

The NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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New Year Day of 1368 ME

Monday, 17 April, 2006



Senior General Than Shwe sends message of felicitations to Syrian President Mr Bashar Al-Assad

YANGON, 17 April— Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Bashar Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, on the occasion of the National Day of the Syrian Arab Republic which falls on 17 April 2006.—MNA

*Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe
paying homage to Maha Muni Buddha Image in Kyauktaw. — MNA*

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing pay homage to Maha Muni Buddha Image in Kyauktaw

YANGON, 16 April — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing arrived Kyauktaw of Rakhine State on 14 April morning and paid homage to Maha Muni Buddha Image.

Accompanied by Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann and party, (See page 8)



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

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

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 17 April, 2006

Happy New Year

Today is New Year Day of Myanmar for 1368 Myanmar Era. New Year Day is also a day for rejoicing, though in a different way, because we lavish in meritorious deeds by offering food to monks, nuns and the laity as well as offering water, flowers and joss sticks to the Buddha images.

Thingyan, perhaps, is the merriest of all such occasions, three or four days of water-fest proceeding New Year Day when revelry draws to a close and the more solemn and religious side of seeking merit becomes very much evident.

On such an auspicious day, the entire people of Myanmar do wholesome deeds through their physical, verbal and mental actions. It is also customary for Buddhist devotees to visit the pagodas, pay obeisance and bathe the Buddha statues—acts of merits which have been perpetuated down through generations.

Myanmar New Year Day begins with the dawn feasting of monks, or a few hours later, followed by the freeing of fish and other life, the shampooing and bathing of the old, offering of natural fragrant bark scents and manicuring.

Community welfare works such as dredging of wells and lakes, renovating of roads and bridges and sanitation tasks are also carried out along with the recitation of Parittas by members of the Sangha for the people to be free from all forms of dangers.

Such good deeds are a centuries-old heritage which we will have to continue to perpetuate, for, in the land of Theravada Buddhism, religion and good deeds go side by side, enriching the lives of the new generation with the embellishments provided by the old. It is also Myanmar tradition to share the merits following such meritorious deeds as offering food to the monks or donating cash and kind for the benefit of the infirm and the needy.

On the New Year Day today, let us all renew our resolve to redouble our efforts for peace, progress and prosperity not only of our Union, but also the region and the world.

Happy New Year.



Joint-Treasurer U Maung Maung Gyi of Hninzigon Home for the Aged Administrative Board recently accepted K 100,000 donated by U Kyaw Lwin and Daw Gu Ri family of No 14, Thamadi Street, Kyaukmyaung, Tamway Township. — H

People's Desire

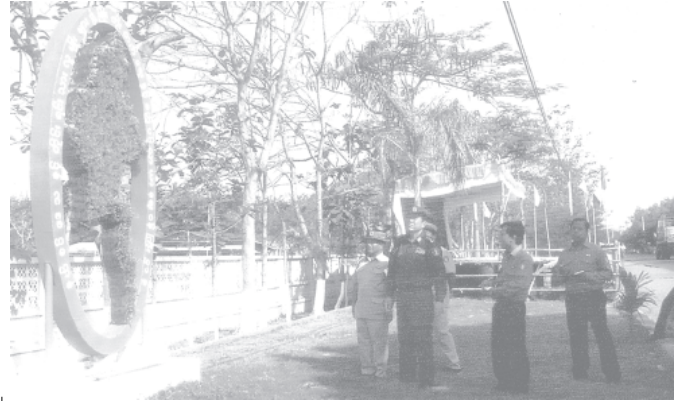
- * Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
- * Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation
- * Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
- * Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

Rural development undertakings supervised

YANGON, 16 April— Deputy Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Tin Ngwe, on 12 April, went to Taikkyi and inspected rural and urban road construction tasks being carried out by Taikkyi Township Development Affairs Department.

Deputy Minister Col Tin Ngwe also inspected physic nut plantation of Taikkyi Township DAD.

In Hmawby, the deputy minister inspected Hlapada-Paukkon rural road built at a cost of K 5 million provided by the



Deputy Minister Col Tin Ngwe inspects office of Taikkyi Township Development Affairs Department. — PBNRDA

State. After inspecting Hmawby-Wanetchaung-Wahpadaw rural road, the

deputy minister arrived Hlegu and inspected building of laterite road

linking Kyungalay and Thayagon villages in Hlegu Township.—MNA

NPE Managing Director inspects maintenance of presses at dailies

YANGON, 13 April — Managing Director U Soe Win of News and Periodicals Enterprise inspected tasks of the New Light of Myanmar Daily on Strand Road in Botahtaung Township, Myanma Alin Press in Bahan Township, and

Myanma Alin Daily at 53, the 1st Natmauk Lane, Bahan Township, under NPE this morning.

The Managing Director inspected maintenance of machines, tasks of computer rooms and staff quarters at the dailies.

Chief Editor U Maung Maung Aye and Manager U Tun Tun Latt of the New Light of Myanmar, Chief Editor U Myint Swe and officials of the Myanma Alin Press, and Chief Editor U Ye Myint Pe and officials of Myanma Alin Daily re-

ported to the managing director on use of the presses and servicing of machines. At the New Light of Myanmar Daily, the managing director viewed the imagesetter, the platemaker and the computers.

After inspecting maintenance of the presses of the dailies, the managing director presented K 30,000 each to three dailies for welfare of the workers of the presses.

During the period of Maha Thingyan Festival, Myanma Alin Daily, Kyemon Daily and the New Light of Myanmar Daily will be published alternatively and the papers will take a three-day break each. However, workers of the newspapers will perform maintenance of the presses during the holidays of the dailies. — MNA

NPE Managing Director U Soe Win inspects the printing press at the New Light of Myanmar Daily. — MNA

Officials to undergo training abroad

YANGON, 16 April — Executive of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Tin Myint and U Kyaw Thura Hlaing (Staff) left here for Japan yesterday to attend the Training Programme on Commercial Arbitration for Asian Countries to be

conducted in Tokyo, Japan, from 17 to 21 April. — MNA

UMFCCI executive and staff at the airport on departure for Japan. — UMFCCI



More tourists expected during Khmer New Year

PHNOM PENH, 15 April — Tourism officials predict that most if not all of Cambodia's 17,000 hotel rooms and 3,000 guest house rooms are booked this weekend for the Khmer New Year, local media reported on Saturday.

Tourism Ministry Secretary of State Thong Khon was quoted by *The Cambodia Daily* as saying that a 25-per-cent increase in foreign tourist arrivals has also been accompanied by a 20-per-cent increase

this year in Cambodians travelling inside the country for recreation.

"I am sure that domestic travellers have caused all the hotels to be booked," he said. "People have money, and there are good

road links to resorts that are fully secure," he added.

In the first three months of 2006, 460,000 tourists arrived in Cambodia, up 25 per cent from last year, Thong Khon said.

Ho Vandy, president of the Cambodian Association of Travel Agents (CATA), said that Sihanoukville Municipality and Siem Reap, Ratanakkiri and Mondolkiri provinces were flooded for the Khmer New Year. Provincial authorities also put more tourism police on alert during the holiday. A manager at Sihanoukville's Golden Sand Hotel said all 112 rooms at the hotel were booked from 13 April to 16 April.

MNA/Xinhua



Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik, left, from Orissa, builds a sand sculpture of a face depicting a man affected by the tsunami at Marina Beach in Madras, India, on 15 April, 2006. —INTERNET

Historical city of Malacca to be safer place in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, 15 April — Malaysia will take a series of measures to make its historical city of Malacca a safer place for tourists, local media reported Friday.

As tourism brings the largest economic cake for the city, local authorities have paid much attention to the security issue and thus worked out new measures in a bid to turn Malacca into one of the most comfortable and safest cities in the country.

The government will install 20 close-circuit television (CCTV) at public places and mounted police will carry out duties in areas frequented by tourists, Mayor of Malacca Zaini Mohamad Nor was quoted as saying by the *Bernama* news agency. — MNA/Xinhua

Bulgaria declares state of emergency in areas endangered by floods

SOFIA, 15 April — The Bulgarian Government had declared a state of

emergency in some areas alongside the Danube, warning that the river could swell to record levels over the next few days, reported the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency on Thursday.

Twenty-two cities in seven states — Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Plevin, Veliko Tarnovo, Ruse and Silistra — are on high alert.

The situation in these areas was very serious, and some parts of Vidin had

already been submerged by 20 to 80 centimetres of water, Bulgaria's Maintenance and Research Agency of Danube was quoted as saying. Local authorities were ready to evacuate people in case of floods, the report added.

