National unity key to achieving Myanmar’s vision of prosperous democratic nation

Democratic change never easy and cannot be imposed from outside

PM addresses Seminar on Understanding Myanmar

YANGON, 27 Jan — Seminar on Understanding Myanmar, organized by Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies, was opened at MICT Park on Hline University Campus in Hline Township here this morning, with an address by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

The seminar was attended by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Chairman of Yangon Division PDC Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the chief justice, the attorney-general, senior military officers, deputy ministers, ambassadors of foreign embassies in Yangon, diplomats, UN resident representatives, officials of the SPDC office, departmental heads, Myanmar ambassadors, retired Myanmar ambassadors, Myanmar historians, economists, rectors and professors of universities, chairmen and officials of social organizations, researchers of foreign countries such as Brunei, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United Kingdom, the United States and Vietnam, researchers, diplomats, and special guests.

Speaking on the occasion Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said: I am very pleased and happy to welcome you to the Seminar on Understanding Myanmar organized by Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies. Your present day is doubly gratifying to me. It not only bears witness to the importance you attach to international affairs but also demonstrates your interest in our country, Myanmar.

I am particularly pleased to note that academics and researchers from many countries are present here. Your vast experiences will stand the seminar in good stead. I am confident that you will be able to contribute to the overall objective of promoting better understanding of Myanmar in the international community.

We live in an area of change. Everywhere around the world transformations are taking place due to the rapid progress of science and technology and the aspirations of peoples for economic advancement and better living standards. Myanmar too has been swept forward by the tide of change. As peace and stability has been restored, we are taking steps to transform the country into a peaceful, prosperous and modern state that would take its rightful place in the world.

On 30th August last year, I announced a roadmap for transition to a disciplined and modern democratic state. The seven-step programme includes convening of the national convention to draft a new constitution which would culminate in free and fair elections and election of State leaders and formation of the Government that would lead the nation into a bright future.

Already the National Convention Convening Commission and its subsidiary bodies have commenced work. Once the groundwork is complete, the process will go forward. To ensure the success of the important undertaking, I have received to date thirteen national groups out of 17 that have returned to the legal fold. I plan to meet the remaining groups. In addition, we are holding talks with Karen National Union (KNU), the last major group remaining out of the legal fold. As Myanmar is home to over 100 national races, national unity is key to achieving our vision of a prosperous democratic nation. Our Government has therefore placed the highest priority on achieving national reconciliation. We have therefore vigorously endeavoured to strengthen ties among all our national races and to promote economic and social development of the regions inhabited by them. To date, the Government has spent more than 50 billion kyats and 500 million US dollars in improving infrastructure development, raising standard of living and quality of life as well as education and health conditions.

In this connection, I would like to stress that democracy can only be established in an environment of peace and stability. It must take into account the historical background and objective conditions of the country. Democratic change is never easy and cannot be imposed from the outside. What works for one country may not work for another. If the transition to democracy is not built on firm foundations and is not accompanied by steps to establish credible institutions, it will result in disintegration of national unity. Like a toddler taking its first tentative steps, we must proceed step by step before larger strides can be taken.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt addresses the opening of the Seminar on Understanding Myanmar.

Four political objectives
- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
- National reconciliation
- 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

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Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt addresses the opening of the Seminar on Understanding Myanmar.

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Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt addresses the opening of the Seminar on Understanding Myanmar.

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

Established 1914
Foreign Heads of State send felicitations to Senior General Than Shwe

Yangon, 27 Jan — The following are the messages of felicitations from foreign Heads of State to State Peace and Development Council Chairman of the Union of Myanmar Senior General (Chairman of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe on the occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar.

From Bashir Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic:

On the occasion of the National Day of the Union of Myanmar. I have great pleasure in extending, on behalf of the Syrian Arab people and on my own behalf, our sincere congratulations to Your Excellency and to your people.

I also express my best wishes for your good health and happiness and for the progress and prosperity of the people of the Union of Myanmar. With my highest consideration. From Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait:

On the auspicious occasion of the Independence Day of Myanmar, it gives me great pleasure to extend to Your Excellency in the name of the people of Kuwait and on my own behalf most sincere wishes for Your Excellency's personal health and happiness with continued progress and prosperity to your friendly people.

MNA

UN Secretary-General sends felicitations to Senior General Than Shwe

Yangon, 27 Jan — The following is the message of felicitations from United Nations Secretary-General Kofi A Amano to State Peace and Development Council Chairman of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe on the occasion of the 56th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar.

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you and to the Government and the people of the Union of Myanmar my warmest congratulations on the occasion of the Independence Day. Ours is the first generation with the knowledge and technology required to end poverty. We have to create a template for action: the Millennium Declaration. We also have institutions — such as the United Nations — that are well placed to contribute. So let us not think of our era only as an age of threats, but also as one that offers new and exciting opportunities to achieve the goals for which we have long yearned. But let us, equally, put our mind to the task, and summon the political will and resources needed for this vital endeavour. In that hopeful spirit, I very much look forward to continuing to work closely with the Government and people of Myanmar in our common, global mission of development and peace. Please accept my best wishes on this important national observance. Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration. — MNA

Myanmar donates disposable syringes and plywood to Iranian earthquake victims

Yangon, 27 Jan — In view of the friendship and solidarity between Myanmar and Iran, the Government of Myanmar has donated 41,200 pieces of disposable syringes and 10,000 sheets of plywood to Iran for the relief of the victims of the devastating earthquake which hit the ancient city of Bam on 26 December 2003 causing huge loss of life and property. — MNA

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

Yangon, 28 Jan — The Government of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr Bogdan Gorazlyok as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Poland to the Union of Myanmar in succession to Mr Jerzy Surykowski.

Born in 1954, Mr Bogdan Gorazlyok obtained Master of Arts in Political Science, Master of Arts in Sociology and Doctor of Political Science from the Warsaw University. He joined the Polish Academy of Science as a trainer in 1983 and became Associate Professor at the Polish Institute of International Affairs from 1984 to 1991. From 1987 to 1991, he was member of the political journal "Polityka" weekly magazine. From 1991 to 1998, he served as Counsellor at the Embassy of Poland in Budapest, Hungary. In 1998, he was appointed as Russian Ambassador to the European Center of the Warsaw University then he became the columnist of the "The New Economic Life" weekly magazine and "Union and Poland" magazine in 2000. Since 2001, he has been serving as Political Counsellor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland. Mr Bogdan Gorazlyok is concurrently accredited as Ambassador to the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok. He is married with one daughter. — 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

57th Anniversary Union Day objectives for all national races to safeguard the national policy—non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty

— to keep the Union Spirit ever alive and dynamic among the national people

— for all national people to defend and safeguard the Union for its perpetual existence

— to prevent, through national solidarity, the danger of internal and external destructive elements undermining peace and stability of the State and national development, and for all national races to make concerted efforts for successful implementation of the seven-point future policy programme.

Golf Tournament opens

Yangon, 27 Jan — Gold Uni Golf Classic golf tournament, organized by Myanmar PGA and Myanmar Golf Federation, was opened at Yangon Golf Club in Danyingon here this morning. Among the spectators were President of Myanmar PGA and MGF Maj-Gen Win Hlaing and guests and fans. Maj-Gen Win Hlaing, Executive Director Mr Pitax Chaiprasit teed off the opening round on 18.45 am.

Mr Pitax Chaiprasit teed off the ball. — saw

Mr Pitax Chaiprasit teed off the tour-

necy with 7 strokes follow-

lowed by Nanda Kyaw with 71, Soe Kyaw Naing (Pan-

West) with 72, and Win Hwe Hlaing (Srixon), and Thant Zin (Mandala) with 73. — MNA

Ambassador Dr Aung Naing presents Credentials to Cambodian King

Yangon, 27 Jan — Dr Aung Naing Ambassa-

ador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar accredited his Credentials to His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Norodom Sihamouk, King of Cambodia, on 18 January 2004, in Phnom Penh. — MNA

Myanmar ICT Week (2004) has been extended up to 31 January 2004

MICT Park Yangon

Bakari Idd on 2 February


Fire destroys some shops at Kyakihtiyoe Hill

Yangon, 27 Jan — A fire broke at shops located between the Kyakihtiyoe Pagoda platform and Mokhsoe Taung Mountain at about 2 am today.

Kyakihtiyoe Pagoda is situated in Kyaikto Town- ship, Mon State. The cause of fire was due to negligence of some shopkeepers at the place. Fire brigades of Kyaikto, Mon State and upgrading hospitals could be taken during the Prime Minister’s tour. Not only that, he fulfilled the needs for the transport and success of agricultural and livestock breeding work of the local people.

In his meeting with members of state, district and township peace and development committees, the key personnel and social organizations, the Prime Minister said that national unity and strong Union Spirit were very important to the Union of Myanmar, home to various national races. The Head of State now and then instructed that all the requirements for the development of national people and their respective regions had to be fulfilled, he added. Therefore, in accordance with the guidance of the Head of State, responsible personnel of the State often tour states and divisions, districts, townships and even villages.

As is known to all, the seven-point policy programme for the emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democracy was made public on 30 August, 2003. Preparatory work is being done to implement the policy programme.

Needless to say, successful realization of the policy programme calls for the concerted efforts and cooperation of the national people for peace.

It should be in mind that community peace, prevalence of law and order, fulfillment of the basic needs of the people and development of human resources are the sine qua non for successfully implementing the policy programme.

We firmly believe that the entire people of the Union will lend themselves to our national task of translating the seven-point policy programme of the State into a reality.
Suicides among US soldiers in Iraq on rise

LAHORE, 27 Jan—In a rate considered abnormally high, the overall suicide rate among U.S. soldiers in occupied Iraq is running at an average of 13.5 per 100,000 troops, while one in every five soldiers will suffer from chronic distress in the future, US military psychiatrists said.

