Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hosts dinner to Union Day delegates

YANGON, 15 Feb.—Chairman of the Central Committee for Organizing the 57th Anniversary Union DayPrime Minister General Khin Nyunt hosted a dinner in honour of members of traditional cultural troupes of states and divisions, Dawei traditional cultural troupe of Taninthayi Division and delegates of the Union Solidarity and Development Association from states and divisions who attended the 57th Anniversary Union Day ceremony at National Indoor Stadium-1 (Thawunna) at 6.30 pm today.

Also present at the dinner were Vice-Chairmen of the Central Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Chairman of the management committee for organizing the 57th Anniversary Union Day Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, the ministers, the Yangon mayor, the deputy ministers, the vice-mayor, senior military officers, members of the central committee and management committee, the director-general of the SPDC office, departmental heads, chairmen of Myanmar Thabin Asiayon, Myanmar Music Asiayon and Myanmar Motion Picture Asiayon, officials and special guests. After the dinner, the Prime Minister cordially greeted the Union Day delegates. Later, artistes entertained those present with songs and dances. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attends inauguration of Myingyan GTI

YANGON, 15 Feb.—Hailing the 57th Anniversary Union Day with a view to ensuring human resource development, the ceremony to inaugurate the main building of Government Technical Institute (Myingyan) was held at the building in Myingyan, Mandalay Division, on 11 February morning, attended by Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were member of the State Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, members of the institute, students and local people. First, first year mechanical power student Maung Zaw Myo Moo and first year civil student Ma Phyu Maw Maw formally opened the building. Next, the Prime Minister and party had photo taken together with teachers and students in front of the building. Then, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party planted Gangaw (Mesua ferrea), Star-flower and gum-kino trees in the compound of the building to mark its opening ceremony.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt then unveiled the plaque of the building. After the ceremony, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party inspected the computer hall and the e-library of the Myingyan GTI. — MNA

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
PERSPECTIVES
Monday, 16 February, 2004

Keep up development momentum

The State Peace and Development Council is making earnest efforts in all sectors for the nation to become a peaceful, modern and developed one. After taking up duties of the State, the Tatmadaw government has been making all-out efforts for national and regional development. Due to active cooperation of regional administrative bodies, fruitful results have been achieved in a short period of time.

Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity and the law have prevailed and national reconsolidation can be built. Better foundations in economic, social and transport sectors were laid and all regions in the country have considerably developed.

The Government has been implementing the border area development projects, the 24 special development regions projects and the five rural development tasks for ensuring equitable development of all parts of the Union with a view to enabling the nation made up of 14 States and Divisions to stand tall among the world nations, to further cementing national solidarity, and to maintaining the development momentum for a long time.

There are a great deal of tasks to be carried out in building the nation into a modern and developed one and those tasks are being implemented simultaneously. Progress has been made due to unity and endeavours at different levels. Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win met with members of Kachin State Peace and Development Council, Myitkyina District and Township Peace and Development Council chairmen and members, ward and village-tract chairmen and members at the town hall in Myitkyina on 9 February.

In his address, the Secretary-1 said that township, ward and village administrative bodies are those that directly deal with the people and their wrongdoing can tarnish the image of the State.

They are to exchange experiences with each other and need to remove the tendency to shirk and neglect duty and responsibility. In this way, dignity of the life of the personnel serving the interest of community with goodwill can be preserved.

As fruitful results have been achieved in nation-building tasks in a short period of time, local administrative bodies are urged to keep up the development momentum.

Efficient use of fuel

* Saving one gallon of fuel per car per month will save the nation one US dollar
* Thus, a total of 455,822 cars in Myanmar can save US $5.5 million in a year
* The amount, US $5.5 million, can build a major bridge across Ayeyawady River

Efficient use of electricity

* Use daylight as the main source of light
* Use the least possible amount of electricity only if there is not enough natural light
* Use the least possible amount of electricity required in production and service enterprises
* Preventing waste of electricity benefits the user and others

There are about 500,000 households using electricity in Yangon. Thus, saving a four-foot fluorescent lamp everyday by each household amounts to saving power that is equal to the capacity a 20-megawatt power station can supply.

Organizational set-up and functions of MWAF explained at MMA

YANGON, 15 Feb — President of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe and party explained organizational set-up and functions of MWAF to members of Myanmar Women’s Medical Association (Yangon) at MMA hall on Theinbyu Street at 3 pm today.

Also present were Vice-Presidents Professor Dr Daw May May Yi and Daw Than Than Nwe, executives, Secretariat members, Chairman of MMA Prof Dr U Myo Myint and executives, member doctors, patrons of the Myanmar Women’s Medical Association (Yangon) and members. Chairman of MMA Prof Dr U Myo Myint gave a speech. Then, Vice-President Prof Dr Daw May May Yi clarified organizational set-up of the MWAF and submitting of membership applications.

Next, Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe explained functions of the federation.

Narcotic drugs seized in Myeik, Muse

YANGON, 15 Feb — A combined team comprising members of local intelligence unit, Myanmar Police Force members and Kawthoung Special Anti-drug Squad, Bureau of Special Investigation and Special Investigation Department and Criminal Investigation Department, acting on information, searched a suspect, Ma San San Wai, at Ngwaja-2 Street, Satwin Ward, Myeiktaung Region, on 30 December 2003 and seized her together with 70 grams of speciosa.

According to further investigations, 32 packets of speciosa weighing 2.24 kilos were seized from her house. Pale (2) Street in Myotha (2) Ward, Myeiktaung Region.

Similarly, a combined team including members of local intelligence unit, Myanmar Police Force members and Muse Special Anti-Drug Squad, acting on information, searched a car with the number plates Hsa/7964 of Shwe Raza Motor Vehicle Association on route from Muse to Namkham at the entrance to Kaungsa Village in Nankham Township on 21 January, and arrested Ma Laphai Jar Ein on board along with 26 grams of heroin hidden in two soap cases from her bag.

Action is being taken against the culprits by the police stations concerned under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.
Iraqi resistance may have inside information

BAGHDAD, 15 Feb—Pentagon officials have expressed concern that resistance fighters may be staging attacks in Iraq based on inside information about US operations.

The concerns were raised on Thursday after recent strikes against three high-profile Americans.

General John Abizaid, who commands US troops in the Gulf, came under attack in Fallujah on Thursday when fighters shot rocket-propelled grenades at his convoy. Abizaid and his party were unharmed.

Defence officials said the Pentagon was aware that the Iraqi resistance might seek to infiltrate security forces created by the United States or to place a “mole” inside US-led civilian operations in the country.

“If you ask anyone, they’ll all say, ‘Yeah, it’s a concern.” There’s no two ways about it,” said one official, speaking on condition of anonymity. “Certainly we monitor the situation very closely,” another said. “It’s something that we’ve always been aware of and have taken steps to prevent.”

On 26 October, rockets struck the Baghdad hotel where Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was staying. And on 6 December, a motorcade carrying US occupation administrator Paul Bremer was ambushed near Baghdad International Airport.

Defence analyst Charles Pena of the Cato Institute said the number of timefighters have been able to target high-profile Americans is disturbing.

“That’s something you cannot do that many times, I would argue, simply through sheer luck and coincidence. They have to be getting some kind of information,” Pena said. —Internet

Gunned open fire on Iraqi police station

Fallujah (Iraq), 15 Feb—Gunned opened fire on a police station and a local government building in the volatile Iraqi town of Fallujah on Saturday, witnesses said.

