Prime Minister inspects Myingyan Dyeing and Printing Factory, Salingyi Textile Factory Project

YANGON, 19 Feb — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party inspected the Dyeing and Printing Factory of the Myanmar Textile Industries in Myingyan on 17 February.

At the briefing hall, Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung and officials reported to the Prime Minister on the location, area and aim of the factory, production of 200,000 yards of cotton fabrics, daily production of 800 yards of cotton fabrics, and installation of 200 weaving machines to boost production.

The Prime Minister attended to their needs, saying that in accord with the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe, projects are being launched nationwide for development of every region, raising the living standard of the local people, and development of regional economy and human resources. The textile factories will help ensure regional development, improve living standard and generate job opportunities. Thus, efforts are required for the success of the projects in the interest of the local people.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party observed the raw materials, printed cotton fabrics, dyed cotton fabrics and installation of weaving machines. On arrival at Salingyi Textile Factory Project of the MTI in Salingyi Township, they were welcomed by Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Deputy Minister for Industry-1 Brig-Gen Thein Tun, local authorities, departmental personnel, members of social organizations, and the managing director and staff of MTI. At the briefing hall, they heard a report on the location and purpose of the project, production and distribution capacity, the total production capacity of the factories in Swedaung, Paleik, Sagaing, Pwintbyu, Pakokku and Salingyi, raw material and cotton requirement, cotton sown acreage in the whole nation and the ministry’s plans to grow cotton presented by Minister U Aung Thaung.

Managing Director of MTI U Oo Thein Maung explained the machinery for the factory, power and water requirement, arrival of machinery and construction task. The Prime Minister stressed the need to implement the project in accord with the schedule and to take fire prevention measures. He presented gifts to experts of China National Machinery Import & Export Corporation (CAMEC) of the project.

At the weaving section, Minister U Aung Thaung and Project Director U Chit Swe presented plans to install production machinery and the production process with the help of charts.

The Prime Minister and party inspected the scale-model of the project, automatic weaving machines, warehouse for raw materials and finished goods, workshop and training hall.

Four political objectives
* Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
* National reconsolidation
* Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
* Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

Four economic objectives
* Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
* Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
* Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
* The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

Four social objectives
* Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
* Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
* Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
* Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects Dyeing and Printing Factory in Myingyan on 17-2-2004 — MNA
For successful implementation of oil and gas exploration projects

The State Peace and Development Council is building the nation with the aim of enabling the country to be on a par with nations of the world, strengthening the national economic life and raising the living standard of the citizens. Based on natural resources in the country, and strength of intellectuals and intelligentsia and the people, national plans are being implemented. With peace and stability in the country, national development undertakings are being carried out with acceleration. Natural resources are being widely exploited to promote the economy of the State.

The oil and gas fields include the following list of natural resources that are being exploited in the country.

To fulfil the needs in the energy sector of the State, the Ministry of Energy is endeavouring with might and main for exploiting oil and gas. In doing so, efforts are being made to expose new oil and gas fields on shore and at the same time offshore oil exploration tasks are being carried out with the cooperation of foreign companies.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party inspected Indaw region oil exploration project in Mawlaik Township, Sagaing Division, on 17 February.

At the project site, Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi reported to the Prime Minister on the location of the project, history of oil exploration in Indaw region, geological condition of the region and prospects, the geological survey conducted by the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise in the region, road construction, provision of heavy machinery and drilling machines, and test wells No 1, 2 and 3 in the region. The minister also said at a depth of 6,500 feet the No 1 test well is producing 4.32 million cubic feet of natural gas per day. The No 2 well yields only salty water. The No 3 well will be drilled up to 6,000 feet, and up to now, digging has reached 757 feet underground. Arrangements are under way to calculate the potential yield of oil and gas in the region after the completion of the drilling of test wells. He then explained the prospects and production of oil and gas fields all around Myanmar and arrangements to extend drilling work at prospective oil and gas fields.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attended to the needs and spoke of the need to continue the drilling work as scheduled.

The Prime Minister observed the drilling of the No 3 well of Indaw region crude oil exploration project. At a time when the energy sector plays a vital role in national development, officials concerned are urged to strive for successful realization of oil and gas exploration projects.

50th 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”.

Minister inspects Mone Creek Multi-purpose Dam Project

YANGON, 19 Feb — Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin, accompanied by departmental heads, inspected Tanyuung Water Pumping Project in Salin Township, Mrauk District, Magway Division, on 16 February.

