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Sunday, 21 March, 2004

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



Serve to the best of ability and with utmost diligence

You comrades are steadfast in adhering to the Four Oaths for the sake of the nation, for the people and for the Tatmadaw. While safeguarding the nation on the one hand, you comrades have to serve the national interests at any time in any period. All threats to the nation have to be staved off without anyone's bidding. Similarly, I would like to urge you to serve to the best of your ability and with utmost diligence in whatever role you are assigned to in working for the benefit of the people.

Senior General Than Shwe

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council

Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

(From address at the parade of the 57th Anniversary Armed Forces Day)

Emergence of a modern stadium contributes towards realization of government's objectives on raising national sport standard

Prime Minister attends opening of modern Pyidaungsu Stadium in Muse, Shan State (North)

YANGON, 20 March—Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, accompanied by member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, the ministers, the deputy ministers, the Chief of Staff (Navy), officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental officials, left here by Tatmadaw aircraft on yesterday morning and arrived in Lashio, Shan State (North) at 10 am.

The Prime Minister and party were welcomed there by Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Hla Myint,

Brig-Gen Soe Oo of Hsenwi Station, members of Shan State, District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials, social organizations, members of national race cultural troupes and local people.

After that, the Prime Minister and party, accompanied by Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, arrived in Muse by helicopter.

They were welcomed there by members of Muse District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials, social organizations, members of the national race cultural troupes and local people.

Next, the ceremony to open Pyidaungsu Stadium in Muse, Shan State (North) was held at the stadium at 11 am, attended by Chairman of Myanmar National Olympic Council Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, the ministers, the deputy ministers, the Chief of Staff (Navy), officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department, members of the District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials, social

organizations, students, members of the national race cultural troupes, athletes and local people. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint and Chairman of So So Pyay Pyay Co Ltd U Sai Tun Aye formally opened the new stadium.

(See page 10)



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt addresses opening ceremony of the Pyidaungsu Stadium in Muse, Shan State (North), on 19-03-2004.—MNA

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Circulation

22,703

59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative special features on pages 7, 8 and 9.



PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 21 March, 2004

Better transport— key to national development

In its efforts to achieve harmonious development in all regions of the nation, the State Peace and Development Council is building many new infrastructures with the aim of promoting regional development and raising the living standard of national people.

On one occasion, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance that transportation plays a pivotal role in national development and thus roads are being built to strengthen friendship among national brethren and narrow the development gap.

In accord with the guidance of the Head of State, arrangements are being made for better transportation throughout the country. According to the needs of the respective regions, new roads are being built, the old ones upgraded and new bridges on these roads are also being built.

The inauguration of Nantmaung Creek Bridge built by the Ministry of Construction in Momeik Township, Shan State (North), was held on 16 March. Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, officials and local people attended the inauguration ceremony. The old Nantmaung Bridge fell into ruin in June 2001 due to heavy rains. Therefore the new one had to be built. With the length of 300 feet and width of 12.5 feet, Nantmaung Creek Bridge is located on Momeik-Konwet road in northern Shan State. Thanks to the opening of Nantmaung Creek Bridge, local people have now easy access to towns in northern Shan State as well as other states and divisions via Momeik and Mogok. It is sure that with better transportation, economy in the region will make progress and friendship among national brethren will be strengthened.

As the Government is building new roads and bridges throughout the country, the number of road miles has now increased to 18,112 in the nation, up from 13,635 in 1988. Along with the roads, the Government has also constructed 168 bridges with 180 feet and above in length and people are now using these transportation facilities. At a time when the Government is endeavouring for regional development and better transport, we would like to urge local people to maintain roads and bridges in their regions for their durability.



Metta Yeikmon Cancer Foundation Chairman U Hla Tun dedicated K 50 million towards the fund of U Hla Tun Hospices in memory of his daughter Daw Mya Sunda Tun who passed away seven years ago. U Hla Tun seen handing over K 20 million of the above-mentioned fund on 20-3-2004. The hospices in Yangon and Mandalay are taking care of over 700 patients. (H)

Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day:



Book Fair

Sarpay Beikman

378,384 Upper Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Yangon
(former PPE head office)
19 to 28 March 2004 (from 9 am to 5 pm)

59th Anniversary

Armed Forces Day Objectives

- To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the State's seven-point policy programme
- To crush internal and external destructive elements hindering the stability and progress of the State through people's militia strategy
- To implement border area development tasks and the five rural development tasks hand in hand with the entire people
- To build up a strong and efficient Tatmadaw to uphold 'Our Three Main National Causes'

Commander attends cash donation ceremony for construction of Letisan Sasana Yeiktha two-storey building in Pazundaung

YANGON, 20 March— The first cash donation ceremony for construction of Letisan Sasana Yeiktha two-storey building in Pazundaung Township was held in conjunction with the ceremony to lay cornerstone of the building this morning, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe. Also present were Vice-Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Thayet Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kesara, Letisan Sasana Yeiktha Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pandita and member Sayadaws, Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Vice-Chief



Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe and party lay corner stones of the building. MNA

of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Aung Kyi, Commander of Ayeyawady Naval Region Command Commodore Maw Thein, Yangon Station Commander and Defence Services Records Office Commandant Brig-Gen Myo Myint, Senior military officers, Managing Director Col Soe Win of News and Periodicals Enterprise and departmental officials, local authorities and well-wishers.

Vice-Chairman Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kesara administered the Five Precepts. Next, members of the Sangha recited Parittas.

Afterwards, the commander offered the gold casket for laying cornerstone of the building to the Sayadaw. Similarly, the minister, the mayor and the Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training and senior military officers donated jewellery bricks to the Sayadaws.

The cash donation ceremony followed. The commander accepted K 15 million donated by Captain Thein Tun (Navy) (Retd)-Lt-Comdr Daw Mya Aye (Retd); K 10 million by Daw Maryar Hsubhar and family, Daw Indara Hsubhar and family, U Jemmy Hsubhar and family, U Rikkit Hsubhar and family, Daw Dura Hsubhar and family, Daw Roma Hsubhar and family and family, K 100,000 by families of Ayeyawady Naval Region Command; K 1.5 million each by Daw Mi Mi Khin and family; (Dr U Thet Tin (Mahamyang)-Daw Si Si Tin and family; Lt-Comdr Myo Aung (Retd)-Daw Yadana (MRTV) (Retd) and family; and K 1 million by Superintending

Engineer U Thu Ta-Physician Dr Daw Thida Oo and family.

Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Aung Kyi and Commandant of DSRO Brig-Gen Myo Myint accepted cash donations from other well-wishers. Today's donations were K 52.1 million by 69 well-wishers. Vice-Chairman Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kesara delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merits gained.

Afterwards, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Aung Kyi, Commandant of DSRO Brig-Gen Myo Myint, Managing Director Col Soe Win of NPE and senior military officers laid cornerstones at the designated places. The commander put the stone plaque on the cornerstone. The commander next performed the rituals of golden and silver shower to mark success of the ceremony.

Those wishing to donate cash may contact the fund-raising division of the building. —MNA

thanks. After the ceremony, Isuzu Motors Ltd of Japan

hosted a dinner in honour of the athletes and guests.—MNA

Yangon Division retains c'ship trophy in ISD Golf Team Championship



YANGON, 20 March— In the final round of the 26th Inter-State/Division Golf Team Championship, Yangon Division team secured the championship trophy awarded by President of Myanmar Professional Golfers' Association and Myanmar Golf Federation Maj-Gen Win Hlaing this morning. After the fourth round of the championship, the prize presentation ceremony followed. Country Representative U Aye Cho of Isuzu Motors Ltd of Japan, Mitsugi Corporation of Japan Managing Director Mr Yamaguchi, Isuzu Motors Ltd of Japan General Man-

ager Mr Iida, MGF General Secretary U Aung Kyi and Sports and Physical Education Department Director-General U Thauang Htaik presented first, second and third prizes to the winners in the respective events.

Next, MPGA and MGF President Maj-Gen Win Hlaing presented championship trophy to Yangon Division team. Isuzu Motors Ltd of Japan General Manager Mr Iida presented US\$ 500 to Myanmar Olympic Committee Secretary-General U Thauang Htaik; US\$ 500 to MGF General Secretary U Aung Kyi and US\$ 1,000 to Treasurer U Oo Maung of Yangon Golf Club. Afterwards, Yangon Division team captain Sai Kyaw Kyaw spoke words of



Isuzu Motors GM Mr Iida presents the first prize of individual scratch to Naing Naing Lin (Yangon).—MGF



Mitsugi MD Mr Yamaguchi presents the first prize of individual handicap to Kyaw Thet Wai of Shan State (North).—MGF

Nine killed in three attacks on eve of Iraq war's anniversary

BAGHDAD, 20 March—A series of car bombings, mortar attacks, and assassinations left nine people dead across Iraq yesterday as military officials braced for further attacks in the run-up to tomorrow's one-year anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Authorities said the milestone was an added cause for vigilance, though they couldn't tell whether the rash of attacks this week had been coordinated.

"The best and only way to prepare for that is to be on the offensive," said Maj Gen Martin Dempsey. "You can't sit back and wait for terrorists to pick the point of his choosing to attack you."

Yesterday's toll included four Iraqis killed in an explosion near a hotel in the southern city of Basra, three Iraqi employees of a US-funded television station who were shot dead on a highway northeast of Baghdad near Baquba, and two Iraqi civilians, including a child, who were killed, along with 17

American troops injured, in a mortar attack on a fortified city hall in Fallujah, west of the capital city.

Guerillas also fired mortar rounds at two US military bases on Wednesday, killing three American soldiers and wounding nine others, the US military said yesterday. The deaths brought to 567 the number of US troops killed in Iraq since the start of hostilities last year, according to Defense Department figures.

Late in the day, rockets also struck two hotels used by foreign contractors near the Green Zone, the secured area in central Baghdad where the US-led occupation authority is based. There were no reports of serious injuries. The spate of attacks followed Wednesday night's

massive bombing at the Mount Lebanon Hotel in Baghdad.

The US military lowered the death toll in the suicide bombing of the Baghdad hotel on Wednesday to seven. Officials had earlier said 27 people were killed in the Baghdad bombing. It then revised that downward to 17 dead without providing an explanation. Hours later, the military said that just seven had been killed.

There was no clear explanation for the change but Iraq doesn't have a centralized system for handling such tragedies, and with the bodies of victims going to different morgues, government departments and other agencies often disagree over death tolls.