A hospital official said several people had been brought in for treatment, but reports of deaths could not be immediately confirmed.

Guerrillas in Fallujah, a hotbed of anti-American activity 32 miles west of Baghdad, have frequently attacked US troops and Iraqis who cooperate with them, especially policemen. Witnesses said parts of the city were cordoned off.

Secret US study raised possibility that weapons would not be found

WASHINGTON, 15 Feb—A classified US intelligence study done three months before the invasion of Iraq predicted that weapons of mass destruction might never be found there, the USA Today newspaper said.

The newspaper said the study by a team of US intelligence analysts, military officers and Pentagon civilians warned that US tactics, guerrilla warfare, looting and lying by Iraqis officials would undermine the search for banned Iraqi weapons.

The document was described to the daily by three high-ranking US intelligence officials. USA Today said it had also obtained portions of the study.

“Locating a program that has been driven by denial and deception imperatives is no small task,” the paper quotes the December 2002 report as saying.

“Prolonged insecurity with factional violence and guerrilla forces still at large would be the worst outcome for finding Saddam’s WMD arsenal,” the report said.

Officials said the report went to the National Security Council but was not specifically shown to President George W Bush, the paper said.

The findings diverge from pre-war statements by US officials saying that caches of banned weapons would be found in Iraq.

Assembly of Digital Solidarity Fund Initiators set up in Dakar

KIGALI, 15 Feb — The Assembly of the Digital Solidarity Fund Initiators was established in Dakar, capital of Senegal, on Friday following a meeting between the Senegalese President and the mayors of the cities of Geneva, Lyon, Turin and Dakar.

The idea is to extend this initiative to the cities of Asia, Canada, the United States, Africa and Latin America, according to a progress report on the digital solidarity fund issued here on Saturday during the summit of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) held here on February 13-14.

The city of Lyon is going to contact them by phone and ask them whether they agree to participate in the fund as founding members, said the report.

Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade is responsible for initiating contacts with the states pending the establishment of a committee of sponsors comprising some African, Asian, European and Latin American countries as well as Canada and the United States.

China boasts 425,000 associations for senior citizens

Beijing, 15 Feb—China has set up 425,000 associations for its elderly people, whose number grows about 3 per cent yearly, according to sources with a relevant government office on aging on Thursday.

About 66 per cent of urban communities and 56 per cent of rural villages have founded such associations.

China could pay more attention to the aging problem in vast rural areas.

In the Year 2000, China already had 130 million elderly people over 60 years old, and the number of those in the age group over 80 in- creases by 5 per cent annually, the figures showed.

HANGZHOU, 15 Feb—US-based Carlson Hotels Worldwide, together with Scott Wilson from Britain, signed an agreement Wednesday with a Chinese company to build its first hotel in China.

The hotel, to be built in Ningbo, a booming port city in east China’s Zhejiang Province, will cost over 500 million yuan (60 million US dollars) and will be a five-star hotel, sources with the developers said.

Carlson has been in talks with partner companies in Beijing and Shanghai, and it expected to open eight more hotels in major cities of China, company sources said. An international lead- ing hotel group, Carlson Hotels Worldwide owns about 1,700 hotels, inns and restaurants in 82 countries and regions with a total em- ployment of 200,000.

Scott Wilson specializes in engineering and design- ing. It has five branch companies and 300 technicians and experts in China. China Yuanwang Huaxia Co Ltd, their Chinese partner based in Ningbo, is a leading local house developer.

MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

Internet
537 US service members killed since beginning of military operations in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 15 Feb.—As of Friday, 537 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, according to the Department of Defence. Of those, 373 died as a result of hostile action and 164 died of other causes, the department said.

The British military has reported 58 deaths; Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Bulgaria, five; Thailand, two; Denmark, Ukraine and Poland have reported one each.

Since May 1, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 399 US soldiers have died 258 as a result of hostile action and 141 of other causes, according to the military.

Since the start of military operations, 2,629 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department. Nonhostile incidents numbered 410.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

A 16th Military Police Brigade soldier was killed Thursday evening in an attack in Baghdad. Identifications reported by the military:

Army Sgt Patrick Tamish, 33, Oceanside, Calif.; killed Wednesday by an explosive while on patrol in Baghdad, assigned to Troop E, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armoured Cavalry Regiment, Fort Polk, La.

Army Pfc William Ramirez, 19, Portland, Ore.; killed Wednesday by an explosive while on patrol in Baghdad, assigned to Troop E, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Armoured Cavalry Regiment, Fort Polk, La.

Three killed in avalanche in western Canada

OTTAWA, 15 Feb.—Three ice climbers were killed after being caught in an avalanche Thursday in Banff National Park in Canada’s western province of Alberta, reports reaching here said Friday.

Their names and hometowns were not released pending notification of next of kin, but early reports indicated they were from the United States, an official of the national park said.

Three part of two climbing parties, were on Mount Wilson north of Lake Louise when the avalanche apparently knocked them off their climbing route Thursday.

Two were found Thursday while the third was located Friday morning after a dozen parkwardens using avalanche dogs and probes combed the avalanche debris at the bottom of an ice waterfall where the trio had been ice climbing. Lasting year was the worst year for avalanche deaths in Canada. According to the Canadian Avalanche Association there were 29 deaths due to avalanches.

British soldiers face new charges of Iraq brutality

LONDON, 15 Feb.—British soldiers called hooded Iraqi detainees by footballers’ names as they kicked and beat them, The Independent on Sunday has been told. One of the Iraqis subsequently died.

Kifah Taha, a hotel worker who suffered acute renal failure after being kicked by soldiers during questioning, said each of the Iraqis was given a nickname.

“They called us by the names of footballers,” he said, “and kept telling us to repeat them, so we would remember who we were.”

One of Mr Taha’s hotel colleagues, Baha Mousa, a 26-year-old receptionist, died in custody after being arrested with seven of his colleagues in Basra last September by troops from the Queen’s Lancashire Regiment, based in Catterick in North Yorkshire. The Ministry of Defence said last week that reports of a possible manslaughter charge were “speculation.” The MoD is investigating the previously unreported death in British custody of Ather Karen al-Mowafakia on 29 April last year. Officials say his death was listed separately from six other deaths in custody because it occurred before the end of the Iraq war.

Adam Price, a Plaid Cymru MP, said he had been warned off visiting Basra next month to make further inquiries.

“One will not be given any protection and my safety cannot be guaranteed,” he said. “The Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, has told me that if I do go I will be killed.”

There seems to be a deliberate attempt to prevent the information reaching the public domain — because these are embarrassing headlines. — Internet

New Zealand scientists to join study on world climate

Wellington, 15 Feb.—A New Zealand research ship will set sail from Wellington for Chile on Sunday as part of a major international project to understand and predict world climate phenomena.

Oceanographer Philip Sutton, from New Zealand’s National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIwa), said in a statement Friday that the ship Kahurangi will deploy 61 high-tech drifting floats, worth about $2.8 million, in the world’s oceans by 2006.

The floats will provide real-time measurements of the temperature and salinity of the upper ocean, which will help forecast long-term climate change and events like El Nino and tropical cyclones.

“Once on the surface, the float transmits this information and its location via a satellite,” he said.

“We don’t have much information on the temperature and salinity of the South Pacific, so these floats will play a very important role in helping to fill this gap,” he said.

