Senior General Than Shwe receives Malaysian Prime Minister and party

YANGON, 13 Feb—Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe received the goodwill delegation led by Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi at the Credentials Hall of Pyithu Hluttaw building, here, at 3 pm today.

Also present at the call together with Senior General Than Shwe were Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Myanmar Ambassador to Malaysia U Hla Maung, Director-General Lt-Col Pe Nyein of the State Peace and Development Council Office and Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department.

The visiting Malaysian Prime Minister and party were accompanied by Malaysian Ambassador to Malaysia Dato’ Cheah Sam Kip.

MNA

Senior General Than Shwe greets Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi at Credentials Hall of Pyithu Hluttaw building. — MNA

The way in which all the national races will have to march

The State has already declared its seven-point future policy programme clearly and openly. The seven points show exactly the way in which all the national races will have to march towards a discipline-flourishing modern and developed democratic nation without fail. The national races who love the country will have to walk straight on the way with full Union Spirit and the spirit of national unity.

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
(From message on the 57th Anniversary Union Day)
PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 14 February, 2004

For perpetual existence of the Union

All the Myanmar races are the true descendants of the Union, living and increasing in numbers on the Myanmar soil. All the over 100 national races have the same characters — sincerity, kindness, helpfulness, loving kindness, forgiveness, sympathy and peacefulness.

Concerning the fact, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance to trainees of primary teacher course No 35 of the University for Development of National Races on 28 January 2003, saying, “As all the national races are living in various parts of the territory of the Union of Myanmar, each and every region of the Union itself is a mini-Union, home to numerous national races living in unity and togetherness. As the national races are indivisible attaching one another with bonds of love, there must be amity and unity among them.”

And since the start of the human civilization and till now, the national races have been living in unity in a family spirit — mutual love and friendship, helpfulness, inter-relationship, forgiveness, and harmonious efforts based on mutual interest — and sharing joys and sorrows together. As they have been living in harmony in the Union of Myanmar, the national races are residing together in all the states and divisions.

Chairman of the Central Committee for Organizing the 57th Anniversary Union Day Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt met Union Day delegates at National Indoor Stadium-1 (Thawunna) on 10 February and extended greetings. The Prime Minister said that in accord with the guidance of the Head of State, all the national races must stay away from narrow racism, and must live in a family spirit like brothers and sisters residing in togetherness and peace based on common interest, with Union Spirit and unity.

The nation enjoyed strength and glory during the periods when unity is strong, and during the times when national unity was weak, the political, economic, social and security conditions of the Union were in a state of disunity and transgression.

As Myanmar is a Union, only when there is consolidated solidarity among the national races, will the Union exist forever and sovereignty last. Therefore, the national policy of non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty has been laid down and emphasis is also placed on national reconciliation and propagation of the Union Spirit. For perpetual existence of the Union, all national people are urged to strive for flourishing of Union Spirit.

59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives

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

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt formally unveils the Beikman where Yesagyo Sayadaw’s statue is kept. MNA

People’s Desire

• Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views concerning the State and progress of the nation
• Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
• Crush all internal and external destructive elements

PM attends Pakokku Maha Withutayama Monastery centennial commemorated

YANGON, 13 Feb — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party attended the opening of the main buildings of Myanmar Department of Buddhist Affairs Technical Institute in Myingyan, Mandalay Division, on 11 February.

Accompanied by Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, the Prime Minister and party arrived at Pakokku, Magway Division, at 12 noon, where they were welcomed by Sagarang Division Peace and Development Council Chairman North West-Command Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye, No 101 LJD Commander Col Sein Win, Magway Division Chief Planner Col Maung, military and civil officials, students and people.

Pakokku Maha Withutayama Monastery held its centenary celebration in conjunction with the third day session of the 11th Samanpatta Ovada Seeking of Pakokku Maha Withutayama Gana Vacaka Nikaya at the monastery, attended by the Prime Minister. The ceremony was graced by the presence of Secretary of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Presiding Nayaka of the Monastery Sayadaw Ablidhajra Maha Rathu Guru Ablidhajra Maha Maha Sattadhama Jotika. Pakokku Maha Withutayama Gana Vacaka Nikaya Sambut Gana Maha Niyang Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara and members of the Sangha Gana Vacaka, Maha Maha Guntavacaka Pandita Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobhana read the resolutions of the meeting.

Next, the Prime Minister supplicated on religious matters. In his supplication, the Prime Minister said that he was greatly pleased with the opportunity to pay reverence to the Sayadaws to the centenary celebration and the meeting. He added that he learnt that Pakokku Maha Withutayama Monastery was founded by First Yesagyo Sayadaw Gana Gana Vacaka, Sara in 1265 ME and at that time the Sayadaw was at the age of 82, vasa 63.

As the Sayadaws have studied the learning and teaching methods of the Second Maungthaingam Buddha Sasana Baing Sayadaw of the King Mindon era and till now, the Kyauktaikgyi has produced 14 eminent monks also come to the Kyauktaikgyi to pursue their religious studies. It is like a garden producing fruits and flowers of the Pariyatti Sasana. In conclusion, the Prime Minister wished all the Sayadaws present at the ceremony to be able to serve the interest of the Sasana more in the future.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister and party presented trophies to the Sayadaws. The Magway Sayadaw gave Niyangama Saranyia Ovadattha. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobhana read the report of Niyangama Gana Vacaka executive committee of the monastery. The opening of the Beikman in which the statue of Yesagyo Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ganthassara is kept, took place at the building.

The Prime Minister pressed the button to unveil the Beikman. After the ceremony, the Prime Minister and party viewed the statue.

Pressnell leads Myanmar Open

YANGON, 13 Feb — The second round of the Myanmar Open was held at Yangon Golf Club in Danyingon this morning. MPG President Maj-Gen Win Hlaing, officials, guests and fans were present. Australian tourney Alistair Pressnell grabbed the halfway lead in the US$200,000 Myanmar Open today where he hopes to win the title to honour his late father. On a tough scoring day, the 23-year-old Pressnell, playing in his maiden professional tournament in Asia, battled to a one-under-par 71 in the second round at Yangon Golf Club for a one-shot advantage over local hope Aung Win, who carded the day’s joint best of 69 and American Andrew Pitts. Former champion Thongchai Jaidee of Thailand, overnight leader Mo Jong-kyung of Korea, Australian duo Unbe Park and David Gleeson and Japan’s Yosikou Tsukuda are lacking a further stroke back. — MNA

Talks on women’s affairs to be held

YANGON, 13 Feb — The team led by President of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Dr Daw Khin Win will go to talks on women’s affairs for Myanmar women doctors at the Myanmar Medical Association’s 13th Annual Convention at No 249, Theinbyu Road, Mingalayar Township, here, at 3 pm on 15 February. — MNA

ISD tennis tournament commences

YANGON, 13 Feb — The 41st Inter-State and Division Tennis Tournament for 2004 sponsored by Myanmar Tennis Federation was opened at Theinbyu Tennis Court in the presence of executives and guests.

