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**For shifting to mechanized farming, steps taken to mass-produce agricultural machinery
The entire peasantry to work hand in hand with national people for
emergence of an enduring constitution, and for successful realization
of seven-point policy programme of the future of the State**

(The following is a translation of the message sent by Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar to the Peasants Day 2005).

Esteemed peasantry,

Today, the 2nd of March, is designated as the Peasants Day in honour of the Myanmar peasantry, one of the major national forces of the Union of Myanmar. On this auspicious day, I wish all the peasants good health, physical as well as mental, wealth and success in all their farming industry.

The State Peace and Development Council has been making ardent efforts for the Union of Myanmar to be on a par with other nations of the world, for the entire national people to be able to enjoy higher living standard and for the emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democracy.

Strong national economy plays a fundamental role in realizing the above-mentioned goals and, in the same way, development of agriculture plays a pivotal role in making the national economy strong.

The agriculture sector is an important economic sector that fulfils food for the entire national people, enhances their socio-economic life and paves the way for rural development.

This being the case, the government has laid down the national economic policy based on agriculture that paves the way for the development of the State economy and strives with special emphasis for the advancement of agriculture sector.

For development of the agriculture sector, various measures such as exploration of terrestrial and aquatic resources, use of machinery and extension of sown acreage are being taken.

Moreover, the government is rendering assistance to the peasants so that they can boost the production and raise the quality of crops with the use of quality strains, organic and bio fertilizers and application of agricultural technologies. Sufficient water supply is essential for the development of the agriculture sector. Therefore, the government is spending large sums of money on dams, sluice gates, river water pumping stations and underground water supply projects in the entire nation.

Since 1988 a total of 171 dams has been built at a cost of 89.4 billion kyats. All these dams are

now irrigating more than 2.3 million acres of farmland. Thirty-six more dams are under construction.

In addition, there are 271 river water pumping stations across the nation and they are benefiting more than 0.3 million acres of farmland.

It was due to the government's efforts to supply sufficient water for agricultural purpose, to put fallow and virgin land and wetlands under various crops, to introduce highland cultivation, to expand double crops and mixed crops, the area under cultivation has increased including summer paddy that can now be carried out the whole year round. The capacity of crop cultivation has increased 151 per cent and the total sown acreage has reached 41.3 million.

To make full use of increased acreage of farmland, it has become necessary to shift to mechanized farming. Therefore, necessary steps are being taken so that the State sector and the private sector can mass-produce agricultural machinery.

Moreover, the government is implementing the five rural development tasks for education, health, economic and social development of rural people.

(See page 2)



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye inspects installation of steel beam between RP 7 and RP 8 of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon). — MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye inspects construction of Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon)

YANGON, 1 March—Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, accompanied by Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win and officials concerned, on 27 February morning arrived at Kandawgyi Public Gardens in Mandalay.

Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party heard a report presented by Mandalay Mayor Brig-Gen Phone Zaw Han on work being carried out at the gardens.

After hearing the report, Vice-Senior General

Maung Aye stressed the need for officials to carry out the upgrading tasks systematically and make the garden green and pleasant. Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party inspected booths and shops of the third Mayor's Cup Horticultural Show being staged at the gardens and progress of construction tasks.

After that, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party proceeded to Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) Construction Project, where they were welcomed by Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Deputy Minister for Construction U Tint Swe

and officials. At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister for Construction U Tint Swe reported on construction of the bridge, Deputy Superintending Engineers U Htay Myint and U San Win on construction of approach structure and the main bridge, progress of work, future tasks and arrival of steel beams to Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party.

In response to the report, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye called on officials to systematically engage in construction tasks and maintain the Inwa Bridge being used for its durability.

(See page 8)

HONOURING THE 2005 PEASANTS DAY

PERSPECTIVES

Wednesday, 2 March, 2005

Safeguard dams and sluice gates for posterity

The Government of the Union of Myanmar has always given top priority to the development of the agriculture sector. Therefore, the production of the agriculture sector can meet the domestic consumption and farmers can earn more through the export of surplus.

Now, paddy, cotton, onion and other kitchen crops are being cultivated on new plots of farmland that were reclaimed from fallow and virgin land and are being distributed locally and exported. The government is providing assistance to the farmers to be able to grow more and export more. It is doing so with the intention of raising the living standard of peasants.

The agriculture industry is flourishing more and more because of the favourable conditions of land, water and weather and because the government has been fulfilling all the requirements, for instance, by building dams, sluice gates and river water pumping stations.

The Ngamoeyeik Sluice Gate built across the Ngamoeyeik Creek near Sitpin Village in Dagon Myothit (East) Township, Yangon Division, was inaugurated on 26 February. It is the 15th sluice gate in Yangon Division and 171st in the whole nation.

The project to green the area within the 30-mile radius of Yangon is being implemented speedily. Hlegu and Dagon Myothit (East) Townships are covered by the project. The Ngamoeyeik Sluice Gate will help store fresh water in the creek and, as a result, it will contribute to the cultivation of summer paddy and other crops in those townships and the greening of environment. In addition to the Ngamoeyeik Sluice Gate, the Ngamoeyeik Dam has also been built in Hlegu Township. It was inaugurated in 1995.

The purpose of the Ngamoeyeik Sluice Gate is to store surplus water of the area irrigated by the Ngamoeyeik Dam, water flowing down from the upper reaches of the Ngamoeyeik Creek and surplus water from plantations. The stored water can be used to irrigate 5,859 acres of summer paddy. Inflow of sea water can also be prevented by closing the sluice gate in the rains. Due to the Ngamoeyeik Sluice Gate, land and water resources in Yangon East District can be used to the full and, as a result, it will contribute a lot to the development of the agriculture sector.

We would like to urge all those responsible and farmers to safeguard the dams and sluice gates, which cost large sums of money, so that our children also can enjoy the benefits of these irrigation facilities.

Concluding and opening of courses of Commerce Ministry

YANGON, 1 March— The concluding of Departmental Procedure Course (2/2005) and opening of Basic Computer Course (3/2005) conducted by Border Trade Department under the Ministry of Commerce were held at the meeting room of the department on Bo Sunpet Street today. Commerce Minister Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, departmental heads, instructors and trainees attended the ceremony.

After delivering an opening speech, the minister presented prizes to outstanding trainees and instructors. A trainee spoke words of thanks.

MNA

People's Desire

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

For shifting to mechanized farming ...

(from page 1)

At a time when the government is making special efforts for the development of the agriculture sector and for all-round development of rural areas where the entire peasants live, the peasants, on their part, are required to strive for enhancement of their socio-economic life and for realization of the production targets of the agricultural sector.

Esteemed peasantry,

Standing firmly on its national policy of non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty, the State Peace and Development Council is working hard for peace and stability, the rule of law and further consolidation of national unity.

Moreover, it is holding the National Convention, the very first and most important step of

the seven-point policy programme for the future of the State in order that a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democracy will emerge in accordance with the wishes of the people.

Now, delegates of peasants, together with other delegates, are carrying out the national duty by taking part in the discussions of the National Convention on the basic principles to be based on in drafting the State Constitution.

In conclusion, I would like to call on the entire peasantry earnestly to work hand in hand with the national people for the Union of Myanmar to be able to stand proudly in the world, for peace and development, for the emergence of an enduring constitution, for development of the agriculture sector, the main pillar of the national economy, and for successful realization of the seven-point policy programme of the future of the State.—MNA

Locals in Pyapon get potable water

YANGON, 1 March — As a gesture of hailing the 60th anniversary Armed Forces Day, water supplying ceremony was held in Pyapon this morning. The ceremony was attended by Chairman of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Commander of South West Command Maj-Gen Soe Naing, Secretariat member of Union Solidarity and Development Association Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt, USDA members, social organization members and locals totalling 1000.

First, the opening of water supply project was held. The commander and the minister opened the ceremony by



Commander Maj-Gen Soe Naing and Minister Col Thein Nyunt at the opening ceremony. — (PBANRDA)

cutting a ribbon.

Next, the commander, the minister and party opened the valve of 800-gallon No 20 pond at 17-ward. They also opened valves at Moose 13, 1, 2 ponds.

Under the water supply project phase-A,

potable water is supplied to over 9000 people living in Wards 12, 17 and 18 and the projects phase B, C and D are under implementation. On completion the whole project can supply potable water to over 50,000 people.

The commander

and the minister also attended the opening of tarred road held at the entrance to Chaungdwin Village. With the length of 1316 feet and width of 10 feet the road was built at a cost of 4.33 million kyat contributed by the State.—MNA

Talks on children development held

YANGON, 1 March— Talks on children development conducted by Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association was held at the hall of MMCWA this morning at the corner of Parami and Thanthumar Roads in South Okkalapa Township.

President of MMCWA Daw Khin Khin Win, CEC members, guests and parents attended the ceremony. First, President Daw Khin Khin Win gave a speech. Next, Director Dr Daw Khin Than Oo of Central Health Education Department under the Health Planning Department gave talks on "Child health and the role of parents", Assistant Director Daw Hla Yi of No 3 Basic Education Department on "All round development of children."

President Daw Khin Khin Win presented gifts to those who gave talks, it is learnt.—MNA

Parade columns practice drills

YANGON, 1 March— The Tatmadaw columns which will take part in the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade this morning from 5 to 9 am practised drill at Myoma Grounds.

The Anawrahta Column led by Col Aung Kyaw Oo, the Kyansittha Column led by Col Tha Aung, the Bayintnaung Column led by Col Khin Maung Oo, the Nawade Column led by Col Aung Zaw Win, the Aung Zeya Column led by Col Myo Win, the Hsinbyushin Column led by Col Khin Aung Myint, the Bandoala Column led by Col Khin Maung Oo, the Myawady Column led by Col Win Swe and the Aung San Column led by Col Thein Zaw practised drills under the command of Parade Commander Brig-Gen Nyi Tun.

Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Aung Kyi and senior military officers inspected the drills.—MNA



SGI Japan Ltd and Flower Robotics Inc demonstrate their jointly developed mannequin robot 'Palette' in Tokyo, on 28 Feb, 2005.—INTERNET



New Parliament to convene on 4 March in Thailand

BANGKOK, 28 Febr — Thailand's new Parliament will convene on 4 March after King Bhumibol Adulyadej gave approval for the first Parliament session, the official Thai News Agency reported Sunday.

According to the Thai Constitution, elected members of the House of Representatives must hold their first session 30 days after the general election.

All MPs elected from the February 6 election this year have registered with the Parliament following the official endorsements of the Election Commission.