The voyage — the first of three planned by NIwa this year — is a joint collaboration with the University of Washington and Scripps Institute of Oceanography in San Diego.

The global programme, which is called Argo, aims to deploy and maintain 3,000 drifting floats in the world’s oceans by 2006.

There are currently 1,029 active floats deployed by 17 countries throughout the world.

“Information from all the floats is shared internationally, and will be invaluable for monitoring the state of the ocean, predicting weather and cyclones, and studying global climate,” Sutton said. — MNA/Xinhua

Greece paralysed by worst snow in decades

ATHENS, 15 Feb.—The Greek capital shut down on Friday when one of the worst snow storms in decades grounded planes, closed ports and highways and stranded thousands of people at bus stops and train stations.

The Acropolis, symbol of the city, was closed, and police said it would be too dangerous to climb up the slippery marble stairway to the temple site.

Meteorologists had warned in advance about the storm, that started on Thursday evening and has already coated Athens with up to 50 centimetres of snow. “It is still too early to say how heavy this storm is but it certainly is one of the heaviest snow falls in decades,” a national weather centre official told Reuters.

The blizzard even paralysed Greek political life. Foreign Minister George Papandreou called off a ceremony where he was scheduled to formally resign to lead the governing socialists in the campaign for March 7 general elections. — MNA/Reuters

World Press Photo of the year 2003 and first prize People in the News singles category by French photographer Jean-Marc Bouju of The Associated Press, showing an Iraqi man comforting his 4-year-old son at a reintegration centre for POW’s in Najaf, Iraq, March 31, 2003. — Internet

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MNA/Xinhua

US soldier killed, nine wounded in Afghan attack

KHOST (Afghanistan), 15 Feb.—At least two Afghans and a US soldier were killed and 15 people wounded on Friday in separate incidents in Afghanistan, police and the US military said.

The US Central Command said a US soldier was killed and nine others wounded by a mine near Ghazni. The incident was under investigation and no further details were available.

In Khost, at least two Afghans were killed and six wounded in an explosion at a government military post near the former Taliban stronghold in northeastern Afghanistan, police said.

The blast came hours after more than 20 rockets landed near Khost’s airport, where US-led forces are based, said an official. It was the biggest single rocket attack since the fall of the Taliban in late 2001, but US military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Bryan Hilferty reported no casualties.

“There were no coalition casualties,” he said in a statement. — MNA/Reuters

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The floats will provide real-time measurements of the temperatures and salinity of the upper ocean that will help forecast long-term climate change and events like El Nino and tropical cyclones.

“The float sinks to a depth of between 1,600 and 2,000 metres where it remains for nine or 10 days carried by ocean currents,” Dr Sutton said.

“It then rises to the surface, measuring the temperature and salinity through the water column as it ascends.”

“Once on the surface, the float transmits this information and its location via a satellite,” he said.

“We don’t have much information on the temperature and salinity of the South Pacific, so these floats will play a very important role in helping to fill this gap,” he said.

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IRAQ UNDER US OCCUPATION

Protesters shout slogans as they march towards the gates of the US-controlled Abu Ghraib prison, 20 kilometres west of Baghdad, Iraq on Saturday 14 Feb, 2004 for a rally demanding the release of prisoners captured by US forces during the war on Iraq. —INTERNET

A US soldier inspects the site where a suicide car bomb exploded on 10 Feb. At least 55 people were killed and 65 wounded when a suicide bomber detonated a pick-up truck packed with explosives outside a police station south of Baghdad. —INTERNET

Scores of gunmen firing mortars and grenades stormed Iraqi security posts in Falluja on 14 Feb, killing 22 people including 14 police in the latest audacious strike. The picture shows a group of US soldiers securing an attacked police station in Falluja. —INTERNET

An armed Iraqi man takes cover on the streets of Falluja, 35 miles south of Baghdad, on Saturday 14 Feb, 2004 in this image taken from video. —INTERNET

A crowd of Iraqis looks over the scene of an explosion at a police station in Iskandariyah, south of Baghdad, on Tuesday, 10 Feb, 2004. —INTERNET
Study says maternal love affects brain like romance

WASHINGTON, 15 Feb — Love may indeed be blind, whether it is love for a new born or its father, British researchers reported on Friday.

Scientists showed that the brains of young mothers lit up in the same way when they looked at their babies as the brains of people who looked at images of their lovers.

And the region activated told an important story, too. It was an area known as the reward system.

Parts of the brain also turned on when it was shown a picture of a lover, spouse or child — and that was the system involved in making negative judgments, the team at University College London said.

Writing in the journal NeuroImage, they said their finding suggests that to some degree, love really is blind to faults.

“Both romantic and maternal love are highly rewarding experiences that are linked to the perpetuation of the same time,” the researchers wrote. “Unknown men fired mortars, explosives and light machineguns from four directions. Their weapons were more powerful than our Kalashnikovs,” said police officer Erazan Abu Issa, who was outside the police station when it was attacked.

The attack signaled a growing boldness on the part of insurgents fighting US-led forces and Iraqis they regard as supporting the occupiers.

US planes circled overhead and dropped heat balloons to divert heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles, witnesses said.

Guerrillas have killed more than 600 security and police forces since April in an attempt to undermine US efforts to prepare Iraqis to take over security of the country.

FALLuja, 15 Feb — Dozens of anti-American guerrillas storm Iraqi security compounds in Falluja

FALLuja police chief Aboud al-Dulaimi said about 70 guerrillas firing rockets, mortars and machineguns launched the coordinated attack on a police headquarters as well as on a compound for the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps (ICDC) and the mayor’s office.

Police and hospital officials said 14 policemen, four insurgents and four civilians were killed in the attack, the latest in a series of assaults on Iraqi security forces seen by the insurgents as supporting the US occupation.

At least 35 others were wounded in the attack.

An Iraqi police officer said the guerrillas outgunned the policemen at the station. A government building situated several hundred metres (yards) away was assaulted at the same time.

The areas activated were the region of the war-ravaged country.

Iraqi interim Foreign Minister Hushyar Zebari, meeting his regional counterparts for the first time, arrived in the Kuwaiti capital on Saturday, refusing to talk to reporters after being received by his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Muhammad al-Sabah.

The two-day conference, the fifth of its kind, is scheduled to kick off at 6.00 pm (1500 GMT) on Saturday, grouping the foreign ministers of Iraq, Kuwait, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Bahrain and Egypt.

Iraq, which is attending this meeting for the first time, will request from its neighbours proof of goodwill on the level of security and cooperation,” an Arab official in Kuwait told AFP. A senior Arab official earlier said the forum “will allow Iraq to air its concerns and enable its neighbours to explain theirs”.

“Iraq is preparing for this meeting next month and your neighbour countries also are preparing for this meeting. We shall have the possibility to have a discussion about the Iraqi crisis, and about the security situation in Iraq. I think it is very important,” said Maha Ruqai, a Kuwaiti political analyst.

Maha Ruqai, a Kuwaiti political analyst, added that the forum is the first time the neighbour countries have invited Iraq to participate.

The meeting will discuss the means of helping the Iraqi people in the political construction of their state and recovering their sovereignty, as well as helping with the reconstruction itself, Maha said in Cairo before leaving for Kuwait.

Report says BBC could lose independence

LONDON, 15 Feb — The UK government is contemplating breaking up the BBC and stripping the broadcaster of its independent status, a British newspaper has reported.