First, defending champions Ayeyawady Division’s men tennis team and Mandalay Division’s women tennis team r-handed over the championship shields they won last year to Director General U Thaung Hlaik who made a speech on the occasion. Next, tennis events followed. Altogether 13 teams are participating in the tournament which will continue until 18 February. — MNA
US troops, allies suffer casualties in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 13 Feb—Two US soldiers were killed and a nine coalition soldiers wounded following a spike in violence targeting mainly Iraqi security forces. A mortar round also exploded near where Japanese troops are deployed in the southern Iraqi city of Samawa, but there were no casualties, a Japanese officer said Thursday.

A US military statement said “two Task Force 1st Armoured Division soldiers are dead and another is wounded after a roadside bomb attack on 11 February.”

The soldiers were conducting a mounted patrol in western Baghdad at approximately 9:30 pm (1830 GMT) when the attack occurred.

The troops were evacuated to the 33rd Combat Support Hospital for treatment where two soldiers succumbed to their wounds. “The incident is under investigation,” the statement added, saying the identity of the victims was being withheld until their families are notified.

Top US general survives assassination bid

FALUJA, 13 Feb—Abizaid is the third senior US official to escape attack in Iraq. The head of US Central Command in the Middle-East, General John Abizaid, has survived an assassination attempt in Falluja.

Abizaid escaped unscathed from an attack with rocket-propelled grenades in the flashpoint Iraqi town on Thursday, a US military official said.

Brigadier-General Mark Kimmitt said the RPGs were launched as Abizaid and Major General Charles Swannack, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, travelled in a convoy in Falluja, west of the capital.

“Three rocket-propelled grenades were fired at their convoy from the rooftops in the vicinity,” Kimmitt, the deputy operations chief for the US-led occupation forces told a press conference in Baghdad.

Two civilians were killed and an undisclosed number wounded in the shootout, according to Aljazeera.

Following the attack, Abizaid cancelled his tour of Falluja and returned to a nearby US base, our correspondent reported.

Abizaid is the third highest profile US official to escape an attack in Iraq.

The others are US administrator Paul Bremer, whose convoy was attacked in December, and Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, whose Baghdad hotel was hit by rockets.

India bullish about coffee export to Russia

MOSCOW, 13 Feb—India is bullish about export of coffee to Russia, the country which has one of the highest growth rates of coffee consumption in the world.

“After European Union, Russia has emerged as India’s second largest coffee market and has 10 per cent growth rate of coffee consumption - one of the highest in the world,” Nitin R Gokarn, Secretary of the Coffee Board, here told a seminar organized by the Indian Business Alliance (IBA).

Noting a direct link between the economic growth and coffee consumption, he reminded that Russia was named along with India, China and Brazil as the fastest growing economies at the recent Davos Economic Forum.

“In 1999s India had exported about 36,000 metric tons of coffee annually to the ex-USSR, while today it is already exporting 33,000 metric tons to Russia,” he said.

Pointing out that India has emerged as the sixth largest producer of coffee in the world, Gokarn recalled that in the past in some years it had exported up to 55 per cent of produce to the ex-USSR, while today Russia’s share is 18-19 per cent in Indian coffee exports, which will further expand with the growth of Russian economy.

Bulk of the Indian coffee export to Russia amounts to the instant coffee imported by Nestle’s Russian subsidiary, while only three thousand metric tons are coffee beans and with the expansion of chains of coffee parlours in the country this sector will also grow, India’s Coffee Board believes.

Unlike, coffee exports to Russia, the tea sector has to radically change its philosophy, Tea Board’s Moscow-based Promotion Director Sumit Jerath said at the seminar.

The latest deaths bring to 257 the number of American soldiers killed in combat in Iraq since US President George W Bush declared major hostilities over on May 1.

In Madrid, the defence ministry said five Spanish soldiers and an Iraqi interpreter were slightly injured on Wednesday by a home-made bomb near their base in the southern province of Dhiwaniya.

The troops, part of a 1,300-strong Spanish contingent serving in Iraq, were on a foot patrol and returning to their base when the bomb was hurled from a nearby building.

Late Wednesday, the US military and the Iraqi police said an Iraqi paramilitary was killed and three US soldiers wounded in two attacks in the northern oil region of Kirkuk.

US accused of promoting Iraq break-up

BAGHDAD, 13 Feb—The United States is pursuing a policy of deliberately destabilising Iraq by showing favouritism towards the Shia and Kurds, according to a new report by an Arab League fact-finding committee.

The report, which comes after an investigation by committee members who visited Iraq in December, accuses US occupation forces of supporting the Shia and Kurds at the expense of Arab Sunnis.

It reveals fears by Arab countries that the policy will split Iraq into several minor statelets along sectarian or ethnic lines.

A federal state based on de-facto ethnic and sectarian divisions in Iraq would represent the first step towards the country’s break-up.

Such a turn of events would pose a direct threat to many Arab countries, which contain minorities that might seek for similar deals.

Ethnic divisions Thereport argues that the composition of the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), corresponding to the country’s ethnic make-up, has laid the foundations for sectarianism.

Minister on China’s cultural progress

BEIJING, 13 Feb—Chinese Culture Minister Sun Jiazheng said here Thursday that China has made great progress in cultural development.

“Art Garfunkel pleaded guilty to NY marijuana charge

NEW YORK, 13 Feb—Singer Art Garfunkel pleaded guilty to marijuana possession and paid a 100-US dollar fine in a small New York town after his arrest last month in his speeding limousine, court officials said on Thursday.

Garfunkel’s attorney entered the guilty plea on February 4 and Garfunkel paid a 100-US dollar fine and 100 US dollars in costs in the Hurley Town Court, 90 miles north of New York City, court clerk Leanne Warren said.

Garfunkel, 62, half of the ‘60s duo Simon and Garfunkel, was charged with unlawful possession of marijuana when his limousine was pulled over for speeding near Hurley on January 17.

The state trooper who stopped the vehicle found a bag of marijuana containing 6 grams (0.2116 ounce) of marijuana in the star’s jacket pocket, police said.

The driver of the limousine received a ticket for driving 61mph in a 45-mph zone.

Chinese Government had signed cultural cooperation agreements with 145 foreign governments.

The government tried all out to well preserve cultural heritage, he said. To date, China has 29 sites inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the World Heritage List.

Iraqi Civil Defence Corps members patrol an area of central Baghdad. Two more US soldiers have been killed in Iraq, as a UN team placed itself halfway between Shiite demands for early polls and Washington’s insistence that a vote needs to be well prepared.—INTERNET
**Two US soldiers killed in latest Iraq attacks**

Baghdad, 13 Feb — A roadside bomb killed two US soldiers in Baghdad, the US military said on Thursday, as Iraqis began burying dozens of victims of two attacks against locals working with the US-led occupation.