Owing to the floods from upriver Hungary and Serbia and Montenegro, a surge is bearing down on the Bulgarian territory.

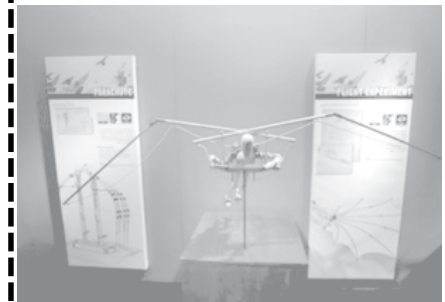
MNA/Xinhua

New exhibit focuses on da Vinci designs

CHICAGO, 15 April — When Leonardo da Vinci died nearly 500 years ago, his masterpieces — "Mona Lisa" and "The Last Supper" — were among the dozens of paintings he left behind.

His sketches, however, numbered in the thousands. In his drawings, he imagined designs for creations that would allow humans to walk on water and under the sea, soar above the Earth and even change how they fought wars.

It's those designs and contraptions that are the focus of "Leonardo da Vinci: Man, Inventor, Genius," a new exhibit at the Museum of Science and Industry opening on Friday. — Internet



A model of a flying machine, built from diagrams by Leonardo da Vinci, is seen at the new exhibit 'Leonardo da Vinci: Man, Inventor, Genius' at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry on 12 April, 2006. —INTERNET

Malaysia mulling more serious warnings against smoking

KUALA LUMPUR, 15 April — Malaysia considers requiring cigarette manufacturers to print pictures showing serious negative influence of smoking, an official said on Friday.

Under the new regulations being drafted, it might be compulsory for cigarette companies to print new labels with clearer warnings before the year 2010, Health Ministry Parliamentary Secretary Lee Kah Choon said.

The new pictures or graphics could enhance public awareness on the health risks associated with smoking and persuade smokers to give up the habit, Lee told reporters in Penang state. — MNA/Xinhua

British soldier killed in Iraq

LONDON, 15 April — A British soldier was killed in a bomb blast in southern Iraq on Saturday, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said.

The soldier died of injuries sustained in an attack involving an improvised explosive device. Three other soldiers were slightly injured.

Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram said: "I was deeply saddened to hear of this incident; my thoughts and sympathies are with the families of all those concerned at this difficult time." His next of kin have been informed but requested that his name be withheld until the wider family had been consulted.

"We regret to confirm a soldier from the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards died," the MoD said. The death takes the number of British troops killed in Iraq since the March 2003 US-led invasion to 104. Of those, 79 were killed in action. No further details of the attack were being released. — Internet



A mounted archer in a Samurai warrior costume sets up an arrow to a bow before marking a target during archery on horseback or 'Yabusame' festival at a park in Tokyo, on 15 April, 2006. —INTERNET

In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, workers excavate the old tomb in Jiangning District in Nanjing, capital of east China's Jiangsu Province, on 14 April, 2006. A 1,700-year old tomb belonging to the Six Dynasties (222-589) has been unearthed in Nanjing. —INTERNET



Mickey Mouse and his friends play with a baby at Xindong'an Shopping Mall in Beijing, China, on 14 April, 2006. Walt Disney Corporation, cooperated with Hong Kong Disneyland, began its three-day cruise in Beijing on Friday. The corporation showed to Beijing residents the magic Disney World. —INTERNET

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Chinese Defence Minister visits Singapore's Naval Base

SINGAPORE, 15 April — Visiting Chinese Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan visited Singapore's Changi Naval Base on the east coast of the city state on Friday.

Cao, who is also vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of China and a State Councillor, toured the Navy's tactical training centre, which is a key part of the Naval Training Command, and was briefed on how the Navy operates.

He also boarded the *RSS Endurance*, a self-designed and built landing ship tank equipped with state-of-the-art technologies. It is the Republic of Singapore Navy's largest class of ship.

Cao arrived here on Thursday for a three-day

official goodwill visit to the city state at the invitation of his Singaporean counterpart Teo Chee Hean. He met with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew and had a talk with Teo on Thursday.

MNA/Xinhua

Hospital performs first face transplant in China

XI'AN, 15 April — Doctors in northwest China have performed the country's first face transplant, and the second such operation in the world.

President of the Xijing Hospital, in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi Province, Zhang Yingzhi announced news of the transplant here on Friday.

"The surgery is even more complex than the first face transplant in France in November last year," said Han Yan, deputy director with the hospital's plastic surgery department.

The patient, Li Guoxing, 30, had two thirds of his face — mostly on the right side — replaced in an operation that lasted 14 hours and ended on Friday morning.

Surgeons in France carried out the world's first such operation on a 38-year-old Isabelle Dinoire whose lips and nose were ripped off by a dog.

Li Guoxing was given a new cheek, upper lip, nose, and an eyebrow from a single donor.

Li's face, nevertheless, had been marred when he

was assaulted by a bear in 2004. He has since lived as a recluse because of his horrific disfigurement.

The hospital performed the surgery free of charge after learning of his plight and his poverty.

Li was recovering satisfactorily, said Guo Shuzhong, director of the plastic surgery department, who performed the transplant.

However, it would take six months for feeling to be established in his new face, Guo said. He also needed to overcome psychological and ethical problems. "His wife may take a long time to adjust to his new face," he said.

Guo said that the donor was male and had been declared brain-dead before the operation, but his next of kin had requested that no

further information be published.

The Xijing Hospital successfully performed a facial skin transplant operation on a rabbit in December, transplanting half the skin tissue from a New Zealand rabbit on to a local animal.

A fortnight later, the rabbit was in good condition with the eye on the transplanted side blinking naturally, the hospital said.

About one million people in China suffer from severe facial disfigurements each year with at least 5 per cent suffering from inoperable conditions.

MNA/Xinhua



Thai teenagers spray each other with water during the Songkran Festival in Bangkok on 14 April, 2006. INTERNET

Cat in Germany saves baby's life

BERLIN, 15 April — A cat saved the life of a newborn baby abandoned on the doorstep of a Cologne house in the middle of the night by meowing loudly until someone woke up, a police spokesman said on Saturday.

"The cat is a hero," Cologne police spokesman Uwe Beier said. "Its loud meowing got the attention of the homeowner and saved the baby from suffering life-threatening hypothermia. The homeowner opened door to see why the cat was making so much noise and discovered the newborn."

Beier said the boy was taken to hospital at 5 am on Thursday, when overnight temperatures fell towards zero, and had suffered only mild hypothermia. He said there was no indication of what happened to the boy's mother. —Internet

Indian actress honoured at Milan Festival

MUMBAI (India), 15 April — It took months of learning the language but Indian movie star Sonali Kulkarni was able to slip into a role in an Italian movie.

Kulkarni won the best actress award at the recent Milan Film Festival for the Italian-language movie "Fuoco Di Su Me" or "Fire On Me." It took eight weeks of coaching for Kulkarni to learn enough Italian, since she didn't want to merely mouth the dialogue in producer Sergio Scapagnini's love story.

Kulkarni was spotted by Scapagnini more than 10 years ago when her first film, "Cheluvi" or "Flowering Tree," was shown at the Cannes Film Festival. She then acted in his film "Vrindavan" before being called on for his new project.

She is known in Bollywood, India's prolific movie industry, for wide-ranging roles in some 26 movies since her 1992 debut. Kulkarni has three more Indian movies in the cards and is in discussion with international filmmakers for European projects.

"I'll never subtract my Indianness but I can look Spanish or French and it's a challenge to play a variety of characters," she said. —Internet



Bollywood actress Sonali Kulkarni in this undated file photo. It took months of work, learning Italian, studying Italian mannerisms, but versatile Indian movie star Kulkarni was able to slip into her film role of a romantic, poetic Italian coral picker, she said on Thursday. —INTERNET



A toad with a long tail sits in a tank at a house in Malaysia's southern town of Tangkak, on 13 April, 2006. A woman on Thursday found the toad, with a tail of about 15.75 inches (40 cm), and has drawn curious onlookers to her house, as reported by a local paper. The woman's family intends to release the toad in the next few days. —INTERNET

Report says Rumsfeld allowed Guantanamo abuse

WASHINGTON, 15 April — US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld allowed an “abusive and degrading” interrogation of an al-Qaeda detainee in 2002, the online magazine *Salon* reported on Friday, citing an Army document.