The Sunday Times said government papers prepared by senior civil servants propose to split the BBC into separate regional entities for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

It has also been proposed that the job of ensuring the BBC’s impartiality be taken away from the corporation’s board of governors.

The newspaper report comes as the BBC negotiates an uncertain future in wake of the Hutton inquiry, which castigated it for misreporting on British pre-war intelligence on Iraq.

The inquiry by Lord Hutton, followed by the deaths of weapons expert David Kelly, concluded last month that the BBC story alleging the government had “sexed up” intelligence to justify the invasion was unfounded.

“The government is gearing up to exploit the fall-out from the Hutton inquiry.”

Plans being considered include giving a government media watchdog greater control over the BBC’s output, closing BBC outlets which are not considered public services and even forcing the corporation to share some of its licence fee revenues with other broadcasters.

Opinion polls after the Hutton inquiry showed that many people considered its verdict a “ whitewash,” and that they trusted the BBC far more than they did Prime Minister Tony Blair and his ministers.

Spring soldier headed to Iraq dies in crash

GATESVille, 15 Feb — An Army reserve soldier preparing for deployment to Iraq was killed in a one-vehicle accident, military officials said today.

Spc Jeremy R Smith of Spring died Friday morning when his personal vehicle went off the road and ran into a tree near Gatesville, Fort Hood officials said.

Gatesville is located a few miles north of Fort Hood. Smith, 22, was assigned to the 461st Quartermaster Company, a US Army Reserve unit based in McAllen, Texas.

It was the third death in a series of accidents which have complicated plans for the unit’s soldiers to depart for Iraq within the next few days.

The accident is under investigation.

Arab FM's to meet on postwar Iraq

KUWAIT, 15 Feb — Iraq's neighbours are gathering in Kuwait City for top-level talks on the post-war situation and the effects on the region of the war-ravaged country.

Iraqi interim Foreign Minister Hushyar Zebari, meeting his regional counterparts for the first time, arrived in the Kuwaiti capital Saturday, refusing to talk to reporters after being received by his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Muhammad al-Sabah.

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“It is important to work together for a situation where the Iraqi people regain their full sovereignty, and this should pave the way for stability,” Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmad Mahir told al-Qabas daily before his arrival. “I believe that the key issue that may achieve normality is to arrive at a settlement among Iraqis that guarantees they regain practicing full sovereignty over their united territories,” Mahir said.

The meeting will discuss the means of helping the Iraqi people in the political construction of their state and recovering their sovereignty, as well as helping with the reconstruction itself, Mahir said in Cairo before leaving for Kuwait.

This colour image taken by the Mars Exploration Rover Spirit’s panoramic camera shows a flaky rock called Mimi, centre, in this image released by NASA on 13 Feb, 2004. Mimi’s flaky appearance leads scientists to a number of hypotheses. Mimi could be a dune that was cemented into flaky layers, a process that sometimes involves the action of water, according to NASA officials.
Those professors PhD degree holders, researchers and observers were from famous universities of Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, Singapore, Thailand, UK, the US, Vietnam and so on. With best regards and admiring and adoring Myanmar’s traditions, customs and culture, they paid a visit to Myanmar under their own arrangements to observe as well as to discuss points about Myanmar.

Some big powers would not like their plan to visit Myanmar. Disregarding that, they did come here. Their affection for Myanmar outweighed their governments’ attitude. It indicates that no one can isolate Myanmar with own fine traditions and culture.

They willingly attended the Conference on Traditions of Knowledge of Southeast Asia held in Yangon last December. A total of 45 papers were submitted at the conference. Among them, 34 were related to facts about Myanmar — 22 by foreign nations and 12 by the host. They had to come to Myanmar for several times to complete their papers and so it showed how much they took interest in Myanmar’s culture, traditions and customs.

Their papers dealt with various subjects such as religion, culture, literature, Kayin and Shan national races, traditional medical science, Myanmar’s history and civilization, worshipping in nats, and Myanmar-Thai duet fights with lances riding elephants. They took interest in and knew more about Myanmar than I did and thus I acknowledge their affection for Myanmar. I would like to present some of their papers.

Regarding to the religion of Myanmar, the paper “A country modeled by Buddhist Traditions” was presented of their papers. The researchers are in the US Ms. Alexandra Green, “The Denison University Collection of Myanmar Art “Acquisition and Analysis”, researcher of the Studinter & Associates of the US Mr. Donald M. Studinter, “The Fallacy of Pys Art” Dr. Annetje Escher of Humboldt University of Germany, The Tradition of Reference Books in Myanmar and the Challenges of The Present Time; and Professor Dr. Takahito Onishi of Kyung University of Japan, “Harp of Myanmar” and the “Southeast Asian influence on the modern Japanese minds”.

In connection with Myanmar national races, Professor Dr Takakshi Michio of Hiroshima University of Japan presented the paper “Ethnic Identity and Knowledge of Shan”; researcher Mr Ikeda Kazuo of Tokyo University of Japan, “Various Versions of the Kayin History knowledge of the People among the Buddhist and Christian Kayins”; and researcher Dr Sun Laichen of Singapore National University, “Histories of Gwe, Gwe, Kui Peoples in Mainland Southeast Asia”. Professor Dr Chowdhury Anwar Hussein of Dhaka University, Bangladesh, reported on Myanmar traditional medicine in his paper “Indigenous Medical Knowledge: Myanmar”.

In connection with Myanmar history, Dr. Aurore Candies of Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in France submitted paper on “Imagination and Knowledge: Some Comments on Rumours in the Mid-nineteenth Century Konbaung Court”, Dr. Wil O. Dijaks of Leiden University of the Netherlands on “Life in Seventeenth Century Myanmar through Dutch Eyes” and Dr. Sunait Chutivararud of Chulalongkorn University on “The Rite of Elephant Duel in Tha-Myanmar History”.

Dr. Elizabeth Moore of London University reported on construction of ancient city structure in her paper on “Ancient Knowledge and Use of Landscape in Walled Settlements in Lower Myanmar”, researcher Mr. Bob Hudson of University of Sydney on “Myanmar’s Early Urban Centres: Some Proposals for Computer Mapping and Analysis of Archaeological Data”. He told me to observe the ancient site of the city in Hsinhsin Village near Mintaingbin Village after I had informed him about it.

In connection with worshipping of Nat, Dr. Benefidee Brac dela Perriere of CNRS department in France submitted paper on “Ritual as Knowledge and its Transmission Concerning the Cult of Thirty-Seven Lords.”

Researchers and scholars from various countries talked to each other during the tea and lunch break. They really love and respect Myanmar. They told me they would come to Myanmar again. They are good friends who have given lectures on Myanmar history and high cultural tradition in their respective countries. They will love Myanmar whatever the respective government’s policy is.

I write this article to present this point. The citizens of the Union of Myanmar too should be proud of their country. We, Myanmar people study more about our own country and write on it after loving and cherishing her more.

Retired ambassador U Thet Tun, Dr Thaw Kaung, Dr Khin Maung Nyunt, Professor U Tun Aung Chein, Daw Ni Ni Myint, Daw Kaywai Kyawat, U Aung Thun Dan, Dr Khin Aye, Dr Tin Soe, U Tin Win, U Kyaw Win Oo and U Sein Myint submitted 12 research papers. The researchers are in their old age now. New generation researchers are to be nurtured.