The US Army’s 1st Armoured Division said the bomb exploded at 9:30 pm (1830 GMT) on Wednesday as the soldiers were passing in their vehicles.

The casualties were evacuated to a combat support hospital for treatment where two soldiers later died, it said in a statement.

The attack on the US patrol came hours after a suicide car bomb killed 47 people at an Army recruitment centre in the capital. A similar attack on a police station south of Baghdad killed 53 people on Tuesday.

Only a few of the bodies from Wednesday’s blast had been taken for burial. Doctors said some corpses were difficult to identify due to mutilation or bad burns.

The police and new Army are central to Wash-ington’s plan to hand over authority to Iraqis by June 30. Most of Wednesday’s victims were newly recruited soldiers reporting for duty.

The attacks follow a pattern of targeting Iraqis seen as collaborating with the US occupation. Twin suicide bombings in April against two Kurdish parties allied with the United States killed more than 100 people.

At least 372 American soldiers have been killed in combat since US-led forces invaded Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein last March.

The violence rages as a UN team, led by veteran dip-lo-mat Lakhdar Brahimi, is in the country discussing the possibility of holding elec-tions ahead of the June 30 handover deadline, as demanded by leaders of the Iraqi Shi'ite Muslim majority.

US plans are for elections only later. Brahimi is due to leave by Friday at the latest, so a US-led administration official said. The rest of the UN team has started touring provinces.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan is expected to make a decision on the elections on 21 February.

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**Fresh tremors jolt Indonesia’s Papua region**

Jakarta, 13 Feb — The death toll from last week’s earthquake in Indonesia’s remote Papua region has risen to 37, officials said on Thursday, as a series of fresh tremors rocked the area.

“We suffered a total of five moderate to strong ones on Wednesday, with the highest registering 5.0 on the Richter Scale,” said Chris, an official at the Nabire quake centre in Papua, 1,900 miles east of the capital, Jakarta.

Chris, who like many Indonesians uses a single name, said no new casualties were caused by Wednesday’s tremors.

The epicentre of last Friday’s earthquake was just a few kilometres from Nabire, a regional centre of 26,000 people and most deaths and injuries were caused by falling buildings.

However, with some damage in remote, outlying areas, reports of casualties were trickling in only slowly. — MNA/Reuters

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**India’s only aging aircraft carrier under repair**

New Delhi, 13 Feb — India’s only aircraft carrier INS Viraat, which is the centrepiece of Indian Navy’s western armada, will be unavailable this year because it has been dry-docked for elaborate repairs and a refit at Cochin in south India.

The 1959 vintage, 23,900-ton carrier had undergone a life extension as recently as 2001, which was intended to have given it a fresh 10-year lease of life. But it is out of action again.

According to Hindustan Times, a leading English newspaper, while acknowledging the limitations imposed in having an aircraft carrier on an “extended life”, the Indian Navy claims that the dry-docking of the Viraat is part of its “routine preventive maintenance”.

At the same time, it uses the case to press its demand for having at least two carriers. “Viraat is not on this season. This is the reason we want another carrier,” a top naval official was quoted as saying.

India will not get its second carrier, Admiral Gorshkov, before May 2008. The in-service air defence ship will take nine years coming. And by going the indications, the aging Viraat needs a lot of nursing, putting a question mark over its reliability. A warship is built to last 25 years. The Viraat is now pushing 45, the paper says.

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**Explosion in Iraq town where Japanese troops are stationed**

Tokyo, 13 Feb — An explosion caused a small hole in a road in a residential area of Samawa in southern Iraq, where Japanese troops are stationed as part of a mission to help rebuild the country, Kyodo news agency said on Thursday.

Kyodo quoted a witness as saying there was a hole about eight inches in diameter in the road, with a cylinder-like metal object stuck in it.

There were no reports of injuries.

A Japanese military spokesman in Tokyo said he had no reports of any injuries to Army personnel or damage to equipment. He had no further details about the incident.

The Mainichi Shimbun daily said in its online edition that many windows had been broken in nearby homes and that there were reports that something like a mortar shell had been fired towards the site of the incident.

There is much concern at home about the safety of Japanese military personnel who are being sent to help rebuild Iraq in Japan’s riskiest military mission since World War II. Some Japanese believe the dispatch is in contravention of Japan’s pacifist Constitution and that soldiers should not be sent. — MNA/Reuters

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**China’s software exports rose 33% in 2003**

Beijing, 13 Feb — China’s information and telecommunication industry witnessed rapid growth in 2003 with impressive performances reported from hardware, software and mobile phone sectors, the Ministry of Information Industry said here.

A total of 8,582 software companies with 18,000 registered products created 19.5 billion US dollars of profit, which increased by 45 per cent over 2002.

Exports of software hit a record high of two billion US dollars last year, up 33 per cent. — MNA/PTI

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**Iraqis view a bullet-riddled civilian car in this image made from television, which was damaged by gunfire when US troops returned fire after a rocket propelled grenade attack on a convoy carrying US General John Abizaid, the top commander in the Middle East, in Falluja, Iraq, on 12 Feb, 2004.** — Internet
Ancient antiques found south of Iraq

BAJGIRAN, 13 Feb — Quite a number of Iraqi ancient antiques were found recently in southern Iraq, Wisal Nareem Jassim, an official at the Iraqi archaeology body, said on Thursday.

“ar in a site near Al Rifaae District, southern Iraq, we found a new collection of ancient antiques of the era of dynasties (BC),” said Jassim, quoted by local Press.

Jassim is responsible for classifying and naming the pieces according to the periods they come from.

“Everyday we receive pieces from ruin excavation site or by confiscating them from thieves. We number them and then send them to higher references to be included with collection of the Nasiriyah Museum,” said Jassim.

She added that the local authorities in Nasiriyah, 350 kilometres south of Baghdad, are waiting for the US-led coalition forces to evacuate from the museum so that it could be opened for the public to see its contents, which represent different epochs of Iraqi civilizations.

Iraqi museums were robbed during the US-led first March and many Iraqi antiques have been smuggled abroad since then.” — MNA/Xinhua

BA cancels Washington flight again for security reasons

LONDON, 13 Feb — British Airways (BA) announced Thursday a flight from London to Washington is cancelled again for security reasons.

The airline said in a statement that its Flight BA 223, from London’s Heathrow Airport to Washington’s Dulles Airport would not fly on Sunday and that Monday’s Flight 263 from London to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia was also cancelled.

BA said the decision was made following “government advice to cancel those flights for security reasons”.

The airline has been forced on several occasions to cancel its flights to Washington after “credible” terror threats were reported since the start of this year.

Disruption to Flight 223 began December 31, when the plane was kept on the tarmac at Dulles Airport for several hours of questioning, while US authorities questioned passengers and crew.

