, upper Sagaing, Yangon and Bago Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (6°C) below December average temperatures in Chin State and Magway Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above December average temperatures in Kachin and Shan States, Bago Division and about December average temperatures in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant night temperatures was Hakha (-2°C). The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Lashio (0.24) inch and PyinOoLwin (0.20) inch.

Maximum temperature on 27-12-2008 was 92°F. Minimum temperature on 28-12-2008 was 63°F. Relative humidity at (09:30) hours MST on 28-12-2008 was 67%. Total sunshine hours on 27-12-2008 was (9.0) hrs approx.

Rainfall on 28-12-2008 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2008 was (110.31) inches at Mingaladon, (120.95) inches at Kaba-Aye and (140.94) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (4) mph from Southeast at (14:30) hours MST on 27-12-2008.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 29th December 2008: Possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin and Shan States and Taninthayi Division, weather will be partly cloudy in Chin and Rakhine States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Yangon Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (40%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight increase of night temperatures in the whole country.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 29-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 29-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 29-12-2008: Partly cloudy.



Residents look at a destroyed vehicle after a bomb attack in Kadhimiya district of northwestern Baghdad on 27 Dec, 2008.

INTERNET

Morocco seizes largest haul of drug in 2008

RABAT, 28 Dec—Customs in the northern Moroccan port of Tangier on Saturday seized 4.11 tons of hashish aboard a TIR truck that was about to leave for Spain, local MAP news agency reported. This catch, the largest hashish haul this year, was loaded on a truck that belongs to a Spanish company operating in the Atlantic city of Agadir in Morocco, the report said.

According to the report, the load was discovered thanks to the scanner imaging that showed suspicious forms inside the trailer, and customs and police agents then unloaded the pepper cases to find large hashish bundles at the bottom of the trailer. The driver of the truck, a 60-year-old Spanish, was arrested.

Internet



Monday, 29 December
View on today

7:00 am

1. တောင်တန်းသာသနာပြုဆရာတော်
ဘုရားကြီး၏ ပရိတ်တရားတော်

7:25 am

2. To be healthy exercise

7:30 am

3. Morning news

7:40 am

4. Cute little dancers

7:50 am

5. “စက်မှုဇုန်မှာကျွန်မစက်ရုံ
လာတည်တော့မယ်”

(မြိုးငွေစိုး၊ မိုးဒီ၊ သခင်၊
ခင်မိုးရီအေး) [ဒါရိုက်တာ-
တင်အောင်ရွှေ(သုတေသီ)]

8:00 am

6. Musical programme

8:15 am

7. ရေဘုတ်ရေလှောင်တံ

8:30 am

8. International news

8:45 am

9. Musical programme

4:00 pm

1. Martial song

4:10 pm

2. Dance of national races

4:20 pm

3. Musical programme
(The radio Myanmar
modern muical troupe)

4:30 pm

4. မြန်မာစာမြန်မာစကား

4:40 pm

5. Dace variety

4:50 pm

6. အေးသင်းတက္ကသိုလ်ပညာရေး
ရုပ်မြင်သံကြားသင်ခန်းစာ
ပထမနှစ် (ရူပဗေဒအထူးပြု)
(ရူပဗေဒ)

5:05 pm

7. Songs to uphold
national spirit

5:15 pm

8. “အသက်ကလေးရယ်တုံ့ရှည်စေလို”
(ဦးအောင်လွင်၊ ကြည်စိုး၊
မေတ္တဝါ၊ နှင်း၊ နှင်း၊ နှင်း၊
ထင်မိုး၊ မိုးမိုး၊ မိုးမိုး၊
(ဒါရိုက်တာ-ကြည်စိုး)

5:30 pm

9. Musical programme

5:55 pm

10. (၆၁)နှစ်မြောက်လွတ်လပ်ရေးနေ့
ဂုဏ်ပြုအစီအစဉ်

6:00 pm

11. Evening news

6:30 pm

12. Weather report

6:35 pm

13. Sing and enjoy

7:10 pm

14. နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ
“စူပါမင်းနှင့်မာနရှင်”
(အပိုင်း-၁၉)

8:00 pm

15. News

16. International news

17. Weather report

18. အချုပ်အခြာအာဏာခွန်ရှည်
ကြာခိုင်မာစေမှုဒီဂျစ်ရှယ်
(စက်မှုအားနှင့်အညီရွှေနိုင်ငံ
သစ်တည်မည်)

19. နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ

“မြင့်မြတ်နုလုံးသားပိုင်ရှင်”
(အပိုင်း-၁၃)

Throughout history, Myanmar has existed in the world with her own literature, culture, customs and traditions

Secretary-1 addresses ceremony to present Life-time Achievement National Literary Award, National Literary Award and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award



Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo delivers an address at presentation ceremony of Life-time Achievement National Literary Award, National Literary Award and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 28 Dec —A ceremony to present Life-time Achievement National Literary Award, National Literary Award and Sarpay Beikman Manuscript Award took place at the Ministry of

Information here with an address by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo. It was also attended by Commander of Nay Pyi

Taw Command Maj-Gen Wai Lwin, ministers, the chief justice, deputy ministers, the director-general of the SPDC office, departmental heads, members of Myanmar Historical Commission, mem-

bers of the committees for selecting award winners, literati, journalists, prize winners, the staff of the ministry and guests. Speaking on the occasion, the Secretary-1 said being the ones who

have cherished their literature throughout the history, the Myanmar people hail the month of Nadaw, one of the 12 Myanmar traditional seasons, by admiring and praising those from the literary

world. And this is a significant characteristic of Myanmar among the world's nations. He said such a ceremony to award the literati has been held annually, adding that he was very pleased to have the opportunity to award the literati. The literati are national forces striving for Myanmar to be able to stand tall among the international community by preserving the national literature that is the lifeblood of the country and the people. The aims of awarding the brilliant literati yearly are to praise the goodwill of the literati, who have been maintaining and preserving the national literature, to promote the standards of the national literature and literary world and to turn out the literati of new generations. (See page 10)



Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo poses for documentary photos together with winners.—MNA

Measures are being taken for human resource development and physical and spiritual development of the people.

Winner to receive Life-time Achievement National Literary Award at home
NAY PYI TAW, 28 Dec—Secretary of National Literary Award Scrutiny and Selection Committee U Maung Hlaing (Maung Swe Nge) accepted the Life-time Achievement National Literary Award for 2007 on behalf of winner U Kyi Aye (Hsinphyugyun Aung Thein) because he was ill and could not attend the prize presentation ceremony. Officials concerned will visit the winner's house in Yangon to present the award.—MNA