In honour of the Union Day I wrote an article “The Union we love and cherish” in 13-2-2003 issue of Myanma Alinn. The last year. The Union Spirit of national races is not the same that of other countries. No one created it politically, religiously and militarily. The spirit was emerged based on the love for the country formed in the hearts of the people.

Therefore, our Union Spirit is like the earth. It cannot be destroyed. It is like the open sky. It cannot be tarnished with inharmonious colours. It is like River Ayeyawady that flows forever. It cannot be burnt. I believe nothing can destroy the Union Spirit. I urged all of us to make endeavours for prosperity of the Union in unity.

This is our spirit and determination to love and cherish the Union forever.

(Translation MS+ NY) (Myanma Alinn 13-2-2004)
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt visits factories.

MBA students visit factories

YANGON, 15 Feb — The students of first year (evening class) of MBA (Master of Business Administration) led by Professor Daw Nu Nu Yin of Management Department of Yangon Institute of Economics yesterday visited Maple garment factory in Pale Myothit and Seinle Myay Foodstuff Industry in Hlinthaing industrial zone here.

Responsible officials concerned welcomed them and explained about the factories. The students were then conducted round the factories.

Minister inspects development tasks


Yesterday morning, the minister attended the ceremony to put into service the rural development base camp and the entrance road to Buta Village, Chawngk Township and explained seven-step road map for future programmes of the State. Then, the minister presented K 100,000, sports gears and periodicals to the base camp. The base camp was built at a cost of K 1.2 million and the road is 15 feet wide and one mile long.

In Kyaukse, the minister inspected construction of new gymnasium and renovation of the sports ground.

This morning, the minister saw over upgrading of the sports ground in Maahanungmye Township in Mandalay and Sports and Physical Education Institute (Mandalay) and fulfilled the requirements.

MNA
**Yangon**, 15 Feb — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Minister for Finance & Revenue Maj-Gen Ohn Myint, Deputy Minister for Agriculture & Irrigation Brig-Gen Khin Maung, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and heads of department, left here by air on 13 February and arrived in Myeik, Taninthayi Division, at 1 pm.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party were welcomed there by Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Commander Brig-Gen Ohn Myint and Col Hla Tun, Deputy Commander of Coastal Region Development Council Office and Co Chairman U Htay Myint and other military officers and departmental officials.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo together with the commander, the deputy minister and departmental officials inspected Myeik by-pass on 13 February and arrived in Myeik, Taninthayi Division, at 1 pm.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party were welcomed there by Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Commander Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Minister for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun, Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Brig-Gen Khin Maung, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and heads of department and entrepreneurs, arrived in Kawthoung airport by air via Myeik at 9.30 am on 14 February. They were welcomed there by Col Myint Tun of Kawthoung Station, Chairman of Kawthoung District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Tin Soe and departmental officials.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party arrived at the 30-ton crude edible oil mill construction project site of Yuzana Co Ltd.

First, Chairman of the company U Htay Myint reported on cultivation of oil palm and arrangements made for construction of the mill.

Commander Brig-Gen Ohn Myint and Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Khin Maung gave supplementary reports.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo gave instructions to officials.

Afterwards, the stake-driving ceremony for construction of the mill was held at the site chosen.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Minister Maj-Gen Hla Tun, Minister Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Khin Maung, Col Myint Tun of Kawthoung Station and Co Chairman U Htay Myint drove the stakes according to the programme at the auspicious time and sprinkled scented water.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party performed rituals of silver and golden showers to mark the success of the ceremony.

After that, the cornerstone laying ceremony for construction of the main office of Yuzana Co Ltd was held at the site chosen.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party laid the cornerstones and sprinkled scented water.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected the 30-ton crude edible oil mill project site.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo met with officers and other ranks and their families of Khamaukgyi Station to mark the success of the ceremony.

Later, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected the 30-ton crude edible oil mill project site.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected the 30-ton crude edible oil mill project site. The minister and party went to the briefing hall of Namittana road construction project special group-6. Officials reported on construction works and the minister gave necessary instructions. Next, he inspected Myitkyina road section. The minister and party looked into Myitkyina-Sumprabum road section on Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putoa Road on 11 February. On 12 February, the minister paid homage to the Suwprabum Theravadha Missionary Monastery Sayadaw and donated offerings.

Minister inspecting roads and bridges

**Yangon**, 15 Feb — Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, accompanied by officials inspected Mandalay-Sayagyi-Shwebo Road on 7 February and gave necessary instructions to engineers. On 8 February, the minister inspected Shwebo-Myitkyina Road by car and construction progress of Mohinpy Bridge and gave instructions on timely completion of the bridge.

On 10 February, the minister and party went to the briefing hall of Namittana road construction project special group-6. Officials reported on construction works and the minister gave necessary instructions. Next, he inspected Myitkyina road section. The minister and party looked into Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putoa road section on Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putoa Road on 11 February. On 12 February, the minister paid homage to the Suwprabum Theravadha Missionary Monastery Sayadaw and donated offerings.

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Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects the site for construction of hospital in Shwepinlon Housing Project in Dagon Myothit (North) Township. — mna

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt views small scale model of Shwepinlon Housing Project on 14-2-2004. — mna

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects the site for construction of hospital in Shwepinlon Housing Project in Dagon Myothit (North) Township. — mna

City becoming more and more pleasant ...

(from page 16)

In the past in Yangon, he said, there were no systematic residential quarters and buildings in conformity with the characteristics of a city. There was insufficiency of clean drinking water and were weaknesses in sanitation and sewerage system. People could not live in hygienic and pleasant environment, he said.

Therefore, he said, the City Housing Project Supervisory Committee is systematically implementing the housing projects for construction of modern buildings and creation of pleasant environment in accord with urban projects. The committee is also making Yangon City clean and pleasant, he added.

He stressed the importance of systematic layout for making Yangon pleasant. He spoke of the need to renovate old buildings and remove the ones that are in danger of collapsing according to the rules and regulations as the city is now over 100 years old.

He said there are now green and pleasant gardens in almost all cities in South East Asia and Asia regions. That is why strenuous efforts are being made to enable Yangon to become a green and pleasant garden city, he added.

He said Kandawgyi and its environs are being made into a green and pleasant garden. City dwellers can take the pleasure of roundabouts and islands with greater momentum.

He said the city is becoming more and more pleasant day after day due to systematic and harmonious efforts of the committee. He called on departmental officials and entrepreneurs to hold coordination and cooperation for realization and completion of the project in scheduled time in accord with the objectives of the city housing projects.

The Prime Minister called for cooperation in unity.

Next, the committee members and officials reported to the Prime Minister on matters related to land, housing, housing project, city development tasks including construction of railway overpass, progress of work, work being carried and future tasks.

After that, Secretary of the High-rise Building Supervisory Committee U Than Myint reported on matters related to construction of high-rise buildings and designs and inspection of high-rise building. This was followed by a general round of discussions.

The meeting ended with the concluding remarks by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Next, the Prime Minister together with Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, the commander and officials inspected Dagon Yeikmon overpass that have already been built in Dagon Myothit (North). The overpass is linking Dagon Myothit (Seikkan), Dagon Myothit (South) and Dagon Myothit (North) Townships.

Next, the Prime Minister and party arrived at Shwepinlon Housing project site.

First, Director-General of DHSSH U Arnt Kyaw reported on implementation of the housing project in Dagon Myothit (North) by Shwekyay Byan Construction and Tosta Construction Group, construction of commercial zone to be completed with schools, the three-storey market, public zone with football grounds, cinema, shops, business offices and department store and residential zone to be facilitated with apartments.