MNA/Xinhua

Bush, Kerry both face attacks on Vietnam records

WASHINGTON, 13 Feb — As US President George W Bush struggles to answer questions about his military service during the Vietnam War era, a conservative counterattack has begun to try to impugn Democratic presidential contender John Kerry’s war record.

A photograph showing Kerry and actress and anti-war activist Jane Fonda taken at a 1970 anti-war rally in Paris surfaced on a conservative website on Monday. It spread across the Internet and appeared on the front page of the Washington Times on Wednesday. TV networks quickly picked up the story.

The newspaper quoted two Republican congressmen, Randy Cunningham of California and Texas’ Sam Johnson, both of whom served in the war, as saying the image would diminish Kerry’s appeal to Vietnam veterans. Johnson said it made him sick.

“The picture shows Fonda listening intently at the rally. Three rows behind her is a fuzzy but recognizable image of Kerry, who also spoke at the demonstration. Kerry, a Massachusetts senator and probable presidential challenger to Bush in November, became a leader of the anti-war movement after returning from Vietnam where he was decorated with a Silver Star, a Bronze Star and three Purple Hearts. He constantly brings up his heroic war service at campaign rallies. Vietnam War veterans who served with him, and one who served with Kerry, said he has saved, have frequently appeared by his side and in his TV ads.

“IT’s clear what some of Kerry’s opponents will try to do. They want to frame him, not as a valiant war hero but as a long-haired war protestor who later as a senator voted against service demand,” said American University political scientist Allan Lichtman.

MNA/Reuters

RSCAP conf adopts declaration on advancement of women

ILHAMABAD, 13 Feb — Expressing commitment to the political, economic and social advancement of rural women, a regional conference here on Thursday adopted a declaration calling for elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women through a policy of zero tolerance.

The three day meeting of the First Ladies of Regional Steering Committee for Asia-Pacitic (RSCAP), hosted by Sheba Musharraf, the wife of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, ended on Thursday and unanimously adopted the ‘Islamabad Declaration’.

The Declaration called on the governments to focus on the objectives of increasing representation and participation of rural women in political systems, integrate them into national and international mainstream, institutionalize gender budgeting facilitate access to credit and markets and formulate and implement health policies to address the urgent health concerns of women particularly HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.

It urged the member nations to encourage rural women apply their indigenous knowledge for preservation of environment, eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women through a policy of zero tolerance and prohibit trafficking of women and girls.

Deputy Chairperson of Rajya Sabha Najma Heptullah attended the meet along with a three member Indian delegation.

Addressing the concluding session of the third RSCAP meeting, Sheba Musharraf, who is also the Chairperson of the regional steering committee, said the meeting provided concrete suggestions to achieve the objective of political and economic empowerment of rural women of Asia Pacific Region. — MNA/PTI

Three-day concave on Buddhism to be held in New Delhi

NEW DELHI, 13 Feb — A three-day international concave on Buddhism, to be inaugurated by President of India APJ Abdul Kalam and addressed by those from other faiths, would begin in the national capital here from February 17.

Announcing this, Tourism Minister Jagmohan told reporters that such a concave would be the first of its kind in India which would also enable the country to promote its Buddhist heritage and culture, besides the Buddhist tourism circuit to attract pilgrims mainly from South and Southeast Asia.

A large number of monks and spiritual leaders would be attending the conference, which would be followed by a dedication ceremony of the ancient Mahabodhi Temple at the holy town of Bodh Gaya in Bihar. Gautama Buddha is believed to have attained Enlightenment.

US troops investigate scene of a vehicle bomb in central Baghdad, on Wednesday, 11 Feb, 2004. A vehicle bomb exploded outside an army recruiting centre in central Baghdad on Wednesday, killing at least 36 people, the second such attack in two days targeting Iraqis working with the US-led coalition. — IRNA

Iranian FM says Teheran ready
to help IAEA verification

TEHRAN, 13 Feb — Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi said on Thursday Teheran was ready to help the IAEA verify its nuclear compliance and insisted on his country’s right to a peaceful nuclear programme.

Asked about US and International Atomic Energy Agency comments earlier in the day expressing concern over Iranian cooperation on the nuclear issue, Kharrazi said: “The burden of proof is on the one who makes the allegations. There may be questions by IAEA inspectors but we are ready to verify those,” he told reporters as he entered a religious conference in Remand.

US Undersecretary of State John Bolton accused Iran on Thursday of pursuing efforts to acquire nuclear arms and of failing to comply with a commitment last year to suspend uranium enrichment activities.

“There’s no doubt in our mind that Iran continues to pursue a nuclear weapons programme,” he said.

But Kharrazi denied the accusation. “Certainly we are not following any programme to produce weapons,” he said.

“We have decided to develop all nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. We insist on that as our legitimate right to have nuclear technology for peaceful purposes,” he said.

MNA/Reuters

New details of layered rocks in Opportunity Ledge on Mars are pictured in this cropped image taken by the Opportunity Rover’s panoramic camera on 9 Feb, 2004, and released by NASA on 11 Feb, 2004. In previous panoramic camera images, geologists saw that some rocks in the outcrop had thin layers, and images sent to Earth on Tuesday now show that the thin layers are not always parallel to each other like lines on notebook paper. — EXTRAMET
US and its allies troops invaded Iraq starting from 20 March 2003. The Iraqi guerrillas have resisted the intruders and as a result the Americans have lost many arms and equipment in Iraq.

American arms and equipment lost and destroyed in Iraq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lost or destroyed arms and equipment</th>
<th>From the beginning of war up to 1 May 2003</th>
<th>From 2 May to 29 January 2004</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</tr>
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<td>Armoured vehicle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other vehicle</td>
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</table>

A fire destroyed an armoured transport vehicle in Mishada, 30 kilometres (19 miles) north of Baghdad on 5 Dec, 2003. The vehicle was attacked by Iraqi guerrillas.

A burned-out US military vehicle seen on the outskirts of Baghdad, on 3 Nov, 2003. The vehicle was attacked by a rocket.

A burned-out military ammunition truck seen after it was attacked in Fallujah, Iraq, on October, 2003, 35 miles (60 kms) west of Baghdad.

American's Humvees were destroyed after an explosion in Mosul, Iraq 400 kms (250 miles) north of Baghdad, Iraq, on 25 September, 2003.
In honour of the 57th Anniversary Union Day:

Development images of Mandalay Division in the time of the State Peace and Development Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development Sector</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>2004</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road (mile)</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>1281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridge (above 180 feet)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microwave station</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auto-exchange</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post office</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telegraph office</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yeywa Hydropower project, the largest in Myanmar, will generate 3,550 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year.

Mandalay International Airport in TadaU Township in Mandalay Division.

Myanmar Aerospace Engineering University in Meiktila.

Mandalay Central Railway Station.

Newly opened Pansay Bridge on the road to the Mandalay International Airport.