The Thai Rak Thai Party, led by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, reaped 377 seats in the 500-seat House of Representatives. The Democrat Party won 96 seats, Chart Thai Party 25 and Mahachon Party 2 seats.

The landslide victory of Thai Rak Thai Party enables its leader Thaksin Shinawatra to form the country's first elected single-party government.

On 9 March, the Parliament is expected to approve Thaksin as the new Prime Minister. It will be his second consecutive term in office.

MNA/Xinhua

China's first private airways opens hub in Tianjin

BEIJING, 28 Feb — China's first private airline, Okay Airways Company Ltd, set up its hub at Binhai International Airport in north China's port city, Tianjin, and will make its maiden flight on 5 March, said an official with the company.

The airline has received its first Boeing 737-900 Friday and will be the first Chinese carrier to operate the largest model of the 737 family. Okay Airways received its business licence as a public aviation carrier from the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) on 27 February. It is expected to

begin operation early next month. The airline has an agreement to sublease two 737-900s from Korean Airlines. The airplanes are owned by Boeing Capital Corp.

"Okay Airways selected the Boeing 737-900, the most advanced model in its class, to provide the optimum in safety, reliability and economics,"

said Liu Jieyin, chairman and president of Okay Airways. The new airline will begin with charter passenger services, domestic air cargo and mail transport and express service from Tianjin. Some of its cargo operations and maintenance may involve Korean Airlines.

Okay's 737-900s will

be used primarily for passenger service. The initial routes begin in Tianjin with flights to Kunming, Changsha, Zhangjiajie, Guilin, Hohhot, Taiyuan and Harbin. Seating up to 189 passengers, the 737-900 will have the lowest seat per mile costs available in a single-aisle airplane.—MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia to go ahead with fuel price increase

JAKARTA, 28 Feb — Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono said the government would go ahead with plans to increase fuel prices by an average of almost 30 per cent even if the move costs him his popularity, a local media reported.

President Susilo, who was quoted by the Jakarta Post, said he was aware that the government's decision would make him unpopular but it was for the good of the whole nation.

He pledged in his campaign to revive Indonesia's moribund economy on which the fuel subsidy has been one of the main drains.

MNA/Xinhua

1,497 US soldiers killed since beginning of Iraq war

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb—As of Monday, 28 February, 2005, at least 1,497 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,135 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is 12 higher than the Defence Department's tally, last updated at 10 am EST Monday. The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Latvia and Kazakhstan one death each. Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,359 US military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,026 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.—Internet

Landslide death toll rises to 96 in Indonesia

JAKARTA, 28 Feb— The death toll from a landslide that swept through two Indonesian villages near a garbage dump last week rose to 96 on Sunday as recovery crews pulled more bodies out of mounds of dirt and waste.

Almost no hope is held for 47 people still believed missing after a wall of black mud and garbage up to 23 feet high swept through homes in the West Java villages before dawn on 21 February.

"There are a total of 96 bodies found as of 1 pm today. Today we found six, and 47 people are still missing," Irbar, a military officer in Cireundeu Village, told Reuters.

Police said heavy rains appeared to have brought down piles of waste that in turn triggered the landslide, leaving a swathe of broken rooftops and shattered walls.

Residents had long complained about the dump near their homes and held many protests since it was set up in 1980 to serve

Bandung, a city of two million people 85 miles southeast of the Indonesian capital, Jakarta.

Landslides are common in other areas of Indonesia, with many blamed on widespread deforestation. In April 2004, 44 people died in a landslide in West Sumatra Province.

MNA/Reuters

Bomb explosion kills eight people in Mosul

Mosul (Iraq), 28 Feb — A bomb exploded near the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Sunday, killing eight people, the US military said.

"An explosion detonated by guerillas in Hamam Al Alil killed eight and injured at least another two Iraqi citizens. The injured citizens were taken to a local hospital," said a statement.

Several of those killed were Iraqi security guards, police said.

MNA/Reuters

More British soldiers face trial on crimes in Iraq

LONDON, 28 Feb — Nearly 50 more British soldiers are facing prosecution for murder, manslaughter, assault and other crimes committed in Iraq, the Sunday Telegraph quoted secret military documents as reporting.

The disclosure follows the sentencing at a court martial in Germany of three soldiers who abused Iraqi detainees earlier this month.

The leaked documents, marked "Restricted—Investigations Not For Disclosure. Ministerial Update of Service Police Investigations", showed that almost three times as many soldiers face charges than had been admitted by the ministry of defence, said the newspaper.

The allegations included two cases in which Iraqi civilians were allegedly deliberately drowned by British soldiers

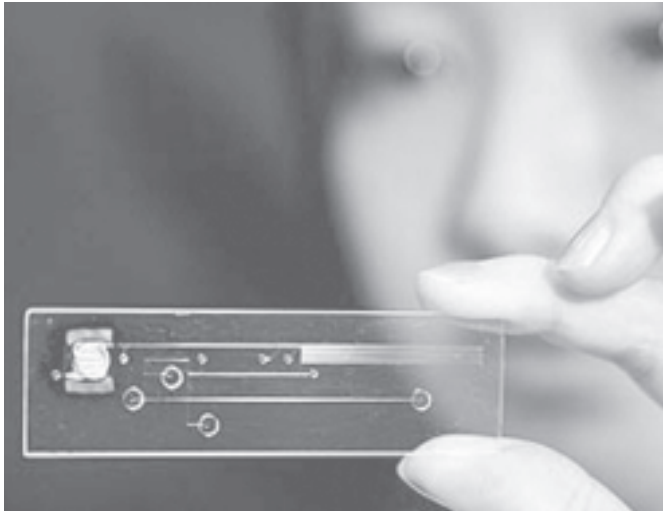
and an incident that could lead to the first member of the elite Special Air Service being charged with murder.

One case involved the alleged murder of 16-year-old Ahmed Jabber Kareem who was arrested on 8 May, 2003. In another case, an officer and two soldiers were reported to be facing a joint manslaughter charge over the drowning of Said Shabram, a sheep herder. On 1 January, 2004, an Iraqi civilian named Roomi was reportedly shot dead by British Special Forces in Basra, southern Iraq.

MNA/Xinhua



A Filipino mining engineer of Philex Mines observes the frothing process of high value minerals composed of gold, copper and silver at their milling plant in the northern Philippine province of Benguet on 28 Feb, 2005.—INTERNET



A Japanese firm has developed a plastic chip, seen here on 23 Feb, 2005 half the size of a business card which it said could detect a number of diseases, including cancer, within 30 minutes.—INTERNET

ဝတ်မှုမ်းအား ခေတ်ကျော်လွှား

Aziz says CBMs with India boosted investment in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 28 Feb— Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz has said that confidence-building measures with India have boosted investment in this country.

“Improved internal security and confidence-building measures initiated with our neighbour have boosted investment by local and foreign investors (in Pakistan),” Aziz said here on Friday at the launch of Pakistan Millennium Development Goals Report 2004.

“The growth is beginning to trickle down and

poverty levels are declining,” he was quoted as saying by *The News* daily.

He said the reform process of the past five years and the turnaround in Pakistan’s economic performance in the last three years was encouraging.

This makes the prospects of attaining the Millennium Development

Goal much brighter, Aziz said, adding “we can’t change the past, but the government of President (Pervez) Musharraf, and I remain committed to the future”.

However, the Pakistan Prime Minister said the rate of progress for quality of life indicators needs more improvement, the daily reported.

MNA/PTI

India, Sri Lanka agree on defence cooperation

NEW DELHI, 28 Feb — India and Sri Lanka would soon sign an agreement for defence cooperation, Lakshman Kadirgamar, Foreign Minister of the island nation said Saturday.

“At any moment now an agreement may be signed,” Kadirgamar, who met Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee Friday, told reporters here.

The Sri Lankan minister has been on a three-day visit in connection with the India Today Conclave.

The minister has been pressing New Delhi for an Indo-Sri Lanka Defence Cooperation Pact which, among other things, envisages reconstruction of the Palaly Airport in Jaffna, intelligence sharing and training of Sri Lankan defence personnel.—MNA/PTI

WHO team to combat mystery disease in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, 28 Feb — A special World Health Organization (WHO) team is due here shortly to assist Sri Lankan specialists trying to combat a mystery illness which has hit the Badulla and Moneragala areas, the official *Daily News* reported Monday.

The disease which bears symptoms of chest pains, breathlessness and accelerated heartbeat is believed to have so far afflicted 184 persons in the region with 64 confirmed cases.

The Health Ministry said all precautions have been taken to combat the disease suspected to be “myocarditis” which was spreading in the Badulla and Moneragala districts. “On a directive of Healthcare and Nutrition Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva, we have taken all pos-

sible steps to control and prevent the disease from spreading,” a senior Health Ministry official told the *Daily News*.

However, health authorities are yet to confirm the cause and other reasons leading to the disease. “A special WHO team will be arriving in Sri Lanka shortly to assess the situation here and assist in medical research. This team will comprise doctors, virologists, epidemiologists etc,” WHO’s Representative in Sri Lanka Dr Kan Tun said. — MNA/Xinhua

Qatar signs gas deal with Shell

KUWAIT CITY, 28 Feb— Qatar on Sunday signed a deal of 6-7 billion US dollars with Royal Dutch/Shell to supply liquefied natural gas (LNG) to North America and Europe, shortly after laying the cornerstone on the same day for another project to supply LNG to Britain.

The agreement was signed by Qatar Minister of Energy and Industry Abdullah bin Hamad al-Attiyah and Jeroen van der Veer, chief executive of the Royal Dutch/Shell group of companies. The minister chairs the state-run Qatar Petroleum (QP) which will own a 70-per cent stake in the deal.

The deal between Qatar and Shell was signed on the eve of a Doha gas conference opening Monday.

MNA/Xinhua

New material to reduce coal mine explosions in China

CHANGCHUN, 28 Feb— Chinese scientists have developed a new coating to reduce sparks caused by friction between machines and rocks in coal mines.

The new material was developed by Changchun Institute of Applied Chemistry of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

It has passed material tests by China Coal Science Research Institute. The material is immune to static electricity, erosion, acid and alkali, according to the

tests.

Machine sparks often lead to gas explosions in coal mines, which claimed many lives each year in China.

The new material can also be applied in other industries such as aviation, construction and chemistry, according to scientists. — MNA/Xinhua

Two Fort Riley soldiers killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 28 Feb— Two Fort Riley soldiers were killed in an improvised explosive device attack Friday in Iraq.