The real rate might never been known as the US Defence Department imposes a news blackout on suicides in the chaos-mired country and refuses to say which of its “non-combat fatalities have been self-inflicted,” The Guardian reported on Sunday, 25 January.

In terms of figures, at least 22 soldiers have killed themselves so far in Iraq, which accounts for about 7 percent of all killed in Iraq, said the British daily. In all, the US Military has killed over 2,200 members of the Iraq Armed Forces.

One of the suicide cases was Army Specialist Joseph Suell, who wrote a last letter home to his mother before he killed himself by an overdose of a painkiller last June.

In the letter, Suell complained how he missed his wife and daughters during a year-long posting to South Korea, Kuwait and finally to Iraq.

The Guardian said that just two suicides were reported among US personnel during the entire Gulf war in the 1990s.

Psychiatrists noted that the majority of the so-called “psychiatric evacuations” have taken place after 1 May, when US President George W Bush declared “major combat” effectively over.

Korean crew member killed in accident at Kakinada Port

HYDERABAD, 27 Jan—A crew member of a Korean ship Hyang Robong was killed in an accident at Kakinada Port in East Godavari District of southern Indian state Andhra Pradesh.

Jo Jong Nam, one of 39 crew on board, was injured critically and died when the derrick used in loading materials at the port fell on him, Kakinada Port police sub-inspector S Ramababu told PTI over phone.

The ship, on its journey to Vietnam from Colombo, arrived at Kakinada Port on January 22 and was scheduled to leave port on January 26, Ramababu said. — MNA/PTI

US troops face Iraq abuse charges

BAGHDAD, 27 Jan—Four US marine reservists were due in a military court on Monday to face charges of abusing Iraqi prisoners.

The incidents are alleged to have occurred last year at a detention facility in southern Iraq.

Two of them face charges of negligent homicide, arising from the death of a Baath Party official.

Lance Corporal Christian Hernandez and the camp’s commander, Major Clark Paulus, are also accused of cruelty, assault and dereliction of duty.

Fifty-two-year-old Baath Party official Nagem Salahon Habat died in June in Camp Whitehorse, a makeshift prison set up to receive Iraqis captured during raids.

Lance Corporal Hernandez is alleged to have grabbed him by the neck and accidentally snapped a bone in his throat, according to the Marine Corps.

Prosecutors are expected to begin presenting evidence in a California court against Lance Corporal Hernandez, Major Paulus and two others.

The proceedings are part of an Article 32 hearing, the preliminary stage of a grand jury. The hearing will help commanders determine whether the four will go on to be court-martialled.

It comes days after the US military launched an investigation into alleged cases of abuse of fresh prisoners in at least two detention centres.

Three soldiers were discharged from the US army for mistreating Iraq prisoners of war at the Camp Bucca detention camp in southern Iraq last May. — Internet

India’s Customs duties on industrial goods reduced to 10-15%  

NEW DELHI, 27 Jan—The federal government has cut Customs duties on a number of raw material goods used in Information Technology, Telecom, Automobiles and manufacturing sectors to 10-15 percent.

According to a notification issued by the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC), the Customs duties on various categories of steel items have been brought down to 15 per cent. According to the notification, duties have been cut on a whole range of products to either 15 per cent or 10 per cent.

Official sources said the duty cut is part of the commitment under the framework Free Trade Area Agreement with Thailand.

Goods on which the slash is to 10 per cent include “spring steel quality” and “free cutting steel” used in fuel injection parts; “valve steel alloy steel bars” and “alloy steel of various grades” used to manufacture engine valves and “Bisphenol A” used in all the goods. Customs duty on Silico-manganese steel used in fuel injection parts has also been cut to 10 per cent. — MNA/PTI

Indiana State's Iraq death toll hits 20

EDINBURGH, 27 Jan—An Edinburgh High School graduate killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq was remembered.

Chief Warrant Officer Brian D Hazelgrove, 29, died Friday when an OH-58 Kiowa Warrior helicopter crashed while returning from a combat mission near Mosul in northern Iraq. He is the 20th Indiana soldier or Marine to die in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Hazelgrove — a pilot with the 3rd Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry Regiment from the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, NY — lived in Edinburgh and graduated from high school there before joining the Army in 1994.

In Iraq since November, Hazelgrove worked in military intelligence before becoming a helicopter pilot and served two tours of duty in South Korea.

“The guy was amazing,” said Hazelgrove’s half-brother, Brad Lemon, 40, Edinburgh.

“He was the one to make it and was making a career.”

Lemon recalled Hazelgrove, who was 11 years his junior, as a “very little lines” as a kid, but said he grew into a man who “was just a joy” to his family and friends.

He leaves behind a wife, Kimmi, and four children, Taylor, 11, Zachary, 10, Brandon, 3, and Katelyn, 7 months.

Mekong becomes crucial trade channel for neighbouring Asian countries

KUNMING, 27 Jan—The Mekong River, linking China and five neighbouring Asian nations, has turned out to be an important transport channel as the booming international shipping resulted in a cargo volume of 235,000 tons in 2003.

The figure is 168,000 tons in 2001, when shipping between China, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand started.

The implementation of China-Thailand zero tax agreement on vegetables and fruits, beginning 1 October last year, was the major contributor to the rapid growth in shipping on the river, with shipment rising sharply by 58 per cent from the previous year, according to sources from the Navigation Administration of Yunnan, southwest China.

Statistics show the Mekong has become a significant trade passageway for nations in that area, said Qiao Xinmin, director of the administration. Yunnan has more than 80 cargo ships sailing on the river and plans to use first-class passenger ships to tap the potential tourism industry. Originating in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau in western China, the Mekong is called Lancang in the Chinese territory and runs through Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam before entering the South China Sea. It is the only river in Asia that flows through six nations.

The Chinese Government regards the river as an important trade link with neighbouring countries and started to dredge the 260-kilometre section of river in Yunnan in the 1990s, said Yang Guangcheng, director of the provincial transport department. — MNA/Xinhua

Statistics show the implementation of the provincial transport department. — MNA/Xinhua

Colonel Theodore Nam, chief of in-patient psychiatry services at the Walter Reed Army Medical Centre in Washington, said no psychiatric cases at all were evacuated during the major combat, expecting high levels of psychiatric casualties.

Last month, reports confirmed that more than 600 US soldiers and servicemen had been evacuated from Iraq for psychological problems.

“Chronic stress”

The chairman of psychiatric services at the Naval Medical Centre in San Diego, Captain Jennifer Berg, said the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is expected to afflict 20 percent of the servicemen and women in Iraq.

“There is a feeling among troops there that they have fallen off the public screen. And the longer people are there, the more we are seeing people come forward with stress reactions,” she stressed.

Berg said US soldiers are now suffering from “chronic stress” due to “a combination of danger, boredom and sleep deprivation, and the knowledge that they are a long way from home.” — Internet

Korean crew member killed in accident at Kakinada Port

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The ship, on its journey to Vietnam from Colombo, arrived at Kakinada Port on January 22 and was scheduled to leave port on January 26, Ramababu said. — MNA/PTI

A Kiowa Warrior helicopter on patrol in Iraq. Hopes were fading of recovering alive three US soldiers lost when a boat capsized and a helicopter crashed in northern Iraq. — Internet

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 28 January, 2004 3
Seven Iraqi police killed in attacks; search continues for Americans missing in Mosul

Baghdad, 27 Jan—Guerrillas fired a rocket at the headquarters of the US-led coalition Monday night after gunmen killed seven Iraqi policemen in a pair of attacks west of Baghdad. A senior Iraqi official blamed al-Qaeda for many of the suicide bombings around the country in recent weeks.

In the north, military divers searched the muddy waters of the Tigris River for three missing US soldiers, including two pilots of an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter that crashed Sunday in Mosul during rescue operations after a patrol boat capsized. It was the fifth US helicopter lost in Iraq this month from hostile fire.

Strong explosions reverberated through the heart of this troubled capital about 10:35 pm, followed by sirens and a recorded message warning those in the coalition headquarters known as the “green zone” to “take cover.”

A coalition official said at least one rocket, apparently fired from across the Tigris, exploded in a parking lot near the palace, used by America’s top civilian administrator in Iraq, L. Paul Bremer, and senior coalition staff, but it caused no damage or casualties.

The attack occurred three days after a UN security assessment team arrived in Baghdad to determine whether it is safe for the United Nations to return its international staff to Iraq.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan withdrawn international staff last year following two vehicle bombings against the UN headquarters here, including the Aug 19 attack that killed 22 people, among them the top UN envoy, Sergio Vieira de Mello.

The attack on the green zone took place a day after the seven policemen were in two separate attacks at checkpoints around the city of Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad, in the Sunni Triangle, the US-run occupation. Iraqi police who reported the attacks made no mention of any insurgent casualties. — Internet

Rocket lands in US Iraq compound

Baghdad, 27 Jan—A rocket landed Monday night near coalition headquarters in the US-controlled area of Baghdad known as the “green zone” but caused no injuries or damage, the US military said.

The rocket fell in an open parking lot near the Republican Palace used by top US officials in Iraq, a coalition official said on condition of anonymity. The US command said there were no casualties or damage to equipment.

That explosion was preceded by the sounds of two smaller blasts, but their origin was unclear.

After the blasts, sirens went off in the green zone and a recorded message broadcast over loud speakers urged people to “take cover.” The rocket exploded near the helicopter landing zone for the palace used by America’s top civilian official in Iraq, L. Paul Bremer, and senior coalition officials, the official said.