Government Technical Institute (Myingyan) under construction in Myingyan, Mandalay Division seen on 27 January.
Marching toward
Golden Land in
unity and amity

Unity is strength

Let’s march to the goal of
the seven-point future policy programme

At present, the Government has already defined a national task clearly. It is no other than the march to a new discipline-flourishing democratic nation in accord with the seven-point policy programme. And the national races have to march to the goal with the spirit to love the nation, patriotism and Union Spirit.

In shouldering the national duty, we will have to carry out the nation-building task, based on the objective political, economic and social conditions of the State.

The State Peace and Development Council has been expediting the nation-building tasks in accord with the 12 political, economic and social objectives.

Here, the Government has been materializing the four political objectives phase by phase. Thus, it can be clearly witnessed that never in the history had Myanmar been enjoying greater peace and stability, and the rule of law in the whole country than at present. At the same time, the Government has been able to make peace with the 17 national race armed groups for national reconsolidation. Moreover, the 17 groups have been taking part in the national development drive in the respective sectors in cooperation with the Government, the Tatmadaw and the people with heart and soul.

Development of a nation always stands on the inter-dependence between the factors of peace and stability, the national economic development, and the national solidarity — and perpetuation of the Union.

In the same vein, the national solidarity can ensure peace and stability, lay sound foundations for national economic progress, and accelerate the national economic development.

As the State Peace and Development Council understands and accepts the fact, it has given priority to the peace and stability, the national reconsolidation, and the rule of law. At the same time, it has been making efforts to actually strengthen national economy for the emergence of a modern and developed nation.

In this way, the Government is carrying out its tasks with the harmonious participation of all the national races and divisions for the development of industries and generation of job opportunities region-wise. At the same time, 257 large and medium State-owned industries and 2,429 private industries have been set up to increase production and to extend manufacturing of import-substitute goods.

The development of the national industries and the increase in their number, and the rise in the living standard of the people have increased the demand for power and electricity. A total of 11 hydel power stations, including Paunglaung hydel power station project capable of generating 280 megawatts of electricity and Yeywa hydel power station project capable of generating 780 megawatts of electricity, are also being implemented. On completion of the 11 projects, another 1,960 megawatts of electricity will be generated.

When it comes to land cultivation, the basic economy of the State, high-yield quality strains of paddy are in use with the application of modern cultivation techniques. Moreover, with a shift from the manual to the mechanized farming, farm machinery are also used. As a result, a total of one billion baskets of paddy are obtained at present, up from 630 million baskets in 1988. The completion of over 150 irrigation facilities and 265 river-water pumping projects in water-scarce areas aimed at ensuring a sufficient supply of irrigation water in agriculture resulted in the extension of sown acreage to more than 2 million. At the moment, another 39 irrigation facilities are under way and 84 others under planning stage.

Measures are now being taken to develop border areas and national races by laying down systematic plans as national solidarity has been built after peace was made with 17 armed groups of national races and others.

(See page 9)
The development measures for border areas are now being taken in 18 regions covering 68 townships in seven states and two divisions. The project constitutes 3,415.34 square miles in area and benefits over 5.3 million of local national people on a broader scale.

The fact is that the development momentum of the State is in fact the road to be followed by the entire national people in unity with strong belief. The entire national people will see the peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic Union without a shadow of doubt if they walk it with firm determination and resolution.

The seven-point roadmap of the State is in fact the road to be followed by the entire national people in unity with strong belief. The entire national people will see the peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic Union without a shadow of doubt if they walk it with firm determination and resolution.

The seven-point roadmap of the State is in fact the road to be followed by the entire national people in unity with strong belief. The entire national people will see the peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic Union without a shadow of doubt if they walk it with firm determination and resolution.
YANGON, 13 Feb — At the invitation of Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt, Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi arrived here by special aircraft this morning to pay a working visit to the Union of Myanmar.

The Malaysian Prime Minister and party were welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, State Peace and Development Council Secretary-General Li Gen Soe Win, Secretary-General Li Gen Thein Sein, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Myanmar Ambassador to Malaysia U Hla Maung and Malaysian entrepreneurs, ambassadors of ASEAN Simon Tensing de Cruz and ambassadors of Singapore Mr Simon Tensing de Cruz and ambassadors of ASEAN countries in Yangon and Malaysian entrepreneurs in Yangon.

At 10 am, the special aircraft carrying the Malaysian Prime Minister and party landed at Yangon International Airport where Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department, Malaysian Ambassador to Malaysia Dato’ Cheah Sam Kip and staff, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps Ambassador of Singapore Mr Simon Tensing de Cruz and ambassadors of ASEAN member countries and staff of the Malaysian Embassy General Khin Nyunt and party and the Malaysian Prime Minister and party proceeded to the reception hall of the airport where the two Prime Ministers inspected the Guard of Honour. Afterwards, General Khin Nyunt greeted the delegation members of Malaysia. Similarly, the Malaysian Prime Minister greeted the welcoming party and Malaysian entrepreneurs in Yangon.

Next, the guests together with General Khin Nyunt went to Seinle Kantha State House in a motorcade. At the State House, General Khin Nyunt cordially greeted the Malaysian Prime Minister and party and left there at 10.35 am.

The Malaysian Prime Minister was accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs Dato’ Daruk Seri Syed Hamid bin Syed Jaafar Albar and senior officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Welcoming the visiting Prime Minister, an archway at the entrance to the airport and Pyay Road at the entrance of the airport were put up with banners “We warmly welcome Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi” both in Myanmar and English languages. In addition, the archways were put up at the corner of Inyalay, at the junction of Pyay Road and Inya Road and at the entrance to Seinle Kantha State House.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt welcomes the Malaysian Prime Minister at the airport. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hosts a luncheon to Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi and party. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt greets the Malaysian Prime Minister at Seinle Kantha State House. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi inspect the Guard of Honour. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi take the salute of the Guard of Honour. — MNA
Emergence of institutions...

(from page 16)

The newly opened Myingyan Degree College. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt sees off Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi

YANGON, 13 Feb — Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi left here by special aircraft this evening after paying a working visit to the Union of Myanmar at the invitation of Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt.

The Malaysian Prime Minister and party were seen off at Yangon International Airport by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Myanmar Ambassador to Malaysia U Hla Maung, Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department, Malaysian Ambassador to Myanmar Dato’ Cheah Sam Kip and staff.

Before the guest boarded the special aircraft, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt greeted Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi and presented the documentary photo album and video tapes to him.

At 6 pm, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party at VIP lounge bade farewell to Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi and party. — MNA

Will soon be able to implement the development projects in Mohinyan region, Kachin State and Myingyan region, Mandalay Division.

In building a new modern and developed nation the intellectuals and intelligensia in the field of science and technology are to be produced. In other words, it is of utmost importance for ensuring development of human resources in both the national level and regional level.

Therefore, steps are being taken for the development of science and technology in the nation and for constantly producing highly qualified human resources and region-wise human resources across the nation.