The attack happened in Taji, Iraq, according to a Press release from Fort. The incident is under investigation.

Spc Colby M Farnan, 22, of Weston, Mo, and Spc Jason L Moski, 24, of Blackville, SC, were killed. Moski was assigned as a field artilleryman. He joined the Army in August 2002 and had been stationed at Fort Riley since January 2003. Farnan was assigned as a field artilleryman. He joined the Army in August 2002 and had been stationed at Fort Riley since March 2003. Farnan died only four days after arriving in Iraq, KMBC’s Krista Klaus reported. —Internet

Car bomb kills 116 in Iraq

HILLAH, 28 Feb— Iraq’s guerillas Monday slipped a massive car bomb into an area normally off-limits to vehicles, then detonated it in front of a medical clinic where dozens of military and police recruits were lined up to undergo physicals.

The explosion killed 116 people in this city 60 miles south of Baghdad and wounded dozens more. It was the deadliest single guerilla attack since the war began, and it suggested that Iraq’s 30 Jan elections and the recent arrests of some guerilla leaders haven’t crippled the loose alliance of militant Islamists, disgruntled Sunni Muslims and renegades from Saddam Hussein’s regime.

The guerillas now appear to be focusing their attacks on Iraqis who work for or support the US-backed government, in an apparent effort to discredit the Iraqi regime and provoke civil war between Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

Many of the dead on Monday perished when buildings that housed government offices and shops in the busy downtown district collapsed from the force of the explosion. Body parts were scattered for blocks, and hysterical sur-

vivors trudged through pools of blood searching for relatives.

A car bomb that detonated around the same time as the Hillah explosion killed three people in the town of Al-Musaib, and guerillas attacked the police special forces headquarters in Baqouba, north of Baghdad.

During the hour-long firefight, one civilian was killed, but it was unclear if any Iraqi police officers died.

The US military also reported that a soldier was killed Sunday as he manned a checkpoint in Baghdad. Another died Monday in an apparent traffic accident near Bayji in northern Iraq that also injured two other soldiers. —Internet

Donate blood



An Iraqi woman looks on as a US Marine searching her house walks by her during a raid in the town of Haditha, west of Baghdad on 28 Feb, 2005.—INTERNET

China to work with Malaysia to promote bilateral ties

BEIJING, 1 March — China will work with Malaysia to carry forward bilateral traditional friendship, deepen bilateral strategic cooperation and promote bilateral overall good neighbourly friendship and cooperation to higher levels, said Chinese President Hu Jintao here Monday.

Hu, at a meeting with visiting Malaysian Supreme Head of State Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, spoke positively of bilateral relations which, in his words, have become more and more mature and entered a new period of overall development.

He mentioned that since the two countries forged diplomatic ties over three decades ago, there have been close high-level contacts, active exchanges at various levels, rapidly growing bilateral trade, and comprehensive development in such fields as agriculture, science, technology, resources development, infrastructural construction and tourism.

Hu also spoke positively of Malaysia's adherence to the one-China policy and contributions to the development of relations between China and ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) countries.

Hu also voiced his support for Malaysia to host the first East Asia Summit and will further push for new progresses in East Asian cooperation.

Sirajuddin, who arrived here earlier Monday on a state visit to China as Hu's guest, said this is his first visit to China and he hopes to maintain close contacts between leaders of the two countries and continuously promote the development of bilateral cooperation.

Sirajuddin reiterated that Malaysia firmly adheres to the one-China policy and this position will never change.

He said Malaysia will make joint efforts with China to further expand bilateral cooperation of mutual benefit in economy, trade, civil aviation, tourism, energy and education.

MNA/Xinhua



Japan's famous samurai actor Ken Matsudaira (C) sings and dances with kimono girls to the rhythm of samba, recently.—INTERNET

Indian, Chinese software majors discuss future cooperation

BEIJING, 1 March — Indian and Chinese software majors Sunday held discussions to enhance mutual understanding and find common grounds for future cooperation in the field. Senior executives of top Indian software companies like Infosys, TCS, Satyam, Wipro, who have already invested in China and set up operations here, are participating in the 'Sino-Indian Software Industry Cooperation Summit', the first such effort between the two sides. Welcoming Indian software industries to Beijing, vice-mayor of the city Fan Boyuan and other officials said the local government would offer incentives and tax breaks to them if they set up bases at the Zhongguancun Software Park here, dubbed as 'China's Silicon Valley'.

Chinese participants at the seminar, supported by Microsoft, stressed that they were willing to cooperate with Indian software firms to attract more Japanese and South Korean clients for Indian companies since they had the local expertise, language advantage, proximity and cultural links. In return, the Chinese hoped that Indian software companies could cooperate with them to gain a foothold in US and EU markets, which are yet to see a major Chinese presence. The seminar has been jointly organized by the Beijing Municipal Commission of Development and Reform and the Beijing Municipal Science and Technology Commission to provide a clearer understanding about China to Indian software companies.—MNA/PTI

India sets \$1.82b plan for rural infrastructure development

NEW DELHI, 1 March— India's Finance Minister P Chidambaram invited Monday private investment in the rural infrastructure plan to implement the 'Bharat Nirman' (Build India) project outlined by President A P J Abdul Kalam last week.

To implement this project by 2009, Chidambaram announced the formation of a Rural Infrastructure Development Fund with an annual funding of around 1.82 billion US dollars for four years, the *Indo-Asian News Service* reported.

"The overarching 'Bharat Nirman' is a business plan for four years for building infrastructure in areas of irrigation, roads, housing, water supply, electrification and tele-communication connectivity," said the Finance Minister when presenting the 2005-06 budget in Parliament.

"We are setting high targets to be achieved by 2009," said the minister, calling for massive private sector participation.

The targets set include extending irrigation facilities to additional 10 million hectares, providing rural roads to inhabitations with a population of 1,000 people or hilly areas with 5,000 population, and building 600,000 additional low-income houses.

Speeding up the rural electrification projects, the new fund created would help to provide power connections to 125,000 more villages involving connectivity to 23 million houses.

Another major target set is to provide tele-communication facilities to 66,822 more villages as part of efforts to raise the telecom density in rural areas from 1.1 per cent now to the national average of over 8 per cent.

"Rural India should be seen as a growth engine and public investment is required in the area of rural infrastructure to unleash its growth potential," Kalam had said in his address to a joint session of Parliament.

To make rural areas, which are home to around 70 per cent of India's one billion plus population, a major engine of growth, Kalam said Bharat Nirman would strive to eradicate poverty, provide excellent and affordable opportunities for education and skill development for all citizens, health care for all and sanitation coverage and generation of higher income levels for all Indians.

MNA/Xinhua

Vanuatuan PM arrives in south China's island province

HAIKOU, 1 March — Vanuatuan Prime Minister Ham Lini arrived in Haikou, on the island province Hainan, Monday evening, continuing his official China tour aimed at strengthening Sino-Vanuatuan relations.

During his stay in China's central province Henan, Lini a number of cities such as Zhengzhou, Luoyang, and Kaifeng. He also visited local enterprises specializing in farming, stock breeding and food processing. He said he hoped the relevant Chinese enterprises would invest in Vanuatu. He particularly mentioned that Chinese experts now are helping Vanuatu to build up a biogas project and the Vanuatuan people will soon benefit from the project.

Lini was impressed by China's long history and its historical heritage. He said he has learned a lot through the visit and he hoped the two countries would further cooperation in the future.

Lini began his China tour in Beijing on 24 February. There he met with Chinese President Hu Jintao and held talks with Premier Wen Jiabao.

Wen and Lini signed a joint statement, saying that Vanuatu reiterates its commitment to the one-China policy, and "reaffirms its opposition to any attempt to create 'two Chinas' or 'one China, one Taiwan', 'Taiwanese independence' or Taiwan's membership in international and regional organizations where statehood is required."—MNA/Xinhua

HK, Finland sign MoU on cooperation in information technology

HONG KONG, 1 March— The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government and the Republic of Finland Monday signed the second Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in information and communications technology (ICT).

The MoU was signed by Hong Kong Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology Francis Ho and Consul-General of the Consulate General of Finland in Hong Kong Pauli Makela at the Hong Kong Design Centre. Speaking at the ceremony, Ho said that the signing marked the beginning of a new phase of closer collaboration between China's Hong Kong and Finland, particularly in such areas as e-government, wireless technologies and the creative industries. Hong Kong and Finland first signed an MoU on ICT in January 2000. In the past five years, a lot of collaborative activities were organized between the two sides.—MNA/Xinhua



A Chinese nurse bathes conjoined twins at a hospital in Hefei, central China's Anhui Province on 1 March, 2005. The babies, were deserted three days after their birth in a street in Hefei, last December, share the same heart and have major respiratory problems.—INTERNET

Space tourism firm extends business to China

SHENZHEN, 1 March — Space tourism may soon be a reality in China as United States firm, Space Adventures, extends business into the country.

The company signed a cooperation contract with Hong Kong Space Tourism Co Ltd on Sunday in Shenzhen, a booming city neighbouring Hong Kong in Guangdong Province.

Some potential space tourists are discussing tours, and one person from Shenzhen has registered for a sub-orbit cruise, said Jiang Fang, president of Hong Kong Space Tourism Co Ltd.

Four space projects will be introduced into China, including zero-gravity training, battle plane training, sub-orbit flight and space orbit tour; prices will range from 10,000 US dollars to several million US dollars. The initial projects are expected to recruit about 20 Chinese as a group and they will receive 16 days of ground simulation training on zero-gravity condition and military plane flight, Jiang said.

The applicants should be older than 18 years of age, be able to pay for the fare, about 100,000 yuan (12,048 US dollars), and have no serious medical conditions, Jiang said.

The sub-orbit tour is a flight aboard a spacecraft off the aerosphere at about 100 kilometres from the Earth. Travellers can get a bird's-eye view of the Earth and feel zero-gravity at a speed of 4,000 kilometres per hour.

The space orbit flight is eight days at the *International Space Station* and 120 circles around the Earth.

The concept of space tourism took shape in 2001 when US multi-millionaire Dennis Tito paid 20 million dollars, or 1,800 US dollars per minute, to make his dream come true by stepping onto the *International Space Station* from a *Soyuz* spacecraft.—MNA/Xinhua



An 18-year-old Malayan elephant 'Tun' is seen in this picture being led out of her resting area by zookeeper Novendran SS as she prepares to get an acupuncture treatment on 25 Feb, 2005 at the Zoological Gardens in Singapore.—INTERNET

NZ approves relief aid for cyclone battered Tokelau

WELLINGTON, 1 March — The New Zealand Government has approved a 500,000 New Zealand dollars (about 360,000 US dollars) contribution to buy relief supplies for Tokelau in the wake of Cyclone Percy, which battered the tiny Pacific island group at the weekend.