Internet

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Guerillas kill two US Marines in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 20 March—Guerillas killed two US Marines in Iraq, the US military said Friday, and an Iraqi journalist allegedly shot by American troops in Baghdad died of his wounds. US Secretary of State Colin Powell visited Baghdad and acknowledged an escalation in rebel attacks.

The attack on the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force occurred Wednesday while the troops were conducting "security and stability operations" in Anbar province, the statement said. Anbar stretches from west of Baghdad to the Jordanian border.

The US military provided

no other details and said the names of the slain Marines were being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

A 1st Infantry Division soldier died early Friday from injuries suffered when the Bradley fighting vehicle he was traveling in rolled 200 feet down an embankment into the Tigris River near Beiji, 120 miles north of Baghdad.

Army spokesman Maj Neal O'Brien said the soldier had been flown to a US military hospital in Germany for treatment but later succumbed to his injuries. Another soldier in the vehicle died during Wednesday's accident, and one more remained in critical condition.

The latest deaths brought to 570 the number of US troops killed in Iraq since the start of hostilities last year, according to Defense Department figures.

In Baghdad, Powell urged Washington's coalition partners Friday not to "run and hide" from their commitment to fight terrorism.

His press conference on a one-day visit was preceded by more than 20 Arab journalists walking out in protest against the shooting deaths of two Iraqi reporters, allegedly by US troops. —Internet



US troops run to secure the area of an attack on a US Humvee in the northern Iraqi town of Mosul, on 19 March, 2004. No one was injured in the attack, witnesses said.

INTERNET

Annan confirms UN return to Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, 20 March—The United Nations has finally confirmed it will play a role in Iraq's future political process.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said he will send a team to the capital Baghdad to help with the formation of a new interim government. The proposed transfer of power from the US-led coalition to Iraqi civilians is set for the end of June.

The UN pulled all its staff out of Iraq in October following two suicide attacks on its headquarters. In a letter to Iraqi Governing Council (IGC) and the coalition, Mr Annan said the UN would rely on them to protect the UN team in Iraq.

The IGC wrote to the UN earlier this week saying it would welcome the UN's assistance.

The team, led by the UN envoy to Iraq Lakhdar Brahimi, will work on political arrangements leading to the creation of a new interim government. Washington originally called for UN help after their plan to choose the government through caucus-style meetings was widely opposed.

After visiting Baghdad last month, Mr Brahimi said elections were impossible because of time constraints, but suggested other options for selecting a government, including expanding the Governing Council or holding a conference. —Internet

ESCAPs 60th session to be held in Shanghai

BEIJING, 20 March—The 60th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) of the United Nations (UN) is to be held in Shanghai of China from April 22 to 28 this year, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said at a Press conference here Thursday.

Prior to the session, the special body on Pacific Island Developing Countries (PIDCs), an ESCAP subordinate body, will hold its eighth meeting from April 20-21, Kong said.

Themed "meeting the challenges in an era of globalization by strengthening regional development cooperation", the session will cover a wide range of topics, including regional economic and social situation, poverty reduction, globalization and social issues.

"It is of special significance for ESCAP to hold its 60th session at its birth place," said Kong, adding that China was looking forward to working jointly with all parties concerned to ensure the session was a great success.

The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), the forerunner of ESCAP, was founded in Shanghai in 1947.

ESCAP is the longest-standing inter-governmental multilateral economic and social development organization in Asia and the Pacific Region with the widest representation.

In the past decades, ESCAP has served as an important channel for its members to exchange experience and expand cooperation, and has played an im-

portant role in promoting the economic and social development in the region.

According to Kong, Chinese Vice-President Zeng Qinghong, State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan will attend the opening ceremony.

Former vice-premier Qian Qichen will attend the "High Level Visionary Meeting for Asia and the Pacific 2020".

Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing will head a Chinese delegation to the session and will also serve as the Chairman.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan will attend the opening ceremony and all 62 members and associate members will send their ministerial or high-level delegations to the session.

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese Vice-Premier visits Cambodia

SIEM REAP (Cambodia), 20 March—Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi arrived here Friday afternoon to pay a five-day official visit to Cambodia at the invitation of Cambodia's Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng.

Wu Yi was welcomed here by Sok An, Cambodia's senior minister, and other Cambodian officials.

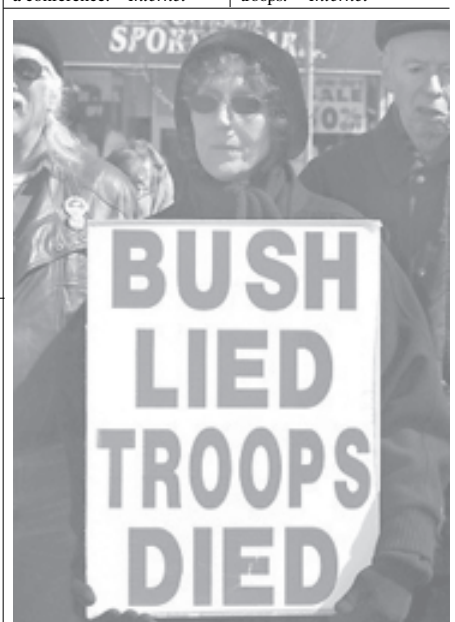
The aim of Wu's visit is to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. The two sides are expected to sign a package of agreements on bilateral economic cooperation.

Wu Yi is scheduled to fly to Phnom Penh on Sunday morning. She will hold a bilateral meeting with Sar Kheng, and to

pay courtesy calls to Cambodia's acting Head of State and Senate President Chea Sim, Prime Minister Hun Sen and FUNCINPEC Party President Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

It is Wu's second leg of her four-nation tour to Southeast Asia and South Asia that will also take her to Myanmar and Maldives. She had a three-day visit to Laos before she came here.

MNA/Xinhua



Anti-war demonstration in Michigan. More than 600 anti-war demonstrators snarled traffic in San Francisco as they staged a rowdy protest to mark the first anniversary of the outbreak of war in Iraq. —INTERNET

Study shows tuberculosis on the rise in big US states

Hundreds of protesters march in San Francisco

US population may grow to over 400 million in 2050

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Demonstration to mark Iraq war anniversary

Anti-war campaigners will inflate a model of a Trident missile, accompanied by activists dressed up as weapons inspectors.

Internet

A San Francisco police officer pushes a group of antiwar demonstrators as they march through the streets of downtown San Francisco to mark the one-year anniversary of the Iraq war in San Francisco, California. More demonstrations are scheduled around the world on Saturday to voice opposition against the ongoing US-led war in Iraq.

INTERNET

Blix says Iraq war may have worsened terror threat

CHICAGO, 20 March — The invasion of Iraq has polarized the Middle East and may have worsened the threat of terrorism, former United Nations weapons inspector Hans Blix charged on Thursday.

On a tour of the United States to promote his book, *Disarming Iraq*, Blix criticized US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair for engaging in a "witch hunt" to justify the US-led invasion of Iraq one year ago.

In a speech sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Blix listed the negatives he believes have resulted from the war: polarized societies in the Middle East, a rift in NATO, damage to the UN Security Council, and no easing in the

threat of terrorism.

"The terrorism threat has not abated," he said.

Asked to expand on his comments in light of the March 11 train bombings in Spain that killed more than 200, Blix said "it's clearly an increase in the terrorism."

"It was ... al-Qaeda or some related terrorist movement trying to tell states that they should not participate in the actions in Iraq," he said.

Blix said his task of seeking weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was undermined by the Bush and Blair govern-

ments, which probably knew they were exaggerating the threat to justify the invasion. "(The war) was more punitive than preemptive," he said. Apart from removing Saddam from power, Blix said he saw no benefit from the invasion and was skeptical of US claims that Libya's subsequent decision to disarm was based on a fear that it could be next.

What bothered him most, he said, was the manipulation of intelligence on Iraq and the lack of support for the weapons inspections process and the UN in general.

"They are politicians, and we understand the need for hype. But still, as citizens, as voters, we want critical thinking, we want sincerity, not advertising hype," he said.

Blix said the UN could play a key role in a fight against terrorism. "First of all, the struggle against terrorism must be a multilateral one, and I think the United States realizes that," he said.

"This is not just an alliance of the willing, of big industrial states, but must have the rest of the world behind it." — MNA/Reuters



A US soldier stands guard on 18 March, 2004 at the site of an explosion that tore apart a five-story hotel catering to foreigners in the heart of Baghdad on Wednesday night. The attack killed 27 people, just days before the anniversary of the start of the Iraq war. — INTERNET

China launches charity campaign to help poor

BEIJING, 20 March — China has launched a charity campaign to help the poor and those hit by natural calamities. So far, some 100,000 pieces of garment have been collected and are ready for distribution.

Tang Shengwen, Deputy Secretary-General of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) said the campaign, co-sponsored by the RCSC and the Sanliuyi Du Sports Goods Company Ltd., will run from March 10 to April 18 in eight provinces or municipalities, including Beijing, Liaoning, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Hubei, Guangdong, Shaanxi and

Sichuan.

The campaign aims to encourage people to help the needy, Tang said.

People can donate clothes to Sanliuyi Du Sports Goods stores, which are scattered in many shopping malls of the eight provinces or municipalities. The company will collect, wash, and disinfect the clothes and send them to the

RCSC. The RCSC will then distribute the clothes.

The campaign showed the love and care of the whole society to vulnerable groups, Tang said.

Yang Feng, marketing manager of the Sanliuyi Du company Ltd. said the company will hold another three or four similar campaigns later this year. — MNA/Xinhua

Brahimi says most Iraqis want UN help on transition

UNITED NATIONS, 20 March — Iraqis overwhelmingly want the United Nations to help Baghdad set up a transitional government and prepare for elections, top UN aide Lakhdar Brahimi said on Friday, dismissing reports Iraq had invited the world body only under US pressure.

While there are definitely Iraqis who have doubts about a UN role in the transition, "from everything we know, the overwhelming majority of the people of Iraq, within and outside of the Governing Council are really demanding and pressing the United Nations to come back again," Brahimi told reporters.

He had been asked whether his planned imminent return to Baghdad as head of a UN political team had been soured by reports that Paul Bremer, head of the US-led occupation authority in Baghdad, had to pressure

the 25-member Iraqi Governing Council to issue an invitation.

Brahimi said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who stood by his side as he spoke, "has always said that we are not looking for a job, and we are not dying to go to Iraq."

"And if the United Nations is not needed, that is perfect from our point of view. But I think the Iraqis in the Governing Council and out of the Governing Council are overwhelmingly demanding that the UN plays a role," he said.