In a report a Pentagon spokesman denounced as “fiction”, *Salon* quoted a December 2005 Army inspector-general’s report in which officers told of Rumsfeld’s direct contact with the general overseeing the interrogation at the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The report at www.salon.com, titled “What Rumsfeld Knew”, comes amid calls by a string of respected military commanders for the Pentagon chief to resign to

take responsibility for US military setbacks in Iraq.

Rumsfeld spoke regularly to Army Major-General Geoffrey Miller, a key figure in the treatment of detainees in Iraq and Guantanamo, during the interrogation of Mohammed al-Kahtani, a Saudi suspected to have been an intended on 11 September hijacker, the *Salon* report said.

Kahtani received “degrading and abusive” treatment by soldiers who were following the interrogation plan Rumsfeld had approved, *Salon* said, quoting the 391-page report, obtained

through the Freedom of Information Act.

Over 54 days in late 2002, soldiers forced Kahtani to stand naked in front of a female interrogator, accused him of being a homosexual, forced him to wear women’s underwear and made him perform “dog tricks” on a leash, the *Salon* report said.

Salon cited Lieutenant-General Randall Schmidt, an Army investigator, as saying in a sworn statement to the inspector-general that “the secretary of defence is personally involved in the interrogation of one

person”.

Schmidt is quoted as saying under oath that he concluded Rumsfeld did not specifically order the interrogation methods used on Kahtani, but that his approval of broad policies permitted abuses to take place. Jeffrey Gordon, a Pentagon spokesman, dismissed the report’s allegation that Rumsfeld or the defence department condoned abuse.

“We’ve gone over this countless times and yet some still choose to print fiction versus facts,” Gordon said by telephone.

MNA/Reuters



Employees of Serbian Rail on their way to work use a locomotive to pass through a flooded part of Belgrade’s main cargo train station on 14 April, 2006. Several towns in Serbia called for emergency measures to deal with floods while Dunav, Sava and Tisa rivers reached their peak levels. —INTERNET

Pakistan considering new bus service with India

ISLAMABAD, 15 April — Pakistan will hold talks with India to launch a new bus service to facilitate followers of Sikh religion, a Cabinet minister said on Friday.

The bus service between Hassanabdal, a town some 40 kilometres northwest of Islamabad, and Amritsar, the capital of Indian Punjab, would enable Sikhs to directly travel to their religious site in Pakistan, Minister for Religious and Minority Affairs, Muhammad Ejaz-ul-Haq said.

The minister was addressing Sikhs at Hassanabdal on the last day of Sikh Religious Festival.

Ejaz said that the government was also trying to issue multiple visas to Sikhs.

MNA/Xinhua



A Romanian soldier carries a sandbag in a flooded yard in Fetesti, 150km (93 miles) east of Bucharest, on 14 April, 2006. Boosted by melting snow, Danube waters rose to the highest level in more than a century in some areas, flooding ports and villages in Romania and Bulgaria. Romania decided to submerge under water thousands of hectares of farmland on the banks of the Danube on Friday to prevent the swollen river from flooding villages, while soldiers stacked sandbags around towns. —INTERNET

British troops hurt in Afghan suicide blast

KANDAHAR (Afghanistan), 15 April — Two British soldiers were wounded in a suicide car-bomb blast in Afghanistan on Friday, the latest in a string of attacks on foreign troops trying to bring peace to the country.

The attack happened near the entrance of a base used by foreign forces in Lashkar Gah, capital of the southern province of Helmand, a provincial official said.

“It was a suicide car attack and two foreign soldiers have been wounded,” said senior provincial official Mahaiuddin, who uses one name. The bomber was killed, he said.

A spokeswoman for Britain’s Defence Ministry said three people had suffered non-life-threatening wounds in the blast. Two of them were British soldiers, she said.

MNA/Reuters

Romania orders controlled flooding as Danube swells

FETESTI (Romania), 15 April — Romania will submerge thousands of hectares of farmland on the banks of the Danube to prevent the swollen river from flooding villages, Prime Minister Calin Tariceanu said on Friday.

Soldiers stacked sandbags around towns as the water level in the river — boosted by melting snow — rose to its highest level in more than a century in some areas, flooding ports and villages on the southern

bank of the river in Bulgaria.

Rising water levels have caused flooding or the threat of flooding in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Serbia.

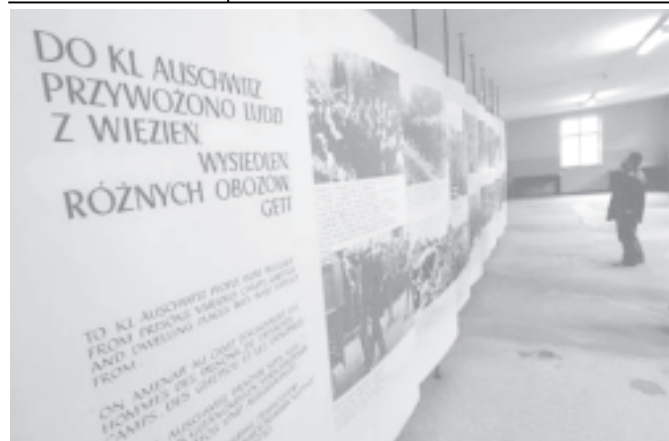
“We decided to pursue controlled

flooding of farmland along the Danube to protect villagers who might be hit by rising waters,” Tariceanu told reporters after a Cabinet meeting.

He said the Danube could hit flow levels in the coming days not seen since 1895. The operation to submerge the farmland should begin within days, said a water department official.

About 90,000 hectares (222,400 acres) of fertile soil on a 400-kilometre (250-mile) stretch of the river will be flooded. Wheat and maize are cultivated on the river’s northern bank.

MNA/Reuters



A man visits one of the barracks at Auschwitz death camp museum, on 13 April, 2006. Poland is trying to change the name of Auschwitz concentration camp to emphasise that Nazi Germans, not Poles, were responsible for the most murderous centre of the Holocaust. —INTERNET

Nigeria arrests man with 144 kilos of Indian hemp

LAGOS, 15 April — Nigeria’s anti-drug-trafficking unit in the northern state of Katsina has arrested a man seizing from him 144 kilos of Indian hemp, an official from the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) said on Friday.

Alhaji Ibrahim Sani, head of the NDLEA Katsina State Command, said the suspect was arrested by the combined team of NDLEA and police that raided the home of the peddler.

According to Sani, the suspect who would be prosecuted soon confessed that he was a salesman for a “notorious peddler” now at large. —MNA/Xinhua

Former officials warn against US attack on Iran

NEW YORK, 16 April — A US conflict with Iran could be even more damaging to America's interests than the war with Iraq, former White House counterterrorism chief Richard Clarke wrote in Sunday's *New York Times*.

In an op-ed article co-authored with Steven Simon, a former State Department official who also worked for the National Security Council, Clarke wrote reports that the Bush Administration is contemplating bombing nuclear sites in Iran raised concerns that "would simply begin a multi-move, escalatory process".

Iran's likely response would be to "use its terrorist network to strike American targets around the world, including inside the United States," Clarke and Simon warned.

"Iran has forces as its command far superior to anything al-Qaeda was ever able to field," they said, citing Iran's links with the militant group Hizbollah.

Iran could also make things much worse in Iraq, they wrote, adding "there

is every reason to believe that Iran has such a retaliatory shock wave planned and ready".

President George W. Bush might then sanction more bombing, Clarke and Simon said, hoping Iranians would overthrow the Teheran government. But "more likely, the American war against Iran would guarantee the regime decades more of

control".

The authors concluded by warning that "the parallels to the run-up to the war with Iraq are all too striking: remember that in May 2002 President Bush declared that there was 'No war plan on my desk' despite having actually spent months working on detailed plans for the Iraq invasion".

MNA/Reuters

Train, car collision kills six migrant workers in US

WASHINGTON, 16 April — A freight train collided with a sport utility vehicle in central United States, killing six migrant workers, authorities said.

The incident occurred on Thursday at a crossing of rail tracks and a county road near the town of Granada, Colorado.

Five of the six migrant workers, who were all from southern Texas and had been looking for work in Colorado for a week, died at the scene and another died in a Denver Hospital. The driver of the vehicle, a 15-year-old boy, was injured seriously. Railway spokeswoman Lena Kent said the crossing is marked by signs but no lights or gates. — MNA/Xinhua



Visitors are shown outside the 'Mission: Space' attraction at Walt Disney World, on 13 April, 2006, in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. —INTERNET

Thailand's rice exports to reach 7.5m tons this year

BANGKOK, 16 April — Thailand's rice exports are likely to reach 7.5 million tons this year, earning the country around 2.3 billion US dollars, according to the Thai Commerce Ministry.