Foreign Affairs and Trade Ministry spokesman Jonathan Schwass said in a statement Monday that the supplies would be shipped from Apia, in Samoa, as soon as the purchase and shipment could be arranged — which was likely to be this weekend.

The supplies had to be shipped because Tokelau has no airport.

A spokesman for Associate Foreign Affairs Minister Marian Hobbs said the 500,000 New Zealand dollars would also help provide food, tarpaulins, medical supplies, drinking water, power generators and fuel.

The tropical cyclone struck Tokelau at the weekend, and is now battering the northern Cook Islands.

New Zealand's administrator for Tokelau, Neil Walter, said Percy had now passed through Tokelau.

He was quoted by New Zealand National Radio as saying on Monday

that there is damage to the infrastructure — a lot of areas have been gouged out, the roads have broken up.

"The power system is down, a lot of damage to buildings, a lot of equipment lost, boats scattered all over the island along with debris and building materials and so on," he said.

Cyclone Percy is one of four tropical cyclones in the Pacific this month to cause damage, following Meena, Nancy and Olaf.

Tokelau, population about 1400, is a self-administering territory of New Zealand. Its three main atolls of Nukunonu, Atafu and Fakaofu have a total land mass of just 10 square kilometres.

About halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand, Tokelau has no airport and is reached by boat from Samoa.

MNA/Xinhua



Mechanism to aid HK people under study

HONG KONG, 1 March — An inter-departmental mechanism to aid Hong Kong people in large-scale overseas incidents is being explored, and initial proposals will be ready in months, HK Secretary for Security Ambrose Lee said on Monday.

Speaking on an RTHK (Radio Television Hong Kong) radio talk show on Monday, Lee noted the Immigration Department has a round-the-clock hotline to offer support to Hong Kong people in the Chinese Mainland and overseas when needed, and the mechanism has been operating smoothly.

However, the tsunamis in South Asia triggered awareness of the need for an inter-departmental mechanism to handle overseas incidents involving a large number of Hong Kong people, he added.

Lee said the mechanism is under study and initial proposals will be ready in months for public and lawmakers'

discussions.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will also liaise with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the issue involves different jurisdictions.

On Hong Kong's crime situation, Lee noted the crime rate and the number of homicide cases remain low. He also expressed concerns over the recent cases involving firearms, adding investigations revealed the assailants are not being hired from the Chinese Mainland.

He noted there may be a small amount of firearms being smuggled into Hong Kong, and stressed all efforts, including stepped up exchanges of

intelligence and enforcement, will be taken to stop this.

Lee said the number of Chinese Mainland visitors under the Individual Visit Scheme has surpassed 5 million since the scheme was launched two years ago. However, the crime rate involving these visitors remains low, with only two in 10,000 visitors arrested for criminal offenses.

He noted some Chinese Mainland visitors work illegally, adding strengthened exchanges with Chinese Mainland authorities, stepped up enforcement at blackspots and stricter inspection at control points will help tackle the problem.

MNA/Xinhua

Singapore's manufacturing output up 9.9% in January

SINGAPORE, 1 March — Singapore's manufacturing output grew 9.9 per cent in January as compared with a year ago.

According to the figures released by the Economic Development Board (EDB) on Monday, all the clusters except biomedical manufacturing registered a double-digit increase in January.

The transport engineering cluster sustained a robust growth of 30.7 per cent last month, while the electronics cluster and the chemicals cluster rose 15.1 per cent and 14.2 per cent respectively during the same period.

The precision engineering cluster reported an increase of 12.1 per cent in January and the general manufacturing industries grew by 14.5 per cent in the same month.

The biomedical manufacturing cluster contracted by 8.6 per cent last month with a decrease in production of pharmaceuticals.

MNA/Xinhua

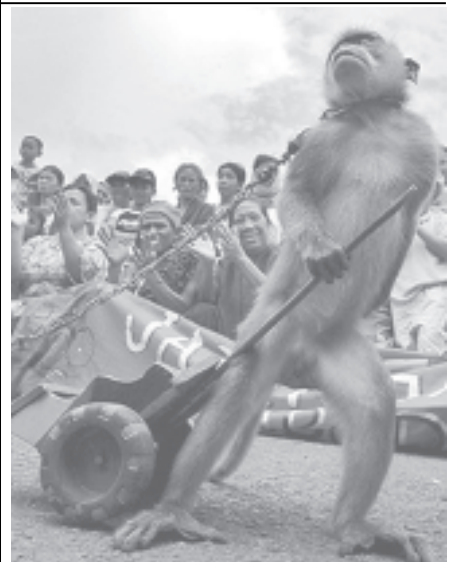
Singapore, Indonesia start talks on sea boundaries

SINGAPORE, 1 March — Singapore and Indonesia began their efforts in solving the sea boundary issue by inaugurating bilateral technical talks here on Monday, according to Channel NewsAsia (CNA) report.

Following the consensus reached by state leaders of the two countries, officials from the two sides met to form a framework for such view exchanges in the future.

CNA quoted a joint statement as saying that delegations discussed various organizational arrangements for future talks including related technical issues, as well as the approaches to be taken in the talks.

Regular meetings will be held alternately between the two countries, the report said. — MNA/Xinhua



Monkey do : People watch a monkey perform in front of the state palace in Jakarta on 28 Feb, 2005.—INTERNET

Dramatic Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine)

Khin Swe Myint (Myanmarsar)

The Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine) is a dramatic one which was put into commission on 5 February 2005. The construction of such a fine transport facility spanning a very wide river, the Thanlwin, was merely a dream in the past.

Frankly, never had I thought that there would emerge a bridge linking Mawlamyine and Mottama, and we local people for a long time wished there had been a bridge across the Thanlwin River.

The current of the river is very strong. The bridge is situated near the confluence of three rivers —the Thanlwin, Gyaing and Attaran. Therefore, I once deduced from these facts that there would never be a bridge on the Thanlwin River.

Later I found that my thought was totally wrong. Thanks to the goodwill of the government, and the technology, diligence and strong determination of the national experts, the dream has come true to make significant contribution towards the regional development undertakings.

Being a native of Mawlamyine, I, like other locals, love my native town very much and it was my great desire for the development of the region along with tranquillity and better transport. Yet, the swift-flowing river was the greatest natural barrier to fulfilment of my wish to ensure the development of Mawlamyine whose beautiful natural scenery and colonial-period buildings fascinate the tourists.

In olden days, local residents had to take ferry boat alongside bus and rail to travel between Mawlamyine and Yangon, and it was indeed a sheer waste of time and money. In addition, the people had to make a frantic scramble for getting on the train or ship they were going to take. So many people lost their lives getting across the river by boat. So the travels of the people in the river were

involving a degree of risk of their lives.

In Mawlamyine, the poor transport has been left behind, and by contrast, the region has now enjoyed the taste of secure and smooth transport to a certain degree.

Old age has not dimmed my memory. When

Being a native of Mawlamyine, I, like other locals, love my native town very much and it was my great desire for the development of the region along with tranquillity and better transport. Yet, the swift-flowing river was the greatest natural barrier to fulfilment of my wish to ensure the development of Mawlamyine whose beautiful natural scenery and colonial-period buildings fascinate the tourists.

I was six or seven or so, I had ever gone to Yangon for the first time together with my parents and my sisters and brothers. At that time, the Sittoung Bridge had not come into existence. My mother and father

holding four of us were in a rush to get off the train at the Sittoung Station and all of our family and the passengers jostled with each other to get on the Z-craft. And then we had to scramble with others for a seat on the train for Yangon.

When I went to Yangon University, the Sittoung Bridge had been inaugurated. Passing the Sittoung Bridge always refreshes my childhood days in which I had to take ferry boat in the Sittoung River, and I am very pleased with the Sittoung River crossing bridge.

Now, I will have to enjoy the fruitful result of the emergence of the Thanlwin Bridge that is much better than the Sittoung Bridge.

I am sure frank and hospitable local residents of Mawlamyine are taking pride in their showcase, Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine) in addition to the natural scenic beauties of the region.

I would like to share my joy with Mawlamyine dwellers and those from all parts of the nation who want to pay a visit to Mawlamyine.

(Translation: MS)

(Myanma Alin⁺+°Kyemon: 1-3-2005)



The 11,575-foot rail-cum-road Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine), the longest and the largest in Myanmar, lies on Thanlwin River after its opening ceremony. — MNA

Child poverty rises in world's richest countries

GENEVA, 1 March — Child poverty is on a steady rise across many of the world's richest countries and can only be tackled by targeted government efforts to raise incomes of the poorer families, a United Nations report said on Tuesday.

The report from UNICEF said that even in countries such as the United States and Britain, the overall rates remain high — while Scandinavia seemed to have the problem under control.

"No matter which of the commonly used poverty measures is applied, the situation of children is seen to have deteriorated over the last decade," said the report — which focused on 24 of the wealthiest nations around the globe.

About 22 per cent of young people under the age of 18 in the United States and 28 per cent in Mexico live in poverty, but in Denmark the figure is only 2.4 per cent, 2.8 in Finland and 3.4 in Norway, it said. UNICEF's Florence-based Innocenti Centre, which carried out the study, says children are in poverty when they are living in households with income per head at 50 per cent or less of the national average for their country.

But the agency's regional director in Geneva, Philip O'Brien, told a news conference that definition was relative. — MNA/Reuters

OPEC crude price rises to \$43.96 per barrel

VIENNA, 1 March — The average crude oil price rose to 43.96 US dollars per barrel last week, up 2.28 dollars compared to the previous week, the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC), headquartered in Vienna, said on Monday.

The crude oil price, based on the average price package of seven market-monitored crudes, stood at 45.24 dollars per barrel on February 24. It was the first time the daily oil price broke 45 dollars per barrel since October 26, 2004.

Sheikh Ahmed Fahd al-Sabah, president of OPEC, said Monday he would suggest the producer group not to cut its production ceiling during the OPEC ministerial meeting on March 16 in Isfahan, Iran. However, he added there was also a possibility of an increase in production if prices remained high.

Qatar's Oil Minister Al Attiya said that high oil prices will make it harder for OPEC to decide on a production cut. "The market has changed now ... prices are on the high side," he said. "If the price continues as it is, I don't believe we'll need to cut further."