Next, Managing Director of TMW Construction Group U Banya Lwin reported on matters related to Mya Yaman Sanieikmon housing project being implemented in Dagon Myothit (South).

Next, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt gave instructions, saying that progress has been made in Dagon Myothit (South) and Dagon Myothit (North) Townships, adding that there has been better transport in the region with the emergence of Dagon Yeikmon overpass linking Dagon Myothit (South) and Dagon Myothit (North). The emergence of the overpass also contributes to development of Dagon Myothit, he disclosed.

A hub of Yangon will soon emerge as Shwepinlon Housing Estate will complete with schools, hospital, department store, gymnasium, sports grounds, busyness centre, houses and apartments and other facilities, he stressed.

Next, the Prime Minister inspected the construction project. — MNA

Dagon Yeikmon Overpass seen to link among Dagon Myothit (Seikkan), (South) and (North) townships. — mna
Rules announced for Painting and Sculpture Contests

YANGON, 14 Feb.—The Sub-committee for Organizing the Painting and Sculpture Contest has announced rules for the painting and sculpture contests. The painting contest comprises six categories—pre-primary level (primary, first and second standards), senior primary level (third and fourth), middle school level (fifth to seventh standards), high school level (right to tenth standards and technical and agricultural high schools) and open division. There will be only one category in the sculpture contest with wood sculpture category and plaster sculpture in open division. Anyone may take part in both.

In the pre-primary level to high school levels, the size of the entry must be 15" x 20". The entry must be endorsed by respective principals with name, standard, school, township, date of birth, father’s name, full address and two passport-size photos. The entries are to be sent to the Education Planning and Training Department at 123, Natmauk Street, Bahan Township, by 23 February 2004. Entries for the open division painting contest must be 20" x 30". Name, NRC No, date of birth, father’s name, occupation and full address must be expressed with two passport-size photos attached. The entries for the wood sculpture and the plaster sculpture contests must not be higher than 36 inches high and circumference not longer than 24 inches. At the foot of the works, name, NRC No, date of birth, father’s name, full address must be written with two passport-size photos attached, and they must be sent to Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road between 1 and 3 March. All the entries must reflect the twelve objectives of the State, the objectives of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day and the twelve fine traditions of the Tatmadaw.

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Schools introduce new methods of legal education in N-W China

CHONGQING, 15 Feb.—Primary and high schools in northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region have engaged people from legal circles to be associate heads, giving pupils a high quality legal education.

Sun Dongsheng, an official with the autonomous region’s department of justice, said that Xinjiang encourages schools to hire officials from justice departments, lawyers and policemen as associate headmasters, giving pupils a high quality legal education.

He made up legal education materials issued by the state, Xinjiang had compiled a set of teaching materials based on its special regional and ethnic situation in the languages of the Han, Uygur, Kazak and Mongolian ethnic groups, said the official.

Wang Guoyou, hired by a high school in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang, is the police station head of the city’s Dongshan District.

He made up legal education materials by selecting criminal cases he had handled, giving lessons to the pupils with his own experiences.

Sun said that 80 per cent of Xinjiang’s 8,071 primary and high schools had associate headmasters responsible for legal education, and as a result, juvenile delinquency had been remarkably reduced in the past year.

MNA/Xinhua

Marijuana seized

YANGON, 15 Feb.—A combined team comprising members of local intelligence unit, Myanmar Police Force and Special Anti-drug Squad, acting on information searched the house of Kyaw Win Htu (a) Kyaw Htu, son of U Kyaw Nyein of No 408, Myatlay (5) Street in Ward-22, Dagon Myothit (South) Township, on 10 February. The authorities arrested Kyaw Win Htu and his accomplices, U Thein Dan, son of U Ohn Shwe of No 10, 7 Market Road in Ward-6 (West), Thakayta Township, Ye Lwin On, son of U Hlaing Aye of No 1045, Myaindawtha Street in Ward-1, Thakayta Township, and Thein On, son of U Tun Hla of No 909, Hupayon (1) Street, Ward-1, Thakayta Township, together with 30.77 kgs of marijuana.

Action was taken against the culprits by the police station concerned under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law.

MNA

Chongqing move 108,000 people from Three Gorges in 2004

CHONGQING, 15 Feb.—Southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality plans to relocate 108,000 residents to make way for the Three Gorges Reservoir this year, a local resettlement official said.

Among the 108,000 people to be resettled, 23,400 peasants will be relocated to other parts of China this year while 130 industrial and mining enterprises will be moved from the reservoir areas, said Liu Fuym, director of Chongqing municipal resettlement department.

Liu said the municipality would build about 2.75 million square metres of houses this year for the resettlement. To date, more than 800,000 residents have been moved from Chongqing and neighbouring Hubei Province to clear the way for the Three Gorges Reservoir and the world’s biggest hydroelectric project.

The municipal government will concentrate on developing key projects like transport, energy and water resources in the reservoir areas to create jobs for migrants.

About 1.3 million people, most of whom are Chongqing residents, will have to move for the dam project on its completion in 2009.

MNA/Xinhua

Le-Gen Maung Bo formally unveils the signboard of the Myanmar Economic Bank branch in Myeik. (News on page 16) — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hosts dinner in honour of delegates to the 57th Anniversary Union Day Reception. (News on page 1) — MNA

Kyaw Win Htu (a) Kyaw Htu, U Thein Dan, Ye Lwin On and Thein On seen with seized marijuana. — MNA
China to cancel car import quota in 2005

GRAND, 15 Feb—From January 1, 2005, China will cancel its auto import quota, which still remains 10.49 billion US dollars this year, said Vice-Minister of Commerce Wei Jianghua here Friday.

According to promises upon China’s entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), China should end the period for protection of the domestic car industry by the end of 2004, and China’s tariff rate for imported car units should drop to 25 per cent by July 1, 2006, said Wei.

Since China’s WTO accession in late 2001, China has been decreasing its car import tariff rate remarkably, he noted, and managing its import quota orderly and transparently.

In 2003, China imported cars and related products worth 14.45 billion US dollars, up 84 per cent year on year. Customs figures showed. China has become the fourth auto manufacturing country in the world, Japan and Germany.

China’s Mainland started its economic reforms around 20 years ago and the demand for plastics has been increasing. Statistics show demand for EPS will grow by 10 per cent each year and hit one million tons in 2010 in the Mainland.

The launching of Tianjin Longquiao Chemical will make Loyal Group the top EPS producer in the world with 750,000 tons of annual production capacity, said Loyal Group’s vice chairman Luan Longqing.

The company plans to start production in the north China port city Tianjin, the group’s eighth company in China’s Mainland.

China’s WTO accession is to finish by 2005 and the end of 2004, China’s tariff rate for imported car units should drop to 25 per cent by July 1, 2006, said Wei.

Addressing an international grain conference at the headquarters of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Yuan said that rice feeds the half of the world’s population and therefore increasing grain yield will play an extremely important role in assuring food security and reducing the number of population in poverty.

Yuan pointed out that there are, in theory, many ways to increase grain yield, including building irrigation projects, improving soil, applying more fertilizer, better growing technology and cultivating high-yield strains.

However, in face of the severe situations of increasing population and falling hectares of land across the world, the most effective and economical way is to grow the Chinese hybrid rice, he stressed.