The attack occurred three days after a UN security assessment team arrived in Baghdad to determine whether it is safe for the United Nations to return its international staff to Iraq. — Internet

Chinese Premier visits centenarian economists

Beijing, 27 Jan—Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao visited two hospitalized centenarian economists, Xue Muqiao and Chen Hansheng, respectively in Beijing Sunday.

At the Beijing Hospital, Wen extended greetings for the Chinese Lunar New Year to 100-year-old Xue Muqiao and his family. The Premier spoke highly of Xue’s contribution in boosting China’s economic reform and development, and the far-reaching effect of his academic thoughts on China’s economic research and policy-making.

Wen later visited Chen Hansheng, 108, at the Beijing Union Medical College Hospital. The Premier praised Chen as a pioneer in China’s economic research and a devoted educator with creative thinking. — MNA/Xinhua

Mysterious disease kills 12 in Bangladesh

Dhaka, 27 Jan—A mysterious disease has killed at least 12 people in Bangladesh and made many more sick and health experts said Sunday they were sending samples to the United States for analysis.

Health authorities declined to comment on whether the sickness could be the bird flu that has broken out in several other parts of Asia, but a livestock official said there had been reports of sick chickens.

“It is too early to comment on whether it is bird flu while the matter is still under investigation,” said Abdul Faitz, a professor of medicine at Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The disease has affected people in villages in Faridpur District, 94 miles north of the capital, Dhaka.

Patients, most of them young boys, suffered from high fever, headache and vomiting before becoming unconscious. Some also suffered from diarrhoea, doctors said.

Three out of five patients admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital with the symptoms had died in the past three days, doctors said.

Health officials and newspapers said nine others had died of the disease since January 17, most of them in Faridpur District.

“We are worried by the sudden spread of the mysterious disease and so far have not been able to identify it,” said another Dhaka Medical College Hospital doctor who declined to be identified.

The government was taking steps to track the disease down, said Health Minister Khandakar Mosharrar Hossain. — MNA/Reuters

US troops face language barrier in Iraq

TIKRIT, 27 Jan—US troops warned Iraqi guards they should leave the area because it was “ricky.” The Iraqis thought the soldiers threatened them unless they brought “whiskey.”

Nine months after the collapse of Saddam Hussein regime, the language barrier remains a major hurdle in day-to-day contact between American soldiers and the Iraqis they are supposed to be helping.

US military planners have started training several hundred soldiers destined for Iraq in the Arabic language and local customs. For the most part, however, American forces must rely heavily on civilian interpreters and the relatively few Arabic-speaking soldiers to talk with Iraqis to calm potentially volatile situations, or to communicate with community leaders who want to know how coalition forces are going to provide jobs or fix bridges and roads.

Most US military operations, in particular daily foot patrols in Iraqi neighbourhoods conducted by American soldiers, are conducted without fluent Arabic language speakers. In the Tikrit-based 4th Infantry Division’s area of operations in north-central Iraq, the Army has up to 20 Arabic speaking soldiers. It also employs some local translators and uses those contracted by an American company that has attracted Arabs from other countries to work in Iraq during the US-led occupation.

Lebanon-born Sgt. Hussein Ibrahim says that having Arabic-trained soldiers working closely with Iraqis is crucial because many people remain skeptical about the occupation. “When the soldiers are without translators, it is obviously harder for them and it makes problems with the Iraqis more prone to happen,” he said. “These people are scared to hell when soldiers come into their homes because of the unknown and all the rumours that circulate about American soldiers in their towns.”

Without a common language, confusion abounds. In one incident, a soldier fired warning shots at several Iraqis near an oil facilities area in Tikrit. Some Iraqi guards nearby heard the shots and approached the soldier to see what was happening. — Internet

“Newsweek” national poll puts Kerry over Bush

New York, 27 Jan—A new national poll by Newsweek magazine showed on Sunday the surging Democratic Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts topping US President George W Bush in an election matchup.

The poll, conducted January 22-23, showed Kerry commanding 30 per cent of support from registered Democrats, up from 11 per cent two weeks ago. And for first time in the poll’s history a Democrat enjoyed a marginal advantage over Bush, with Kerry garnering a three-point lead over the President, Newsweek said. Forty-nine per cent of registered voters chose Kerry, compared to 46 per cent favouring Bush.

Former Vermont Governor Howard Dean, the Democratic frontrunner until his dismal third-place showing in last week’s Iowa caucuses, saw his support among registered and likely Democratic voters cut in half, to 12 per cent, despite a 12 point drop among registered voters to 50 per cent versus 44 per cent who disapprove, despite his having delivered a State of the Union address last Tuesday.— MNA/Reuters

Malaysians shop at a fresh market in Kota Bharu in the northeastern state of Kelantan, 300 miles north of Kuala Lumpur. Kelantan and Terengganu are the two of Malaysia’s 13 states. File photo taken on 24 November, 2003. — Reuters
China’s catering industry sees high growth

BEIJING, 27 Jan— The Chinese people spent more than 600 billion yuan (73 billion US dollars) dining out in 2003, an 11.5-per-cent increase over 2002, despite the severe impact of the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) outbreak.

The annual turnover of China’s restaurants has maintained a double-digit growth for 13 consecutive years, sources with the catering industry said, predicting a still higher turnover of more than 700 billion yuan (85 billion US dollars), or a 15-per-cent growth, for 2004.

Analysts say that the success of the country’s catering industry could mainly be attributed to their restructuring efforts and innovative steps.

Statistics show that among China’s top 100 restaurant groups, 79 have adopted franchising management and opened chain stores. One of the most successful examples was the Beijing-based Guanjude Group, which specializes in making the world famous Beijing Roast Duck.

In the top 100 restaurant groups, 43 are engaged in fast food, while 42 others try to woo customers with special regional or ethnic cuisine.

— MNA/Xinhua

Medical source warns of epidemic spread in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 27 Jan— A medical source warned of a serious increase of typhoid fever infections and deaths resulting from liver disease cirrhosis, local newspaper Al Nahdha Sunday.

Nima Soltan, general manager of health monitoring circle, was quoted as saying that more than 183 cases of typhoid infection were reported near Jissr Diyala southeast of Baghdad, and 100 more in a village in Majar District of Missan Governorate, 365 kilometres south of Baghdad.

The reason behind the spread of the disease in those areas is the drinking water there, spread of wastes and swamps and the lack of awareness among the citizens, Nima said.

Meanwhile, a source in the health preventive division told the newspaper that more than 70 deaths resulting from cirrhosis infection had also been reported.

He called on officials to find quick and proper solutions for the sewage problem and the increase of stagnant water pools, and asked people to pay more attention to cleanliness and food type. — MNA/Xinhua

Singaporeans requested to stay away from poultry farms

SINGAPORE, 27 Jan— The Agri-food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) of Singapore said here on Monday that the public will no longer be allowed to visit the local chicken and quail farms and slaughterhouses as a precaution against the deadly bird flu disease.

Only farm personnel and those with business dealings will be allowed into the farms and slaughterhouses, said the AVA.

It said that AVA officers are checking on the poultry farms twice a day.

Workers at the farms are also being vaccinated and ordered to wear protective gear such as the N95 mask, said the authority. — MNA/Xinhua

Hu, Chirac agree to enhance Sino-French cooperation

PARIS, 27 Jan— Chinese President Hu Jintao and French President Jacques Chirac on Monday discussed bilateral relations and major international issues of common concern and reached broad consensus.

In their first meeting after Hu’s arrival in Paris, the two presidents spoke highly of 40 years of relations between China and France since the two countries established full diplomatic ties.

He said the relationship between China and France, which has been enriched and broadened constantly thanks to efforts by both sides, has developed rapidly and with marked achievements, especially after President Jiang Zemin and President Chirac declared the establishment of a comprehensive partnership between the two countries in 1997.

Chirac said the two countries have made tremendous progress in their relations in the past four decades.

France is willing to continue to improve, consolidate and advance French-Chinese cooperation, Chirac added.

The two presidents also exchanged views on strengthening bilateral economic and trade cooperation. Chirac said Paris is willing to work with China in such areas as nuclear energy, aviation and railway transport, and stands ready to transfer key technologies to China to advance localized production so as to achieve new leaps forward in economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

Hu, speaking positively of the results already achieved in such cooperation, said China is willing to work with France to consolidate the good momentum and further broaden the areas of bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

On the current international situation, Hu said there still exist unknown elements in Iraq and other Middle East spots and non-traditional security problems, terrorism being one of them, are increasingly threatening peace and security of mankind.

“We believe it is necessary to engage in dialogue and cooperation and bring into play the UN’s role in solving global problems and meeting the challenges and difficulties mankind faces,” the Chinese President said. — MNA/Xinhua

Iran shows off new home-grown “Rad” naval missile

TEHERAN, 27 Jan— Iran, under international pressure to prove its nuclear programme is for peaceful means, unveiled a new type of nuclear missile on Sunday, designed to be fired from ships or coastal batteries, state television reported.

Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani, shown looking at the light blue rockets, played down any suggestion that Iran was engaging in military gamesmanship.

“It contravenes Iran’s defence policy to start a war, but we must boost our ability to defend the country’s territorial integrity and independence,” he said.

Shamkhani told the students JSVA news agency that the new Rad missile’s range would be three times longer than that of its predecessor, the Nur missile which he said could fly 75 miles. Rad is Persian for thunder.

The new-missile programme has run alarm bells in Washington which suspects Iran of seeking to build an atom bomb, and has also caused concern in Israel and US bases in the Gulf.