MNA/Reuters

Vietnam's automobile, motorbike component imports to fall

HANOI, 20 March — Vietnam is forecast to see year-on-year falls of 15 per cent and 100 per cent in import turnovers of automobile and motorbike components, respectively in the first quarter of this year.

The country will import around 80 million US dollars' worth of automobile components and 45 million dollars' worth of motorbike components in the period, local newspaper *Transport* quoted sources from the Ministry of Trade on Friday as saying.

The expected decreases are mainly due to the local weakened purchasing power of automobiles and motorbikes, since automobile prices have risen considerably in recent months, and restriction in motorbike registration has been applied by authorities of Hanoi. Vietnam recorded sales of 3,389 automobiles in the first two months of this year, a year-on-year decline of 24.1 per cent, mainly because of higher special consumption taxes imposed on automobiles and value-added tax on imported automobile components since January 2004.

MNA/Xinhua

Central America questions military role in Iraq

SAN SALVADOR (El Salvador), 20 March — Central America's token military role in Iraq faces increased questioning by local politicians and residents wondering why 740 troops from the tropical isthmus are needed in the turmoil of the Middle East.

Largely unnoticed amid the violence in Iraq, soldiers from El Salvador and Honduras have been clearing mines and providing medical care in central Iraq since last summer.

Their humanitarian work is an effort by some Central American countries to build on close trade and immigration ties with the United States, which has been eager to share the military burden in Iraq.

But a Nicaraguan troop contingent withdrew in February complaining of a lack of funds and the 380-member Honduran light infantry unit is due to leave when its mandate finishes in July. Replacement Honduran troops are unlikely to be sent.

A former rebel leader in El Salvador is threatening to bring home his country's 360 troops if he wins the presidential election on Sunday.

"Of course we are going to pull them out. That is no surprise," leftist candidate Schafik Handal told a news conference on Friday.

Opinion polls show Handal trailing conservative Tony Saca who on Friday softened previous support for the continuation of Salvadorean forces in Iraq beyond the end of their original one-year term. "It is something that has to be revised when the time comes," he told *Reuters*.

Analysts say the incoming Spanish Socialist Prime Minister's decision to withdraw Spain's troops from Iraq if the United Nations does not take charge there by the end of June is also swaying the Central Americans, whose troops are under Spanish command in Iraq.

"The events in Spain in recent days have cast doubts on the presence of the Central American troops in Iraq," said Salvadorean political scientist Napoleon Campos. The Central American troops have not been involved in major incidents in Iraq. Costa Rica and Panama do not have standing armies. Guatemala has not sent troops to Iraq.

MNA/Reuters

Pakistan's fighter plane crashes

ISLAMABAD, 20 March — A fighter plane of the Pakistani Air Force crashed near the central Pakistani city of Jhang on Friday while on routine mission, according to a statement of the Air Force.

"The Pakistani Air Force reports with regret that an F-7 fighter aircraft, while on a routine operational training mission, crashed 20 miles west of Jhang (Punjab Province)," it said.

The crash apparently occurred due to technical malfunction, it said.

The pilot of the aircraft ejected safely, said the statement, adding that no loss of civilian life or property has been reported.

A board of inquiry has been ordered by the Air Force Headquarters to determine the cause of the accident, the statement said. — MNA/Xinhua



Filipino protesters display an anti-US placard during a protest outside the US embassy in Manila on 19 March, 2004. Dozens of anti-war activists protested on one-year anniversary of the US-led attack on Iraq. — INTERNET

Iraq in the aftermath of US invasion

The worst attacks in Iraq

After US and allies invasion of Iraq on 20 March 2003, Iraqi people are facing many difficulties and remain hopeless. More and more Iraqis are becoming victims of the US-led invasion against Iraq.



Victims of the explosion which broke out in Khadimiah district on 2 March 2004 were rushed to hospital.

Iraqis view the scene of destroyed houses adjacent to Bagdad's Mount Lebanon hotel on 18 March 2004, after a powerful bomb blasted in the building in which 4 people were killed.



Iraqis mourn for thier relatives who died in an explosion in Baghdad.



Iraqis, carrying the wounded, run from the explosions in Kirkuk on 2 March 2004.



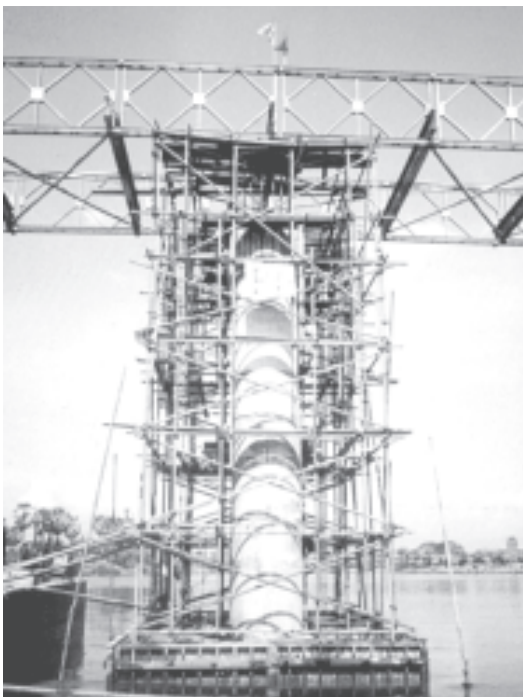
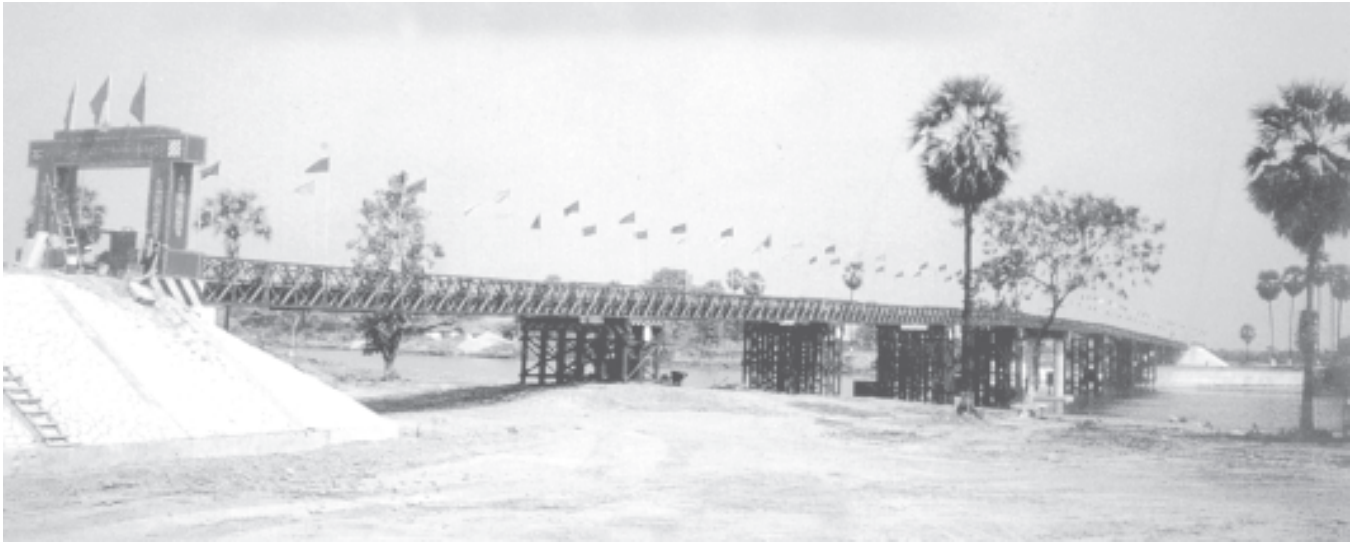
The worst attacks in Iraq

Sr	Date	Death toll
1.	From 19-8-2003 to 23-2-2004	500
2.	2-3-2004	181
3.	17-3-2004	7
4.	18-3-2004	4
	Total	692

An Iraqi man carries a wounded boy as he runs away from the explosions in Kerbala on 2 March, 2004.

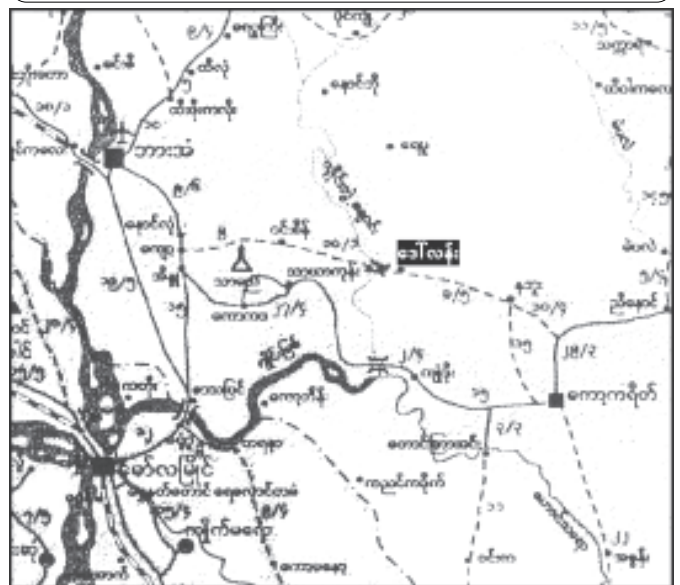
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day:

Tatmadaw always making efforts for national development in the interest of the people



Hlaingbwe River-spanning Dawlan Bridge near Dawlan Village in Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin State. The facility was constructed by the Tatmadaw for regional development and smooth transport.

Dawlan Bridge across Hlaingbwe River near Dawlan Village, Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin State. It was built by the Tatmadaw.



The map showing the location of Hlaingbwe River-crossing Dawlan Bridge.



A Tatmadaw of noble spirit and high morale

Facts about Dawlan Bridge across Hlaingbwe River

Location	- Dawlan Village, Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin State
Length	- 1,000 feet
Width of motorway	- 13 feet and seven inches
Kind of the bridge	- Type Bailey (steel frame)
Permitted load	- 30 tons
Launching date	- 18-3-1998
Completion date	- 13-3-1999
Opening date	- 23-5-1999

The Tatmadaw (Armed Forces) in perpetual service of the people



"As you, the Tatmadawmen, were born of the people, you are the Tatmadawmen of the people. Therefore, you are to serve the interest of the people when you have no combat and training duty. You will have to undertake the community welfare tasks in wherever regions you are, regarding those regions as your native places."