The Chinese expert said that the hybrid rice, which has been grown in China for a long period, has an average of 20 per cent more yield than other strains, and is already playing a significant role in guaranteeing food security in China.

He added that the hybrid rice has also helped other Asian countries to increase grain yield. By way of extensive growing of the rice, Vietnam has become the second largest grain exporter in Asia, he said.

The two-day conference is part of the activities of international grain year 2004 initiated by the United Nations. It was attended by officials and experts from China, Italy, the United States, Indonesia and some other countries.

Yuan said for his outstanding achievement in breeding high-yield hybrid rice, which has substantially increased China’s grain output. He was the first in the world to have successfully cultivated hybrid rice in the 1960s.

Continuation of surgery on conjoined Iranian twins a consensus

TEHRAN, 15 Feb—A lawyer and a journalist as members of the key surgeons involved in the unprecedented operation, the landing of the operating team and the surgeons felt they were “at the point of no return”.

However, US-based Goh, who flew in to give testimony at a three-day inquiry on Wednesday when he took stand on Wednesday, 90 per cent separated.

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Blizzards bring life to a halt in Turkey

ISTANBUL, 15 Feb—Heavy snowstorms in Turkey cut off thousands of villages, blocked major roads and kept air and sea routes closed on Friday, bringing life to a halt for the second time in a month.

Five people died from breathing fumes from faulty stoves as they tried to keep warm in the western city of Bursa, where snow reached a depth of 17 inches.

One ship was grounded near Istanbul, the country’s sprawling commercial capital, and flights at the city’s airport were suspended because of blizzards.

Three Turkish Maritime officials said Istanbul’s Bosporus and the Dardanelles straits, the only outlet to the Black Sea, were closed after a decision to shut them on Thursday as visibility dropped to near zero.

A total of 42 tankers were awaiting transit at the entrances to the two straits.

Some 400 houses destroyed by large fire in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, 15 Feb—Some 400 small wooden houses along Basac River, southeast of the capital Phnom Penh, were destroyed by a large fire Friday afternoon, municipal police said.

The fire left more than 1,000 families homeless. So far, there were no casualties reported.

Police said the fire started from a motorcycle repairing workshop. Some 10 fire trucks and many firefighters spent more than three hours to control the large fire.

Most of the victims are Vietnamese emigrants. Officials of the municipal authorities said the urgent work is to help the people find a place to live.

Chinese expert stresses role of technology in food security

Room, 15 Feb—Yuan Longping, agricultural expert and “father of hybrid rice” in China, said here on Friday that increasing grain yield by way of technology is an effective way to solve the global issue of food shortage.

Addressing an international grain conference at the headquarters of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Yuan said that rice feeds more than half of the world’s population and therefore increasing grain yield will play an extremely important role in assuring food security and reducing the number of population in poverty.

Yuan pointed out that there are, in theory, many ways to increase grain yield, including building irrigation projects, improving soil, applying more fertilizer, better growing technology and cultivating high-yield strains.

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Oil rises as world fuel stock worries persist

LONDON, 15 Feb — Oil prices improved on Friday as concerns persisted about low global fuel stock levels following OPEC’s pledge this week to cut crude production.

US light crude futures rose 12 cents to 34.10 US dollars a barrel, while in London benchmark Brent crude was 15 cents higher at 30.12 US dollars a barrel.

The West’s energy watchdog, the International Energy Agency (IEA), and the US Government’s Energy Information Administration (EIA) have both warned OPEC’s proposed output cut could keep global inventories low and push prices higher.

Analysts said that on Friday, a shortened trading session ahead of a public holiday in the United States on Monday, would add to the upward pressure as investment funds avoided taking short positions.

“A lot of speculators who might have been taking some profits are running shy of that now,” David Thomas, analyst at Commerzbank, said.

The Organization of the Petroleum-Exporting Countries, which controls half of world’s oil export trade, pledged on Tuesday to cut its official supply limits by one million barrels per day to 23.5 million barrels per day by April 1. It also said it would act immediately to cut about 1.5 million BPD in output by its members above self-imposed limits.

Sri Lankan govt appeals for int’l assistance to fight drought

COLOMBO, 15 Feb — Sri Lanka’s caretaker government on Monday made an appeal to the international community to assist in its efforts to overcome the difficulties faced by the people affected by the drought currently prevailing in the country.

Briefing the Colombo-based diplomatic corps on drought relief assistance, the Minister of Power and Energy and the chairman of the Cabinet Subcommittee for Drought Relief Management, K.T. Jayaasurya, said that much of the country is now in the grip of a severe and prolonged drought caused by torrential rains and evaporation hardships to the people and their livelihood.

He said that more than 231,000 families consisting of nearly 1.04 million people out of some 19 million in total in seven districts of the country have been severely affected by the continuous drought.

He said that the lack of rains since October last year has caused significant fall in the rice produce and that in these districts and the drought has also affected the water level in the hydro-power resources and irrigation tanks in the country. “The government will therefore make a general appeal to the international community of donors to provide both assistance in kind and cash,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

Moscow pool roof collapse kills 15, 97 hurt

MOSCOW, 15 Feb — A glass roof at a popular Moscow swimming complex collapsed under the weight of snow late on Saturday, killing at least 15 people and injuring nearly 100 others as shares of glass plunged down onto the bathers.

ITAR-TASS news agency said early on Sunday rescue workers were still hearing cries for help from under the wreckage of the giant aqua park, popular with children and their families.

An Emergencies Ministry spokesman said the death toll early Sunday morning had risen to 15, including three children, with 97 hurt.

TASS reported.

“The rescuers are guided by video cameras.”

The agency said an official from the emergency crisis centre set up after the incident as saying, “Please save my mum!”

A small boy, aged about six, cried as rescuers carried him into the street wrapped in a blanket.

Panicking swimmers, some in bathing suits, rushed outside into freezing weather shortly after the glass dome caved in at 7:20 p.m. Moscow Time.

More than 420 people were in the area where the roof caved in, and a total of 1,300 visitors were in the entire complex, Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov said.

It was unclear how many people remained unaccounted for.

“It has been definitely confirmed it was not an act of terrorism,” Luzhkov told reporters outside the complex in southwestern Moscow.

“The moment when the roof caved in was recorded by video cameras.” — MNA/Reuters

Women discuss solutions for domestic violence, poverty

HONG KONG, 15 Feb — Women representatives from Chinese Mainland, Macao and Hong Kong discussed on Saturday the problems and solutions for women to combat domestic violence and poverty at the 2004 Women’s Conference.

Chairwoman of Guangdong Provincial Women’s Federation said that, although women’s status has been enhanced in the fields of politics, economics, culture and family, family violence still exists in some households. She said grievous domestic violence often endangers women’s safety, damage the reins between husband and wife, but also lead to family conflicts and social problems. Therefore, there is a need to widely out solution to the problem.

Social Worker of Macao Good Shepherd Centre Debbie Lai shared her experience of domestic violence. She said that, inspired by traditional thoughts, women usually tend not to report violence that happened in their family. They think it is a shame to let a third person to know they are facing such a family problem. Lai suggested that, public education is one of the effective ways to combat domestic violence.

Executive Director of Hong Kong Har-

China to train 200 million migrant workers by 2010

BEIJING, 15 Feb — The Chinese Government plans to provide professional training to over 200 million rural migrant workers by 2010.