The new programme has been enriched and broadened constantly thanks to the search for banned weapons in Iraq who resigned on Friday, told Britain’s Sunday Telegraph newspaper that he had uncovered evidence that unspecified material had been moved to Syria shortly before the war to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

“We are not talking about a large stockpile of weapons,” he told the newspaper.

“But we know from some of the interrogations of former Iraqi officials that a lot of material went to Syria before the war, including some components of Saddam’s WMD programme. Precisely what went to Syria, and what has happened to it, is a majorissue that needs to be resolved,” Kay said.

Syria, which vehemently opposed the US-led war in neighbouring Iraq, has repeatedly denied US charges that it has its own weapons of mass destruction programmes.

“They are seeking to cover their failure,” Hassan said after meeting with a delegation of Iraqi journalists and artists in Damascus.

However, Kay said when he resigned on Friday he had concluded there were no Iraqi stockpiles to be found.

Hassan urged a swift end for the occupation of Iraq and a role for the United Nations to allow fellow Arab Iraqis to elect a national government.

He urged Iraqis to safeguard their country’s unity and said all Arab nations oppose the division of the occupied Arab state.

— MNA/Reuters

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he may decide as early as Monday on sending a mission to help a US handover of power to Iraqis, while US forces search for three missing military personnel.

Annan is pictured speaking during the World Economic Forum in Davos on Friday.—INTERNET

Hu, Chirac agree to enhance Sino-French cooperation

PARIS, 27 Jan— Chinese President Hu Jintao and French President Jacques Chirac on Monday discussed bilateral relations and major international issues of common concern and reached broad consensus.

In their first meeting after Hu’s arrival in Paris, the two presidents spoke highly of 40 years of relations between China and France since the two countries established full diplomatic ties.

He said the relationship between China and France, which has been enriched and broadened constantly thanks to efforts by both sides, has developed rapidly and with marked achievements, especially after President Jiang Zemin and President Chirac declared the establishment of a comprehensive partnership between the two countries in 1997.

Chirac said the two countries have made tremendous progress in their relations in the past four decades.

France is willing to continue to improve, consolidate and advance French-Chinese cooperation, Chirac added.

The two presidents also exchanged views on strengthening bilateral economic and trade cooperation. Chirac said Paris is willing to work with China in such areas as nuclear energy, aviation and railway transport, and stands ready to transfer key technologies to China to advance localized production so as to achieve new leaps forward in economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

Hu, speaking positively of the results already achieved in such cooperation, said China is willing to work with France to consolidate the good momentum and further broaden the areas of bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

On the current international situation, Hu said there still exist unknown elements in Iraq and other Middle East spots and non-traditional security problems, terrorism being one of them, are increasingly threatening peace and security of mankind. “We believe it is necessary to engage in dialogue and cooperation and bring into play the UN’s role in solving global problems and meeting the challenges and difficulties mankind faces,” the Chinese President said. — MNA/Xinhua

The two presidents also exchanged views on strengthen-
Iraqi north pipeline to stay closed for months

BAGHDAD, 27 Jan — Iraq’s northern oil export line to Turkey, vital to Baghdad to maximize revenues and rebuild the country, will take months to restart as repairs are carried out and security is tightened, the US Army said on Monday.

It will take months before the Iraqi Turkey pipeline can start working again because several factors have to be coordinated such as repairs and security,” said Richard Dowling, a spokesman for the US Army Corps of Engineers, which works with the Iraqi Oil Ministry. You can’t just have partial security to the pipeline and you can’t just have partial repairs,” he said.

Iraqi officials had hoped security along the pipeline would improve enough to allow shipment from the giant Kirkuk oil fields to restart this spring. But sabotage has not abated. The pipeline opened for a few days last year but was closed by another sabotage attack.

Oil industry officials said on Sunday that there had been 40 attacks on the pipeline in the last three to four months, steady with previous levels of sabotage that has hit the oil industry since the US-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein in April.

Since the war ended in April, Iraq has been restricted to crude exports from its southern oilfields as saboteurs repeatedly sent segments of the northern field up in flames by planting crude bombs underneath it.

Minister says Iraq not secure enough for elections

BAGHDAD, 27 Jan — Iraq’s Interim Interior Minister said on Monday the country was not secure enough to hold early direct elections.

“We ask for this matter to be postponed, even if it is for a short time, until all the political and security preparations can ensure that elections can run in a free and stable manner,” Nouri Badran told a news conference.

Iraq’s postwar political arena has heated up since the top Shiite cleric, Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, called for direct elections, challenging an American plan for transferring power by July. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is currently deciding whether to send a mission to Iraq to decide on the feasibility of holding early elections.

The country’s volatile region of Basra is safe enough for UN staff, security experts are in Iraq as a result of fears of attacks by radical groups and drug dealers. But he also blamed poor border patrolling following the fall of Saddam Hussein in April and a decision by the US-led administration to disband the Iraqi Army for security problems gripping Iraq.

“We lost a lot of experienced people,” he said.

Badran said Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda movement had left its fingerprints in Iraq, especially on massive suicide bombings.

Washington believes elections would be difficult to organize before July because of a lack of electoral registers and laws. Its plan envisages regional caucuses selecting an assembly to choose a transitional government.

Badran, who made no further comments about the elections, said 300 Iraqi families of former Iraqi police who were detained by US forces in violation of the American Constitution had been freed.

A US military spokesman said the former police had no immediate comment on the blasts.

Two United Nations security experts are in Iraq assessing whether the country is safe enough for UN staff to return to assist in transferring sovereignty back to Iraq.

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Blasts in Baghdad, sirens wail at coalition HQs

BAGHDAD, 27 Jan— Loud explosions echoed across central Baghdad on Monday evening, followed by warning sirens from the “green zone” where the US-led coalition in Iraq is based.

Just over a week ago a suicide bomber detonated half a ton of explosives outside the US seat of power in Iraq, killing at least 20 people in the deadliest attack since the capture of Saddam Hussein.

Two United Nations security experts are in Iraq assessing whether the country is safe enough for UN staff to return to assist in transferring sovereignty back to Iraq.

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Cambodia, Malaysia agree to strengthen bilateral relations

PHNOM PENH, 27 Jan — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen Monday afternoon met with visiting Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and the two leaders held talks on cooperation between the two countries in a number of fields.

The two prime ministers discussed, among other issues, Malaysia’s financial assistance to Cambodia, including the construction of a part of a railway in northeastern Banteay Meanchey Province.

Badawi expressed his admiration for Cambodia’s achievements in the past years in economic development, social stability and democratic process.

During the meeting, Badawi said the Malaysian Government will continue encouraging Malaysian businessmen to invest in Cambodia to further enhance trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Both sides also agreed to strengthen cooperation in the crackdown on human trafficking.

Hun Sen said he hopes Malaysia to establish open air links between Kuala Lumpur and Cambodia’s Siem Reap Province and support Cambodia’s non-permanent membership of the Security Council of the United Nations.

Badawi arrived here Monday afternoon for a one-day visit. He was welcomed by Hun Sen at the Phnom Penh International Airport. This is Badawi’s first official visit to Phnom Penh since he succeeded Mahathir Mohamad in October last year.

Badawi also met with Malaysia’s business community in Cambodia. Malaysia is one of Cambodia’s major investors. Its bilateral trade with Cambodia totalled 74.3 million US dollars in 2002. So far, there are more than 40 Malaysian companies in Cambodia with a total registered capital of more than 1.79 billion US dollars.

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Singapore’s Deputy Premier meets Indonesian President

JAKARTA, 27 Jan — Singapore’s Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong met with Singaporean PresidentMegawati Soekarnoputri here Monday to discuss bilateral issues, but the bird flu outbreak was not among the agenda.

“The bird flu doesn’t represent Singapore-Indonesia bilateral issue. It is a regional issue that will be discussed with several other countries because it affects several countries of the ASEAN,” Lee said after meeting Megawati, referring to the ten-member Association of South East Asian Nations. He said a regional meeting on the issue will be held in Bangkok in the near future.

Commenting on his conversation with Megawati, Lee said the President briefed him about the Indonesia’s general election this year. He said Singapore wishes the elections go well to allow a strong government to emerge in the neighbour. Lee, the heir apparent to Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, also said Singapore would respond to Indonesia’s call for transparency in bilateral trade statistics. Indonesian Trade Minister Rini Soemawati and Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda have earlier criticized Singapore for refusing to reveal its data on bilateral trade with Indonesia.

But Singapore has recently revealed its trade balance with Indonesia for 2003, admitting that its neighbour was among its top 10 trading partners.
There are news reports about the avian flu that is spreading from one country to another in Asia and the Pacific region, infecting chicken at the farms and then human beings living close to the chicken, and claiming human lives. Kyemon interviewed Dr. Thant Tun, Chairman of the Livestock and Fisheries Federation. We have already instructed all the members to halt all chicken egg and chicken import. All the MLFF members have been informed about the disease and given instructions. Our Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries has written to inform and organize the members to stop export and import of chicken. We can know that breakout in Hong Kong exists, the Union will be safe and the sovereignty secured.

The disease in the region? Ans: The disease has been found. There are news reports about the avian flu in the Asia and the Pacific Region and the measures being taken in the countries where the infection of the disease has been found.

The two ministries have been jointly launching operations since 24 January. There are three steps in launching the operations. The first step is to close all border gates with Thailand to stop all chicken import. The second step — there are about 2.3 million chicken at the farms in 14 provinces at the Myanmar-Thailand border. Staff of the LBVD are checking the health of the chickens at the farms, and if they find any trace of the disease, they will immediately report the matter to the head office. The Health Ministry is also making contacts with the chicken breeders and sending back their finds at the farms to the respective head offices. In step three, the representatives of the local authorities, the Health Ministry and the LBVD are inspecting the farms to check the health of the chicken and to inform them about the symptoms of the disease is found. The LBVD has terminated the situation to the Prime Minister’s Office. We have already collected a certain degree of information about the situation. According to the report, our country has nothing to worry about the disease.