Venezuela and Indonesia also prefer to keep production quotas unchanged. On January 30, the OPEC ministerial meeting decided to maintain the daily production at 27 million barrels. — MNA/Xinhua

Residents of Swiss cities have highest purchasing power

GENEVA, 1 March — Residents of Swiss cities have the world's highest purchasing power, despite having to pay more for goods than in most other European countries, according to a results of a survey released on Monday.

The latest update to the Prices and Earnings survey by Swiss bank UBS found that Zurich, Basel, Geneva and Lugano were among the most expensive cities in the world.

The survey, which is published by UBS economists every three years, compares the prices of goods and services, wages, wage deductions and working hours, along with the resulting purchasing power in 71 cities around the globe.

This year's update is based on the statistics from the 2003 analysis, recalculated to take into account changes in exchange rate, inflation and economic productivity.

In terms of purchasing power, Zurich tops the list while Luxembourg is the only non-Swiss city in the top five.

In terms of cost of living, Oslo remains the most expensive city in the world. Zurich ranks fourth, Basel seventh, Geneva ninth and Lugano tenth.

Gross earnings are the highest in Copenhagen and Oslo, with Copenhagen replacing Zurich as the city with the highest wages. — MNA/Xinhua

60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives

- To work in concert with the people to achieve success in implementation of the seven-point Road Map for emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation
- To exert energetic efforts in carrying out the five rural development tasks
- To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the twelve State Objectives while upholding Our Three Main National Causes
- To build a strong, efficient and modern Tatmadaw



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye hears a report by Deputy Minister U Tint Swe on the Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) Project. — MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye inspects construction...

(from page 1)

Afterwards, Vice-Senior Maung Aye and party inspected progress of construction tasks on Mandalay bank and installation of steel beams between RP1 and RP 2.

After that, they inspected driving of bore piles on Sagaing bank.

Later, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party inspected the construction of the approach structure and installation of steel beams between RP 7 and RP 8 on Sagaing side.

Next, they inspected the loading of concrete beams onto the bridge on Sagaing bank and other construction tasks.

After inspecting construction work on Sagaing bank and Inwa Bridge, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party arrived back on Mandalay bank.

Next, they inspected the upgrading of eight-lane Strand Road and Circular Road in Mandalay.

Later, Patron of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Vice-Senior General Maung Aye met the secretary and executives of Mandalay Division USDA, secretaries and executives of District and Township USDAs of seven townships in



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye gives instructions to officials on the Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) Project. — MNA

Mandalay Division and organizers and USDA members at the Office of Mandalay Division USDA and gave instructions to them.

Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party went to Mandalay International Airport and arrived back here by special flight.—MNA



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye inspects the Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) Project. — MNA



Progress of installation of iron beams in Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon). — MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San pay homage to Maha Muni Buddha Image in Mandalay



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party pay reverence to the Maha Muni Buddha Image. — MNA

YANGON, 1 March — Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San together with Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe and officials visited the Maha Muni Buddha Image in Mandalay on 27 February morning.

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party offered 'soon', fruits, lights, flowers and water to the Buddha Image and

paid homage to it. Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party offered gold foils to the image.

Afterwards, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win and party signed the visitors' book. Vice-Senior General Maung Aye presented cash donations to the funds of the image through the Pagoda Board of Trustees. Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San and party inspected renovation and preservation of the Gandakuti building, in which the image is kept.

MNA



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye presents cash donations to the pagoda board of trustees. — MNA



Daw Mya Mya San, wife of Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, and party pay homage to the Maha Muni Buddha Image. — MNA

NC delegates entertained

YANGON, 1 March — The Entertainment and Welfare Subcommittee of the National Convention Convening Management Committee is presenting entertainment programmes to the National Convention delegates for their recreation daily at the Nyaungnapin Camp in Hmawby Township, Yangon Division.

Yesterday evening, the NC delegates were entertained with a film titled 'Pay-sat-thu-doe-hna-lone-thar' directed by Kyi Soe Tun, starring Nyunt Win, Yan Aung, Kyaw Ye Aung, Myo Thanda Tun and Khine Hnin Wai.

The NC delegates took different kinds of physical exercises such as walking, badminton, golf, table tennis, body building and chinlon (circular sepaktakraw) this morning and evening. — MNA



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye inspects progress of construction of forging machines and foundry plants and arrival of machines. — MNA

Equitable development of all states and divisions...

(from page 16)
who misused the authority in accord with the laws. All the State serv-

ren, and national recon- solidation. It is vividly visible that based on the already-achieved success

to be able to stay in touch with the developed nations in the region.

Mandalay Division,

So, measures are to be taken effectively and thoroughly for the city to possess all the character-

city and Yangon.

In conclusion, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye called on those offi-

entire Mandalay Division including Mandalay City.

After the meeting, Vice-Senior General



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye has a cordial conversation with officials, rectors, medical superintendents, members of social organizations, townsmen and entrepreneurs. — MNA



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye cordially greets secretaries, executives, organizers and members of township and district USDAs.

MNA

ice personnel and the MCDC staff are to be oneness with the people, to safeguard them and to constantly serve the interests of the entire people.

Under the leadership

the entire nation including border areas are gaining development momentum in numerous sectors. Similarly, the State, the people and the Tatmadaw are to be united in im-

the economically reliable one for the nation, requires to main and accelerate the development momentum.

In particularly, the region also needs to work harder than ever to meet the local food demand.

Now, the government is keeping an eye on supply of water for Meiktila plain to be able to extend paddy cultivation and greening tasks.

The government is carrying out similar tasks for Myingyan District. Extended cultivation of paddy is indispensable for food security of these districts, and only then will the entire division will be able to enjoy food sufficiency.

The government has formed the Mandalay City Development Committee as a high-level committee to be able to discharge the development affairs concerns as Mandalay City of Mandalay Division is the second capital of the nation.

istics of a city and to fully observe the discipline. In the process, efforts are to be exerted constantly for enabling Mandalay City to reduce the development gap between the

officials in charge of the region and respective service personnel to be armed with patriotic spirit and self-consciousness in carrying out their tasks for further progress of the

Maung Aye cordially greeted those present.

Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party met members of the Mandalay Industrial Zone Development Committee and industrialists in the Mandalay Industrial Zone. They inspected progress of building of machine shop, arrival of machinery. They were conducted the tasks (See page 11)

The government has formed the Mandalay City Development Committee as a high-level committee to be able to discharge the development affairs concerns as Mandalay City of Mandalay Division is the second capital of the nation. So, measures are to be taken effectively and thoroughly for the city to possess all the characteristics of a city and to fully observe the discipline. In the process, efforts are to be exerted constantly for enabling Mandalay City to reduce the development gap between the city and Yangon.

Officials in charge of the region and respective service personnel are to be armed with patriotic spirit and self-consciousness in carrying out their tasks for further progress of the entire Mandalay Division including Mandalay City.

of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe, the State service personnel are capable of making combined and harmonious endeavours, resulting in peace and stability in border areas, more understanding and relations among the national brethren,

plementing the tasks for transition to democracy.

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye arrived at venue at 2.30 pm and delivered a speech, saying that speedy and equitable development of all states and divisions is crucial to the future of the nation



Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint.

MNA



NPED Minister U Soe Tha.

MNA

Equitable development of all states and divisions, crucial to future of nation...

(from page 10)
round the foundry and forging shops project site.

They also viewed the construction of foundry shop and arrival of machines for the project. Vice-Sen-

ior General Maung Aye gave instructions on production of more human resources and effective use of the machines.

USDA Secretary-General Maj-Gen Htay Oo, Secretaries Brig-

Gen Thein Zaw and U Thaug and CEC members, who accompanied Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, held a meeting with the secretary and executives of Mandalay Division USDA, district and

township level secretaries, executives and organizers of USDAs from seven townships in Kyaukse and Mandalay Districts at the office of Mandalay Division USDA on 26 February. — MNA



Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win holds a meeting with officials, members of social organizations, townsenders and entrepreneurs. — MNA



POEM: We See

* We see
Fresh and various nation's beloved flowers
Fully disciplined and modern
For development to take root
Toward a democratic nation
With good aim and heart
Discussions are in progress

* We see
Correct and accurate
For Myanmar's history not to be rude in future
Discussions and decisions in progress

* We see
Self and group interest
Regional interest, other weaknesses
Not to seep in, care being taken
For appearance of national character
All these features
Are accorded understanding and consideration
All collectively voiced

* We see
Not to be parted in life, and even in death
Nationals, in all fairness
Serious thought and aims
Are not ignored but collectively
Are forwarded so that there'll be no doubts
Explained at the Golden Convention
Studied, discussed, and decisions made
These the correct national path.

Kyi Aye Maung (Trs)

260 drug-related cases exposed in 2005-January

YANGON, 1 March—The Tatmadaw, the Myanmar Police Force and the Customs Department exposed a total of 260 drug-related cases in January 2005.

The authorities seized 214.6743 kilos of opium in 42 cases, 23.3597 kilos of heroin in 96 cases, 0.0004 kilo of morphine, 1.8034 kilos of opium oil in 12 cases, 1.643 kilos of low grade opium in 14 cases, 13.0243 kilos of marijuana in 18 cases, 1.3 litre of phensedyl in one case, 525236 stimulant tablets in 41 cases, 0.062 kilo of stimulant powder in two cases, 178 kilos of stimulant solid (ice) in one case, 2546.25 litre of chemical liquid in one case, 3.1752 kilos of chemical powder, 12 cases for failure to register and 20 other cases.

Action was taken against 395 people in 260 cases — 333 men and 62 women in January 2005. — MNA

Chairman of Leading Committee Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects drilling of parade columns



Lt-Gen Kyaw Win views drill practising of parade columns. — MNA

YANGON, 1 March— Chairman of Leading Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Member of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win together with Chairman of Management Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, members of the Leading Committee Chief of Staff (Navy) Captain Nyan Tun, Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Aung Kyi, Vice Adjutant-General Maj-Gen Hla Shwe, Vice Quartermaster-General Maj-Gen Khin Maung Tun and senior military officers inspected parade columns, the Resistance Park and Myoma Grounds this afternoon.

Chairman Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party arrived at No 1 Transit Centre (Bayintnaung). Commandant of

No 1 Transit Centre Lt-Col Tin Kyaing reported on accommodation of the parade columns, opening of welfare shop and others.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win told officials to make necessary arrangements for the Tatmadaw members.