Next, the minister met with departmental officials and dealt with cultivation of summer paddy and long staple cotton and irrigation of cultivated land.

The minister and party proceeded to Bueywa Dam Project to be implemented near Bue Village, Sedoktara Township, Mrauk District, Rakhine State. Officially concerned reported on facts about the project and work progress. Director-General of the Irrigation Department U Kyaw San Win and Director U Khin Maung Chi gave supplementary reports.

The minister met with engineers for talks about construction tasks and inspected the project site. Afterwards, he inspected the main embankment and irrigation buildings at the Mone Creek Multi-purpose Dam Project. Officials concerned reported on construction tasks. The minister gave instructions on timely completion of the project and looked into the construction works. MNA

Ministry of Home Affairs

Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State

Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation

Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views

Oppose those trying to crush the economy of the State

Oppose those trying to crush the internal and external destructive elements

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now.
Iraqi suicide bombs kill 11

HILLA (Iraq), 19 Feb—Suicide car bombers killed at least 11 Iraqis and wounded 58 foreign troops on Wednesday in twin attacks on a military base south of Baghdad in the run up to a UN report on the feasibility of direct elections in Iraq.

A spokesman for Polish-led forces in Hilla, about 60 miles south of Baghdad, said 41 Iraqis were also wounded in the blasts. The wounds of the soldiers were not life-threatening.

Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Strzelecki told Reuters that guards outside the base managed to stop one of the cars by shooting it at but that a second car exploded after smashing into a wall.

“At 7:15 local time (0415 GMT) near the logistics base there was a terrorist attack using two cars,” Strzelecki said. “We found the bodies of the two drivers, and two Iraqis standing in the street were killed.”

US-led Coalition Provisional Authority spokesman spokesman Hilary White later put the death toll much higher.

“We can confirm that more than 11 Iraqis were killed,” she told Reuters. “It killed men, women and children.

The blasts blew the facing and roofs off of homes outside the base, and, like car bombs last week that killed about 100 people as they entered the base, left survivors blaming Iraq’s US occupiers for the bloodshed.

“We heard the sound of a plane overhead and a rocket landed and then another rocket landed,” said Omar Zayed, 17, who lives near the site of the explosion.

Two young boys who were wounded in the explosion lost their parents. One of them, 10-year-old Seif Saleh, lay in a hospital bed complaining of pain and asking for his father as the coffins of his parents were brought into the hospital.

Relatives of one of the dead wept hysterically on the corridor floor and beat their hands on the wall.

The wounded foreigners included at least 12 Filipinos, 12 Poles, 10 Hungarians and two Americans.

The attacks are the latest in a string against soldiers of governments helping the United States occupy Iraq, and highlighted the violence that threatens US plans to formally hand sovereignty over to Iraqis by mid-year.

MNA/Reuters

Singapore’s foreign trade grows 7.9% on-year in January

SINGAPORE, 19 Feb—Singapore’s total trade grew 7.9 per cent year-on-year in January 2004, moderating from the 19.0 per cent growth achieved in December 2003, said a government Press release Tuesday.

Non-oil domestic exports (NODX) expanded by 2.7 per cent in January 2004 over the corresponding month of 2003, moderating from the 30.7 per cent expansion achieved in December 2003, said the Press release published by the International Enterprise Singapore (IE Singapore), or previously known as the Trade Development Board.

Except Japan and the US, NODX to all key markets reported positive gains in January 2004, it said. In particular, NODX to the European Union, China and Australia continued to post double-digit gains in the month, it added.

Domestic exports of electronics contracted by a mild 0.8 per cent in January 2004, after a 25.7 per cent expansion in the previous month, it said.

“This lackluster performance is attributed to the weak growth in domestic exports of disk drives, PCs (personal computers) and parts,” it said.

Oil domestic exports declined by 10.8 per cent in January 2004, as compared to the 22.4 per cent growth in December 2003, said the release.

Non-oil re-exports growth moderated in January 2004 to a positive 4.9 per cent, following the 26.4 per cent increase in the previous month, it said.

Singapore’s total trade reached 474 billion Singapore dollars (about 280 billion US dollars) in 2003, increasing by 9.6 per cent over the previous year.