It is the guidance Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe has given to the Tatmadawmen to engage in the community welfare tasks in his address delivered at the graduation parade of the 46th Intake of the Defence Services Academy. Thus, the Tatmadawmen are undertaking the development tasks all over the country when they have no combat and training duty.

The Tatmadawmen crushed the colonialists hand in hand with the people, erecting a milestone of victory history. In addition, they have been safeguarding the nation's independence and sovereignty, sacrificing lives, blood and sweat. Together with the people, they are carrying out public welfare tasks in the march towards a modern and developed nation.

As they were born of the people, they are serving the people's interest.

Not only have they striven to regain independence and safeguarded the lives and property of the people, but have also built irrigation facilities for agriculture, reclaimed land and built roads and bridges. Moreover, they have carried out the task to develop the rural areas and remote border regions.

required for the convenience and satisfaction of the passengers.

The geographical condition of the nation permits rivers to flow from east to west or south to north in any region of the country.

Hence, the Government has been building bridges on a network of roads the length and breadth of the nation for the people's interest. The nation's bridge builders are Public Works, the Directorate of Myanmar Railways and the Military Engineers.

Roads and bridges are the strength of the nation. In the past, the transport links run from the north to the south of the nation on the east of Ayeyawady River. But now, master plans have been laid

the Tatmadaw for the national development. To know about the bridges built by the Tatmadaw, a team of newsmen of the Myanmar Alin daily interviewed the Tatmadawmen who have taken part in the bridge-building projects.

"Of the bridges built by the Tatmadaw, let us know about the Dawlan Bridge on Hlaingbwe River?" Our team interviewed Lt-Col Thaik Soe, in-charge of the bridge construction project, to know its benefits.

He said, "The Dawlan is the first ever bridge the Tatmadaw has built for the nation. After the completion of the facility, the Tatmadaw has been building more bridges. Of the 11 over-180-

cluded ferrying across Gyaing River, and the journey was 58 miles long. Crossing the river during the monsoon was hazardous. The bridge has cut travelling time and reduced the probability of hazards. Thanks to the better transport, the local people are enjoying economic, health and education developments. With the public participation, the project was completed within a year, without facing any difficulty."

The Tatmadaw built the bridge in 1999 to help solve the transport difficulty in Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin State. Now Kayin State is enjoying better transport, and it is the result of the Tatmadaw's love for and

smoothen the transport between the east and west bank of Ngamoeyik River and cut 21 miles in transporting passengers and goods directly from the No 7 Highway as cars do not need to pass through the Indaing-Hlegu section of the Yangon-Pyay Highway via No 2 Highway."

These are the benefits of the Ngamoeyik, the second bridge built by the Tatmadaw.

The Tatmadaw built the third facility, the Pathaung Bridge, on Myeik-Taninthayi-Kawthoung Highway in Myeik Township, Taninthayi Division. The bridge has facilitated the transport of towns and villages on the Yangon-

Bridges built by Tatmadawmen

The people of the nation travel or transport goods by land, water or air.

Of the three means of transport, water transport consumes much time, while the cost of air transport is high. Hence the most reliable means of transport is the road transport. In this regard, motorways, railroads and bridges are

down and implemented to build motor roads and railroads linking all the places located in all the directions of the nation. A total of 180 over-180-foot bridges including five constructed by the Tatmadawmen have been built in the whole nation after 1988.

Building of bridges is one of the many endeavours of

foot bridges it has built or is building, five have already been put into service, and another two are soon to be opened. The remaining four are under construction. As for the under-180-foot bridges we have built many bridges.

"Before the existence of the Dawlan, travelling from Hpa-an to Kawkaik in-

goodwill towards the people.

Ngamoeyik Bridge in Dagon Myothit (East) in Yangon Division, is the second bridge built by the Tatmadaw.

Our team interviewed head of the Ngamoeyik Bridge Project Maj Aug

Mawlamyint-Ye-Dawei-Myeik-Taninthayi-Kawthoung Highway.

As they are the sons and daughters of the people, they are always serving the public interest. They have always crushed the enemies trying to endanger the lives and property of the people.

Maung Nyein Chan

Kyi.

"Please explain to us about the aim of the project."

"Its aim is to transport the imported goods unloaded at Thilawa Port to other places of the nation without needing to pass through the congested roads of Yangon. Another aim is to help facilitate the flow of goods to the western parts of Bago Division. In addition, the bridge will also help

Moreover, they have been tirelessly taking part in the development undertakings in the interest of the nation and the people. Throughout the successive eras of history, the Tatmadaw stood as the main reliable institution for the people.

The Tatmadaw continued to build bridges in Sagaing Division.

It has built 21 large
(See page 9)

The people of the nation travel or transport goods by land, water or air. Of the three means of transport, water transport consumes much time, while the cost of air transport is high. Hence the most reliable means of transport is the road transport. In this regard, motorways, railroads and bridges are required for the convenience and satisfaction of the passengers. The geographical condition of the nation permits rivers to flow from east to west, or south to north in any region of the country. Hence, the Government has been building bridges on a network of roads the length and breadth of the nation for the people's interest. The nation's bridge builders are the Public Works, the Myanmar Railways and the Directorate of Military Engineers.



The Tatmadaw has erected the 810-foot Pathaung bridge in Myeik Township, Taninthayi Division, for the nation and the people.

Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day



Ngamoeyeik Bridge built by the Tatmadaw in Dagon Myothit (East) Township, Yangon Division.

(from page 8) and small bridges on crossing the river by boat is hazardous. Although the distance is near, the journey from one bank to another was much difficult. To overcome the difficulty, the Head of State has given guidance to build strategic road for developing the west bank regions of the region is further flourishing. In addition to the bridges in the western and northern parts of the nation, the Tatmadaw has also been building four bridges in the central Myanmar. They are: Hsinthechaung Bridge and Ngalaikchaung Bridge in transport sector. The Tatmadawmen have always served the interest of the national races. As the Tatmadawmen have love for and goodwill towards the national brethren to that extent, the people are also rendering assistance with goodwill to



Lapin Bridge built by the Tatmadaw lies in Kani Township, Sagaing Division.

and Tein bridges have been completed, and they will be opened soon. Our team interviewed Maj Aung Kyi, in-charge of the projects. "Let us know about the aim of the bridges on Monywa-Kalewa Road." "As the current of Chindwin River is strong, Chindwin and facilitating the transport of Kale region. The Tatmadaw erected 153 wooden bridges, eight bridges installed with steel frames and 13 concrete bridges. Thanks to the bridges and the road, Sagaing Division and Chin State are achieving greater progress, and the border trade in the Pyinmana Township; Ahsonchaung Bridge in Tatkon Township; and Yonebin Creek Bridge in Lewe Township. It is also erecting more bridges at other necessary places. In this way, the Tatmadaw is making efforts night and day for the development of the nation and facilitating the the Tatmadawmen discharging duties in various parts of the nation. The strength that comes out from the bonds of love and goodwill between the Tatmadaw and the national races will become greater and last forever.

(Translation: TMT)



Pahtolon Bridge in Kani Township, Sagaing Division, is one of the several bridges built by the Tatmadaw.

Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

Poem

March, the month of Sun art

- * When decayed, drying leaves herald summer
Gantgaw, mango ready their sprouts
The wind takes the mist in all directions
Letpan and Pauk in bloom
There's crimson overwhelming everywhere.
- * When that crimson touches your heart
There's reminiscence of the past
On Myanmar land they intruded, stayed
Anti-fascist resistance spreads nationwide
The sound of victory reverberates everywhere
- * In celebrating victory with resonance
Everyone throughout Myanmar is involved
Kayah, Kachin, Kayin and Shan
Chin, Rakhine, Mon, Bamar
In unity, they are of one mind.
- * With one mind, taking victory flowers repeatedly
Will march together, will sacrifice life
Toward regaining independence thoughts are fixed
People's Tatmadaw will lead
No discrimination between hills and plains
- * For 59 years over patriotic Tatmadaw
Has marched on doing public duty
With zeal and zest, in nobility
The red victory flag skyward
Ever-fluttering, it stays.
- * With mind set on marching toward the future
Peaceful, developed and flourishing Myanmar
We'll build together, this modern beauty
Dependent only on strength within
Let's do that organized in solidarity
Brethren all rejoice together till eternity
We'll work for flourishing of the seven-step
Road Map.

Myinmu Maung Naing Moe (Trs)

Bridges built or being built by the Tatmadaw

Sr	Bridge	Township	Length (Feet)	Note
1.	Dawlan	Hlaingbwe	1000	completed
2.	Ngamoeyeik	Yangon	660	completed
3.	Pathaung	Myeik	810	completed
4.	Pahtolon	Kani	450	completed
5.	Lapin	Kani	220	completed
6.	Tein	Mingin	360	under construction
7.	Myoma	Kani	540	under construction
8.	Yonebin	Lewe	270	under construction
9.	Ahsonchaung	Tatkon	190	under construction
10.	Ngalaikchaung	Pyinmana	300	under construction
11.	Hsinthechaung	Pyinmana	210	under construction



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt accepts K 10 million each for development of education sector and sports standard donated by So So Pyay Pyay Co Ltd Chairman U Sai Tun Aye in Muse on 19-3-2004.— MNA



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects Namhumon (Kaungkha) Hydro-electric Power Plant in Kaungkha on 19-3-2004.



Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects construction of Thanlwin Bridge (Tarpa) in Kutkai Township on 19-3-2004.— MNA

Emergence of a modern...

(from page 1)

Next, the Prime Minister and party planted a Tawwin coconut sapling at the entrance to the stadium to mark the opening of the sports facility.

After that, the Prime Minister unveiled the stone inscription of the stadium and sprinkled scented water on it and the first session of the opening ceremony ended.

Next, the second session of the opening ceremony continued at the stadium.

Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing made a speech. He said that in accord with the uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation out of the four social objectives, the opening of new modern stadium in Muse, the border town in Shan State (North) is an honour for both the local people and the State.

The new stadium is the fruitful result of the guidance of Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt which calls for building a new sports facility to be in conformity with development of Muse, he noted.

The Government spent over K 600 million on construction of the sports facility which can hold 2,140 spectators on both grand stand and stalls.

At a time when the Ministry of Sports and the athletes who bring honour to the nation are discharging the national sports duties for uplift of national prestige and integrity, the emergence of such sports facility will contribute much towards development of the sports for Shan State and the nation, he stressed.

Shan State (North) has been able to produce 15 athletes representing the nation and they are now participating in the international sports events, he disclosed.