Rachane Potjanasuntorn, Director-General of the Ministry of Commerce's Department of Foreign Trade, was quoted by the web edition of local newspaper *Bangkok Post* on Saturday as saying that the country's targeted rice exports this year would be around 200,000 tons higher than the kingdom's total rice exports last year.

He said Thailand had exported 1.87 million tons of rice from 1 January-5 April, 2006, worth around 595 million US dollars.

The average price of exported Thai rice is anticipated about 318 US dollars per ton, Rachane said. Vietnam, Thailand's main rival as a rice exporter, has set to export about 5 million tons of rice this year.

MNA/Xinhua

Global temperatures may increase 3°C by 2100

LONDON, 16 April — Global temperatures are likely to rise by at least 3 degrees Celsius (5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century, said Britain's chief scientific adviser, BBC radio reported on Friday.

Due to an atmospheric carbon dioxide level of 550 parts per million, "the temperature rise could well be in excess of 3 degrees Centigrade," Sir David King in comments broadcast by BBC radio.

And 550 parts per million in the atmosphere is probably "the best" can

be achieved, King added.

A British Government report said a 3-degree increase would sharply increase drought and water shortages.

King also called for major global efforts to adapt to the effects of climate change.

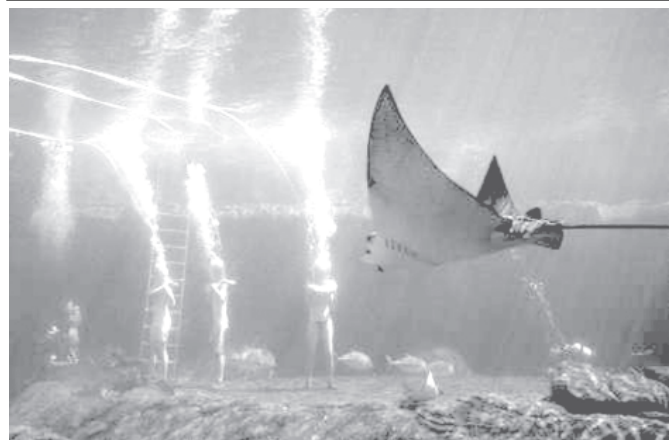
MNA/Xinhua

China starts to issue \$3.87b book-entry T-bonds

BEIJING, 16 April — China on Friday began issuing 30.96 billion yuan (3.87 billion US dollars) worth of book-entry treasury bonds with terms of maturity of three years.

The T-bonds, the fourth batch of its kind issued this year, carry an annual interest rate of 2.12 per cent, the Ministry of Finance said in a statement. The interest of the T-bonds will be calculated from 17 April, the starting day of the retail sales of the bonds, and the issue will be completed by 20 April, said the ministry.

The ministry noted that the T-bonds are available to investors with accounts for investment in fund, share and bonds investment at China Securities Depository and Clearing Co or China Treasury Bonds Depository and Clearing Co. — MNA/Xinhua



A Spotted Eagle Ray glides past visitors walking along the aquarium floor at Durban's uShaka Marine World on 14 April, 2006. South Africa's largest marine park attracts thousands of visitors each day, boosting the country's booming tourism industry. —INTERNET

13 dead, 39 missing in Colombian mudslide

BOGOTA, 16 April — A Colombia Government rescue team confirmed on Friday that 13 bodies had been recovered from under a large mudslide on the Cali-Buenaventura Road in the Valle del Cauca region, but added that 39 people were still missing.

Among the missing were eight soldiers who had been guarding the road and a local TV station journalist who had gone to cover the disaster. Rescue workers, policemen and soldiers are continuing the search.

Around 1,000 affected people had been evacuated to the nearby port of Buenaventura.

President Alvaro Uribe visited the scene of the disaster on Friday. He

demanded that the local government, military and other departments rescue the victims as swiftly as possible.

The mudslides, which halted traffic on the Cali-Buenaventura Road, were started by heavy rain. Many villages have been isolated as a result of the disaster. And up to 42 municipalities in Valle del Cauca were in a state of emergency.

It is considered to be the worst winter tragedy in Colombia in the last 10 years.

Across Colombia, dozens of people have been killed and thousands left homeless by flash floods and mudslides in the country's wet season which began in March.

MNA/Xinhua



A car drives through a flooded street in Belgrade, on 15 April, 2006. —INTERNET

Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) fixed with iron frames

YANGON, 13 April — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Khin Zaw and officials of SPDC Office and departmental officials, met officers, other ranks and family members of the local station in Sagaing on 10 April morning.

He instructed them to take part in the carrying out of five rural development tasks, growing of physic nut plants, and agriculture and livestock breeding tasks to be undertaken for welfare of the family members.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint attended a ceremony to grow 100,000 physic nut saplings in the local station. He inspected the physic nut nursery of the local station.

He inspected construction of the approach road to Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) in Ohbo Ward of Sagaing. Next, he viewed progress in building Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon).

At the briefing hall on Mandalay bank, Deputy Superintending Engineers U Hsan Win and U Htay Myint reported on construction of the bridge. Lt-Gen

Ye Myint gave instructions on timely completion of the bridge and worksite safety.

The lower structure of the whole bridge was completed, and installation of iron frames at the upper structure is in progress.

The iron frames were installed from RP8 to RP4 on Sagaing bank, and those from RP1 to RP5 on Mandalay bank.

A total of 1,086 metres of the bridge out of 1,126 metres have been fixed with iron frames. Efforts are being made for the completion of installing iron frames at the whole bridge.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint left Nanmyo in Mandalay in the afternoon and arrived back Nay Pyi Taw in the evening.

MNA



State Peace and Development Council Member Lt-Gen Ye Myint of Ministry of Defence inspects construction of approach road to Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon). — MNA

Thingyan, transition to new year

U Kyaw Sein (Mandalay)

Tagu, the first of the Myanmar year, is a month that lies in a hot and dry period. It is also a month that ushers the old to the new year. That is to say the old year comes to an end and the new year commences, and Thingyan falls in this period according to the Pali word "Sankanta" which means transition. The term "Thingyan" derives from the Pali word "Sankanta" and it means transition from the old to the new year. As a gesture of welcoming the new year, Myanmar people douse water to one another wishing those poured with water to be free from all dirt and dangers and to be cool like water. In such a transitional period, Myanmar do meritorious deeds such as paying respects to parents, teachers and elderly persons, carrying out sanitation work inside and outside the house, shampooing, taking precepts and doing charity at pagodas and monasteries and cleansing pagodas and Buddha images.

According to the religious treatises, in the month Tagu, kings of Sakya dynastic clan in Kapilavat country enjoyed themselves by celebrating water-throwing festival in royal camps near the serene Lake "Deva Daha". In the Maha chronicle of Myanmar kings, it said that water-splashing festival was celebrated in a month of the hot season when King Nara

Thiha Pate was on the throne in Bagan. In the lyric poem about Myanmar twelve months featuring facts about Innwa royal city, it said that Myanmar drenched one another with scented water in the New Year Day Festival in the month Tagu.

Among the festivals in the twelve months of Myanmar calendar, Thingyan Festival (Water Festival) is the national festival held on a grander scale than any other ones. Myanmar believe that in the period of the Thingyan, Thagyamin (king of celestial beings) comes on a sojourn to the human abode. One should study the old treatises on astrology such as Thuriya Theiddanta treatise and Thandeit-ha treatise if one wants to know when the sojourn of the Thingyan begins and ends. According to the treatises on Thingyan, the interval between two Thingyan Festivals lasts a year. And it takes a year in which the Earth, one of the planets in the Universe, goes round the Sun once. To be exact, it lasts 365 days, six hours, 12 minutes and 37 seconds. In the process, the time is divided into 12 periods or zodiacs. At the beginning of the first zodiac, Thingyan falls and ends according to the movement of specific planets.

In the world of nature, all objects such as water, lands, forests, mountains and trees always change —

some come into being while some come to an end. As the current of a stream always flows, the first water goes away while second water comes. Lands, forests, mountains and trees also are in the process of constant change in the same way.

Similarly, mind changes in accordance with the process of coming into existence and cessation without a break. According to "Sankanta", the process of coming into existence and cessation of mind and body can be called Loka Thingyan (transition of secular world).

Throughout the life, man is continuously in the process of growing old or in the process of coming into existence and death. According to "Sankanta", the process of coming into existence and cessation in the life of a human being can be called Bhava Thingyan (transition of a life).