Q: What’s your prevention methods? Ans: We have given directives to the staff of the chicken farms to avoid eating other farms and let the outsiders enter their farms to feed the chicken with fresh and hygienic food, to keep the farms and all related equipment clean, clear, and safe, to avoid eating chicken meat, and to eat only the well-cooked meat, to spray antiseptic at all entrances to the farms. There are vaccines for the flu, but the vaccine is available only in the virus is of different types. They are Type A, B and C. Type A mostly affects chicken, pig, horse and man; Type B mostly man; and Type C mostly human beings and pigs. The two kinds of protein that include in the Type A are Haemagglutinin which is also called H Antigen and Neuraminidase that is also called N Antigen. H Antigen has one to different 15 groups and N Antigen has one to nine different groups. The flu varies depending on the type of groups. Of them, H5 and H7 can affect human beings. The types of virus that breakout in Hong Kong and Korea are of the H5 and H7.

Dr. Tin Aye Kyi, Deputy Director of the LBVD. N: What about the symptoms of the infected chicken? Ans: An infected chicken becomes inactive and suddenly dies. A chicken suffering from the flu drinks water very often. It loses appetite, has running nose, coughs and faces respiratory problems. Its droppings are usually white or green. Its face becomes swollen and its comb and neck turn blue. Its head, face, neck and joints also become swollen. Eggs-laying rate declines in the layers. The postmortem of an infected chicken shows blood leaking from the gizzard, esophagus and trachea; white spots on the liver and spleen; and a shrink intestine. Significant sign is the leaking of blood in the innerpart of the chest, a symptom that cannot be found in the chicken that dies of Newcastle disease. This sign shows that the death is caused by the flu.

Q: What kind of animals can be infected? Ans: Any avian species including chicken, turkey, quail and common moorhen, which also serve as the disease carriers.

Q: What are the methods to check the infection? Ans: We can check the liquid that comes from throat and anus and the droppings. We can also check the liver, heart, spleen of a dead chicken. We can know whether there is infection at a farm or not by inspecting the serum. But the type of the disease can be found at the advanced laboratories.

(Translation: TMT) (Kyemon: 27-J-2004)
National unity key to achieving ... (from page 1)

As a developing nation faced with daunting challenges, Myanmar needs to set its priorities. In the final analysis, it is for us to determine what model to follow and what pace of transformation to adopt.

In the economic sphere, Myanmar has been able to maintain a steady course in its effort to promote a market economy, despite the private sector of the unilaterals sanctions instituted by some Western countries. The technological universities five doctorate courses in engineering and one IT doctorate courses. With regard to foreign affairs, Myanmar plays an active role in the maintenance of an environment of peace and stability in our region and the world. We consider that it is vitally important to establish international conditions which guarantee security needed for development of our country. Myanmar will continue to support the search for peaceful solutions to the problems that the world faces based on the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law. Accordingly, we support efforts to bring about the United Nations. At the same time Myanmar seeks to maintain fruitful relations in the region and with all countries, particularly with our neighbors.

Furthermore, we very pleased that our relations with the countries of the region have made significant progress. We would like to express our sincere thanks for all the assistance and support shown towards Myanmar by our friends from the region. Myanmar has also been able to contribute actively to regional forums such as ASEAN to BIMST-EC. We have been privileged to have the honour and privilege of hosting the First Summit on Economic Cooperation among Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand in Bagam Ion last November.

The 4 nation economic cooperation strategy adopted by the Summit is aimed at increasing competitiveness, generating economic growth in border areas, creating jobs and reducing income disparity.

We are confident that this sub-regional initiative will yield fruitful results that would benefit the peoples of all the nations concerned. Myanmar has come a long way in the past 15 years. Never in its history has the country seen so much improvement in its basic infrastructure as well as in health and education standards in such a short time.

The peace and stability in the region is unprecedented and assure well for the future of the country. It is an undeniable fact that the country has not only been able to overcome the unilateral sanctions imposed by some Western countries but has been able to improve the economic well-being of its peoples. It has accomplished transition to a modern relying on its own resources and the cooperation of neighbors. Noteworthy advances have been made in the education sector. The number of professors and instructors have grown. The number today totals 130,000 to 154.

Greater educational opportunities have been created from 32 in 1988 to 154.

In this regard, we are happy to note that private industry must be the driving engine.

In the energy sector, the discovery of world-class commercial gas deposits off the coast of Rakhine, coupled with the new large hydro-electric power projects in the country will contribute greatly to the development of the industry sector of the country. At present, Myanmar’s energy is primarily based on agriculture. Our aim is to transform Myanmar into a modernized and industrialized state. In the efforts for modernization, new universities and colleges have been opened; undergraduate courses have been established. The number of institutes of higher learning in the country has increased from 32 in 1988 to 154. Greater educational opportunities have been created and as a result the number of students studying at institutes of higher learning has increased from 130,000 to 890,000 at present. Likewise the number of the people and instructors have grown.

The number today totals 16,000 professionals, 45,000 engineers, 92,000 university, the Mandalay University and the Yangon Institute of Education presently offer.

Laotian Deputy Prime Minister and wife visit Shwedagon Pagoda, Third MICT Week-2004

YANGON, 27 Jan.—The goodwill delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Planning and Economic Cooperation Committee of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic Dr. Souphanouvong Sosisith and wife Madame Nady Sosisith, currently here, at the invitation of Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li Gen Soe Win and wife Daw Than Nwe, visited the Shwedagon Pagoda and the Third Myanmar Information and Communication Technology Week-2004 this morning.

The goodwill delegation led by the Deputy Prime Minister and wife, accompanied by Ambassador of Lao People’s Democratic Republic Mr. Chanthavay Bodheessane and wife and officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, arrived at the Shwedagon pagoda at 8.30 a.m. that day.

They were welcomed by members of the pagoda board of trustees.

The goodwill delegation members visited the pagoda and they were conducted round there by the members of the pagoda board of trustees.

Chairman of Myanmar Information and Communication Technology Development Corporation Brig-Gen Thein Swe extended the greetings.

Joint-Secretary of e-National Task Force U Pyone Maung Maung reported on information and technology development in Myanmar.

Officials replied to the queries of the delegation members.

The Deputy Prime Minister presented souvenirs to Vice-Chairman of e-National Task Force member of Civil Service Selection and Training Board U Aung Myint.

The members of the goodwill delegation visited the Third MICT Week-2004 and Bagan CyberTech.

The Vice-Chairman of e-National Task Force presented gifts to the visiting Deputy Prime Minister.

The members of the goodwill delegation left the MICT Week at 11 a.m. MNA

Matters relating to putting programme illegally into VCDs that can destroy computers clarified

YANGON, 27 Jan.—A clarification on putting programmes illegally into VCDs that can destroy the computers was held at Room 205 at MICT Park in Hlino University City Campus in Hlino Township this evening.

Present were members of e-National Task Force, officials of Myanmar Computer Federation, Myanmar Computer Scientists Association and Myanmar Computer Industry Association and delgates of computer companies.

Secretary of e-Application Committee Col Tin Oo said that it was found that programmes that can destroy the computers was inserted in VCDs in order to prevent piracy of VCD. In connection with this, officials concerned warned VCD producer, disributor and programmers for the first time.

He said a warning was made for protection of computer com

Chairman of Myanmar Computer Industry Association U Aung Zaw Myint said comparing with laws of different levels, the MICT Week penalized VCDs that can destroy computers.

He said the act was against the law according to the notification 3/2002 of the Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs issued on 10 July 2002. Actions can be taken against those with the fine or both cash and imprisonment. The programme was not created by the use of high technology but was the col-

Chairman of Myanmar Computer Industry Association U Aung Zaw Myint said comparing with laws of different levels, the MICT Week penalized VCDs that can destroy computers.

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Secretary of e-Application Committee Col Tin Oo clarifies on putting programmes illegally into VCDs that destroy computers. — MNA

Chairman of Myanmar Information and Communication Technology Development Corporation Brig-Gen Thein Swe extended the greetings.
Secretary-1 and wife host dinner in honour of Laotian Deputy Prime Minister and wife

YANGON, 27 Jan — Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win and wife hosted dinner in honour of Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Planning and Cooperation Committee of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic Dr Thongloun Sisolith and wife Madame Naly Sosith. It was attended by Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Thein Sein, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win, the director-general of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of departments, Ambassador of Lao People’s Democratic Republic Mr Chantavey Bodhisane and wife and officials.

At the dinner, artistes of Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture entertained the guests with Myanmar traditional songs and dances.

MNA

Secretary-1 meets Deputy Prime Minister of Lao People’s Democratic Republic

YANGON, 27 Jan — Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Planning and Cooperation Committee of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic Dr Thongloun Sisolith and party visited Myanmar ICT Park in Hline Township today. The exhibition was themed with students, service personnel, organizations, members of the Sangha and the people. The exhibition is still drawing a large number of visitors. It will be kept open until 31 January.

MNA

Myanmar ICT Week 2004 extended to 31 January

YANGON, 27 Jan — The Third Myanmar ICT Week 2004 continued for the seventh day at the MICT Park in Hline Township today. The exhibition was themed with students, service personnel, organizations, members of the Sangha and the people. The exhibition is still drawing a large number of visitors. It will be kept open until 31 January.