He said that Shan State (North) is to strive to produce more new generation athletes by holding the sports events in accord with the programmes laid down by the Ministry of Sports and the State.

Next, Minister for Sports made a speech. He said that the government is making all-out efforts for the emergence of a new modern and developed nation. At such a time, priority is being given to improvement of the sports standard like the nation-building tasks.

He said that the global nations are vying each other for advancement in sports, regarding the sports as a national task; that the improvement of sports is the most effective way in boosting the national prestige and integrity.

To be able to effectively uplift the sports standard the Myanmar National Olympic Council and the Myanmar Olympic Committee were formed with the State level officials under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

For improvement of the standard of football which is

regarded as national sports steps for development of youth football are being taken across the nation and constant football matches are being held in states and divisions and new football grounds were constructed and the old ones renovated.

At a time when there are encouragement of the people, the guidance of the Head of State and much assistance of the wellwishers, the athletes are to strive to be able to bring glory to the nation with sporting spirit.

The new Muse Stadium opened today will be able to produce many athletes and contribute to enhancing the friendship between Myanmar and China through sports as it is situated at the border of the two countries.

In conclusion, the minister called on the local people, staff of the Ministry of Sports and members of local sports and physical education committee and local authorities to safeguard the sports facility for its durability.

Next the Prime Minister delivered a speech. He said opening of such a new stadium in Muse is an effective development for uplift of health and fitness of local people and for urban development of Muse.

He said it is true that emergence of a modern stadium contributes towards the realization of the objectives on raising of national sport standard of the government.

He said the Union of Myanmar is a Union formed with over 100 national races. The government is laying emphasis on harmonious development of all parts of the Union and enjoyment of better foundations on regional development by all national people.

The government made endeavours for reconsolidation of national solidarity in border areas that lagged behind in development due to lack of regional security and peace in the past. With regional peace and stability the government built better foundations for transport, economic and regional development with greater momentum, he said.

He said Muse is a border town and border trade has developed well there in accord with the market-oriented economic system. Therefore it is an economically and socially significant region, he added.

He said the government implemented systematic plans for development of Muse so that progress has been made in regional development including national solidarity, regional peace and tranquillity and transport. In a short time, Muse has greatly changed and developed, he said.

Now Muse has become a city with modern high-rise buildings, hotels, departmental store of international standard which are characteristics of a city.

He said old sports ground was in the narrow region of the centre of the town and it was difficult to upgrade it. Therefore an urban development project was drafted. He said he permitted to build a modern stadium with stands and a 400-metre track during his inspection tour in Muse in March

2003.

Emergence of a modern stadium is a significant characteristic for developed Muse. Being a town bordering the People's Republic of China, it is necessary for the town to improve its standard in accord with the development of the neighbouring country so that it can promote dignity of the nation and its people, he said. He pointed out that it is important to preserve traditional culture and customs.

He urged officials and local people to make efforts for strengthening the existing bilateral friendship, enhancing bilateral cooperation for common interest and improving border trade equally.

He spoke on raising of sport standard of Muse District and turning out brilliant athletes. He said southern Shan State produced a lot of athletes who bring honour to the nation. He believed that the town will also produce such brilliant athletes after emergence of a modern stadium.

He urged officials to make endeavours for turning out outstanding athletes in accord with the lofty aim, "Myanmar sports—the world to conquer".

In conclusion, he urged them to make progress of Muse, to maintain regional peace and stability and strengthen national solidarity and to improve socio-economic life of local people based on patriotism and Union spirit. He wished for success of the athletes of the new stadium.

Next, Chairman U Sai Tun Aye of So So Pyay Pyay Co Ltd presented K 20 million—10 million each for education and sport sectors to the Prime Minister.

Chairman U Sai Tun Aye also presented K 10 million for education fund of Shan State (North) to Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing.

He handed over related documents to Deputy Director-General of Sports and Physical Education Department U Thein Aung.

Next, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing presented commemorative pennants and gifts to the Prime Minister, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and the ministers.

The Prime Minister and party watched traditional dances of national races. They then inspected the grand stand.

Next, the Prime Minister inspected construction of Muse District Hospital on 20 acres of land near the sports ground. He also inspected Muse Township Hospital.

At Shweli Yadana Hall in Muse, the Prime Minister met with district and township authorities and departmental officials. First, Chairman of Muse District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Soe Win reported on matters related to the district, Director U Sein Htay of Border Trade Department on border trade tasks and Company Commander Maj Kyi Zin of No 1 Border Region Immigration Inspection Control Headquarters on immigration tasks at the border region.

(See page 15)

Demonstration and lecture on Myanma traditional dance held

YANGON, 20 March— The demonstration and lecture on Myanma traditional dance, organized by Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (Cultural Working Group), was held at City Hall, here, this afternoon.

Present were Vice-Presidents of the federation Daw Khin Lay Thet and Daw Than Than Nwe, Adviser Daw Khin Than Nwe and officials, Patron of the Yangon Division Organization for Women's Affairs Daw Khin Thet Htay and guests.

Vice-President Daw Than Than Nwe spoke on the occasion. Adviser Prof Daw Khin Nu gave lectures on culture of Myanma dance and Academy Daw Nwe Nwe San performed dances. Later, Vice-President Daw Than Than Nwe presented gifts to Prof Daw Khin Nu, Academy Daw Nwe Nwe San and leader of the music troupe U Khin Maung Tin.—MNA



MWAF Vice-President Daw Than Than Nwe delivers an address at the demonstration and lecture. — MNA

Economic Working Group of Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation meets

YANGON, 20 March— The Economic Working Group of Myanmar

Women's Affairs Federation met with those in charge of township

economic working groups in Yangon Division at MICT Park on Hline Universities' Campus in Hline Township this morning. Present on the occasion were Vice-Presidents Daw Khin Lay Thet, Daw Than Than Nwe and Daw Khin Khin Win, General Secretary Prof Dr Daw Khin Aye Win and Secretariat members, Founder of Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs'

Association Professor (Retd) Daw Yi Yi Myint and officials.

First, Economic Working Group leader Daw Khin Myint Myint and Professor (Retd) Daw Yi Yi Myint gave speeches.

Officials reported on future tasks of the working group. Next, those present took part in the discussions. Later, Daw Khin Myint gave concluding remarks.—MNA



MWAF economic working group leader Daw Khin Myint Myint delivers an address at the meeting. — MNA

Sanitation tasks carried out for cleanliness of Yangon City

YANGON, 20 March — Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of YCDC Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin visited Tatmadawmen, members of Myanmar Police Force, staff of Yangon City Development Committee and the people carrying out sanitation tasks to hail the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day in Yangon municipal area this morning.

The commander and the mayor inspected dredging of the drain and tasks for proper drainage from U Wisara Road to Padomma Sports Ground in Sangyoung Township and attended to the needs.

Next, they looked into unblocking of drains along Anawrahta Street in Pabedan, Latha and Lanmadaw Townships. They also inspected sanitation tasks in Mingala Taungnyunt Township and gave instructions on sanitation tasks and dredging and unblocking of drains to be carried out under the supervision of respective officials.

Similar tasks were carried out Kamayut, Dagon, Mayangon, Hline, Kyimyindine, Seikkan and Bahan townships in the same morning.

Afterwards, the commander and the mayor inspected tasks for upgrading of Kandawgyi Gardens and left necessary instructions. — MNA

Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division meets

YANGON, 20 March—The Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division held its work coordination meeting at the meeting hall of All Private Bus Lines Control Committee (Yangon Division) Head Office on Laydauntkan Street in Tamway Township yesterday evening, with an address by Chairman of the Supervisory Committee Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Commander Col Wai Lwin

and the military region commanders, the station commanders, Secretary of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myint Kyi and members, the Supervisory Committee members, the Chairmen of District Peace and Development Councils, the registrars of the universities and colleges in Yangon and officials.

First, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe gave instructions on measures to be taken by members of the Supervisory Committee for the convenience of the people who are travelling

downtown Yangon and from Yangon to other parts of the nation.

Next, members of the Supervisory Committee reported on measures taken for ensuring smooth and secure transport for the people who are travelling downtown Yangon and in other states and divisions by car, train, air and sea, and for the people who are commuting downtown Yangon by bus, circular train, ship and powered boat; the registrars of the universities and colleges and officials on arrangements to be made by

the Supervisory Committee for the convenience of teachers and students; and the chairmen of bus lines running in Yangon Division on steps taken for enabling drivers and conductors of the respective bus lines to follow the prescribed traffic rules.

The meeting ended with the concluding remarks by Chairman of the Supervisory Committee Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe.—MNA



Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein cordially greets a delegation member at the dinner.—MNA

PRC delegation visits Mindhamma Hill

YANGON, 20 March—The visiting Chinese writers delegation headed by Chairman of the Writers Association of the People's Republic of China Mr Wang Chonglu, accompanied by officials, this morning arrived at the Mindhamma Hill where they paid homage to Lawka Chantha Abhaya Labha Muni Buddha Image kept in Yadana Gandakuti Shwekyungdaw and made cash donations.

Chairman of the Pagoda Board of Trustees Maha Saddhammajotika Dhaja U Shein Aung Bo briefed the visiting delegation on the history and the salient points of the Buddha Image. Next, the visiting delegation viewed round the hill.—MNA

Marijuana seized in Pyu

YANGON, 20 March —A combined team comprising local intelligence unit, Bago Anti-Drug Squad and Pyu Police Station searched a suspect Naing Moe at East Ward in Pyu on 9 October 2003 and seized 51 grams of marijuana.

Pyu Police Station filed Naing Moe, son of U Han Tin of Pyu Railway compound under Section 15/16(C)/21 of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Pyu Township Court heard the case and handed down five years' imprisonment on him under Section 15 and seven years' imprisonment under Section 16 (C) to serve separately on 13 February 2004. — MNA



The 12th edition of Tourist Maps of Myanmar published by DPS Ltd.



The Sarpay Beikman Book Fair continues for the second day on Saturday. — MNA

ပညာရေးဖြင့် ခေတ်မီပွံ့ပြားတိုးတက်သော နိုင်ငံတော်ကြီး တည်ဆောက်အံ့

Experts say inhalant abuse rebounds among US youths

WASHINGTON, 20 March—The effects of a 1990s advertising campaign credited with reducing inhalant abuse among children are starting to wear off, and a new generation is at risk, US experts said.

While abuse of many other drugs such as marijuana is declining, young teens are starting to experiment again with inhalants such as glue or nail polish, government and non-profit group experts said.