IE Singapore has earlier projected an 8-10 per cent trade growth for 2004, citing positive factors such as stronger pick-up in global electronics demand, improved outlook in the US economy, expected further expansion in the Chinese, EU and Japanese economies. —MNA/Xinhua

Preparations underway for UNESCO World Heritage session

BEIJING, 19 Feb — Preparations for the 28th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee (WHC) have begun in east China’s Suzhou City, said committee chairman Zhang Xinheng here Tuesday.

The WHC session is scheduled for June 28 to July 7 in Suzhou, a historic city in Jiangsu Province.

Zhang, who is also Vice -Minister of Education and chairman of China National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), said China’s Government department has coordinated well to ensure the preparations for the WHC session.

China attached great importance to the conference, and all the world heritage sites and their local governments had adopted practical measures to ensure its success, he said.

China had also set up a leading group for the preparation work, headed by State Councillor Chen Zhihui, who held a work meeting in Suzhou in January, and arranged for further preparations. — MNA/Xinhua

Second woman from Wisconsin killed in Iraq

LENA, 19 Feb—A Wisconsin soldier from Lena who specialized in civil affairs was killed after only two weeks in Iraq when an improvised explosive device struck her convoy, authorities and family members said Tuesday.

Pfc. Nichole M. Frye, 19, was assigned to Company A, 415th Civil Affairs Battalion of the Army Reserve in Kalamazoo, Mich.

Her mother, Lisa Frye, told The Associated Press the family received a computer e-mail from her daughter about a week ago explaining some of her duties. She had been in Iraq only about two weeks. Frye was the 10th person from Wisconsin — and the second Wisconsin woman — to die serving in Iraq.

Internet

Egypt says ready for more engagement with Iran

TEHERAN, 19 Feb—Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Maher said here Tuesday that his country is ready for more engagement with Iran.

“Iran and Egypt share common hopes and worries and the meeting of the two countries’ presidents in Geneva was a positive sign of the two sides’ intention for bilateral cooperation,” Maher said while meeting with his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharraz.

He was referring to the meeting between Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and his Egyptian counterpart Hosni Mubarak on the sidelines of a UN summit last December.

Maher arrived here earlier in the day to take part in a summit of the Islamic economic group of eight, comprising Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

He and Kharraz discussed regional and international issues and bilateral cooperation between Teheran and Cairo in various areas, according to a Press release released by the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

The two agreed on “maintaining contacts and exchange of views between the two sides for complete resumption of talks between Teheran and Cairo,” said the ministry.

“Cooperation between Teheran and Cairo will guarantee interests of the region,” Maher was quoted as saying at the meeting.

According to the Press release, the two ministers described the situation in Iraq as “grave” and hailed a recent meeting of Iraq’s neighbours held in Kuwait.

Indications showed that Iran and Egypt were taking historic steps toward restoring bilateral relations after 25 years of break due to the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

MNA/Reuters

HK population increases

24,000 in 2003

HONG KONG, 19 Feb—Hong Kong population was 6,810,100 at the end of 2003, representing an increase of 24,000 or 0.4 per cent, over a year ago, according to the statistics released Tuesday by the Census and Statistics Department.

Obtained by subtracting the number of deaths of 36,500 from the number of births of 46,200, the natural increase of the population from the end of 2002 to the end of 2003 amounted to 9,700.

The overall population comprises a natural increase of 9,700 and a net movement of 14,300 residents. The ratio of natural increase to overall population increase was 40 per cent, while that of net movement to overall population increase was 60 per cent.

Hong Kong population is measured on the definition of resident population, which comprises usual residents and mobile residents.

Among the total population at the end of 2003, 6,619,100 were usual residents, and 191,000 mobile residents. —MNA/Xinhua
Contractors’ security costs rise in Iraq

Baghdad, 19 Feb—Attacks on the private contractors rebuilding Iraq are boosting security expenses, cutting into reconstruction funds and compelling US officials in Baghdad to contend with growing legions of private, armed security teams spread throughout the country.

While attacks on military targets and Iraqi citizens have received widespread attention, the costs to the companies, which have lost at least 17 dead and others wounded, are lesser known. Those attacks could jeopardize the success of the coalition efforts in Iraq, according to a Coalition Provisional Authority document reviewed by The Washington Post.

A draft of the security guidance for contractors prepared by the CPA’s Infrastructure Security Planning Group in Baghdad says, “Spilling costs, excessive work delays, lost material and workforce casualties in the current threat environment have the potential to put Coalition success at risk.” The CPA’s Program Management Office is seeking to hire a central coordinator for the private security teams in anticipation of the thousands of foreign workers and hundreds of new work sites that will flood Iraq starting next month, when nearly $10 billion in US-funded rebuilding contracts are due to be awarded.