Chairman Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party inspected drilling of Anawrahta, Bayintnaung and Aungzeya columns. They went to the Resistance Park where officials concerned reported on renovation of the park.

They also inspected Myoma Ground and drilling of parade columns. Chairman Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party inspected Myawady parade column at Yangon Command. Column commander Col Win Swe reported on accommodation, drilling and administrative matters.

They inspected welfare shops and hostels.—MNA

List of winners of Armed Forces Day commemorative poetry competitions announced

YANGON, 1 March —The list of winners of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative poetry competitions conducted by Poem and Art Contest Work Committee was announced today.

In the level-1 short poetry contest, nine persons won the prizes including six consolation prizes; in the level-1 long poetry contest, six persons won the prizes including three consolation prizes; in the level-2 short poetry contest, nine persons won the prizes including six consolation prizes; and in the level-2 long poem contest, six persons won the prizes including three

consolation prizes.

First, second and third prize winners will be awarded at the ceremony to mark the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day in Yangon on 27 March and consolation prizes will be awarded at the celebrations of respective commands. First, second and third prize winners are to personally contact Secretary of Subcommittee for organizing the contests Lt-Col Ohn Maung (Retd) (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe), also Chief Editor of Naing Ngan Gonyi of No 529/531, Merchant Street, Yangon, not later than 22 March. — MNA

Zarqawi remains as elusive as ever

HADITHA (Iraq), 28 Feb—Iraq's government said on Saturday it was closing in on Abu Musab al-Zarqawi but out in the western desert, where he is rumoured to be hiding, Marines said the Jordanian militant remained as elusive as ever.

"There is no pinpoint accuracy as to where he's at, just rumours," said Lieutenant-Colonel Greg Stevens after his US Marines had completed a sweep of palm and orange groves along the Euphrates River in search of guerrillas.

"He's a ghost out there. He has nine lives, he's very slippery and very well protected and he certainly isn't stupid."

Iraq's minister of state

for national security, Kassim Daoud, said on Saturday the government was "at the closest point to Zarqawi", the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq and the man who has claimed responsibility for many of the country's worst attacks.

On Friday the government said it had captured one of Zarqawi's senior aides, Abu Qutaybah, near the Syrian border.

US Marines and Iraqi soldiers launched an offensive last weekend in the villages and towns straddling the Euphrates, which meanders northwest for over 300 kilometres (190 miles) from close to Baghdad to the border with Syria and beyond.—MNA/Reuters

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Italian PM defends govt's stewardship of economy

ROME, 28 Feb — Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi defended his government's stewardship of the economy on Saturday and renewed vows for tax relief at the centre of his budding reelection campaign.

Speaking at an export conference in Rome, he shrugged off worries that Italy had lost its competitive edge and asked executives to look at emerging markets, particularly in Eastern Europe.

"We will not abandon ourselves to the idea of decline that many newspapers subscribe to, because that's absolutely not where we're headed," Berlusconi said. "I continue to be optimistic and have faith in the future."

Berlusconi's upbeat outlook followed a warning on Friday by President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi that the Italian economy was suffering stunted productivity growth hurting competitiveness.

Italy registered its first global trade deficit for 12 years in 2004 and the government has largely blamed export trouble on the high value of the euro against the dollar. The damage has been compounded by a listless economy with weak internal demand.

Berlusconi estimated Italian economic growth of 1.4 per cent last year, at the high end of the 1.3-1.4 per cent forecast by Economy Minister Domenico Siniscalco. The official 2004 figure will be published by statistics

agency ISTAT on Tuesday.

Berlusconi railed against the European Central Bank, which has left rates unchanged at 2 per cent since June 2003, and again called for more flexibility in the European Union's strict deficit ceiling of 3 per cent of gross domestic product.

"In a period of economic stagnation it (the 3 per cent) is a limit, we are choking ourselves with our own hands and therefore it does not permit us to compete with (economies) outside Europe," he said.

The Prime Minister, elected in 2001 on a tax relief platform, vowed to reduce the tax burden on Italians by another percentage point of gross domestic product next year.—MNA/Reuters

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Bill Gates urges restructuring US high schools

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — Microsoft Corp Chairman Bill Gates has urged American governors and leaders in the education community to restructure the country's high schools to raise graduation rates, prepare students for college and train a workforce facing growing global competition, news reports said Sunday.

"Our schools were

designed 50 years ago to meet the needs of another age," Gates said Saturday at a two-day National Education Summit, cosponsored by the National Governors Association and Achieve Inc., a partnership created by the governors and the business community aimed at increasing standards and accountability in education.

"Until we design them to meet the needs of this century, we will keep them limiting, even ruining, the lives of millions of Americans every year," he said.

High schools, he said, leave most students unprepared for college and

for today's jobs. "When I compare our high school with what I see abroad," he added, "I am terrified for our work force of tomorrow."

To address the problem, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation said it would give 15 million US dollars to the National Governors Association, to be disbursed to states that take significant steps to improve their high schools. The Gates foundation said it had invested 733 million dollars in more than 1,500 high schools — about 8 per cent of all public high schools — in the past five years.

MNA/Xinhua

IDB finances electricity interconnection in central America

SAN JOSE, 28 Feb — The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has granted 170 million US dollars in loans to finance the electricity interconnection in Central America.

The project is set to connect electricity firms in Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala with a line of 1,800 kilometres from 2006 to 2008, a spokesman for the firms said on Saturday.

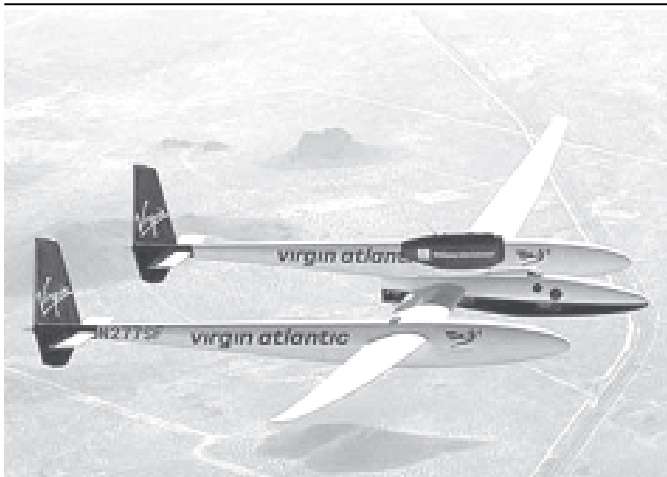
The line, which will have a transmission capacity of 230-300 megawatts, will be the spine of the Electric Interconnection System for the countries of Central America.—MNA/Xinhua

Presidents, royals to attend Uruguay's presidential inauguration

MONTEVIDEO, 28 Feb — A total of 600 guests from over 100 countries, including several presidents of Latin American countries and European princes, will attend the swearing-in ceremony of Uruguayan President-elect Tabare Vazquez on 1 March.

Vazquez, who replaced the outgoing President Jorge Batlle, won the presidential elections on 31 October, 2004. He will become the first left-wing president in the country. Presidents of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela have been invited to the ceremony. Vazquez, who will govern with absolute majority in Congress, decided to form a Cabinet of moderates to preserve stability in the country, according to political analysts.

MNA/Xinhua



The final countdown is underway for a 2300 GMT takeoff of the experimental Virgin Atlantic GlobalFlyer, seen here during testing, seeking to make the first solo, non-stop, non-refueled flight around the world.

INTERNET

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77th annual Academy Awards

LOS ANGELES, 1 March— Following is a complete list of winners at the 77th annual Academy Awards, held at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood on Sunday.

- Best Picture: "Million Dollar Baby" (Warner Bros)
Best Director: Clint Eastwood for "Million Dollar Baby"
Best Actor: Jamie Foxx in "Ray" (Universal)
Best Actress: Hilary Swank in "Million Dollar Baby"
Supporting Actor: Morgan Freeman in "Million Dollar Baby"
Supporting Actress: Cate Blanchett in "The Aviator" (Miramax, Initial Entertainment Group, Warner Bros)
Original screenplay "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," screenplay by Charlie Kaufman, story by Charlie Kaufman & Michel Gondry Pierre Bismuth (Focus Features)
Adapted screenplay: "Sideways," screenplay by Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor (Fox Searchlight/20th Century Fox)
Foreign Language Film: "The Sea Inside" (Spain)
Animated Film: "The Incredibles" (Pixar Animation Studios Inc <PIXR.O>, distributed by The Walt Disney Co <DIS.N>)
Documentary Feature: "Born into Brothels"
Original Score "Finding Neverland," Jan AP Kaczmarek (Miramax)
Original Song: "Al Otro Lado Del Rio," from "The Motorcycle Diaries" (Focus Features)
Cinematography: "The Aviator," Robert Richardson
Art Direction: "The Aviator," Dante Ferretti, Francesca Lo Schiavo
Makeup: "Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events," Valli O'Reilly, Bill Corso (Paramount)
Costume Design: "The Aviator," Sandy Powell
Film editing: "The Aviator," Thelma Schoonmaker
Visual Effects: "Spider-Man 2," John Dykstra, Scott Stokdyk, Anthony LaMolinar, John Frazier (Columbia Pictures)
Live Action Short Film: "Wasp"
Animated Short Film: "Ryan"
Sound Mixing: "Ray," Scott Millan, Greg Orloff, Bob Beemer, Steve Cantamessa
Sound Editing: "The Incredibles," Michael Silvers, Randy Thom
Documentary Short Subject: "Mighty Times: The Children's March"
Miramax Films is a unit of Walt Disney Co. <DIS.N> Warner Bros. is a unit of Time Warner Inc. <TWX.N> Fox Searchlight and 20th Century Fox are units of News Corp. <NWS.N>
Universal Pictures and Focus Features are units of General Electric Co. <GE.N>-controlled NBC Universal. Columbia Pictures is a unit of Sony Corp <6758.T> <SNE.N>. — MNA/Reuters



China's Ziyi Zhang, a presenter, arrives at the 77th annual Academy Awards in Hollywood, on 27 Feb, 2005. — INTERNET

Two killed in stampede in Africa's film festival opening

Ouagadougou, 28 Feb — Two people died on Saturday in a stampede ahead of the free gala opening ceremony for Africa's Fespaco film festival in a football stadium in Burkina Faso, festival officials said.

The two people died at the national football stadium in Ouagadougou, the dusty capital of this West African nation which hosts the continent's biggest film festival every two years.