MNA

Relay system on GSM, TDMA and CDMA briefed

YANGON, 27 Jan — A briefing on the relay system used in the buildings on GSM, TDMA and CDMA took place at the International Business Centre on Pyay Road here this afternoon. It was attended by Minister for Communications, Posts and Telecommunications and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Sein, and Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu, officials and guests.

The minister delivered a speech on the occasion.

Managing Director of LGP Allgon (Singapore) Mr Terry Wan presented a powerpoint system on TDMA, CDMA and Cellular Tele- phone, In-Building Solution, and communication equipment produced by LGP Allgon, and replied to the queries raised by those present.

MNA

Minister Brig-Gen Thein Zaw delivers a speech at the briefing on system used in buildings on GSM, TDMA and CDMA.

— HOTELS AND TOURISM

National Seminar on Prevention and Management of Substance Abuse commences

YANGON, 27 Jan — The opening of the National Seminar on Prevention and Management of Substance Abuse organized by the Department of Health under the Ministry of Health and WHO took place at the Myanmar Medical Association this morning. It was attended by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, Deputy Minister Dr Mya Oo, departmental heads, officials from respective ministries, Vice-Presidents of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Dr Kyi Soe and Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint, officials of the ministries, WHO and social lay organizations and guests.

On the occasion, the minister delivered a speech. In his speech, he said that the Ministry of Health has organized national level seminar on prevention and management of substance abuse for two times in 1979 and 1988. The objectives of the third seminar are: to exchange views and experiences of the physicians discharging duties in rehabilitation centres for drug addicts and township hospitals; to seek ways and means for grappling with the difficulties physicians are experiencing in giving medical treatments to the patients; to enable the medical staff to be familiar with modern prevention and control methods in the medical field; and to achieve success in implementing the project on elimination of drug addicts, which is the goal of the 15-year drug elimination plan. In its drive to head for the goal of drug elimination plan, the Ministry of Health is taking systematic measures for drug rehabilitation purposes.

Now, the 15-year plan has entered the fifth of the first five-year term, previous tasks are under review for more effectiveness of the plan. The drug addicted patients in Wa Region in Shan State (East) are receiving medical treatments under the community based treatment programme.

In the first five-year term of the 15-year plan, tasks are being carried out to accomplish the medical team of the Ministry of Health — control and giving educational talks on drugs abuse to the public. And, after adopting an aim, research work is being done, which is necessary for making cumulative progress in drugs control and rehabilitation. The team to ensure more effectiveness and smooth implementation of the plan, the Ministry of Health is carrying out the tasks in cooperation with related projects and ministries.

In conclusion, the minister expressed his belief that the seminar will contribute much towards harmonious implementation of anti-narcotic tasks, and tasks for prevention and control of narcotic drugs and rehabilitation of drug addicts. The seminar continues tomorrow.

MNA
Ministers, ambassadors and UN resident representatives tour Shan State (North), Mandalay Division, Magway Division

YANGON, 27 Jan — Chairman of Central Committee for Drugs Abuse Control Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Vice-Chairman Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung and Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt, members Minister for Labour U Tin Winn and Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Aung and Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung visited Shan State Brig-Gen Khin Yee and MPF Director-General agencies, CCDAC Secretary diplomats, resident missions in Yangon, Sone, together with ambassadors of foreign missions in Yangon, diplomats, resident representatives of UN agencies, CCDAC Secretary MPF Director-General Brig-Gen Khin Yee and officials, visited Shan State (East), Shan State (North), Mandalay Division and Magway Division starting from 23 January to observe regional development and drugs elimination tasks. On 25 January morning, they visited poppy-substitute coffee plantation of North-East Command in Lashio where officials briefed them on growing of coffee plants and raising of 13,600 poultry. The visitors looked around the summer paddy fields and crop plantations, the natural fertilizer plant, power station and brick factory. Responsible officials conducted them around the factory and replied to queries.

The ministers, the ambassadors, diplomats and resident representatives of UN agencies left Lashio for Laukkai and arrived there at 11 am. At the briefing hall of Laukkai Drugs Elimination Museum, national race leader U Phon Kya Shin briefed on regional development tasks, drugs elimination tasks and poppy-substitute agriculture tasks for Kokang region. He said poppy-growing which was started over 100 years ago has been rooted out since 2002. It is a good deed not only for Kokang region but also for the country and the international community. Local people have encountered many difficulties as they had grown poppy for over 100 years and the soil is infertile and there is no sufficient water for agricultural use. So, there is little possibility for growing poppy-substitute crops. Local national race leaders have made arrangements for growing of rubber and other crops which are suitable to the region. Local people are to rely on the Laukkai Hospital constructed by the government. Over 10,000 students are pursuing education at 125 schools. To eliminate drugs, regional development tasks have been carried out. Handsome amount of cash has been spent on road transportation, education, rehabilitation tasks, availability of water and electricty, development affairs and growing of poppy-substitute crops, he said.

A 1000-acre farm has been established at the place six miles from Laukkai. Similar farms have been set up in other places. In addition, an area of 2,500 acres was put under sugarcane in 2003. China, Japan and the UN rendered assistance to the region. In 2003, the government presented 5,000 bags of rice to local people and the North-East Command provided them with summer/monsoon paddy and other crops. With the help of Japanese government, a power station that can supply electricity to three villages has been constructed. The 10-mile long road section on Laukkai-Tardswehtan road was tarred. Two poultry farms have raised 120,000 poultry, 2,000 pigs and 10 cattle. Kokang region needs assistance from international community and there is total elimination of drugs in the region, he explained.

CCDAC Chairman Minister Col Tin Hlaing briefed on drugs elimination tasks carried out in Kokang region in cooperation with the government, Minister Col Thein Nyunt on efforts for improving living standard of national races and development of border areas including Kokang region made by the government and Minister U Win Aung on the need of international community to render assistance to people in the region. The visitors viewed poppy-substitute plantations and border areas development tasks near Laukkai. They left there for Lashio by helicopter and arrived there at 2 pm. Afterwards, they visited Ywey hpeed power project at 3.30 pm. At the briefing hall, Director-General Dr Thein Tun of Department of Electric Power briefed on location, area and historical background of the project, its objectives and tasks being carried out, data and budget in detail. Queries of the ambassadors, diplomats and UN resident representatives were then replied. The visitors looked around there and arrived at PyinOoLwin at 4.45 pm. At the briefing hall of National Kandawgyi Gardens in PyinOoLwin, Wood Land Co Chairman U Wun Aung explained reconstruction and renovation tasks for the park. At 7.30 pm, CCDAC officials hosted a dinner in honour of the visitors at Namnyaung Hotel.

On 26 January morning, the group visited Tanyang river-water pumping project in Salin Township, Magway Division. At the briefing hall there, Deputy Director-General U Hla Myint and Maung of Water Resources Utilization Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation reported to them on facts on the project. Afterwards, the group arrived at Mon Creek multi-purpose dam project at noon. Director-General U Win Kyaw of the Ministry of Electric Power explained that the project is located in Sedokkata Township, Minbu District in Magway Division. Its main purposes are to supply enough water for growing of monsoon paddy, summer paddy and other crops, to prevent flooding of Mon Creek and to generate 330 million kilowatt hours of electricity per annum. The project started in October 1995 and will finish in March 2004. The catchment area of the dam is 1,468 sq miles. The dam is 4,320 feet long and 200 feet high. The earthen dam, that can supply water to 108,000 acres of land, will cost K 33.800 million including US $ 32 million.

Director of Irrigation Department Project Director U Myint Than briefed on tasks for the projects. Officials replied to the queries of the ambassadors, diplomats and UN resident representatives who later looked around the project site. They arrived at Minbu airport at 2.45 pm and viewed Ayeayawaddy Bridge (Magway). They arrived back here at 5 pm via Magway airport.

Cash donations for NyaungU Township MCWA annexe

YANGON, 27 Jan — A ceremony to hand over cash donations for building annexe of the NyaungU Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association was held on 20 January. Over Bagan Co Daw Khin Ohnmar Win also donated K 1.5 million to NyaungU District Home for the Aged and K 200,000 for the NyaungU district/ township Organization for Women's Affairs. Officials concerned made words of thanks. (H)
Farmer now can grow paddy not only for own consumption but also for local rice sufficiency

Chaungmanet Dam inaugurated in TadaU Township

YANGON, 27 Jan – The inauguration of the Chaungmanet Dam built by Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation was held at Kyauktan Village in TadaU Township, Mandalay Division this morning, attended by member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence.

Speaking at the event, Head of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin, officials of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, local authorities, social organizations, students and people totalling 7,000.

He said the government is implementing the tasks for long-term interest of local people, convenience of agricultural activities, raising of living standard of rural people and greening of the region without laying emphasis on gaining of profits economically. The community welfare services will continue to exist as better foundations for posterity.

He said in Mandalay Division 40 dams including the present one were built and they irrigated over 350,000 acres of land. Nine dams are being built and three of them can be used to generate electric power. There are eight dams to be built, he added.

The greening projects have achieved success as the government undertakes the measures on conservation of forest, extended planting of trees, establishment of firewood plantations and use of firewood substitute fuel in cooperation with local people.

Due to the greening projects, climate in the region has become better and better acreage also increased and living standard of local farmers improved, he said.

Farmlands have emerged in Anya regions due to the government’s efforts. Those who have never cultivated paddy before can now grow it not only for themselves but also for local sufficiency, he said.

The greening projects, climate in the region has become better and better year after year, he said.

He said Mandaly Division is the region where ten main crops can grow successfully. Moreover, it can produce kitchen crops and is the division on which the State relies economically.

Economic development of Mandalay Division can reflect the economy of the State, he said.