The first day of a year is called New Year's Day Myanmar observes as auspicious day of a new year. On the New Year's Day, the Buddhists living in the Union of Myanmar perform meritorious deeds such as cleansing pagodas and Buddha images, offering alms at pagodas and monasteries, paying respects to the aged, carrying out sundry tasks, releasing animals, and holding ceremonies to listen to parittas in respective villages, wards and townships.

So, Myanmar is free from dire natural disasters and three catastrophes namely famine, war and epidemic diseases.

So, on this New Year's Day, I wish for all the world people to gain auspiciousness without sufferings, to be free from all forms of harms and dangers, to get rid of evil spirits and able to cultivate good habits, and to follow the ways worthy of rewards and benefits and enjoy them.

Translation: MS

The first day of a year is called New Year's Day Myanmar observes as auspicious day of a new year. On the New Year's Day, the Buddhists living in the Union of Myanmar perform meritorious deeds such as cleansing pagodas and Buddha images, offering alms at pagodas and monasteries, paying respects to the aged, carrying out sundry tasks, releasing animals, and holding ceremonies to listen to parittas in respective villages, wards and townships.



Senior General Than Shwe offers gold foils to Maha Muni Buddha Image in Kyauktaw. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing pay homage...

(from page 1)

the Senior General and wife arrived at Maha Muni Buddha Image in Kyauktaw at 11 am. They were welcomed by departmental officials of Kyauktaw Township, members of the pagoda board of trustees and local people.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing paid homage to the Buddha Image. They offered gold foils to the Buddha Image.

The Senior General and party inspected all-round renovation tasks at the Gandakuti Building of the Buddha Image.

Later, they freed fish into Utawhsay Lake.

MNA



Senior General Than Shwe cordially converses with Tatmadawmen and family members of regiments and units in An Station at Antaung Hall of Western Command Headquarters. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe meets ...

(from page 16)

On 14 April evening, Secretary-General of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Minister Maj-Gen Htay Oo, Secretariat Member Minister Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, CEC members minister Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein and Minister Maj-Gen Thein Swe who accompanied the Senior General met with the secretary, executives and organizers of An Township USDA at the office of An Township USDA, and fulfilled the requirements. — MNA



Senior General Than Shwe meets officers, other ranks and family members of regiments and units in An Station at Antaung Hall. — MNA

Mandalay dwellers enjoy Maha Thingyan Festival

YANGON, 16 April — Myanmar traditional Thingyan festival continued in Mandalay on Akyat Day, 15 April.

Thingyan revellers thronged pandals on the circular road of the moat in Mandalay.

Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Khin Zaw and wife Daw Khin Pyone Win, Mayor Brig-Gen Phone Zaw Han and wife, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Nay Win and wife, local authorities, visited the Mayor's Pandal and other

pandals.

They joyfully participated in the water-throwing festival. At the Mayor's Pandal, artistes performed variety of dances and songs to those present.

Pandals in Mandalay were packed with Thingyan revellers and merry-makers and decorated vehicles.

Devotees and pilgrims visited pagodas and religious buildings in Mandalay, Amarapura and Sagaing Hill, and merry-makers and holiday-makers took rest at Taungthaman Lake, U Pein Bridge, and other recreation centres. — MNA

General Thura Shwe Mann meets officers, other ranks and family members of regiments and units at Nawarat Hall of Kyauktaw Station.

MNA



Earlier completion of bridges urged to save costs and serve people sooner with better transport

YANGON, 16 April — Chairman of the Central Committee for Ensuring Secure and Smooth Transport Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, accompanied by Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence and officials of the State Peace and Development Council Chairman's Office, arrived at Twantay Bridge near Phaya-ngokto Village of Twantay Township this morning.

They were welcomed by Yangon Division Superintending Engineer U Soe Tint, Deputy Superintending Engineer U Kyaw Naing and officials.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspected progress in building the bridge.

Superintending Engineer U Soe Tint reported to the Secretary-1 on construction of the approach road and the bridge, Deputy Superintending Engineer U Kyaw Naing on construction of the pedestrian way and other structures as well as work done to complete the project according to schedule, and Deputy Superintending Engineer U Ye Tun of Road Special Group 16 of Public Works on laying of gravel at the approach road and arrangements being made for construction of the approach road.

The Secretary-1 gave instructions on efforts to be made for timely completion of the bridge, and completion of the roads in Hlinethaya and Twantay sides.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party inspected construction of the bridge.



Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspects progress in construction of Twantay Bridge. — MNA

building the bridges, efforts are to be made for completion of construction tasks earlier than schedule so as to save the cost and to serve the people sooner with better transport.

Pyapon District Senior Engineer U Soe Myint reported on maintenance of Dedaye-Pyapon Road. The Secretary-1 gave instructions on repairing of the

road to the bridge on Pyapon side. Pyapon Bridge is of reinforced concrete type with steel frame. It is 3,932 feet long including the approach roads and 40 feet wide. Its clearance is 265 feet wide and 36 feet high. The bridge can withstand 60 tons of loads. The 75% of bridge construction has completed. After viewing the developing Pyapon, the Secretary-1 and party proceeded to Golden Jubilee (Pyidaungsu) Guest House in Kyaiklat and gave instructions to officials on tarring of Pyapon-Kyaiklat Road.

In the afternoon, they inspected Maubin Road by car and arrived at Maubin. In meeting with departmental officials at Maubin District Hall, the Secretary-1 said for the health and education of the people in Maubin District, the State has built more hospitals, schools and universities. So, those in the fields of education and health are to work hard in the interest of the region and its people. Maubin District will develop speedily if the people work hard by making most of their talents and technologies plus the district's rich natural resources. The education sector is imperative in generating human resources. In building a discipline-flourishing democratic nation, the people need to be equipped with a good education and the State needs to be economically strong. The State's being able to increase the salaries of service personnel is due to the increased GDP and per capita incomes of the nation. The service personnel on their part are urged to grow kitchen crops in the compounds of their homes. The Secretary-1 said the purpose of his tour was to inspect the development of the transport sector in Ayeyawady Division. Officials concerned in the district are urged to work hard in the interest of the State and the people.

Later, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspected the Maubin-Nyaungdon-Yangon Road by car and arrived back here in the evening. — MNA



Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein oversees construction of Pyapon Bridge. — MNA

They viewed Twantay-Kawhmu-Kungyangon-Dedaye Motor Road by car. On arrival at Dedaye Bridge in Dedaye, the Secretary-1 and party were welcomed by Chairman of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Commander of South-West Command Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung and officials.

Accompanied by the commander, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party met departmental personnel at the office of Dedaye Township PDC.

They inspected Dedaye-Pyapon Road by car and arrived at the briefing hall of Pyapon Bridge Construction Project.

Deputy Superintending Engineer U Khin Maung Hse of Special Bridge Construction Group 7 briefed the Secretary-1 on matters related to the bridge and progress of construction tasks, and availability of construction materials.

After hearing the reports, the Secretary-1 said that Ayeyawady Division is rich in natural resources. Better transport will contribute toward development of the region. Hence, the Government spends a large amount of money on construction of roads and bridges. As there are many rivers, creeks and lakes in Ayeyawady Division, small and big bridges are being built there. In

16-mile road between Dedaye and Pyapon.

Next, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party inspected the construction of the lower structure of Pyapon Bridge by boat and gave necessary instructions to officials concerned. The Secretary-1 inspected the construction of bole pile (C-14) of the approach



The photo shows Pyapon Bridge under construction. — MNA

Yangon revellers enjoy Maha Thingyan Festival on Atet Day

YANGON, 16 April — There were echoes of Thingyan songs downtown Yangon and suburban areas, and Thingyan dances were staged here and there on Atet Day today.

From morning to evening, Yangonite merry-makers and revellers including tourists enjoyed Maha Thingyan Festival 1367 ME at the water-throwing pandals in townships of Yangon Division.

During the period of Maha Thingyan Festival, young men and women served older persons with shampooing, manicuring, and refreshments.

Local authorities together with members of social organization supervised joyful participation of revellers in the water-throwing festival.

People visited famous pagodas and religious buildings. — MNA



Crowded revellers seen in Anawrahta Street in Latha Township on Thingyan Atet Day. — NLM

Revellers take part in Thingyan festival in Yangon, Mandalay

YANGON, 16 April — The water-throwing pandals and entertainment pandals were crowded with revellers during the Myanmar traditional Maha Thingyan Festival.