The number of soft Coalition targets will grow dramatically, the draft states. US and coalition military forces, which are being trimmed and face continuing attacks, cannot provide contractor protection, and neither can fledging Iraqi forces, the draft states, leaving private teams as the main protection for contractors. But tighter licencing, registration and identification are needed, it says.

The draft says the threat to Coalition forces and contractors is “assumed” to remain at current levels into next year, leaving rebuilding companies vulnerable to attacks both from anti-occupation elements and criminal rings. That combination could intensify bidding wars for experienced security personnel and cause more money to be pulled away from rebuilding under government contracts that allow companies to pass on security and other costs, providing little incentive to hold down those expenses.

Security costs are consuming about 10 percent of each construction contract, up from 7 percent in October, according to the Baghdad office that manages reconstruction projects for the Coalition Provisional Authority. Costs on high-profile targets, including pipelines, run higher. The added expenses may cause some projects to be delayed or canceled, said Derrell Crawford, chief of staff for the office.

Experts say more balanced city planning needed in China

Beijing, 19 Feb—China should give special consideration to the balanced development of cities with the rising economic strength in the country, according to some of the world’s leading urban planning experts.

“Besides economic growth, good governance, a skilled workforce and physical renewal should become important standards to evaluate the urban development level in China,” said Nicholas Brooke, President of the British-based Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), quoted by Wednesday’s China Daily.

Brooke made the remark at the “Winning Cities Forum” in Beijing Tuesday. It is the first forum being hosted in China for RICS, the world’s largest organization for real estate professionals.

Rising urban centres in China may face the same problems which used to battle major Western cities such as London and New York in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, cultural facilities often give way to the development of commercial developments in some Chinese cities, leading to the removal of historic landmarks.

Philippines to adopt new tax collection measures

Manila, 19 Feb—The Philippine Government is set to introduce new measures to magnify last year’s success in tax collection in 2004, a local newspaper reported Tuesday.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. was quoted by the Philippine Daily Inquirer as saying that the agency would strengthen its relations with civic organizations and business groups to promote payment of proper taxes among citizens.

Last year, the BIR had for the first time in years surpassed its collection target. To repeat the achievement, the authorities were planning to adopt new measures to incent corporate taxpayers, whose income tax remittances were expected to exceed last year’s level by 20 percent in April 2004, Parayno said.

The commissioner added that the government would continue to intensify the tax measures introduced in 2003, including the tax mapping drive, the electronic filing and payment system.

Parayno said the BIR would cover more business establishments under the tax mapping drive and to encourage more taxpayers to avail themselves of the online services of the BIR.

Under the tax mapping drive, BIR personnel last year visited about 200,000 business establishments nationwide to look into their tax compliance, it said.

247 centenarians living in Beijing

Beijing, 19 Feb — The Chinese capital boused 247 centenarians by the end of 2003, up from 57 over 2001, Beijing Daily reported.

Female centenarians account for approximately 80 percent of the total, including three aged over 110 years old, and 209 centenarians, or 84.6 per cent of the total, are urbanites, according to statistics of the Beijing Municipal Committee on Ageing (BMCA).

The Beijing News earlier cited the BMCA as saying that by the end of 2003, the number of senior citizens aged at and above 60 living in the city’s urban area is estimated at over 1.2 million.

According to a recent survey conducted by the Beijing Municipal Research Centre on Ageing, the secret for longevity of those centenarians could own much, among others, the natural way of living, good-quality sleep and rational eating, open-mindedness and a good temper, as well as fine family living environment.
IOM, WiRED cooperate to help Iraq’s health sector

GENEVA, 19 Feb — The International Organization for Migration (IOM) announced Tuesday that it has signed an agreement to work with WIRED International to provide computer technology and training to medical students and health professionals in Iraq.

IOM will provide free Internet connectivity and support to documentation and research efforts through the setting up of e-libraries, which IOM will incorporate into workshops and training programmes, said IOM spokesman Christopher Lom.

WIRED International, based in California, is a non-profit information and communication resources company that helps disadvantaged people around the world.

Access to training and continuous education is a huge challenge for the many health professionals who carry on in postwar Iraq, but with Internet connectivity, the e-libraries will allow telemedicine, on-line consultation and access to web-based medical resources, said Lom.