They said they will renew efforts to warn parents and children about the dangers of “huffing” or “sniffing”, which can kill or leave users brain-damaged for life.

Those most likely to use them are young teens, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America said in a report.

The Partnership help organize an advertising campaign in 1995 that targeted children aged nine to 17 and their parents. Groups including the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration agree it helped reduce inhalant use through its messages stressing the dangers of huffing.

“Today’s sixth-graders, who were too young to benefit from the campaigns of the

1990s, are now exposed to inhalant abuse as they enter middle school and are unaware of its risks,” the Partnership’s report reads.

Inhalants, from glue to spray-can computer keyboard cleaners, have always been the drug of choice for the younger set, said Dr Nora Volkow, head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

“They are widely available. They are cheap,” Volkow told a news conference. “They are highly addictive. They are very toxic.”

They can kill immediately by causing fatal heart arrhythmias, asphyxiating the user by sucking the oxygen from their lungs, or causing them to vomit and then suffocate.

Long-term abuse damages the brain’s white matter, first interfering with the ability to concentrate and later causing long-term cognitive damage.

MNA/Reuters

China’s individual investors buying more on fund market

BEIJING, 20 March — China’s individual investors are increasingly turning to mutual funds as a major investment channel, boosting the country’s fund sales.

Two securities investment funds, the Citic Funds-Classic Allocation Fund and the Fortis Haitong Income Fund, netted over 10 billion yuan (1.2 billion US dollars) each from their sales, 80 per cent of which was purchased by individual investors, according to sources from the two companies.

Institutional investors used to play a major role in buying fund units, but now, “individual investors have become the main buying force”, said Zhao Hongyu, marketing manager of Citic Fund Management Co., Ltd.

As the government pushes the opening-up and stable development of China’s stock market, individual investors, who are at times victimized by bad corporate

governance, in-house trading and improper information release, are becoming more confident about the prospects of stock investment, such as buying securities investment funds. Other funds, Zhao said, like principal guarantee funds, are also popular among individual investors, whose fund buying desire is boosted by an average 20 per cent economic return of last year’s fund market.

“It’s common in foreign countries to put personal assets in the hands of professional institutions. Some in China have begun to accept the investment mode.”

Against inflation expectations and low interest rates at present, part of the 11.06 trillion yuan (1.3 trillion US dollars) of individual bank-

ing deposits has also started to flow to the stock market via fund purchase.

Market analysts believe eight funds issued last month, including the Citic Fund and the Fortis Fund that reached record sales for the first time in the Chinese Mainland so far, will start to buy in stocks from late March.

According to Chen Shaosheng, Fortis Funds manager, believed companies mainly engaged in steel, petroleum, electricity, auto production, finance, telecommunications would be popular with fund management companies. By the end of 2003, 32 fund management companies had been established in China, with 112 securities investment funds on the market.—MNA/Xinhua

India tests nuclear-capable “Prithvi” missile

NEW DELHI, 20 March — India test-fired on Friday its short range nuclear-capable Prithvi missile, which is seen as a deterrent to neighbouring Pakistan, the Press Trust of India reported.

A Defence Ministry official said a test of the surface-to-surface Prithvi had been planned for this month as part of a regular series, but he had no immediate details.

The test came shortly after Pakistan tested on 9 March a ballistic missile, the

Shaheen II, which it says is capable of delivering nuclear warheads to all the cities in India.

PTI said the Indian missile, tested from an island in the Bay of Bengal, had a range of between 93 miles and 124 miles.

The two nations, which began peace talks last month to end more than half a century of hostility, carried out underground nuclear tests in 1998 and have since been developing missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.—MNA/Reuters

Australian farmers winning battle against locusts

SYDNEY, 20 March—Australia is winning the battle against billions of marauding locusts, but the insects are laying eggs in preparation to attack ripe winter crops in six months’ time, officials said on Friday.

“I think we’re getting on top of it,” said Laury McCulloch, director of the Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC).

Aerial spraying will move to Coonamble, 250 miles northwest of Sydney, on Saturday, as locust fighters attempt to knock out as many insects as possible before they lay eggs for the next generation.

But he noted reports of “test drilling” by locusts around the town of Dubbo, near Coonamble, which was invaded by the locusts this week.

Eggs laid by the locusts in holes drilled into the dry, baked earth would need rain to survive, he said, but if they did they would hatch in October and be swarming by November.

So far the locusts have eaten into summer crops of oats and horticultural produce,

less important than Australia’s world-class winter crops of wheat, barley and canola which are harvested in the last three months of the calendar year.

“The potential is there for a pretty serious spring,” APPLC operations manager Walter Spratt told the *Land* newspaper this week, describing the infestation as similar to the widespread plague of 2000, but closer to settled areas.

In 2000 up to 100 billion locusts traversed the outback in a long band running across three states from western Queensland to New South Wales (NSW) and into South Australia.

“In the afternoon the sky is just a silver haze,” Narromine farmer and live-stock agent Jason Hartin told the *Land*. “When the sun is over them you’d swear you

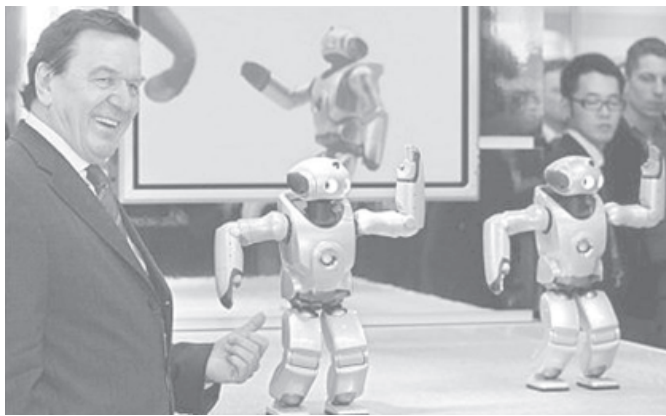
were looking at a shower of silver bullets.”

McCulloch is calling on farmers to be vigilant, note layings and hatchings, and use free chemicals supplied by the Department of Agriculture. APPLC fixed-wing aircraft and spotter helicopters will assist if farmers become overwhelmed.

“It becomes a process of attrition,” McCulloch told Reuters. “You get a couple of hundred farmers treating four or five small bands, you begin to make a serious dent in the stuff,” he said.

After being brought to life by drought-breaking rain, over the past couple of months the locusts have swarmed over an area twice the size of England along a 745-mile front from southwest Queensland through to central New South Wales.

MNA/Reuters



Chatty robots, cocktail-shaking computers, pen phones wow CeBIT crowds.
INTERNET

2.17 lakh turtles come for mass nesting along Orissa Coast

KENDRAPARA (Orissa), 20 March—An estimated 2.17 lakh endangered olive ridley sea turtles had visited the Nasi-II Island off Orissa’s (east Indian state) Gahirmatha Coast for mass nesting during the first week of March, official sources said.

The turtles, proving the sceptics wrong, had begun arriving along Gahirmatha Coast, known as the world’s largest rookery for these species, for mass nesting much to the joy of turtle watchers across the globe.

The sources said the threatened marine species, given the same protection as extended to tigers under country’s wildlife provi-

sions, literally invaded the tranquil beach at Nasi-II in large numbers for mass nesting, an annual phenomenon otherwise called “Arribada” in Spanish.

The Divisional Forest Officer, Rajnagar Mangrove (Wildlife) Forest Division, Anup Kumar Nayak, who monitored the Arribada, said the olive ridleys arrived en masse at Nasi-II Island on

1 March night for laying eggs on the sandy beach. The arrivals continued up to March 8 night.

While nearly 5,000 turtles turned up on March 1 to lay eggs, the figure shot up on the following days. An estimated 1.80 lakh female ridleys crawled on to the tranquil Nasi-II beach on March 2 and 3. About 32,000 turtles came to lay eggs during the

last five days.

The Nasi-II Island being located close to a sensitive defence installation in the Wheeler’s Island is free from human interference and predators.

The defence personnel had lent their active support in ensuring safe mass nesting working with forest staff who maintained vigil on the nesting site.—MNA/PTI

Doctor says Muslim veil could cut cancer risk

RIYADH, 20 March — Veiled women are protecting more than their modesty — they are also less prone to nose and throat cancers because their veils screen out viruses, a Canadian doctor was quoted on Friday as saying.

Professor Kamal Malaker said women in Saudi Arabia, many of whom wear a full face-covering veil, suffered a low rate of the Epstein Barr Virus which causes nasopharyngeal cancer.

“The hijab (veil) is a protection against upper respiratory tract infection,” the *Saudi Gazette* quoted Malaker as saying. “In the kingdom, nasopharyngeal throat cancer ailment is very low among women as compared to men.”

“It is interesting how a very simple social custom can have a profound effect on a human’s life,” said Malaker, head of radiation oncology at King Abdul Aziz Hospital in the conservative Muslim kingdom.—MNA/Reuters

SPORTS

Leeds United takeover announcement expected Friday

LONDON, 20 March—Debt-laden Leeds United is expected to make an announcement about its financial future later on Friday, a source close to the Premier League club said.

The club has been in lengthy negotiations with a consortium of local businessmen.

A deal would end uncertainty over Leeds' future after it announced in December it needed to find a buyer to avoid going into financial administration.

Leeds has racked up debts of around 80 million pounds (146.5 million US dollars) and reported a financial loss of almost 50 million pounds in the year to June 2003.

The problems date back to a spending spree on players under former chairman Peter Ridsdale and ex-coach David O'Leary, their confidence buoyed by Leeds' progress to the Champions League semifinals in 2001.

Forced to cut back on its players' wage bill, the club is facing relegation this season. It is bottom of the standings with 22 points from 28 games.

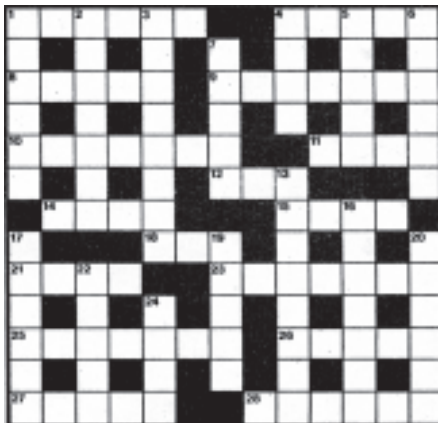
MNA/Reuters



Annika Sorenstam tees off from the 13th tee box during the first round of the Safeway International, on 18 March, 2004, at the Superstition Mountain Golf and Country Club in Gold Canyon, Ariz. It was Sorenstam's first tournament of 2004.