"The official opening ceremony of the 19th Fespaco ... claims two deaths and 15 injured persons as a result of a stampede," the festival organizers said in a statement.

The statement said police blamed the incident on crowd reaction. When the August 4 stadium opened early in the afternoon, people rushed in, racing to get to the stand which receives most

shade from the sun, witnesses said. In the crush, people fell from an upper balcony and two of them died, they added.

"Everyone rushes to go in, mainly because it's free. Nobody pays anything, so everyone wants to come in and watch the spectacle," said a fire officer at the scene.

The accident happened several hours before the gala event which drew 35,000 people.

MNA/Reuters

Spanish police arrest suspected top Italian mobster

NAPLES (Italy), 28 Feb — Spanish police have arrested a suspected top Italian mobster believed to be at the centre of clan warfare that has gripped the southern port city of Naples for months, Italian police said on Sunday.

A police official said Raffaele Amato, who faces charges in Italy of murder and drug trafficking, was seized in Barcelona on Saturday night along with five other people.

Amato, 39, is believed to be the head of a breakaway mob that is locked in a bloody turf war with the established Di Lauro criminal clan, one of whose leaders was arrested in a massive swoop in December. "The two factions that are bloodying Naples have been decapi-

tated. Dozens and dozens of acolytes are already in prison," Interior Minister Giuseppe Pisanu said.

"(Amato's arrest) shows Neapolitans that the war against the Camorra will be won," he said, according to ANSA news agency.

More than 120 people have been murdered in Naples over the past year as supporters of the two clans fight a ferocious battle for control of a drugs and extortion racket in the crime-ridden suburbs of the city. — MNA/Reuters

Cypriot police smash counterfeit euro ring

NICOSIA, 28 Feb — Cypriot police have smashed a counterfeit euro trading ring, arresting four key suspects, local Press reported on Sunday.

Police said the ring forged a whole sum of 41,000 euros and was planning a transaction involving one million counterfeit euros. Moreover, police suspected that the ring might have already circulated an unknown quantity of counterfeit euros on the market.

A 45-year-old British police officer, who serves at the British base in Dhekelia, was released Saturday in custody for six days by a Limassol court, accused of being in connection with the ring. The man is

the fourth suspect arrested in the case.

Three other men, including a republic police officer from Paphos, were remanded in custody for six days on Friday.

Police believe more people were involved in the ring from both sides of the divided line on the island.

Investigations have extended to Nicosia, Paphos and Famagusta while Interpol and the European Central Bank have shown concerns about the case.

MNA/Xinhua

Rural Tanzania warned of sleeping sickness prevalence

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 28 Feb — Experts warned on Sunday that the influx of refugees would likely to expose the rural areas of Tanzania to reemerging of sleeping sickness prevalence.

The prevalence of trypanosomiasis or sleeping sickness, a blood infectious disease caused by biting of the tsetse fly, may reemerge in Tanzania's rural communities, said Director of Animal Health in the Water and Livestock Development Ministry, Barnos Kilmario, in a tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis meeting held in Tanzania's biggest city Dar-es-Salaam on Sunday.

The official cautioned that the influx of refugees from neighbouring countries, where sleeping sickness has been reaching the epidemic level, would bring in tsetse flies to Tanzania although cur-

rently no mass prevalence of these deadly disease were reported in the east African country. The tiny tsetse flies, thriving in the 36 sub-Saharan countries and threatening about 55 million people, cause fever, coma and death by leaving parasites in bloodstream after biting human beings or living stocks. Each undiagnosed and untreated human creates a new host to tsetse flies, resulting in further spreads.

The official said that the Tanzanian Government would implement the Integrated Land Use Plan to ensure areas cleared of tsetse flies do not get re-infested. —MNA/Xinhua

Ivory Coast campaigns to defeat polio

DANANE (Ivory Coast), 28 Feb — On foot and by bicycle, an army of 28,000 people advanced through towns and remote villages in Ivory Coast on Sunday to vaccinate children against polio to try and finally defeat the crippling disease.

This weekend's mission in Ivory Coast and neighbouring Liberia is part of a continent-wide campaign to vaccinate more than 100 million children in 22 West and Central African nations against polio in the space

of a few days.

The World Health Organization said on Friday the disease was spreading across Africa and 13 out of 14 previously polio-free countries to record cases are in the world's poorest continent.

In the remote village of Guin-Houye not far from the porous frontier with Liberia, vaccinators marched from one mud hut to the next under the burning sun, carrying cool boxes loaded with polio vaccines. —MNA/Reuters

SPORTS

Nedved to miss Juve's home tie against Real

ROME, 1 March— Juventus midfielder Pavel Nedved is due to miss the Italian soccer giants' Champions League second leg match against Real Madrid on March 9 after heads clash in their away match of the first leg last Tuesday.

The Czech international has been in a clinic since suffering concussion in Juve's 1-0 first leg defeat to Real in Madrid when he clashed heads with Spanish defender Raul Bravo.

Juventus said on Monday that after undergoing tests Nedved had been released from the clinic but needed seven days of rest at home.

Further tests for Nedved would be made on March 8 to decide when Nedved could begin training, according to the Italian club. Nedved will also certainly be sidelined in Saturday's Serie A match when Juventus face Roma.

MNA/Xinhua

Manchester City beat Norwich City 3-2

LONDON, 1 March— Robbie Fowler struck twice to help Manchester City recover from 2-0 down and snatch a last-gasp 3-2 win at second-bottom Norwich City on Monday.

Former England striker Fowler tucked away a Shaun Wright-Phillips pass on 37 minutes to score his 150th Premier League goal and put a huge dent in Norwich's survival hopes when he sufficed home the winner in injury time.

Fowler is now third on the all-time Premier League scoring charts behind Alan Shearer and Andy Cole.

Norwich took the lead through striker Dean Ashton's deft flick over keeper David James in the 12th minute and looked in control when Leon McKenzie latched on to Ashton's pass and ran through to score.

Antoine Sibierski nodded Manchester City's first as the match began to swing round and Norwich finally capitulated after Swede Mattias Jonson was shown a second yellow for a rash tackle on Joey Barton midway through the second half.

Manchester City moved up two places to 10th while Norwich are five points from safety in 19th. —MNA/Reuters



Robbie Fowler, seen here in 2004. A Robbie Fowler double inspired Manchester City to a come from behind 3-2 win at struggling Norwich.—INTERNET

Pires to miss Champions League match against Bayern

LONDON, 1 March— Robert Pires has joined a growing list of injured and suspended Arsenal players and will miss their Champions League match against Bayern Munich at Highbury next week, manager Arsene Wenger said on Monday.

The French winger, victim of a lunge that earned Southampton's David Prutton a red card in the teams' 1-1 draw on Saturday, will be out for up to three weeks with a sprained ankle.

"It doesn't look like anything is fractured," Wenger told the Arsenal website. "But it is a good ankle sprain. It does not look like he will be ready for two to three weeks."

Arsenal, 3-1 down after the first leg of their first knockout round tie in Munich last week, are being severely weakened by injuries.

England defender Sol Campbell, also recovering from an ankle injury, is still unavailable and Brazil's Edu is doubtful with a pulled hamstring.

"Sol will be out for two more weeks," said Wenger. "It is open for Edu. The earliest is Bayern but even then there is a question mark."

The trio will miss Arsenal's FA Cup fifth-round replay at second division Sheffield United on Tuesday, a match for which striker Thierry Henry is also ruled with an Achilles injury. Forwards Dennis Bergkamp, Jose Antonio Reyes and Robin van Persie are suspended. "Thierry is out with an Achilles problem...Therefore I have to think about who I play up front," Wenger said, naming youngsters Jeremie Aliadiere, Quincy Owusu-Abeyie and Arturo Lupoli as certain to play a part.—MNA/Reuters

Porto preserves 14-year unbeaten home record against Benfica

LISBON, 1 March— Portuguese champions Porto preserved their 14-year unbeaten home record against Benfica when they drew 1-1 in a top-of-the-table clash on Monday.

The result enabled the European champions to remain top of the Portuguese Premier League with 42 points from 23 matches, ahead of Sporting, who thrashed Estoril in a later match, and Benfica.

All three teams have the same points total and Porto lead by virtue of the teams' head-to-head results.

Braga and Boavista are also in contention for the title, two points adrift of the top three after the same amount of games.

Unbeaten at home to Benfica since 1991, Porto opened the scoring after 66 minutes when South African striker Benni McCarthy tapped in a cross by defender Nuno Valente.

Ten minutes later, Benfica levelled when Brazilian winger Geovanni headed home a corner by Armando Petit.

The attendance was 50,218, the highest since Porto's Dragao stadium was used for last year's European Championship.

Brazilian striker Liedson scored two late goals in Sporting's 4-0 home win over promoted Estoril. The league's top

scorer has now hit the target 20 times this campaign.

Romanian forward Marius Niculae, who has missed most of the season through injury, tapped in a Hugo Viana free kick to give Sporting the lead in the eighth minute.

It was his first goal of the season.

Brazilian midfielder Fabio Rochemback doubled the home side's advantage on 77 minutes before Liedson netted twice in the last four minutes to complete the rout.—MNA/Reuters

Serie A match reports

ROME, 1 March— Brief reports of Serie A matches played on Sunday:

Bologna 0 Livorno 0

Bologna struggled to impose themselves against a Livorno side that had one of the worst away records in the division, having won just one of their previous 12 matches on the road. In the 25th minute striker Igli Tare volleyed against the post, but that was the closest the home side came to taking all three points.

Cagliari 3 Atalanta 3

Bottom-placed Atalanta gave more evidence of their improved form with this resilient display in Sardinia. Cagliari took the lead three times through Italy international strikers Antonio Langella and Mauro Esposito and Uruguayan defender Nelson Abeijon, but the visitors responded on each occasion.

Luigi Sala and Stephen Makinwa grabbed the first two equalisers before Abeijon's 90th-minute handball allowed Michele Marcolini to seal the 3-3 draw from the penalty spot.

Lazio 2 Parma 0

Lazio's third win in a row kept Parma hanging just above the relegation zone. Massimo Oddo put the home side ahead with a 19th-minute penalty following a handball by defender Daniele Bonera. Midfielder Antonio Filippini scored Lazio's second as the home side broke forward in the last minute of the game.

Lecce 1 Messina 0

The 82nd-minute sending off of Messina midfielder Massimo Donati for a second bookable offence swung the balance of a game that seemed likely to finish deadlocked. Three minutes later Lecce exploited their one-man advantage, with striker Sasa Bjelanovic running on to Marco Cassetti's pass before whipping the ball past visiting keeper Marco Storari.