The agreement will complement IOM’s Medical Evacuation and Health Rehabilitation Programmes for Iraq (MEHRP), which facilitates treatment abroad for patients who cannot be treated in Iraq, and contributes to the rehabilitation of the country’s dilapidated specialist healthcare system.

MEHRP doctors have identified hospital departments specializing in cardiac surgery, oncology, orthopedics, hematology, ophthalmology and serious burns as those most in need of help, he said.

War, economic sanctions and systematic looting of health facilities following the fall of Saddam Hussein’s regime have severely affected Iraq’s health care system.

Many hospitals and healthcare services are still struggling to provide minimum standards of service to patients, many health workers have fled the country and many have not yet returned to work because of the security situation.

Oil prices cling to OPEC-fuelled gains

LONDON, 19 Feb — Oil prices held firm on Tuesday as traders predicted OPEC would take some action to limit output even if it was failing to enforce last week’s promise to stop leakage above the cartel’s official ceiling.

London Brent crude rose 40 cents to 30.72 US dollars.

In volatile trade, US light sweet crude weakened slightly, falling three cents to 34.53 US dollars a barrel. But traders said the US contract was taking account of modest losses on the London market on Monday when the US exchange closed for Presidents’ Day and some funds were preparing for contract expiry later this week.

The Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries pledged at a meeting in Algiers last week to cut official supply limits by one million barrels per day to 12.6 million bpd from April to counter a seasonal second quarter decline in fuel demand after the northern winter — MNA/Reuters

Iraq hit by snow and dust storms

BAGHDAD, 19 Feb — Iraq witnessed snows and dust storms that affected the Middle East region in the past two days, Iraqi weather sources said here.

The low pressure that came Sunday from Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon influenced the country, said the sources.

The northern parts of Iraq witnessed a snowstorm, while Mosul, 400 kilometres north of Baghdad, witnessed low temperatures and heavy rain that started early Saturday afternoon, which turned later into heavy snow, the sources, said.

Snows in Mosul cut off all the roads leading to nearby cities like Arbeel, 380 kilometres north of Baghdad, and Dihouk, 465 kilometres north of Baghdad, where temperatures dropped drastically.

Baghdad witnessed the worst dust storm since last March, which reminded Iraqis of the weather that prevailed in the days of the US-led war on Iraq.

EU pursues new trade dispute against US

BRUSSELS/GENEVA, 19 Feb — The European Union took legal action against the United States on Tuesday in a new trade fight that could spark further sanctions threats.

The European Commission, which looks after trade matters for the 15-nation EU, sought an investigation at the WTO over complaints the US had dumped goods on the EU market.

The Commission said products such as steel, ball bearings, chemicals and pasta were being hit by the zeroing method. The dispute adds to several high profile matters for the 15-nation EU, sought an investigation at the WTO's disputes settlement body on March 19.

"Several hundred million dollars of trade is involved," the Commission said in a statement accompanying the request for a trade panel to decide on the rights and wrongs of the case.

But the investigation, which can take at least six months, will not be launched immediately because the United States exercised its right under WTO rules for a brief delay.

However, it will automatically triggered after the next meeting of the WTO's disputes settlement body on March 19.

The EU is attacking a practice known as zeroing, which raises the amounts of duties countries have to pay if they are found by Washington to have dumped goods on the EU market.

The Commission said products such as steel, ball bearings, chemicals and pasta were being hit by the zeroing method. The dispute adds to several high profile transatlantic trade fights, one of which comes to a head on March 1.

That case involves a threat of 200 million US dollars of EU sanctions on US goods unless Congress changes legislation which gives tax breaks to US steelmakers, which was ruled illegal by the WTO.

In another case before the WTO, South Korea asked for an probe into its complaint the European Union was violating trade rules in auto-fair-trade.

The EU has already brought a similar complaint against South Korea and Brussels has decided to keep its subsidies until Seoul raises drastically the prices of its ships.

Chinese FM holds talks with Jamaican guest

BRUNING, 19 Feb — Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing held talks with Jamaican Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Keith Desmond Knight in Beijing Wednesday.

Both sides exchanged views and reached a consensus on bilateral ties and international and regional issues of common concern.

Knight expressed appreciation for the help of the Chinese Government in sending and reiterating Jamaica’s adherence to the one-China policy on the Taiwan issue.

Li appreciated the long-term stance on the Taiwan issue adopted by the Jamaican Government, and the active role of Jamaica in international and regional affairs.