On 14 April, Akya day, a water-throwing pandal named Melody on Inya Road in Kamayut Township collapsed because of its flagging base. Some revellers were injured but no one was killed.

Yangon Thingyan festival came alive with revellers the whole day. In Mandalay, the revellers participated in the festival peacefully. — MNA

Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal closes

YANGON, 16 April — A ceremony to close the Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal was held at the venue in front of the City Hall, here, at 5 pm today.

Chairman of the Working Committee for Organizing the Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Festival 1367 ME Joint-

Secretary of Yangon City Development Committee U Aung Than Win announced the conclusion of the water-throwing festival. Those present sang the song entitled 'Mann Taung Yeik Kho'.

Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and wife Dr Daw Khin Hsan Nwe, Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa and wife and officials presented prizes to winners in the dance contests.

From morning to evening, traditional dance troupes, Yein troupes and artistes presented variety dances and songs to the people.

Merry-makers and revellers joyfully participated in the water-throwing festival at the Mayor's Pandal. — MNA



The closing ceremony of Yangon Mayor's Maha Thingyan Pandal in progress. — MNA

Valiant Pandal attracts Thingyan revellers

YANGON, 16 April — The Valiant pandal in No 4 Ward in Latha Township was crowded with revellers during Thingyan Festival which lasts four days.

At the pandal which was sponsored by

Myanmar Towards Co Ltd, residents on 19th Street in Latha Township sprayed water on revellers during the festival, and revellers were entertained with songs.

No 4 Military Region Commander Lt-Col

Khin Maung Tun, Chairman of Latha Township Peace and Development Council U Thein Tun and officials also enjoyed the water festival.

At the pandal, those present were served with refreshments. — MNA



Belles from Valiant Pandal joyfully throwing water at Thingyan revellers. — MNA

Foreign Minister felicitates Syrian counterpart

YANGON, 17 April — On the occasion of the National Day of the Syrian Arab Republic, which falls on 17 April, 2006, U Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Farouk Al Sharaa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic. — MNA

New Year Wish

**Sitra constellation
And Meiktha coincide
From the old year to the new
The month Tagu makes transition
In the sacred month, blooms
The golden padauk, to beautify
Wears them, and does merit
Calculates merit, for human world
Keeps Sabbath, longlasting
Based on, strength of mind
Awake, thinking, forever
With no avarice, and anger
No match of anger, seeking love
Halt the bad, enhance the good
See what's wrong and right of it
Thoughtful, decisive, with human stance
Let it be, a virtuous world
Let the New Year be pleasant.**

Cheint Naing (Trs)

WTO Customs Valuation Agreement Workshop concludes

YANGON, 16 April — Batch No 6 of the WTO Customs Valuation Agreement Workshop (Private Sector) jointly organized by Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Customs Department concluded at the training centre of UMFCCI on Bo Sun Pet Street on 12 April.

Chairman of the Education Work Committee of UMFCCI U Sein Win Hlaing and Deputy Director-General Thiha Thura U Thein Tun Tin of the Customs Department spoke on the occasion. Altogether 47 trainees attended the 10-day course. — MNA

MTEA office at new address

YANGON, 16 April — Office of Myanmar Timber Entrepreneurs Association has been opened at the building of the division manager's office of Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading at No 61, first floor, Maha Bandoola Park Road in Kyauktada Township.

Those who wishing to conduct business with MTEA may contact telephone number 241910 at the new address. — MNA

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Greenpeace Arctic mission to spotlight polar bears

LOS ANGELES, 15 April—Two US explorers plan to start a four-month summer expedition to the North Pole next month to gather information on the habitat of an animal they believe could be the first victim of global warming — the polar bear.

Lonnie Dupre and Eric Larsen plan to travel 1,100 miles by foot and canoe over the Arctic Ocean to test the depth and density of the ice in summer in a mission sponsored by Greenpeace, the environmental group said on Thursday.

MNA/Reuters

Health alert in India after malaria claims 35 lives

NEW DELHI, 15 April — Authorities in Assam State in east India sounded a health alert on Thursday following an outbreak of malaria that has claimed at least 35 lives and affected about 20,000 people.

"A maximum alert has been sounded across Assam and medical teams are working on a war footing to check the spread of malaria," *Indo-Asian News Service* quoted Assam Health Minister Bhumidhar Barman as saying.

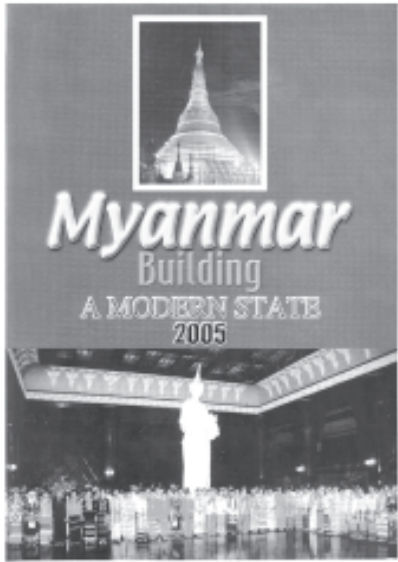
Most of the casualties were reported from the eastern Assam state's districts of Golaghat and Lakhimpur, besides from areas bordering Bhutan.

Some 35 people have died of malaria in the past few days and an estimated 20,000 people are hit by the disease, the minister said.

Unofficial reports put the death toll in the malaria epidemic at around 80.

Experts say early monsoons had led to the outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease.

MNA/Xinhua



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Triple treatment cuts malaria in HIV patients

LONDON, 15 April — Combining anti-AIDS drugs, an antibiotic and bed nets treated with insecticide could cut the rate of malaria infections in people infected with HIV by up to 95 per cent, researchers said on Friday.

Malaria and HIV are leading infections in sub-Saharan Africa. In adults and children with HIV, malaria is more common and can be more severe.

"Our study was able to show that with the implementation of a few interventions the incidence of malaria can be dropped considerably," Dr. Jonathan Mermin, of the Uganda Virus Research Institute in Entebbe, Uganda, said in an interview.

The researchers found that antiretroviral drugs, the antibiotic cotrimoxazole and bed nets are each effective in combating malaria in HIV patients but when combined their impact is cumulative.

Malaria, a parasitic disease transmitted by mosquitoes, kills more than a million people a year, mostly young children in Africa.

HIV weakens the patient's immune system making it more vulnerable to opportunistic infections such as malaria and AIDS.

Mermin and his team studied the impact of individual and combined treatments for malaria in about 1,000 HIV positive people in Uganda.

Cotrimoxazole, which is a standard treatment worldwide for patients infected with HIV, reduced the incidence of malaria in the patients by 76 per cent. When combined with anti-AIDS drugs it hit 92 per cent and cut cases by

up to 95 per cent when the bed nets were included.

The researchers, who reported the findings in *The Lancet* medical journal, believe the impact of the anti-AIDS drugs was due to its effect in

strengthening the immune system rather than any direct effect of the drugs on the malaria parasite.

"Although these interventions work separately, the prime message is that together they are associated

with a 95-per-cent reduction in malaria," said Mermin.

"Malaria then becomes a rare event among this population whereas before the interventions it was quite common," he added.

MNA/Reuters

Study says melting sea ice a danger to walrus

WASHINGTON, 15 April — Arctic researchers who discovered a surprising number of abandoned baby walrus say melting sea ice may be the culprit, according to a study in the April issue of *Aquatic Mammals*.

During an icebreaker cruise in the Canada Basin two years ago, researchers measured an unusually warm mass of water — as high as 44 degrees F (7C) — moving into the area from the Bering Sea to the south. This warm water may have rapidly melted seasonal sea ice over the shallow continental shelf north of Alaska, the study said.

They also found nine lone and possibly abandoned walrus calves in the area, an

"unprecedented number" for walrus since mothers tend to stay with their calves for two years.

"We were on a station for 24 hours, and the calves would be swimming around us, crying. We couldn't rescue them," said team member Carin Ashjian, a biologist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Sea ice offers foraging walrus a place to rest. Mothers leave their calves on the ice while they dive to feed on animals on the

sea floor such as crabs and clams. But rising ocean temperatures may be forcing the walrus mothers to abandon their young as they follow the rapidly retreating ice edge north to colder waters, the study said.

Without their mothers, the calves likely drown or starve, according to the research team.

"The young can't forage for themselves," Ashjian said in a statement. "They don't know how to eat." — MNA/Reuters

At least 20 killed in two boat accidents in Uganda

KAMPALA, 15 April — A boat carrying 50 fishermen capsized on the Lake Victoria in Uganda on Friday morning, leaving 20 passengers drowned, while another boat accident killed at least one in the west.