More universities and colleges were opened throughout the nation. Thus, there were 32 universities and colleges in 1988 and there are now 154 in total.

In the technological sector, there were one technological institute, one university for computer studies and 12 government technical institutes in the past and there are now three technological institutes, two universities for computer studies, one Myanmar Maritime University, one Myanmar Aerospace Engineering University, 26 government technological colleges, 24 government computer colleges and 11 government technical institutes.

In the Myingyan region, the students had to go to other regions for their pursuit of formal education in the past. Nowadays, they have the opportunities of pursuing education in their region with the emergence of Myingyan Degree College and government technical institute with peace of mind.

In the basic education sector, there were 689 basic education schools—647 primary schools, 32 middle schools and 10 high schools—in Myingyan District in the past and there are now 924 basic education schools with an increase of 235. Therefore, the number of students pursuing education has increased from over 130,000 to over 170,000.

At a time when education infrastructures are emerging in their region, the teachers and students are to make integrated and well-coordinated efforts for constantly producing intellectuals and intelligensia of international level in the region, realizing the objectives of regional development and education sector.

The student youths, on their part, are to pursue education with peace of mind with the effective use of the degree college and government technical institute complete with magnificent and splendid buildings and modern teaching and learning aids.

At the same time, when they become the qualified intellectuals and intelligensia they are to try their best to become the ones capable of serving the interest of the State and the people.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister called on the teachers to strive together with the students for regional development through the education infrastructures, for enabling the nation to keep abreast of the global nations and for constant emergence of highly qualified human resources in accordance with the objectives of the State. Next, Minister for Education made a speech.

After that, first year student Ma Thiha Lin, on behalf of students of Myingyan degree college, spoke words of thanks. Next, Managing Director of Aden Group Co Ltd U Chu Khine presented a gift to mark the opening of main building to the Prime Minister. Afterwards, Managing Director of Aden Group Co Ltd U Chu Khine presented K 15 million for the degree college and K 15 million for the GTI through the Prime Minister.

After the ceremony, the Prime Minister and party inspected the subject-wise presentations on display at the book fair in commemoration of the opening ceremony.

Next, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party and guests viewed round new technologies on computers and modern teaching and learning aids displayed by IT companies. — MNA

The Malaysian Prime Minister presents a gift to General Khin Nyunt. — MNA

General Khin Nyunt sees off the Malaysian Prime Minister at the airport. — MNA

The Malaysian Prime Minister presents a gift to General Khin Nyunt. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents documentary photo album and video tape to Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents documentary photo album and video tape to Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi. — MNA

The newly opened Myingyan Degree College. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents documentary photo album and video tape to Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi. — MNA
China adds 26 national scenic spots

Beijing, China — Beijing added 26 scenic spots to its list of national parks Wednesday, increasing the country’s state-level scenic spots to 177. The 26 national parks are in 14 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions on the Chinese Mainland, such as the Three Mountains (San Shan) scenic spot in Jiangsu Province, and Fangyan scenic spot in Zhejiang Province.

Vice-Minister of Construction Qiu Baosheng said at a nameplate awarding meeting the new group of national parks will bring forth more responsibility for the ministry to protect the country’s natural resources.

MNA/Reuters

Fire kills family of five in South China

Shantou, China — A family of five, including three children, died when a fire engulfed their shop in Shantou City, south China’s Chaozhou City, on Tuesday.

The fire started on the early morning of February 13, the Chaozhou Daily reported.

MNA/Reuters

China develops device to find living people trapped by accidents

Chongqing — Chongqing has developed and produced its own set of devices for searching for living people trapped in buildings toppled by earthquakes and landslides.

The devices, made by the Chongqing Seismological Bureau, recently passed a technical appraisal jointly organized by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the China Seismological Bureau.

China orders nationwide market cleanup

Lusaka, 13 Feb — The Zambian Government has ordered all local authorities to clean up market places used for overnight stays within two weeks, in a bid to contain the spread of cholera that has killed over 100 people since last November, independent newspaper The Post said Thursday.

Sylvia Masebo, the minister of local government, was quoted as saying Wednesday that the cleanup exercise will last from February 11 to February 25, after which inspectors will be sent to determine whether the markets will be re-opened.

MNA/Reuters

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MNA/Reuters

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The devices, made by the Chongqing Seismological Bureau, recently passed a technical appraisal jointly organized by the Ministry of Science and Technology and the China Seismological Bureau.

The set is made up of an optical device, a sound pulsator and an infrared thermal imaging system.

Peng Jinchuan, a senior engineer of the Sichuan Provincial Seismological Bureau, said that the devices have their respective functions. The optical instrument serves as an eye working in a dark environment, the sound pulsator as an ear which can hear voices a long way off, and the infrared thermal imaging system is a perspec- tive mirror.

While searching for living people confined in rub- bles, a rescue may use a de- tector which can turn around with the maximum angle of 127 degrees. If it is not long enough, the detector can be connected with an adjustable pole which is capable of go-

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New HIV drugs show promise in early trials

WASHINGTON, 13 Feb—New classes of HIV drugs that prevent the virus from infecting cells are showing promise in early trials, researchers reported on Wednesday.

Schering-Plough Corp.‘s new drug that blocks a cellular doorway called CCR5 is safe and works about as well as older classes of drugs called protease inhibitors and non-nucleotide reverse transcriptase inhibitors, researchers said.

And researchers said Bristol-Myers Squibb‘s new drug, an attachment inhibitor, also seems to suppress the virus in early, experimental tests in patients.

There are about 20 AIDS drugs on the market now and they can be used in various combinations called highly active antiretroviral therapy. When it works well, HAART can keep the virus at very low levels in patients, in turn keeping them healthy and able to live virtually normal lives.

But eventually the virus develops ways to resist the drugs and, after a while, patients run out of options. Some of the drugs also cause side-effects including heart disease and osteoporosis.

While new AIDS drugs do not offer a cure, they may offer a few more years of healthy life for patients with the always-fatal infection.

Dr. Mark Laughlin, a senior Schering-Plough research executive, told the annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in San Francisco on Wednesday that the company’s experimental drug, called SCH-D, showed it could reduce viral load — how much virus can be detected in a patient’s blood — by as much as older HIV drugs. Lower viral load usually translates into fewer symptoms for patients.

The drug is a CCR5 antagonist, which blocks a receptor on cellular doorway called CCR5 that HIV uses to get into cells.

An early trial in HIV patients given the drug for two weeks showed it was initially safe and reduced viral load by a measurable amount.— MNA/Reuters

300 kilograms of drugs seized in northern Philippines

MANILA, 13 Feb — Anti-narcotics and Customs agents seized about 300 kilograms of methamphetamine hydrochloride, popularly known as “ice”, in a raid in the northern Philippines on Thursday, officials said.