Knight was invited by Li Zhaoxing for an official visit to China starting February 17 — MNA/Reuters

Japanese Government approved a bill Tuesday to revise the Radio Law in a bid to alleviate frequency congestion through the effective use of radio frequencies. NHK television reported. Under the proposed amendment, the government would compensate businesses having unused radio frequencies for losses incurred when they dismantle idle radio facilities. Fees would be imposed on newcomers for their use of radio frequencies.

According to the television report, the proposal also calls for deregulating radio and wireless stations, replacing the current licensing system with a registration system.

Passengers select “most satisfactory” airline companies

BEIJING, 19 Feb — China Eastern Airlines Company, Hainan Airline Company and Sichuan Airline Company have been selected by 110,000 passengers as offering the “most satisfactory” services of all Chinese airlines in 2003.

The China Civil Aviation Association, which conducted the survey on Chinese air services, announced the results here Wednesday.

Most passengers showed increased satisfaction over airline punctuality, but they were still dissatisfied with announcements, entertainment and luggage services at airports.

Shanghai, Haikou, Shenyang, Harbin and Nanchang airports provided the best services in China in 2003, according to the survey.

The annual surveys, which started in 1993, aimed to strengthen exchanges between civil aviation departments and passengers, said Li Jun, deputy director of the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China (CAAC).

At the beginning of 2004, the administration for the first time publicized a list of airline companies that received complaints from passengers in 2003.

A pier worker directs a driver of export automobiles lining up on the Daikoku pier in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, on 18 Feb, 2004. — AP/Wire
Romanian company wins Iraq reconstruction contract

BUCURESTI, 19 Feb — The Romanian company Tehnoexport SA signed an 18-million-US-dollar contract with Iraq to furnish several Iraqi schools, the Romanian daily Ziarul Financiar reported Tuesday. The Romanian Ministry of Economy confirmed this contract, which is one of the most important contracts Romania has won in Iraq.

Tehnoexport SA is a foreign trade company, which has 122 employees. Over 2,300 projects in Iraq in sectors including oil, electricity, water resources and sanitation management, transport and communications, security, building and health, are in need of reconstruction. They are totally worth 18.6 billion US dollars.—MNA/Xinhua

US soldier injured in east Afghanistan

KABUL, 19 Feb — Another US soldier was injured by suspected Taleban members in Kumar, east of Afghan capital city, a US military spokesman said on Wednesday.

“A coalition vehicle struck a mine near Kunar, and two US soldiers and a soldier had a broken nose,” Bryan Hilferty, the coalition spokesman told a Press briefing here.

He also denied the earlier report that said two vehicles of a US patrolling team hit landmines near Assalabad on Monday, claiming casualties.

Singapore, Panama to start free trade talks

SINGAPORE, 19 Feb — Singapore and Panama have begun talks on a free trade pact, the first between the wealthy Southeast Asian state and a Central American country.

Singapore’s Government said it expected to complete a pact with Panama within in a year, reducing tariffs on two-way trade worth around 1.2 billion US dollars.

Panama needs an economic boost. It has a 12-billion-US-dollar-a-year economy, a dynamic banking sector and the Panama Canal, which carries 4 per cent of world trade, but some 40 per cent of its 2.9 million population live in poverty.

Washington said in December it also intended to negotiate a free trade agreement with Panama. Its exports to Singapore consist mostly of fish products while Singapore ships petroleum products and electronics components to Panama.—MNA/Reuters

Mars rover digs trench on Red Planet

PASADENA, 19 Feb — NASA scientists said on Tuesday that Mars rover Opportunity successfully dug an 8-centimeter trench on the Red Planet using one of its front wheels.

Scientists at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Lab here said the rover’s digging with its right front wheel was expected to end at 10:19 p.m. Monday US Pacific Standard Time (0519 GMT Tuesday).

The six-wheeled rover also made observations with its navigation camera to help prepare for the drive to a target of interest later this week, NASA said. The Opportunity is expected to finish a thorough examination of the freshly exposed layers of dirt and ground inside the trench.

In doing the examination, the rover will use its microscopic imager, a spectrometer and alpha particle X-ray spectrometer to take parallel science measurements and compare with those made during previous activities, NASA said.

The dead were mainly curious local residents, as well as firefighters who had rushed to the scene to douse an initial blaze before the wagons exploded, state news agency IRNA said.