The local farmers should make effective use of the favorable conditions created by the State to raise the crop per acre yield. They will have to make collective efforts for their land to firmly stand as a region contributing more to the national economic development.

The Chaungmanet Dam opened in TadaU Township, Mandalay Division, on 27 January 2004.

In some townships local people had to fetch drinking water from far areas with much difficulty. Therefore, under the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe arid zone greening projects were laid down and water resources were explored.

Based on water resources in Anya region, dams, river-water pumping projects and underground water pumping projects are being built one after another spending a large sum of money. The regions have become green as there is water there. Cultivation

Lt-Gen Ye Myint addressing the inauguration of newly-constructed Chaungmanet Dam. — MNA

The Chaungmanet Dam opened in TadaU Township, Mandalay Division, on 27 January 2004. — MNA

Lt-Gen Ye Myint tours Myingyan district

YANGON, 27 Jan. — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint and departmental officials, inspected paving of road section of the TadaU-Myotha-Myingyan road at mile post 496/7 on yesterday morning.

They also inspected laying of gravel for tarring road at mile post 495/7 near Gwoegon village.

They next went to Myotha station hospital in Ngazun Township and inspected it. Officials concerned reported matters on the hospital.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party proceeded to Nyangwun village of Myingyan Township and inspected the village primary school.

Next, they inspected the Government Technical Institute in Myingyan and the Myingyan Degree College. Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party left Myingyan and arrived in Mandalay in the evening. — MNA

The Government has been laying down and implementing plans for harmonious development of all the regions of the nation. The people have also made earnest efforts to achieve success to a certain degree to lay a foundation in implementing the task.

The future of the nation is brighter due to the leadership of the State, the participation of the people, and the efforts of the service personal.

The seven-point future policy has already been laid down for the nation to stand tall forever with her own sovereignty and for emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and democratic nation.

The seven-point future policy is laid down in the interest of the nation and the people. As the policy is in conformity with the 12 objectives of the State, the entire people have unanimously supported and approved it.

Community peace and the rule of law are essential needs for the success of the policy. So also, the sound economic foundations are the essential requirement for the convenience of the food, clothing and shelter of the people. The local people and the departmental personnel will have to collectively maintain the dam, to use the water effectively and to conserve the watershed area.

Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin said it is the 156th dam of the nation and the 40th dam in Mandalay Division. Emergence of one more irrigation facility in the agricultural region will help develop the crop cultivation. The ministry has been reclaiming more land, extending irrigation facilities, applying advanced techniques and equipment, distributing quality strains and conducting research work. Farmers will have to strive to become the ones using modern techniques and machines. The dam was built to ease the hardships of the local farmers.

Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint also gave a speech.

A local people thanked the Government for building the dam.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint unveiled the stone plaque of the dam. The commander and the minister formally opened the dam. Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party inspected the dam.

The earth dam is 6,000 feet long and 50 feet high. The maximum storage capacity is 8,040 acre-feet. It can irrigate up to 3,900 acres of land. — MNA
Nigerian Customs seeks protection for local industries

LAGOS, 27 Jan — The Nigerian Customs Service (NCS) on Saturday expressed commitment to protect local industries from unfavourable competition with imported goods, according to a high-ranking NCS official.

Akinbayo Ogunbanmili, acting comptroller-general of the NCS, told newsmen in Nigeria’s commercial capital Lagos that the NCS has streamlined its operations to track down smugglers and check dumping to protect the businesses of the indigenous private sector.

He said the NCS would continue to explore new avenues and fresh strategies to check smugglers and their new antics especially now that new items have been put on the imports prohibition list.

The comptroller-general pointed out that the recent increase in the number of banned items was part of the efforts of the government to boost local production of some of the items put on the prohibition list.

In the last few years the NCS has intercepted huge consignment of banned and fake products worth millions of naira. Some of the importers of the goods were prosecuted while their wares which included textile, leather products, dairy, fruit drinks and food items were confiscated.

The Nigerian federal government while announcing the prohibited items at the beginning of 2004 urged the Customs service to ensure 100 per cent enforcement. MNA/Xinhua

The Malta Rescue Coordination Centre, overseeing the effort, said no survivors had been found during the latest searching, and there was no word on the identities of the bodies.

The search for the ship’s crew was rescued on Friday morning after the Greek-owned ship, under a Comoros flag with a crew of 17, sank about 120 miles west of the Greek island of Crete.

US and British-flagged ships responding to a distress signal from the Keph, spotted only one lifeboat with two crew members aboard, but bad weather hampered the rescue.

The Malta Rescue Coordination Centre said earlier it could not confirm that both men had been rescued, as earlier announced by Maltese authorities on Friday. Greece has only one person was saved.

A spokesman for the rescue centre, run by the Maltese military, said two merchant ships, under the Greek and an Italian flag, had been helping in the search.

The Keph, with mostly Egyptian crew and carrying cement, was sailing from Istanbul to West Africa. MNA/Reuters

THE MALTA RESCUE COORDINATION CENTRE

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L,
Attorney General of Myanmar,
Dated: 28th January, 2004

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Number of Cubans working abroad doubles in 2003

HAVANA, 27 Jan — The number of Cuban workers overseas soared to 16,770 in 2003, more than double the previous year, Marta Lomas, Minister of Foreign Investment and Economic Cooperation, said Friday.

These Cubans worked in 101 countries, some of them for the Inter-American Health Programme in American and African countries, Lomas said at the ministry’s annual meeting which concluded late Friday.

Lomas said Cuba held cooperative relations with 154 countries in 2003 and developed 86 cooperation projects covering about 20 social-economic sectors in 31 African countries.

The minister also said there were 313 cooperative production agreements in 2003, a 15.9 per cent in

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The Keph, with mostly Egyptian crew and carrying cement, was sailing from Istanbul to West Africa. MNA/Reuters

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Overseas Indians celebrate 55th Republic Day

ISLAMABAD, 27 Jan— Overseas Indians on Monday celebrated the 55th Republic Day with patriotic fervour, hoisting the tricolour, singing national songs and holding cultural functions.

In Islamabad, High Commissioner Shiv Shankar Menon hoisted the national tricolour and read out a message from President APJ Abdul Kalam in his address.

In Mandala in Myanmar, a colourful ceremony was organized to celebrate India’s 55th Republic Day.

Central PK Bhutiani unhoisted the tricolour and read out President Kalam’s address to an enthusiastic audience of about 300 Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin.

In Islamabad, High Commissioner Yash Sinha hoisted the tricolour following the rendering of the national anthem by children from Indian school.

He asked the children a ten-point oathunencumbered in President Kalam’s speech expressing among other things commitment to removal of corruption, pursuit of excellence in education, spreading of literacy and eradication of religious discrimination.

The Consul General in Dubai Yash Sinha also unhoisted the tricolour in the presence of a large number of Indians. — MNA/PTI

Britain gives giant military plane contract to Airbus

LONDON, 27 Jan— Britain has given a giant military plane contract to the European consortium led by EADS, the parent company of Airbus Industrie, British Ministry of Defence (MoD) said Monday.

The MoD said it believed the European consortium would offer the most value for money, snubbing a rival bid to provide a tanker fleet from a group involving US-based Boeing Co and Britain’s BAe Systems.

The ministry said it expected talks with the European group, which includes Rolls Royce, Cobham and EADS, to “take a number of months” before it made a final decision.

The MoD contract is Europe’s largest order for air-to-air refueling aircraft.

“Annalists here believe it is a big win for Airbus which would supervise civilian plane to be converted into air tankers and it could also crack open a sector where Boeing has long held a near-monopoly.

EADS has offered a tanker based on its A-330 commercial jet, while Boeing, together with Sncer and Spectrum Capital, had planned to sell a military version of its 767 jetliner which would have had to arbitrate.

The panel of judges, which will act as referee, officially has around a month from now to reach a decision, but such rulings have in the past often taken longer.

The spat is the latest in a series of disputes involving the government of US President George W. Bush, an avowed free trader who has refused to ratify an anti-dumping law over the three years since it came into force. But, as expected, the United States opposed the level of sanctions, which meant that under WTO rules it was automatically put to arbitration.

The European Union, which includes Britain, Ireland and Denmark, want to retaliate against Washington for not lifting a trade law—the so-called “Byrd” amendment—already ruled illegal by the WTO.

They sought sanctions on US exports for the equivalent of the more than 700 million US dollars that Washington has raised and distributed to US firms uninterested in a European Union trade case affecting their products.

The US has threatened to take the case to the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

The EU has previously pulled its punches over a number of issues.

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The EU has previously pulled its punches over a number of issues.
Monaco survive French Cup fright
PARIS, 27 Jan— Ligue 1 leaders Monaco needed a penalty shoot-out to overcome Third Division Valenciennes in the second round of the French Cup on Sunday.

Unable to score during 120 minutes of play, the Champions League side finally overcame their defiant opponents 4-1 in the decider.
The five times winners of the French Cup had a huge fright when Valenciennes’ Orlando Silvestri appeared to have scored two minutes into the second half.

Three minutes later, winger Sa Pitno equalized with a header to send the teams into the break all square.

Belenenses slip leaves Real Madrid top in Spain
MADRID, 27 Jan— Valencia suffered a 1-0 defeat at home to Osasuna on Sunday to leave title favourites Real Madrid top two points clear at the top of the table.

Valencia, needing to win to reclaim top spot after Real’s 2-1 victory over Villarreal on Saturday, had only themselves to blame as centre-back Mauricio Pellegrino scored a ridiculous own-goal to gift Osasuna the lead at the end of the first half.

Mista and Xisco had good chances after the break but Valencia, who had Armando Carboni sent off four minutes from time, were unable to find an equalizer.