The accident occurred near Entebbe, 40 kilometres south of Kampala, in the morning and killed 20 on board, according to different reports from local radio stations.

The Capital Radio, a private radio station, said the boat capsized on the Lake Victoria, the second largest fresh water lake in the world, en route from Damba Island to Kasenyi in Entebbe.

Another private radio station Dembe FM said the strong wind which blew the boat to a rock in the lake caused the tragedy.

Katanda Luutu, the resident district commissioner in Kalangala District in the Lake Victoria area, told *Xinhua* that "we are aware of it, but we are trying to find more details about it".

Meanwhile, Patrick Onyango, the country's police spokesman, confirmed another accident on the Lake Albert, west of Uganda, which borders the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It also clarifies the earlier confusion about the location of the accident.

MNA/Xinhua



A Romanian girl hand-paints a traditional Orthodox Easter egg at Bucharest's Peasant Museum during a Palm Sunday fair, where hundreds of artisans from all over Romania gathered to show and sell their goods, on 15 April, 2006. — INTERNET

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China concerned by Iran's claim on enrichment

UNITED NATIONS, 14 April— China expressed concern on Wednesday over Iran's declaration that it had enriched uranium but said it was not convinced the UN Security Council needed to take a tougher line on the issue.

"For China, we are concerned about the events and the way that things are developing," China's UN Ambassador Wang Guangya told reporters. "It is not in line with what is required of them by the international

community," including resolutions of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency and a statement issued last month by the Security Council, he said.

But he said the IAEA should remain for now in

charge of the crisis over Iran's nuclear ambitions rather than the Security Council, which has the power to impose sanctions.

"In spite of this, I believe diplomatic efforts are still under way," Wang said when asked whether China felt it might now be time for the Council to take a tougher line.

He also said the five permanent members of the Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China — plus Germany planned to meet again "in a few days to discuss and take note of the situation".

Senior officials from these six nations have met periodically in recent months in search of a coordinated strategy on Iran.

MNA/Reuters

Iran refuses to suspend enrichment

TEHERAN, 14 April — Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani said on Thursday that Iran would not re-suspend uranium enrichment activities.

Larijani told reporters after talks with UN nuclear chief Mohamed ElBaradei that a UN Security Council statement demanding Iran to freeze the enrichment-related activities was "not so important".

"Every action must be reasonable and logical. We are cooperating in a constructive manner with the International Atomic Energy Agency, and Mr ElBaradei is here and the inspectors and cameras are here, so such a proposal is not very important to solve the problem," Larijani said.

On his part, ElBaradei termed his talks with Larijani as "constructive".

"I can tell you on the issue of cooperation to resolve outstanding issues, Mr Larijani renewed his commitment that the Islamic Republic of Iran will accelerate its efforts to work with us in next couple of weeks to provide clarity to the issue that we need to clarify," the IAEA chief said.

ElBaradei also said that he had called on Iran to solve outstanding issues within the remaining time and suspend its nuclear activities for a specific period of time until the submission of his report to the Security Council, the official IRNA news agency reported.

MNA/Xinhua



Members of the KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife game capture team guide a drugged white rhino bull into a metal crate after its capture in South Africa's Makhasa Game Reserve, about 300 km (186 miles) north of the coastal city of Durban, on 9 April, 2006. Game capture is serious business in South Africa, where it has been honed to a fine science to supply niche markets—INTERNET

Chinese telecom operators invest heavily to prepare for upcoming 3G

BEIJING, 14 April — Chinese telecom companies have begun to invest heavily in their mobile phone networks in preparation for the launch of third generation mobile communication (3G).

Statistics with the Ministry of Information Industry (MII) show China's telecom industry reported a growth rate as high as nearly 40 per cent in the first two months of this year.

Sales revenue of the industry reached 94.91 billion yuan (about 11.9 billion US dollars) during the period with a year-on-year rise of 38.2 per cent. Profits rose 59 per cent to 5.9 billion yuan.

China is expected to issue its first 3G licence this year, which will introduce a new mobile phone technology that will provide better reception and many new services.

Handset manufacturers also reported a rapid growth in the first two months of the year as newcomers have joined in since China

relaxed rules governing phone-making licences last year.

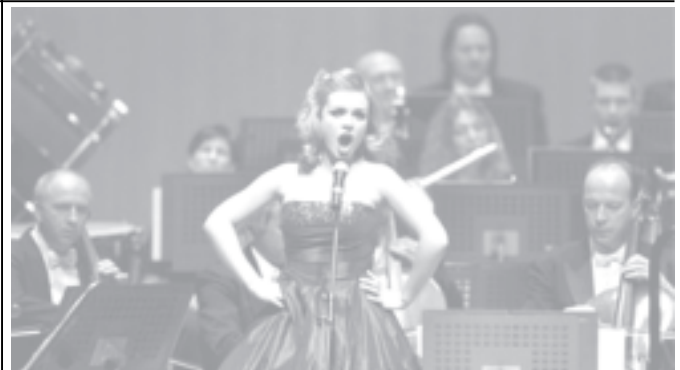
Statistics with MII show that China produced 62.83 million handsets in the first two months with a year-on-year rise of 55 per cent. The export of mobile phones rose 69.5 per cent year-on-year to 3.98 billion US dollars during the period.

China's integrated circuit industry also

witnessed rapid growth in the first two months of the year as multinationals increased their investment in China.

Statistics with MII show that sales revenue from the industry in China reached 34.3 billion yuan (some 4.3 billion US dollars) in the January and February with a year-on-year rise of 45 per cent.

MNA/Xinhua



Welsh opera singer Katherine Jenkins performs on stage with the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, during her Japan Tour 2006 in Tokyo, on 15 April, 2006.—INTERNET

Japan publishes report to boost 'peaceful' image

TOKYO, 14 April — Japan, seeking to improve

its image among Asian neighbours who hold bitter memories of the wartime past, stressed the country's six decades of contributions to world peace in a diplomatic report issued on Friday. Japan's relations with China and South Korea have turned cold over a number of issues, many relating to Japan's invasion and occupation of much of East Asia in the first half of the 20th century.

"Japan has had various complaints from surrounding countries," a Foreign Ministry official said. "We hope that by reading this paper, people will get a better idea of what Japan has been doing for the past 60 years."

Beijing and Seoul have been angered by

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's annual visits to Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine, which honours convicted war criminals together with 2.5 million war dead.

The "blue paper" details Japan's efforts since World War II to build a peaceful and stable world order, touching on development aid, the pacifist Constitution and contributions to international peacekeeping operations. But the report — the bulk of which deals with Tokyo's diplomatic activities in 2005 and its view of the global and regional situation — also reiterates Japan's call for greater clarity in China's military spending.

MNA/Reuters



A Myanmar Python captured ten years ago sits still in a cage at the Palm Beach Zoo at Dreher in Florida, on 11 April, 2006. The 195 pound (88 kg) snake measures 16 feet (4.8 metres) long and was originally released by a domestic pet owner into the wild. South Florida's year-round subtropical climate makes their survival possible and helps them rise to the top of the food chain along with other top predators such as alligators and panthers.—INTERNET

SPORTS



Chelsea's Frank Lampard (L) scores the second goal against Bolton Wanderers on 15 April, 2006. Lampard, 12 months after his goals secured Chelsea's first Championship for 50 years, returned to the Reebok Stadium to claim the second in his side's 2-0 win over Bolton Wanderers which all but guaranteed a second successive Premiership title.—INTERNET

Chelsea close on title

LONDON, 16 April — Chelsea moved within touching distance of a second successive Premier League title with an untroubled 2-0 victory at Bolton Wanderers on Saturday.

Goals by England's John Terry and Frank Lampard took Chelsea nine points clear of Manchester United, who were surprisingly held to a goalless home draw by Sunderland on Friday.

Chelsea could secure the title at Stamford Bridge on Monday by beating Everton if United fail to win at Tottenham Hotspur earlier in the day. Chelsea have 85 points, United 76 and Liverpool, who visit Blackburn Rovers on Sunday, are third on 70. Tottenham have 61 with Arsenal on 57 after their 3-1 win at home against West Bromwich

Albion. Blackburn have 54.

The day's action began with a lunchtime kickoff at the Reebok Stadium where Chelsea secured the title a year ago.

Bolton's Ricardo Vaz Te hit a post midway through the first half in what turned out to be the only worthwhile goal attempt by a team who have now lost five in a row.