Law-enforcers managed to seize the illegal drugs, locally called “shabu”, from a container van in a factory warehouse in Meycauayan Town in the province of Bulacan after a tip-off from China, Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency chief Anselmo Avenido said.

Avenido said the information came after their warehouse owned by Waretext Manufacturing Corp., officials said.

In follow-up operations, a Chinese national, supposedly sent by an international drug syndicate to the country to supervise the arrival of the shipment, was arrested and is now undergoing interrogation, officials said.

Japanese electronics giants to jointly develop new circuit

TOROY, 13 Feb—Sony Corp and Toshiba Corp said Thursday they will co-develop advanced 45-nanometer process and design technologies for next-generation system large-scale integrated circuits (LSIs).

The two major Japanese electronics giants expect to see positive results in 2005, building on their successful joint development of a 65-nanometer design process that will soon be applied to sample products, they said.

Through the 20-billion-yen project, Sony and Toshiba hope to become the first to market with 45-nanometer know-how, they said. Advancing digitization is fueling demand for the ability to process, save and enjoy rich data sources, driving demand for system LSIs that combine miniaturization with enhanced functionality, faster operating speeds and less power consumption, they said.— MNA/Xinhua

US-born giant panda to return home

BRONX, 13 Feb — For the first time in her life, Hua Mei will set foot on her Motherland, enjoying the sunshine and bamboo in the place where her parents were born and grew up.

The giant panda born in the United States in 1999 is expected to arrive in Beijing Thursday afternoon by air.

Hua Mei — the first word means China and the second means the United States — was daughter to Shi Shi and Bai Yun, a panda couple leased to the San Diego Zoo in California by China.

Having the first overseas-born Chinese giant panda to return.

Altogether 26 giant pandas were given as gifts by China to nine countries in the period from 1957 to 1982.

China decided to no longer present giant pandas as gifts to other countries in 1985.— MNA/Xinhua

WHO probes funding for “poor country” diseases

GENEVA, 13 Feb— The World Health Organization (WHO), alarmed at low invest-
ment in drugs to tackle Third World killer diseases, launched a long-promised probe on Thursday into how to remedy the situation.

Ninety per cent of the some 14 million deaths a year worldwide from infectious diseases are in poor coun-
tries, but few new drugs are being developed to fight them.

The United Nations‘ health agency named Swiss Minister Ruth Dreifuss as chairperson of its Com-
mision on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health. The nine ex-
perits will report back to the WHO‘s executive board next January.

The launching of the in-
vestigation was approved at the WHO’s annual assembly last May, but only after a heated debate between rich and poor states over the role of international patent rights in promoting drugs‘ research.

Rich states, led by the United States, warned any attempt to ensure better and cheaper access to medicines in poorer countries by cur-
tailing intellectual property rights would backfire because big pharmaceutical companies would have no incentive to develop new drugs. Part of the job of the commission, which also in-
cludes Trevor Jones, direc-
tor-general of the British Pharmaceutical Industry As-
sociation, will be to examine the role played by patents — which ensure that companies earn royalties on their inven-
tions — in the development of medicines.

It will also look into how to increase funding for re-
search and production of new medicines, particularly those most needed by poorer states.

Cellphone sales fall in China, but laptops rise

BEIJING, 13 Feb— Laptop computer and digital televis-
ion sales are expected to boom in China this year, while sales of cellphones — the highest in the world in 2003 — are forecast to slip, the Ministry of Information Industry has estimated.

In 2004, the laptop computer sales will increase from one million to around eight million, while digital TV receivers will rise from one million to 30 million within two years, according to the ministry.

Over the next five years, China‘s laptop computer mar-
et will keep growing steadily, with sales peaking in 2004, according to China Centre for Information Industry Devel-
opment (CCID), a consultancy company under the ministry.

However in 2003, China sold 80 million cellphones, just half of its production volume.

Motorola, Nokia and Siemens, the three biggest selling cellphone brands, last year all claimed their actual sales failed to meet expectations.

Experts fear the cellphone’s declining market may be-
tray its increasing productivity. — MNA/Xinhua
Santini names Saha in squad for Belgium friendly

Paris, 13 Feb—Manchester United striker Louis Saha was named in Jacques Santini's France squad on Thursday for next week's international friendly against Belgium in Brussels.

Santini also called up Olympique Lyon forward Peguy Luyindula for the first time during the official presentation of licensing products in Lisbon, on 10 Feb, 2004. Two thousand licensed products promoting the Euro 2004 Soccer Championship will go on sale in Portugal, Europe and Asia in kiosks and department stores this week.

Manchester United shareholders jockey for position

DUBLIN, 13 Feb—The stakes are rising in the power-struggle at Manchester United, with two Irish horse racing tycoons and US sports magnate Malcolm Glazer both increasing their holdings in the English soccer champions.

Glazer, owner of American football team the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, raised his shareholding to 16.31 per cent on Thursday, a day after Cubic Expression, a company owned by John Magnier and J.P. McManus, pushed its stake up to 28.89 per cent.

Cubic's move reignited takeover talk around the club, which has been at the centre of an acrimonious dispute between Cubic's owners and Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson, by stopping just short of the 30-per-cent shareholding that would automatically trigger a full-scale bid under market rules.

However, many analysts doubt a takeover is part of the Irish duo's game plan, at least in the short term, and say their latest foray into the market was designed to further ratchet up pressure on the club's board, whom they are challenging over corporate governance and transfer-fee issues.

"It's more about jockeying for position, and trying to make sure their interests are protected. They've tightened the screw and increased their influence over the club without going through the 30-per-cent shareholding threshold," said one Dublin-based analyst who asked not to be named.

"Manchester United is one of the better-run clubs in the league, but Cubic thinks it can be run even better and generate higher profits and pay bigger dividends," he said.

He added that another element in the Irishmen's latest share purchase may have simply been to keep the stock out of the hands of billionaire rival Glazer.

"Many of the media coverage of the Irishmen's involvement has speculated that it is connected to a high-profile legal dispute between bloodstock baron Magnier and club manager Ferguson over stud rights to record-breaking racehorse Rock of Gibraltar.

Although any increase in Cubic's holding can only add to Ferguson's unease, analysts point out that Cubic was building a stake before the row and that McManus, a hard-headed businessman with a 50-per-cent interest in the venture, is not directly involved in the dispute.

"Many commentators have suggested the stake building by Cubic Expression is a tit-for-tat response to Ferguson's legal action against Magnier...I strongly disagree," Bill Gerrard, professor of sports management and finance at Leeds University Business School, wrote in the Irish Independent.

"The central issue always has been the growing disaffection of Magnier and McManus with the way Manchester United is run as a football club and as a business," added Gerrard, who said there was "no practical way a takeover is in the offing.

Magnier and McManus also maintain that better corporate governance at the club can only enhance their investment and, with their holdings worth nearly 200 million pounds (379 million US dollars), they will insist the board list to their preferences.