The result completed a miserable week’s work for Valencia, who went down 3-0 to Real Madrid in the opening leg of their King’s Cup final tie at the Bernabeu on Wednesday.

With 21 games played, Real lead the standings with 46 points, 14 clear at the top of the table.

WASHINGTON D.C.— Thierry Henry, who was being rested by Wenger, and have also lost Kani to the African Nations Cup so they had to rely on their midfield players for goals.

“In the short term you can compensate for the absence of Thierry. We created as lot of movement today and (Robert) Pires came in, Ljungberg came in and they created a lot of danger.”

Wenger said he did not know if Henry, who will be back from his short holiday on Sunday, would play against Middlesbrough when Arsenal try to overturn a 1-0 deficit in their League Cup semifinal, second leg clash at the Riverside on Wednesday.

Middlebrough’s second 4-1 defeat at Highbury this season left manager Steve McClaren disappointed but he is looking forward to their fourth encounter with Arsenal in 19 days.

Rui Costa ends goal drought as Milan haul in Roma
Rome, 27 Jan— Portuguese playmaker Rui Costa ended a three-year goal drought as AC Milan thrashed bottom club Ancona 5-0 on Sunday to close in on Serie A leaders AS Roma.

Milan’s win lifted them to second place on 42 points, one behind Roma, who were held 1-1 at home by Udinese.

Reigning champions Juventus, currently third on 39 points, play Empoli in a late match on Sunday.

The San Siro scoreboard was level on Ancona, who held out for more than an hour before crumbling spectacularly.

The game turned in the 64th minute when a handball by defender Roberto Maltagliati allowed Andry Shevchenko to put Milan ahead from the penalty spot.

Seven minutes later Rui Costa scored his first goal ever for the European champions, firing past goalkeeper Sergio Marcon from the edge of the area. He last scored in a Serie A match between Fiorentina and Vicenza in March 2001.

Shevchenko’s replacement, Jon Dahl Tomasson, added a third from the penalty spot in the 78th minute and two late strikes by Brazilian midfielder Kaka completed the rout.

No stopper could keep the 19-year-old Bentley is a centre forward. He is more of a supportive striker. He has

Middlesbrough’s second 4-1 defeat at Highbury this season left manager Steve McClaren disappointed but he is looking forward to their fourth encounter with Arsenal in 19 days.—MNA/Reuters

Girondins Bordeaux 1-0 against Ligue 1 rivals Nice.

Fourth-Division and amateur side Croix Savoie 2-0; Alexandre Frei scoring their second goal two minutes into the second half.

Romania striker Viorel Moldovan scored twice as Nantes overpowered 3-0 another fourth-tier team, Fontenay-le-Comte.

The 16-match round was played over three days and the main surprise came on Friday as amateur club Bayonne, who had already shocked Ligue 1 team En Avant Guingamp 3-0 in previous rounds, beat Girondins Bordeaux 1-0 after extra time.

RC Lens, who have lost six regulars to the African Nations Cup, were the only other top-flight team ousted by a lower division side when they lost 2-1 to Third Division Dijon on Saturday.

MNA/Reuters

Valencia’s Miguel Angel Mista (R) fights for the ball with Osasuna’s players Cesar Cruchaga (C) and goalkeeper Ricardo Sanzol during their Premier League match in Mestalla Stadium in Valencia.—INTERNET

Paradox still smiling after defeat
MELBOURNE, 27 Jan— Of all the ailments that hamper tennis players these days, overgrown toenails do not rank highly in the list.

But that is precisely why Thai 13th seed Paradorn Srichaphan needed attention in his Australian Open defeat by Andre Agassi on Sunday.

“I’m not disappointed,” he said. “It was a great match and he was playing really well.

Thailand’s most successful player, who has been in the world’s top 10 for the past four years, was unable to find a nail clipper to just cut his middle toenail.

“Some of my nails just hit with the string (raquet) or something so it just cracked... I had to ask for a nail clipper just to cut it.”

Such was Agassi’s form, the nail incident had no effect one way or the other but Paradorn was still pleased with his performance.

“I’m not disappointed,” he said. “It was a great match and he was playing really well.

Thailand’s most successful player, who has been in the world’s top 10 for the past four years, was unable to find a nail clipper just to cut it...”—MNA/Reuters

Wenger tips young gun Bentley as potential new Bergkamp
LONDON 27 Jan— David Bentley has the qualities to become the new Dennis Bergkamp, Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said after the forward scored with a delicate chip in their 4-1 win over Middlesbrough in the FA Cup fourth round on Saturday.

“I believe he has a bit of the characteristics of Bergkamp, who is certainly his idol,” a delighted Wenger told reporters.

Arsenal were already leading 3-1 at Highbury with a goal from Bergkamp and a double by Fredrik Ljungberg when substitute Bentley, set up by Robert Pires, chipped the ball past ‘Boro goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer to wrap up the victory.

Former England Under-18 captain Bent- ley, who joined Arsenal as a schoolboy in the summer of 2000, had only made three first team appearances this season. “He is a very talented player,” said Wenger. “A young player coming from the bench who scores after five minutes and chips the ball past the keeper does not lack confidence, especially with his left foot, as he is right-footed.”

The Frenchman, though, does not think 19-year-old Bentley is a centre forward.

“He is more of a supportive striker. He has to become more mature,” he said.

Arsenal were without Thierry Henry, who is being rested by Wenger, and have also lost Kani to the African Nations Cup so they had to rely on their midfield players for goals.

“In the short term you can compensate for the absence of Thierry. We created so much movement today and (Robert) Pires came in, Ljungberg came in and they created a lot of danger.”

Valencia’s Miguel Angel Mista (R) fights for the ball with Osasuna’s players Cesar Cruchaga (C) and goalkeeper Ricardo Sanzol during their Premier League match in Mestalla Stadium in Valencia.—INTERNET

AC Milan’s Portuguese player Rui Costa (R) and Ancona’s Roberto Maltagliati fight for the ball during their Serie A soccer match at the San Siro Stadium in Milan, on January 25, 2004.—INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 28 January, 2004

AC Milan’s Portuguese player Rui Costa (R) and Ancona’s Roberto Maltagliati fight for the ball during their Serie A soccer match at the San Siro Stadium in Milan, on January 25, 2004.—INTERNET
Summer English courses to be opened

YANGON, 27 Jan — Under the training of Dr Myint Hlaing, intermediate level English grammar and reading-writing and spoken English courses, General English, Medical English, TOEFL, English in Medical Studies and Guiding abroad English courses are being conducted at MRA (Myanmar Royal Academy). In the first week of February Post-intermediate English, English in Basic Buddhism, English in Myanmar Language, Culture and Literature courses and Chinese courses will be opened. Those wishing to attend the courses may contact No 57, ground floor, 9th Street, Lanmadaw Township.

Ministry of Education

WEATHER

Tuesday, 27 January, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST. During the past 24 hours, light rains have been isolated in Shan State, Mandalay and Yangon Divisions and weather has been partly cloudy to cloudy in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin, Rakhine and Mon States, Lower Sagar, Mandalay and Magway Divisions, (6°C) to (7°C) above normal in Shan State, (3°C) below normal in Chin State and Tanintharyi Division and about normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 26-1-2004 was 33.0°C (91°F). Minimum temperature on 27-1-2004 was 18.2°C (65°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs on 27-1-2004 was 81%. Total sunshine on 26-1-2004 was (6.5) hours approx. Rainfall on 27-1-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 14 mph from southeast at (10:30) hours MST on 26-1-2004.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 28-1-2004: Possibility of isolated rain in Kachin, Chin, Shan and Rakhine States, Upper Sagar, Mandalay and Magway Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy to cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is 60%.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Possibility of isolated rain in upper Myanmar areas.
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Rakhine national group

YANGON, 27 Jan —
Chairman of the Work Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received Rakhine national group led by U Saw Tun Oo from Aung Zeya Nyeinchanyay Village, who had returned to the legal fold, at Zeyathiri Beikman Hall, Konmyinttha, here at 5.15 pm today.

Also present at the call were Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Thein, Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office Maj-Gen Thein Swe, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Brig-Gen Khin Maung, Deputy Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Brig-Gen Than Tun, Vice-Chief of Military Intelligence Maj-Gen Kyaw Win, Director-General of the Office of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Pe Nyein, Director-General of the Office U Soe Tint and officials.

On the occasion, the national race leaders said that they welcome and support the State’s seven-point Roadmap and pledged that they will collectively and unitedly participate in the tasks for accomplishment of the State’s future policy programme under the leadership of the Government.

They held talks on assistance to be rendered by the State for education, health, agri-cultural and economic sectors and for regional development.

MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Chinese guests

YANGON, 27 Jan —
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received President and CEO of the China Huanqiu Contracting & Engineering Corp Mr Wang Shihang and party at Zeyathiri Beikman Hall, Konmyinttha, here at 4 pm today.

Also present on the occasion were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office Maj-Gen Thein Swe, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win, Director-General of the Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet, Economic and Commercial Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy to Myanmar Mr Tang Hai and members and Managing Director of the Asia World Co Ltd U Tun Myint Naing. — MNA

Marching toward the Golden Land in unity and amity

The Union Day, which falls on 12 February every year, is commemorated to further strengthen existing ties of friendship and amity among the national brethren. In honour of the 57th Anniversary Union Day, 2004, The New Light of Myanmar will present articles, documentary photos, poems and cartoons plus data and charts highlighting the historical facts on forging Union Spirit and sustained efforts of the State Peace and Development Council for perpetual existence of the Union and for bringing peace and prosperity to all regions including the border areas. The NLM will feature the programme “Marching toward the Golden Land in unity and amity” as from 29 January 2004.

The New Light of Myanmar