Chelsea went ahead in the 44th minute when Lampard swung in a free kick and Didier Drogba and John Terry rose unmarked together to meet it, the English defender claiming the final touch.

MNA/Reuters



England's David Lynn hits a ball from a bunker during the 3rd round of the China Open at Beijing Honghua International Golf Club course in Beijing, China, on 15 April, 2006. Lynn was the overnight leader on nine under par.—INTERNET

Ballack keeps Bayern on track for German title

FRANKFURT, 16 April — Michael Ballack struck his 13th goal of the season to lead Bayern Munich to a 2-0 win over Arminia Bielefeld on Saturday, keeping the champions four points clear of Hamburg SV with four games left.

Hamburg, doing their best to keep the Bundesliga title race alive, enjoyed a 2-0 win at MSV Duisburg, with both goals coming in the first half.

For a long time that looked like being enough to cut the Bayern lead in half but Ballack drilled in with 21 minutes to go and substitute Mehmet Scholl wrapped up the points with another long-range strike five minutes later.

With 30 games played, Bayern lead with 69 points and remain on course for a 20th German title.

Hamburg are second on 65 after an own goal from Uwe Moehrle and a neat finish from Ailton made short work of Duisburg.—MNA/Reuters

Last-gasp Cannavaro rescues point for Juventus

MILAN, 16 April — A header from Fabio Cannavaro five minutes into injury time earned Juventus a dramatic 1-1 draw at Cagliari on Saturday, leaving the Serie A champions five points clear of AC Milan with four games remaining.

Second-placed Milan beat city rivals Inter 1-0 in Friday's derby to close the gap on leaders Juve, who had enjoyed a 10-point advantage less than a month ago.

A penalty from Honduran striker David Suazo put Cagliari ahead one minute before the break before visiting striker Alessandro Del Piero had a penalty saved by former Juve keeper Antonio Chimenti.

MNA/Reuters

Answers to yesterday's Crossword Puzzle

1	C	A	P	I	T	A	4	L	I	S	Z	7	T			
	A	A	A	A	E	A	O	I					I			
8	T	U	L	I	P		9	T	H	R	I	V	E	D		
	C	E	H	G	E	I										
10	H	I	11	B	E	R	N	A	T	E	15	R	U	N		
			I	E	L	E	G									
13	M	A	L	A	D	Y	14	R	E	M	I	S	S			
	A	I					16	L	G							
17	M	A	N				18	B	U	N	D	A	N	C	19	E
	M	G	R	I	E	L										
20	O	P	U	L	E	N	T	21	R	A	N	G	E			
	T	A	N	A	L	I	G									
23	H	A	L	M	A			24	R	O	Y	A	L	T	Y	



Arsenal's Robert Pires, left, scores against West Bromwich Albion during their English Premier League soccer match at Arsenal's Highbury Stadium, London, on 15 April, 2006.—INTERNET

Benfica beat Boavista 2-0 to narrow gap on Sporting

LISBON, 16 April — Benfica closed the gap on second-placed Sporting to two points with a 2-0 win at Boavista in the Portuguese Premier League on Saturday.

Last year's champions opened the scoring after 53 minutes when Boavista midfielder Tiago Pereira turned the ball into his own net following a free kick by Simao Sabrosa.

Benfica's Angola striker Pedro Mantorras scored with six minutes left after being found unmarked in the box by Sabrosa to secure the visitors first victory at Boavista in 10 years.

Leaders Porto moved to within one win of taking Benfica's crown with a 1-0 victory over Uniao Leiria on Friday and have 72 points from 31 games with three matches left.

Sporting, held to a goalless draw at Estrela Amadora on Saturday, have 65 points with Benfica third on 63.

MNA/Reuters

Gonzalez goal lifts Sociedad out of drop zone

MADRID, 16 April — A spectacular late strike from on-loan midfielder Mark Gonzalez gave Real Sociedad a 1-0 home win over Racing Santander which lifted the Basque side out of the relegation zone on Saturday.

Gonzalez, who joined from Liverpool in January, cracked in a superb left-foot volley from 20 metres with 15 minutes to go.

The victory pushed Sociedad up to 14th with 35 points from 33 games, one ahead of Racing, Espanyol and Real Mallorca and two clear of the drop zone.

The goal was the only bright moment in a dull encounter in which nerves got the better of two struggling sides.

MNA/Reuters

Lille beat Bordeaux to hand title to Lyon

PARIS, 16 April — A Peter Odemwingie double earned Lille a 3-2 victory over Girondins Bordeaux on Saturday and handed the Ligue 1 title to Olympique Lyon.

Lyon secured a record fifth consecutive title without playing and can now celebrate at Paris St. Germain on Sunday.

Gerard Houllier's side top the standings with 75 points from 33 matches with Bordeaux second on 61 points after 34 games. With only four matches left the Girondins cannot now catch Lyon.

Lille, who have played 35 matches,

are just three points behind the Aquitaine side in third place.

Stade Rennes, who visit mid-table Nice on Sunday, can reclaim third place by a point from the northerners if they win their ninth consecutive league game.

Lille scored twice in the first six minutes against Bordeaux at Villeneuve d'Ascq's Stadium Nord, where they play their domestic games.

Midfielder Mathieu Bodmer poked home from Mathieu Chalme's free kick after two minutes and Nigerian striker Odemwingie made it 2-0 four minutes later with a volley just inside the box.

MNA/Reuters



Nadia Petrova of Russia reacts after making her shot against Anna-Lena Groenefeld of Germany during their semifinal match at the 2006 Family Circle Cup tennis tournament in Charleston, South Carolina, on 15 April, 2006. Petrova won 6-1 6-3.

INTERNET

Almagro upsets Safin to reach Valencia final

VALENCIA (Spain), 16 April — Spanish qualifier Nicolas Almagro reached the Valencia Open final when he upset wildcard Marat Safin 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 on Saturday.

Almagro, who beat Juan Carlos Ferrero in the first round, fought back from a break down in the third set to earn a showdown with Frenchman Gilles Simon, who will also be playing in his first ATP final.

The 20-year-old Almagro manufactured two break points in the eighth game and took full advantage after Safin twisted his ankle to break back and level the set at four games each. With the Russian former world number one unable to move freely, Almagro held his serve and then broke the Russian's to secure his place in the final.—MNA/Reuters

Senior General Than Shwe meets officers, other ranks and family members of local regiments in Kyauktaw, An in Rakhine State



Senior General Than Shwe cordially greets officers and other ranks and family members of regiments and units of Kyauktaw Station. — MNA

YANGON, 16 April — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, accompanied by Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann and party, flew from Sittway to Kyauktaw on 14 April morning.

The Senior General

and party were welcomed there by Col Ya Pyae of Kyauktaw Station, military officers and departmental officials.

At Nawarat Hall of the local regiment, the Senior General and party met officers and other ranks and families of regiments and units of Kyauktaw Station.

At the meeting, General Thura Shwe Mann explained the purpose of

the inspection tour of Senior General Than Shwe and party in Rakhine State, building a new peaceful, modern and developed nation in line with the 12 State objectives upholding national policies, development of the nation in all aspects thanks to systematic implementation of the development plans, and concerted efforts of the State, the people and the Tatmadaw to

be made for meeting the target.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe stressed the importance of the Tatmadawmen to try their best to become good ones. He cordially greeted officers, other ranks and family members.

Afterwards, Senior General Than Shwe and party proceeded to An by helicopter. They were welcomed there by Deputy Commander of Western Command Brig-Gen Tin Hlaing and senior military officers, departmental personnel and

officials.

On 15 April, Senior General Than Shwe met with officers, the rank and file and families of regiments and units of An Station at Antaung Hall of Western Command Headquarters. General Thura Shwe Mann explained matters on the buildup of the Tatmadaw.

Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance on organizational tasks inside and outside the units, and greeted the Tatmadawmen and family members. After the meeting, they viewed development of An in a motorcade.

They left An for Thandwe by air. Command Staff Colonel Col Myint Swe of Western Command, senior military officers, and departmental officials welcomed the Senior General and party at the airport.

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INSIDE

On this New Year's Day, I wish for all the world people to gain auspiciousness without sufferings, to be free from all forms of harms and dangers, to get rid of evil spirits and able to cultivate good habits, and to follow the ways worthy of rewards and benefits and enjoy them.

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U KYAW SEIN (MANDALAY)



Senior General Than Shwe meets officers and other ranks of Kyauktaw Station at Nawarat Hall of the local regiment in Kyauktaw. — MNA