Analysts believe they will move towards face-to-face meetings with United executives and seek places on the board — if not for themselves personally then for their representatives.

Under pressure from Manchester United has already announced an internal financial review and caved the length of Ferguson's new contract.

Whatever the motives of Magnier and McManus, the field of potential predators has narrowed after the latest share deals.

Dutch media mogul John de Mol sold eight million shares in the club to Cubic and another, smaller, stake, saying his world-famous brand has been damaged by the row between Magnier and Ferguson.

Manchester United shares closed at 267-1/2 pence, valuing the club at around 700 million pounds.

Former Lazio president arrested in Rome

Rome, 13 Feb—Former Lazio president Sergio Cragnotti was arrested by Italian police on Wednesday, judicial sources said.

The former head of insolvent food firm Cirio, which was Lazio's majority owner until last August, defaulted on more than one billion euros (1.27 billion US dollars) of bonds in late 2002.

In an arrest warrant, prosecutors accused Cragnotti of favouring six banks when repaying debts. The financial transfers, made in 2000-02, were worth a total of just under 600 million euros, the warrant said.

The 64-year-old Cragnotti has been investigated for months over suspected fraud, following statements to the stock market and criminal bankruptcy.

Judicial sources said Cragnotti was arrested along with his son-in-law, Filippo Fucile, a former direttore generale of Cirio's Finanzaria, and his son Andrea Cragnotti, who also held a management role at the company.

Ciragnotti, who bought Cirio in 1994, denies wrongdoing.
Prime Minister Khin Nyunt inspected progress of building Nanmyint Tower in Bagan on 11-2-2004. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspected preservation of Bagan cultural heritage

YANGON, 13 Feb — Prime Minister Khin Nyunt inspected preservation of cultural heritage in Bagan region on 11 February. This morning arrival at the park, the Prime Minister and party were welcomed by Prof. Khin U Seint, Myint, faculty members and students. After choosing the site for the main hall of the university the Prime Minister visited the language and computer training centre. The pro-rector reported to the Prime Minister the location and the area of the university, academic matters, the number of students, 26 IT rooms installed with 98 computers, staff strength and organizational set-up and management affairs.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt gave instructions on promotion studies on major subjects and the construction of a three-storey building. He also inspected the lecture halls. At the project to rebuild King Anawrahta’s Bagan Pyinsapathada Shwenandaw Palace in Bagan, the Prime Minister heard a report on the reconstruction of the palace presented by Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung and officials. The Prime Minister gave suggestions.

During the inspection of the excavation site of King Anawrahta’s palace, the Prime Minister spoke of the need to preserve the finds for their durability. He then inspected the Nanmyint Tower Project, where Managing Director of Htoo Trading Co Ltd U Teza presented a report on the project. The tower should be a weather- and earthquake-resistant building which must have the essence of Bagan architecture and culture, the Prime Minister pointed out. At Bagan Airport, he heard a report on the airport terminal extension project presented by Deputy Minister for Transport Col Nyan Tun Aung and officials. The Prime Minister looked into the requirements. — MNA

Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects the mess for Aung San Summer.— MNA

Chief of Armed Forces Training inspects hostels of parade columns

YANGON, 13 Feb — Chairman of the Leading Committee for Organizing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Member of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Li-Gen Kyaw Win this morning inspected the hostels of Tatmadawmen who will participate in the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade.

On arrival at the meeting hall of the Resistance Park, the chief of Armed Forces Training was welcomed by Member of the Leading Committee Chairman of the Management Committee for Organizing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, members of the Leading Committee Vice-Chiefs of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint, Maj-Gen Aung Kyi and Brig-Gen Nyan Win, military region commanders, senior military officials and members of the Management Committee and the Work Committee.

Major Myo Thant reported on progress of work in decoration of the park with the use of charts. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Vice-Chiefs of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint, Maj-Gen Aung Kyi and Brig-Gen Nyan Win gave supplementary reports. The chief of Armed Forces Training gave instructions.

Next, the chief of Armed Forces Training inspected decoration tasks at the park and Myoma Sports Ground, and left necessary instructions.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now.
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi hold discussions at Seinle Kantha State House.— MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt meets Malaysian counterpart

YANGON, 13 Feb — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt met Prime Minister of Malaysia Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi at Seinle Kantha State House at 11 am today.

Also present at the meeting were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Myanmar Ambassador to Malaysia U Hla Maung, Director-General U Soe Tint of the Government Office and Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department.

The Malaysian Prime Minister was accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs Datuk Seri Syed Hamid bin Syed Jaafar Alhar, Secretary-General Tan Sri Ahmad Fuzi Hj Abdul Razad of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysian Ambassador to Myanmar Dato’ Cheah San Kip and senior officers.

At the meeting, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and Malaysian Prime Minister Dato’ Seri Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi posed for the documentary photo. The two Prime Ministers exchanged views on relations between the two countries, economic cooperation and regional issues.

The discussions were held in an atmosphere of warm friendship, cordiality and mutual respects.

They agreed to enhance the existing bilateral contacts and mutually beneficial cooperation in many areas. In this regard, they agreed to set up a joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation.

YANGON, 13 Feb — Chairman of the Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attended the ceremony to open the main hall of Myingyan Degree College and the Government Technical Institute (Myingyan).

The ceremony was held at the college in Myingyan, Mandalay Division, on 11 February.

Also present were members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, ministers, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department, local authorities, departmental personnel, the principal, faculties and students of the degree college and others.

Students formally unveiled the signboard and opened the hall. The Prime Minister and party posed for photos together with faculty members and students. They also planted trees to mark the success of the ceremony. The Prime Minister unveiled the stone inscription.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said the college and the institute are the results of the State’s resolve to ensure harmonious progress in all parts of the Union. The students who are pursuing advanced level studies at the two institutions with peace of mind will understand the power and value of the national unity that is the essence and the symbol of the Union.

Thus, it is sure that they are going to take part in the task to further strengthen the national unity.

Yangon University of Computer Studies in Yangon Division, Hpa-an University in Kayin State, Mohmyin Degree College and Government Technical Institute (Mohmyin) in Kachin State and Myingyan Degree College and Government Technical Institute (Myingyan) have been opened prior to the 57th Anniversary Union Day. The institutions are equipped with modern teaching aids and equipment.

Emergence of institutions of higher learning one after another reflects the Government’s parental equal love for people.

The educational institutions being opened the length and breadth of the Union will produce technicains and academicians in every part of the nation.

Thus, they contribute much to the unity and progress of the whole Union.

At present, the Government is building the political, economic and social foundations, that will serve the national interest in the long run, with the concerted efforts of the entire national people for the development and advancement of the nation, enabling it to stand shoulder with the world nations, and to protect and promote the national interest in the process of globalisation.

Over 100 national races are living in unity and amity in the Union of Myanmar. Thus, the firm national unity, prevalence of peace and stability in the