INTERNET

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1 Lord
- 4 Tranquility
- 8 Way of travel
- 9 Echo
- 10 Those who make salt
- 11 Thin
- 12 Undermine
- 14 Prepare for publication
- 15 Irritable
- 18 Resort
- 21 Unctuous
- 23 Toffee
- 25 Ostracise
- 26 Shouts
- 27 Girl's name
- 28 Floor

DOWN

- 1 Gloomy
- 2 Sordid and dingy
- 3 Powers of nature
- 4 Mail
- 5 Revile
- 6 Termination
- 7 Garb
- 13 Ibsen verse play (4,4)
- 16 Wild speculator
- 17 Limp
- 19 Sharp
- 20 Shiny
- 22 Faithful
- 24 Unite

Real appeal over extra Ronaldo transfer fee

LAUSANNE (Switzerland), 20 March—Real Madrid have appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to overturn FIFA's decision ordering the Spanish giants to pay Inter Milan a final 10-million-euro settlement over the transfer of Ronaldo, CAS said on Friday.

In November, world soccer's governing body FIFA told Real that the extra payment should be made to Inter on top of the 35-million-euro fee after Real's Santiago Solari refused to move as part of the deal.

The original transfer agreement had included Argentine Solari in part-exchange, prompting Inter to make a formal complaint to FIFA claiming they were entitled to additional money for the Brazilian international.

CAS said Real had requested the annulment of FIFA's decision four days ago. The appeal process would take up to four months and the result would remain confidential.

Ronaldo, 27, who joined Real on a four-year deal in 2002, signed a two-year contract extension earlier this month, saying he expects to see out his playing career at the club.—MNA/Reuters

Man United shocked, Ferdinand "devastated"

MANCHESTER (England), 20 March—Manchester United expressed shock on Friday at the failure of Rio Ferdinand's appeal against an eight-month ban and the defender admitted he was "devastated".

An independent appeal commission on Thursday upheld Ferdinand's suspension for missing a drugs test, shattering his hopes of playing for United again this season and representing England at the European Championship in Portugal.

"I'm disappointed, everyone is. There's a sort of sense of shock about it," Ferguson told a news conference.

"We are not saying anything at the moment, simply because we want to absorb all that was said yesterday, the findings, and digest it and take counsel opinion and things like that."

Ferdinand, who missed the drugs test at United's Carrington training ground in September, had hoped to get a reduction in his suspension and told *The Sun* newspaper on Friday he was "absolutely devastated" by the verdict.

"The main thing keeping me going throughout this has been the possibility of playing again this season. This verdict has taken that hope away from me."

The confirmation of Ferdinand's ban means England's defence has been breached even before they kick a ball at Euro 2004.

Ferdinand's partnership with Sol Campbell was the cornerstone of England's

run to the 2002 World Cup quarterfinals. Coach Sven-Goran Eriksson had made no secret of his wish to see Ferdinand's ban reduced so he could take him to Portugal.

"If he could have a lesser punishment, I should be happy," a hopeful Eriksson told *Sky Sports News* in the run-up to Thursday's decision.

The Swede faces a tough task to find a replacement for the world's most expensive defender, with Chelsea's John Terry the most likely candidate.

Terry may lack flair going forward with the ball but was solid when it counted most, when he replaced Ferdinand for the nervy 0-0 draw with Turkey in Istanbul that booked England's place in the finals.

Terry has improved hugely in the new-look Chelsea side this season and he can only have benefitted from their run to second place in the Premier League and a Champions League quarterfinal slot.

Terry has also worn the Chelsea captain's armband frequently this season. With Ferdinand's absence confirmed, his place alongside Campbell appears almost certain for England's Euro 2004 opener against France on June 13.

MNA/Reuters

Ferguson looks to Spurs match to spark United recovery

MANCHESTER (England), 20 March—Alex Ferguson hopes a victory against Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday will send a message to the rest of the Premier League that things are back to normal at Old Trafford.

The English champions have won only two of their last eight league matches, a record that has seen them slip 12 points behind leaders Arsenal and all but out of the title race.

United have 10 league matches remaining in the season, plus an FA Cup semifinal against Arsenal and, if they get through that, the final of the world's oldest competition.

UEFA reject Wales appeal over Russian dope case

LONDON, 20 March—UEFA have turned down an appeal by Wales who wanted to be awarded a place at Euro 2004 after Russian midfielder Yegor Titov failed a drugs test.

UEFA banned the player after he tested positive for a banned stimulant after Russia's playoff match against Wales in November in Moscow. Wales drew the first leg 0-0 in Moscow, a match Titov did not play in.

However, he played in the second leg which Russia won 1-0. "The Appeals Body based its decision in particular on the failure by the Welsh FA to present evidence of any implication of the Football Union of Russia in the alleged doping infringement," a UEFA statement said on Friday.

MNA/Reuters

"We have got potentially 12 games left this season and we have to use these as the message that we are back in our normal position in terms of winning matches," Ferguson told a news conference on Friday.

"That's the name of the game for us and it's always going to be that way. Getting back into winning ways is always a cure for everything in the sense of bad results. It's the only thing you can do." United suffered two major blows in the space of five days last week, being knocked out of the Champions League by Porto and then losing 4-1 to Manchester City.

"The important thing is to get our own ship in order and that is by winning football matches, and that is what we are expected to do," Ferguson said.

"I'm trying to get back to a fit squad and in the process also get the confidence of the team back up. And training helps in that respect...It's been very positive."

"You have to do that in training, reinforce the good habits they've always had, to encourage them and tell them that they are good."

Along with suspensions to defenders Gary Neville and Rio Ferdinand, Ferguson has also faced injury problems in recent weeks and there is little sign of that easing on Saturday.

South African Quinton Fortune (knee) is definitely out and there are doubts over striker Louis Saha (Achilles), captain Roy Keane (hamstring) as well as fellow midfielders Eric Djemba-Djemba, Kleberson and Cristiano Ronaldo.

MNA/Reuters



Lindsay Davenport follows through on a forehand return against France's Nathalie Dechy during the semifinals match of Pacific Life Open, on 19 March, 2004, in Indian Wells, Calif. Davenport won, 6-2, 7-6 (4).—INTERNET

Emergence of a modern stadium...

(from page 10)

After attending their needs, the Prime Minister delivered an address, saying that as Muse is sharing border areas with the People's Republic of China, departmental personnel in Muse are to lay emphasis on promoting bilateral relationship and cooperation tasks.

Friendly relationship and economic cooperation are flourishing between the Union of Myanmar and PRC. As such, departmental personnel discharging duties in the border areas are to strive for more flourishing of bilateral relationship between the two countries. Efforts are to be made for correctly and promptly carrying out tasks so as to share mutual interest in the border trade.

Regarding the agreements of management of border regions between the two countries, systematic cooperation tasks are to be undertaken at the basic level. As Muse is a district level town, departmental officials are to go right down to grass-roots level and to systematically manage affairs to attend to requirements of the people.

Similarly, the problems which cannot be solved at the basic level are to be submitted to above levels. The committees formed in respective sectors are to strive for achieving success with concerted efforts and collective leadership so as to have progress in their townships and districts. If arrangements can be made to fulfil requirements of the people after realizing natural conditions of the rural areas, personnel can put trust in the people and win their cooperation in discharging duties.

On arrival at the construction site of Thanlwin Bridge (Tarpa) on Kutkai-Tamoenye-Monesi-Tarpa-Tashwehtan-Laukkai road on Township, Brig-Gen Than Win of Laukkai Station, local authorities, departmental personnel, local national races and local people welcomed them.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister for Construction U Tint Swe reported on facts about the bridge, Deputy Superintending Engineer U Than Shwe of Bridge Construction Project Special Group-9 of Public Works on preliminary engineering works, construction of the foundations of the towers on Monesi bank and Tashwehtan bank and efforts being made for com-

pletion of the bridge earlier than scheduled. The Prime Minister gave instructions on efforts to be made for completion of the works as soon as possible.

Next, the General presented gifts to the workers and foodstuff to local national race leader U Myint Lwin. The General inspected progress of construction tasks. Afterwards, the General managed to upgrade Kutkai-Tamoenye-Monesi-Tarpa-Tashwehtan-Laukkai road into a tarred one.

Thanlwin Bridge (Tarpa) crossing Thanlwin River will link Kutkai-Tamoenye-Monesi-Tarpa road section on the western bank of Thanlwin river and Tarpa-Tashwehtan-Laukkai road section on the eastern bank. It will be 600 feet long and it will be of concrete tiles and steel frames suspension bridge. On completion, the road will emerge to link the western and eastern banks of Thanlwin River and it will contribute much to development of economic and social standards of the people in border regions.

Next, they proceeded to the construction site of Namhumon (Kaungkha) Hydro-electric Power Plant near Lwekhan Village, Kaungkha Myothit, Kutkai Township, where they were welcomed by Tactical Operations Commander Col San Lin, local authorities, Shan State (North) Special Region-5 national race leader U Mahtu Naw and local people.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Myo Myint reported on matters related to the power plant project and Director U Win Kyi of Construction-2 of Hydro-electric Power Department on construction of irrigation facilities for the project. National race leader U Mahtu Naw reported on carrying out of regional development tasks and requirements. The General attended to their needs. Next, the Prime Minister presented foodstuff gifts to U Mahtu Naw and workers of the project.

Similarly, U Mahtu Naw presented gifts to Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and Lt-Gen Aung Hwe. Afterwards, the Prime Minister and party viewed construction of the diversion weir, sluice gate, conduit and canal. Namhumon (Kaungkha) Hydro-electric Power Plant will be installed with two 150 kilowatt generators to produce 1.475 million kilo-

watt hours a year. It will supply sufficient power to Kaungkha.

On arrival at Kutkai, the Prime Minister and party were welcomed by Tactical Operations Commander Col Ohn Lwin, local authorities and local people. At Pyidaungsu Hall in the township, the Prime Minister met with township level authorities and departmental officials, social organization members and local people.

First, Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U Chit Wai and departmental officials reported on matters related to the township. The Prime Minister attended to the needs and delivered an address, saying that the purpose of the tour is to fulfil the requirements for development of Kutkai Township and raising the living standard of local people. He said that he has also attended to the needs for development of the entire Muse District and construction of Tapar suspension bridge across Thanlwin River which will play a crucial role in smooth transport for Kutkai and Shan State (North).