Palermo 2 AS Roma 0

Palermo got the better of Roma on a sodden pitch at the Stadio Barbera. The visitors had chances early on, with Vincenzo Montella hitting the woodwork, but in the 54th minute their keeper Ivan Pelizzoli parried a Luca Toni shot into the path of striker Franco Brienza, who fired in off the post.

Palermo played the last quarter of an hour with ten men after Simone Barone picked up a second yellow card, yet still managed to strike again, Toni tapping in from close range after Mario Santana's speed had shredded Roma's defence.—MNA/Reuters



Juventus' captain Alessandro Del Piero (L) is congratulated by Uruguayan teammate Marcelo Zalayeta, after scoring the third goal against Siena, during their Italian Serie A football match at Delle Alpi Stadium in Turin. Juve won 3-0.—INTERNET

Olympiakos stay top of Greek League

ATHENS, 1 March— Two goals from midfielder Ieroklis Stoltidis ensured that Olympiakos Piraeus stayed top of the Greek league on a weekend when their two nearest rivals also picked up maximum points.

Olympiakos, playing behind closed doors as part of the punishment handed out after crowd trouble in January in a match at Panionios, cruised to a comfortable 3-0 win over Halkidona.

Panathinaikos, in second place and two points behind, beat bottom club Kerkyra 1-0.

On Saturday, AEK Athens kept up the pace with a 2-1 win over Kallithea, staying in third place and three points off the leaders.—MNA/Reuters

Chepkemei banned for rest of 2005 by Athletics Kenya

NAIROBI, 1 March — Twice world half-marathon silver medalist Susan Chepkemei has been banned from all national and international competitions for the rest of the year, said Athletics Kenya senior official on Monday.

"We have banned her (Susan Chepkemei) from all local and international competitions including the London marathon (on April 17)," Isaiah Kiplagat, chairman of the national athletics governing body, told a news conference.

The 2004 New York City Marathon runner-up failed to beat last Wednesday's deadline to report to Kenya's national cross country training camp in Embu and was dropped from the team for the World Cross Country Championships in France on March 19-20.

"We shall communicate this decision to the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and all meet directors all over the world. Her ban will run until December 31 this year," Kiplagat added.—MNA/Reuters

Test-run of Shwe-3 oil well, exploration of natural gas inspected



Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi inspects test-run of Shwe-3 oil well at block A-1 in Rakhine State.—ENERGY

YANGON, 1 March —Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi inspected test-run of Shwe-3 oil well at the block A-1 in Rakhine offshore region this afternoon.

First, at the briefing hall of the MV-Frontier Duches, Exploration Director Mr Heung Bum Yi of Daewoo Interna-

tional Corporation and officials reported to the minister on digging of Shwe-3 well. Next, the minister viewed the trial-run exploration of natural gas.

Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise and Daewoo International Corporation signed a contract for exploration

of oil and natural gas on 4 August 2000. A survey of 3552.75 Kilometres of seismic line was conducted in 2001. Shwe-1 oil well and Shwe-2 oil well were dug in December 2003 and January 2005 respectively at the block A-1. According to the test-run of Shwe-3 well,

it is found that natural gas deposits were more than six trillion cubic feet (TCF) which was a previous estimation. Other five wells will also be explored by July this year. It is calculated that there can be 12 TCF to 20 TCF of natural gas deposits at the block A-1. MNA

Myanmar -Japan volleyball friendly on 2 March

YANGON, 1 March — A 22-member Japanese volleyball team headed by Mr Keiichiro Yamaguchi of Kinki University arrived here by air to take part in a Myanmar-Japan friendly

which will take place at the National Indoor Stadium-1, Thuwunna, on 2, 4 and 6 March starting from 3 pm. Admission for the friendly is free, it is learnt. MNA



Members of the Japanese volleyball team at the airport. — SPORTS & PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Vitorious Myanmar Archery Team arrives back

YANGON, 1 March — Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint welcomed back the vitorious Myanmar Archery Team which bagged two gold medals, one silver and two bronze at Yangon International Airport yesterday evening. The team took part in world qualifiers event of the First Asia Archery Tournament held in Bangkok from 23 to 28 February.



Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint poses together with victorious Myanmar archery team at the airport. — MNA



Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint welcomes back victorious Myanmar archery team. — NLM

Officials of the Ministry of Sports, Myanmar Women's Sports Federation, executives of MAF, trainees of Sports and Physical Education Department and athletes aslo welcomed them. The team comprised Vice-Chairman of MAF U Tint San and 19 athletes.

Japan stood first, the Philippines, second and Myanmar, third in the tournament.

A total of 146 archers took part in the tournament. MNA

စာအုပ်လှူဒါန်းပွဲ

ကျေးရွာကိုယ်အားကိုယ်ကိုး စာကြည့်တိုက်များအတွက် သုတ/ရသ စာအုပ်များနှင့် စာပေဒါန ငွေပဒေသာပင်လှူဒါန်းပွဲ(ပဉ္စမအကြိမ်)ကို အောက်ပါအစီအစဉ်အတိုင်း ကျင်းပပါမည်-

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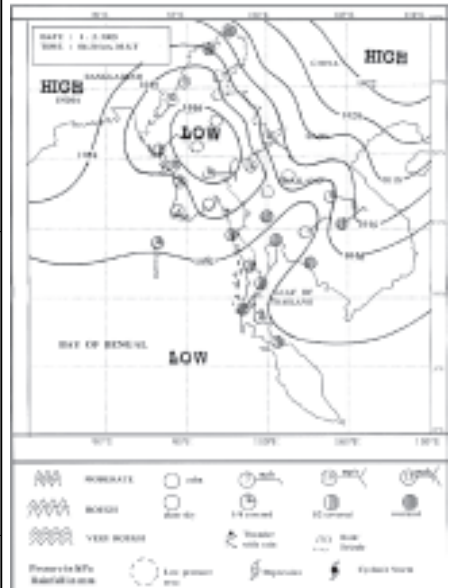
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Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas



WEATHER

Tuesday, 1 March, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been generally fair in the whole country. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin, Shan and Kayin States, Sagaing, Magway and Taninthayi Divisions, (5°C) above normal in Mandalay Division and about normal in the remaining states and divisions. The significant day temperature was Chauk (39°C).

Maximum temperature on 28-2-2005 was 98°F. Minimum temperature on 1-3-2005 was 60°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 1-3-2005 was 69%. Total sunshine hours on 28-2-2005 was (7.6) hours (approx). Rainfalls on 1-3-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (6) mph from Southwest at (20:50) hours MST on 28-2-2005.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 2-3-2005: Except for the possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin State weather will be generally fair in the whole country. Degree of certainty is (40%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. **Outlook for subsequent two days:** Generally fair weather in the whole country.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 2-3-2005: Fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 2-3-2005: Fair weather.

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

Equitable development of all states and divisions, crucial to future of nation to be able to stay in touch with nations in the region

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye meets departmental officials in Mandalay



Vice-Senior General Maung Aye meets officials, members of social organizations, townsenders and entrepreneurs at Mandalay City Hall. — MNA

YANGON, 1 March—Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, accompanied by Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win, SPDC members Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, Mandalay Division PDC Chairman Central Command Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, ministers, senior military officers, deputy ministers, and officials of the SPDC Office, left PyinOoLwin by helicopter for Mandalay on 26 February morning.

They were welcomed there by Mandalay Mayor Brig-Gen Phone Zaw Han, Deputy Chief Justice U Khin Maung Latt of the Supreme Court (Mandalay), Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Ne Win, high-ranking military officers and officials at division level.

On arrival at the Mandalay City Development Committee Office, the Prime Minister and party held a meeting with members of Mandalay Division PDC, departmental heads, rectors, medical superintendents, members of the Union Solidarity and Development

virtually impossible to achieve the national goal—the building of a peaceful, modern and developed nation—only through ordinary procedures, calling for active role of all those responsible in revolutionary tasks to transit the nation from the old system to new one. The government is implementing numerous tasks as it has to make political, economic and social reforms simultaneously, and so it is necessary for the responsible officials to shoulder responsibilities with a sense of duty and to take innovative measures with zest and zeal.

In a bid to improve the State's economy, innovative steps are to be taken on a larger scale for growing other suitable crops in addition to the agricultural produce in the region.

Mandalay Division's rice output has not still met the local demand, and it has thus to pay more attention to extended cultivation of paddy to be able to enjoy rice sufficiency. It is also needed to expand the scope of planting coffee and tea that thrive well in PyinOoLwin and Mogok.

Simultaneously, efforts are to be made with added momentum for further improvement of trade that is



- * **Mandalay Division, the economically reliable one for the nation, requires to main and accelerate the development momentum.**

- * **In particular, the region also needs to work harder than ever to meet the local food demand. Now, the government is keeping an eye on supply of water for Meiktila plain to be able to extend paddy cultivation and greening tasks.**

- * **The government is carrying out similar tasks for Myingyan District. Extended cultivation of paddy is indispensable for food security of these districts, and only then will the entire division be able to enjoy food sufficiency.**

Association and social organizations, townsenders and entrepreneurs.

The Division PDC chairman gave an account of total sown acreage of the region, cultivation of the major crops, measures being taken for meeting the targeted per acre yield of the crops, completion of cultivation of monsoon paddy, arrangements for the growing of summer paddy, plan for extended cultivation of monsoon paddy up to 1 million acres, ensuring more than 67 per cent of rice and more than 180 per cent of edible oil of local sufficiency, irrigation projects and benefited acreage, livestock breeding sector, development of the industrial sector, and success achieved in the education, health, transport and rural development spheres.

Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha reported on State's economic development in respective short-term plans and progress, the percentage that Mandalay Division contributes towards the State annual economic turnover, economic progress of the division and its prospects for further development.

In response, the Prime Minister said that it is

already making progress in Mandalay Division, a strategic region of the nation. Mandalay Division needs to work hard to be able to switch its border trade system to the normal trade system that Yangon Division is practising. The businessmen in Mandalay Division are well-versed in trade and equipped with fairness, and they are urged to strive to ensure further progress of trade services especially to be able to enlarge the horizon of normal trade.

The State service personnel on their part are to perform duties in accordance with the laws but not to misuse the authority. There have been many events that the government had to take action against those

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The current of the river is very strong. The bridge is situated near the confluence of three rivers — Thanlwin, Gaing and Attaran. Therefore, I once deduced from these facts that there would never be a bridge on the Thanlwin River.

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