In recent years, rural migrant workers have flocked to cities in search of jobs. Their numbers have exceeded 100 million and continued to grow.

A majority of workers find jobs in the housekeeping, catering, hotels, construction and manufacturing industries, but only 9.1 per cent of labourers in rural areas have received formal occupational training, officials with the Ministry of Labour and Social-

Canada condemns Condon O’Brien TV show

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Kipchoge wins but Masai beaten in Kenyan championships

NAIROBI, 15 Feb—World 5,000m champion Eliud Kipchoge beat a strong field to win the 12km title at the Kenyan cross country championships on Friday.

But there was a surprise defeat for double world cross country short course champion Edith Masai in the women's 4km race. Masai, 34, was beaten into third place by Beatrice Jepchumba (12:42) and Jane Galanyu (12:45).

"This was just part of the training," Masai said. "Don't think I am finished. The real work starts at the (training) camp."

Kipchoge, world junior cross country champion, clocked 35 minutes, 19 seconds on the Ngony race course.

"I am happy to win this race because it was too tough. More so, it was my first time in the 12km race and it thrills me that I emerged the winner," Kipchoge told reporters.

Outgoing champion John Kotter finished in second place in 35:26 while 2002 world cross country bronze medallist Wilberforce Talel was third (35:34) and former 5,000 metres world champion Richard Limo fourth (35:39).

Kipchoge, 29, said he was looking forward to the 3,000 metres steeplechase champion Saif Saeed Shaheen dropping out of the race on the fifth lap.

Shaheen, formerly known as Stephen Cherono before switching nationality last year, had been allowed to take part in the championships because it was also an International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) Permit Meeting.

Keane warns United's young guns to start firing

MANCHESTER (England), 15 Feb—Manchester United captain Roy Keane has warned the club's young players not to take things for granted at Old Trafford.

"We have worked extremely hard to get to the top but it is a lot harder to stay there," the 32-year-old midfielder said on Friday.

"We have one or two young players who have done very little in the game. They need to remember that and not slacken off.

"They need to remember just how lucky we all are to play for Manchester United and show that out on the pitch."

Manager Alex Ferguson has made signing young players a priority this season as he looks to maintain United's domestic dominance.

But the Premier League champions have stuttered in recent weeks to fall five points behind Arsenal in the title race.

Keane will return to lead United in Saturday's FA Cup derby with Manchester City after being rested for their mid-week 3-2 home league defeat by Middlesbrough.

The former Republic of Ireland international is a three times winner of the Cup with United and is determined to get past visiting City and into the quarterfinals.

"The fact there will be 9,000 City fans there should ensure a brilliant atmosphere," Keane added.
Monday, February 16

Weather

View today:
7:00 am: Recitation of Parittas by Missionary Sayaw D Ottamathara
7:25 am: To be healthy exercise
7:30 am: Morning news
7:49 am: Nice and sweet song
7:50 am: Songs of national races
8:05 am:
8:18 am: Nice & lovely
8:20 am: Cute little dancers
8:28 am: Nice & lovely
8:30 am: Nice & lovely
8:45 am: Nice & lovely

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the 24 hours, weather has been generally fair in the whole country. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kayah State, Mandalay and Bago Divisions, (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Chin State and Tanintharyi Division and about normal in the remaining areas. Maximum temperature on 14-2-2004 was 35.0°C (95°F). Minimum temperature on 14-2-2004 was 15.6°C (60°F), Relative humidity at 9:30 hours MST on 15-2-2004 was 76%. Total sunshine hours on 14-2-2004 was 9.1 hours approx. Rainfall 15-2-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 10 mph from Southwest at 14:30 hours MST on 14-2-2004.

Bay influence: Weather is partly cloudy in South and West Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Possibility of isolated light wind to moderate in eastern offshore Myanmar areas.

**Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives national race leaders of Shan State (East) Special Region-4**

**Yangon**, 15 Feb — Chairman of the Work Committee for Progress of Border Areas and National Races Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received Chairman of Shan State (East) Special Region-4 U Sai Lin and party at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmyintha at 4 pm today.

Also present at the call were Minister for Electric Power Maj-Gen Tin Htut, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office Maj-Gen Thein Swe, Deputy Minister for Mines U Myint Thein, Deputy Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Brig-Gen Than Tun, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Phone Swe, Director-General Lt-Col Pe Nyein of the State Peace and Development Council Office, Director-General U Soe Tint of Government Office and senior military officers of the Office of the Chief of Military Intelligence.

At the meeting, the national race leaders promised that they support the seven-point policy programme (roadmap) of the State, adding that they will participate in conscientiously discharging the duty in their sector together with the entire people under the leadership of the Government for ensuring implementation of the roadmap.

Next, the national race leaders reported on assistance of the State to be provided for development of education, health, agriculture and tourism industries.

**Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt greets Shan State (East) Special Region-4 Chairman U Sai Lin and party at Zeyathiri Beikman. — MNA**

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**City becoming more and more pleasant day by day due to systematic and harmonious efforts of the committee**

**Prime Minister addresses meeting of City Housing Project Supervisory Committee**

**Yangon,** 15 Feb—The City Housing Project Supervisory Committee held its Meeting No 1/2004 at the meeting hall of Department for Human Settlement and Housing Development on Bogyoke Aung San Street here yesterday, with an address by Chairman of City Housing Project Supervisory Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were 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 Commandant of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Yangon Mayor, deputy ministers, the Vice-Mayor, the committee members, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and heads of department and responsible officials. First, Chairman of the committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt made a speech. He said the City Housing Project Supervisory Committee is implementing its housing projects with the aims of possessing characteristics of international cities, hygienic living of the people and raising their social standard.

(See page 10)

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**New building of Myanmar Economic Bank opened in Myeik**

**Yangon,** 15 Feb—The opening ceremony of the new building of Myanmar Economic Bank of the Ministry of Finance and Revenue was held in Kanpya Myoma Ward in Myeik on 14 February, attended by member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of the Ministry of Defence.

Present on the occasion were Chairman of Tanintharyi Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Coastal Region Command Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Ministry for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Brig-Gen Khin Maung, Deputy Commander of Coastal Region Command Col Hong Ngaing and senior military officers, the director-general of Customs Department, managing director and general manager of MEB, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, social organizations and local people.

Commander Brig-Gen Ohn Myint spoke on the occasion. He said the State Peace and Development Council is implementing the tasks for harmonious development of the Union including border areas in all-round sectors. Development plans are being undertaken in the State after designating 24 development regions including Dawei and Myeik in Tanintharyi Division.

The government spent K 49,701.13 million on development of border areas. Moreover, it is carrying out five rural development tasks in the rural areas where majority of the population live.

He went on to say that MEB is taking charge of monetary services and it is the main important department for economic development. He said banking is a kind of service and bank personnel are to provide customers with speedy services for progress. Minister Maj-Gen Hla Tun also spoke on the occasion.

Next, Managing Director of MEB U Soe Tint presented documentary photos to Lt-Gen Maung Bo, the commander and the minister. Lt-Gen Maung Bo formally unveiled the signboard of the building.

Next, Chairman of Myeik District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Khin Maung Kywe and Managing Director U Soe Tin formally opened the building.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party attended a ceremony to start operation of Hi-Fi speedboat-8 of TZK Co Ltd at Sein Khe jetty in Myeik.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected the speedboat. Director of TZK Co Ltd explained about the boat. The speedboat will run on Dawei-Myeik-Kawthoung trip. — MNA