In the past, there was only one road that linked Lashio and Kokang through Hsenwi and Kunlong. Thus the people from Kutkai had to go to Hsenwi first if they wanted to travel to Kunlong, Laukkai and Kongyan. On completion of Tapar Bridge Project, the facility will make effective contribution towards improvement of economy and living standard of local people.

The government is implementing the project with great difficulty spending a huge sum of foreign exchange as regional development mainly relies on the transport sector.

In the past, peace could not prevail in Shan State (North), resulting in a poor transport along with a slow commodity flow. As a result, the region lagged behind in development.

But, peace has been restored in the region for nearly 15 years and border areas development projects have been implemented on a large scale. With the emergence of roads and bridges in remote areas, good foundations on trade and production have made progress, he said.

At the same time, good foundations in education, health and social sectors have been laid across border areas that can help bring about highly-qualified

generations with fitness.

The government also places emphasis on equitable development of all parts of the nation. The regions between Shan State (North) and (South) still lag a bit behind in development and thus the government is upgrading the roads linking these two regions.

Furthermore, roads linking southern and northern parts, and eastern and western parts of Shan State are being constructed where necessary. Consequently, a network of roads has emerged in Shan State.

With emergence of more roads linking one region and another, it will further cement relationship and friendship among the national races. Only then, will national solidarity be further strengthened, leading to perpetual existence of the Union that forges Union Spirit and nationalistic spirit.

As soon as national solidarity weakens aliens will drive a wedge among the national races, which can lead to disintegration of the Union.

That is why the government has been translating the State's further seven-point policy programme into reality, which can guarantee perpetual existence of the Union and national solidarity.

The government is gearing up for reconvening of the National Convention as the first step of the seven-point policy programme.

Being convinced that only when the State's noble aims have been accomplished, will there definitely emerge a peaceful, modern and developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation, the people are to heartily take part in the State's bid to ensure national development and to elevate the economy and living standard of the people.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister called on the entire people to make combined efforts in unison for building up a economically strong nation, transformation from conventional farming to mechanized farming and perpetual existence of the Union.

Next, Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee General Khin Nyunt presented a TV set, a video cassette player and a computer set to Kutkai BEHS through the township education officer and the headmaster. The Prime Minister and party arrived back in Lashio later in the afternoon. They headed for Yaykantaung in Lashio. On

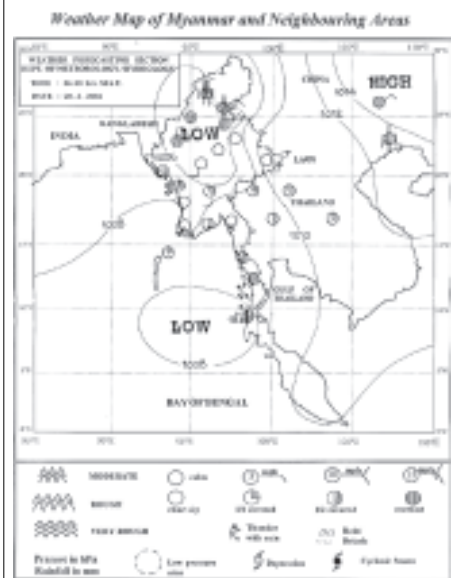
the occasion, Director of Shan State Development Affairs Committee U Kye Myint reported on water supply including the digging of six more lakes and sinking tube-wells and tasks for greening of Yaykantaung. The Prime Minister gave instructions. The Prime Minister and party planted shady trees and landscaping flowery trees. Departmental personnel and local people also collectively planted shady and flowery saplings.

The Prime Minister and party visited the Tiloka Maha Vijaya Hsutaungpyay Pagoda on Yaykan Hill in

Lashio and made cash donations to the pagoda funds. Next, they arrived at the Shweli Yeiktha in Lashio.

Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Maung Aung, who accompanied the Prime Minister, met with 70 staff at Shan State (North) Immigration and National Registration Department yesterday evening. At the meeting, the deputy minister elaborated on participation in the tasks for accomplishment of the 12 objectives, the State's seven-point policy programme and original tasks.

MNA



WEATHER

Saturday, 20 March, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers has been isolated in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions and weather has been generally fair in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States, Mandalay, Sagaing, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Divisions, (6°C) above normal in Kayin State and about normal in the remaining areas. Significant day temperatures were (42°C) each in Minbu, Magway and Hpa-an.

Maximum temperature on 19-3-2004 was 39.6°C (103°F). Minimum temperature on 20-3-2004 was 17.6°C (64°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 20-3-2004 was 76%.

Total sun shine hours on 19-3-2004 was (9.5) hours approximately.

Rainfall on 20-3-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 3 mm (0.12 inch) at Yangon Airport and nil at Kaba-Aye and central Yangon.

Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 12 mph from Southeast at (18:30) hours MST on 19-3-2004.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 21-3-2004: Isolated rain or thundershowers are likely in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions, weather will be generally fair in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Isolated rain or thundershowers are likely in Southern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 21-3-2004: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 21-3-2004: Generally fair weather.

Secretary-2 inspects factories in Shwepaukkan Myothit and North Okkalapa Township

YANGON, 20 March —Chairman of Myanmar War Veterans Organization Central Organizing Committee Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspected workshops and factories run by MWVO and Directorate of Resettlement in Shwepaukkan Myothit and North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Division, this afternoon.

Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, accompanied by Vice-Chairman of MWVO Central Organizing Committee Vice-Admiral (Retd) Kyi Min and officials, arrived at industrial zone in Shwepaukkan Myothit this afternoon. They were welcomed by member of MWVO Central Organizing Committee Director of Resettlement of the Ministry of Defence Maj-Gen Aung Thein and officials.

Staff Officer (Grade-I) of the Directorate of Resettlement Lt-Col Aung Gyi reported on area and location of factories under MWVO, investment and tasks being carried out, finished products of the factories, markets and factories to be built.

Director of Resettlement of the Ministry of Defence Maj-Gen Aung Thein gave a supplementary report.

Lt-Gen Thein Sein said the factories are being built with the aims of providing job opportunities to the disabled soldiers and members of their families and boosting productive forces of the State. He urged officials to continue to produce products of high quality and to distribute to the market. Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party inspected barbed wire, plastic ware, purified water, wood products, furniture factories in Shwepaukkan industrial zone and production process of the concrete brick factory in North Okkalapa industrial zone. The Secretary-2 then gave instructions and left there.—MNA



Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspect Plastics Ware Factory of Myanmar War Veterans Organization in Shwepaukkan Industrial Zone.—MNA

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than presents computer set for Kyaukkyi Village Affiliated BEHS to an official in Thandwe Township.

MNA

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than tours Rakhine State

YANGON, 20 March —Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by officials, left here by air and arrived at Thandwe in Rakhine State yesterday morning.

They were welcomed at the airport by Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Chairman Western Command Commander Maj-Gen Maung Oo, Col Myint Soe of Taungup Station, local authorities and officials.

Together with Commander Maj-Gen Maung Oo and Col Myint Soe, they proceeded to Kyeintali, Gwa Township, Thandwe District. There, officials reported on area, organizational set-up of Kyeintali, education, health, town development affairs, agriculture and water supply. The commander gave a supplementary report. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than fulfilled the requirements and gave instructions on regional development tasks.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin

Maung Than and party inspected arrangements for construction of circular road. They looked into Kyeintali People's Hospital and Police Station and attended to the needs.

Afterwards, they inspected the Ngapali oil palm farm (branch) of Myanma Perennial Crops Enterprise under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation near Kyanyo Village, Thandwe Township. They attended the presenting of a computer set donated by the State Peace and Development Council to Kyaukkyi Village affiliated basic education high school in Thandwe Township.

On the occasion, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than delivered a speech. In his speech, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than said that in its attempt to build up a modern developed nation, the government has been implementing the five rural development tasks for progress of rural and urban regions. In realizing rural education promotion plan, measures are being

taken for ensuring enrolment of all school-going children and upgrading of basic education schools. Multimedia teaching centres are being opened at the schools with the sponsorship of wellwishers under the leadership of the State. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than elaborated on necessary assistance rendered by the government for rural development.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than presented the computer set to the school through officials, and cordially greeted those present.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than viewed the 75-acre pepper plantation and gave instructions.

Manager of Myanma Agriculture Service U Hla Myint who accompanied Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than, disseminated pepper cultivation methods to local farmers.

During the inspection tour, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspected Thandwe-Kyeintali section of Thandwe-Gwa Road Project. —MNA



River water pumping project, paper mill inspected

YANGON, 20 March —Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin and officials inspected Kyonzoke river water pumping project in Maubin Township this morning. Officials reported on the site for construction, rise and full of river water and the site for digging canal. The Minister made arrangements for the project. The Minister and party inspected the site, the main canal and the site for the lake. The project lies on

Kyonzoke River near Kyonzoke Village. On completion of the project, it will irrigate 9,000 acres of cultivable lands.

The minister went to the site of Maubin Paper Mill of Myanma Jute Industries. Officials reported on installation of machines, future tasks, assistance rendered by departments concerned.

The minister gave instructions on early completion of the project. Next, the minister inspected quality of

machines. The mill can produce 17 metric tons of writing paper a day. The minister also inspected harvesting of summer and monsoon paddy along the road.

He met farmers as well as Divisional Agriculture Coordination Committee members in Nyaungdon Township. Over 1.3 million acres of summer paddy were grown in Ayeyawady Division and 170,000 acres of paddy have been harvested. —MNA

Myanma Gems Emporium fetches over euro 18.2 million

YANGON, 20 March —Patron of Myanma Gems Emporium Central Committee Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint arrived at the 41st Myanma Gems Emporium being held at Myanma Gems Mart on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here at 3 pm today.

The minister was welcomed there by Secretary of

the Central Committee Managing Director of Myanma Gems Enterprise U Khin Oo and the central committee members.

The minister greeted local and foreign gem merchants and viewed the sale of gem lots through competitive bidding and left there. Under the 41st Myanma Gems Emporium

Central Committee, sale of gem lots through competitive bidding was held from 9 am to 5 pm today as the fifth day and gem merchants bought 50 gem lots for euro 7,769,858.

The gem merchants also bought 503 jade lots at a price of euro 10,473,434 at 41st Myanma Gems Emporium. The 41st Myanma Gems Emporium fetched euro 18,243,292 up to date.

Lots of pearl will be on sale by tender system/through competitive bidding tomorrow.—MNA



The 41st Myanma Gems Emporium in progress on Saturday.—MNA

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