The dead toll stood at 295, according to a document prepared by local officials for the Interior Ministry and seen by Reuters.

Nearby village homes were razed to the ground, crushing their inhabitants under crumbled mud brick walls. At dusk, columns of black smoke could still be seen belching from the wreckage of the unmanned train of 51 wagons.

An acrid smell of sulphur hung in the air hours after the blast that shattered windows for six miles around.

“The earth shook. We thought it was an earthquake. We were so scared,” said Ali, 42, from Nishapur, a town 13 miles from the scene in the salt-flat-growing province of Khorasan, bordering Afghanistan and ex-Soviet Turkmenistan.

IRNA photographs showed the blast site strewn with shredded torsos, clothes ripped from their bodies, and severed limbs.

Ali Soleimani, a local resident, said he found the body of the governor of Nishapur, who IRNA reported as among the dead: “I pulled out the corpse of the governor myself, he had no legs and was sliced to death.” IRNA said tremors in the quake-prone region might have set the wagons moving but officials said it was too early to say what caused the disaster.—MNA/Reuters

Iranian freight train blast kills almost 300

NIŞAPUR (Iran), 19 Feb — A runaway train laden with fuel and fertilizers ploughed off the rails in north-eastern Iran and blew up on Wednesday, killing almost 300 people.

The dead were mainly curious local residents, as well as firefighters who had rushed to the scene to douse an initial blaze before the wagons exploded, state news agency IRNA said.

The dead toll stood at 295, according to a document prepared by local officials for the Interior Ministry and seen by Reuters.

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White House says Iraqi oil exports may top $1b monthly

WASHINGTON, 19 Feb — Iraq’s oil export revenues could exceed one billion US dollars per month this year if prices hold at current levels and export capabilities are not interrupted, the Bush Administration told Congress in a report on Wednesday.

The White House report said Iraq’s crude oil exports should increase significantly once a pipeline from Kirkuk to Turkey’s Ceyhan Port is sufficiently secured from attacks to allow a reopening.

The report on progress in rebuilding Iraq, which Congress required in the resolution it passed authorizing the US-led invasion, also said Iraq is consuming 500,000-600,000 barrels of oil per day.

Refinery production of kerosene, diesel and gasoline remains at pre-war levels because of the sabotage of crude oil pipelines and electric power shortages, it said.

But the report said product imports have increased to meet domestic needs with the US-led Coalition Provisional Government spending seven million US dollars to eight million US dollars per day to import refined oil products from Turkey, Kuwait and Jordan.

As of early this month, the report said gasoline supplies consistently exceeded daily demand, and supplies of other products including diesel and kerosene also have improved.

The 15-page report also touched on progress in other areas, such as water and sanitation, electrical power, health care and transportation.—MNA/Reuters

Apple ships new iPod mini

LOS ANGELES, 19 Feb — Apple Computer announced Tuesday that its iPod mini, the world’s smallest portable digital music player ever to hold up to 1,000 CD-quality songs, will be available on Friday.

The iPod mini, encased in an ultra-portable, lightweight anodized aluminium body and in a choice of the five colours of silver, gold, pink, blue and green will be available at the online Apple Store (www.apple.com), Apple’s retail stores and Apple authorized resellers throughout the United States, the company said. Apple said it has received over 100,000 pre-orders for the iPod mini which was introduced last month.

“The response to iPod mini has been off the charts,” said Philip Schiller, Apple’s senior vice president of worldwide Product Marketing. “iPod mini broadens the market for iPod by competing head-on with flash based players.”—MNA/Xinhua

Pakistani police seize 600 kilos of charas

ISLAMABAD, 19 Feb — The Pakistani police Wednesday seized 600 kilos of charas in Peshawar, capital of the North-West Frontier Province which is bordering Afghanistan.

The Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) reported that local police formed special teams and checked different locations in the city after receiving a tip-off.

A vehicle bearing a fake UN registration number was trying to escape the scene when signalled to stop, APP quoted local police as saying.

The driver later abandoned the vehicle and fled the spot, said APP, adding that the charas were found in the car. — MNA/Xinhua
Correspondent Myint Oo, a friend of mine, informed me of the free treatment offered to cleft lip and palate patients at the 200-bed Maubin District Hospital under the supervision of Ayeyawady Division Maternal and Child Welfare Association. As I have been a columnist writing articles on the activities of the women’s sector under the leadership of the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, he asked me to join him on a visit to the hospital. Thus, we two went there on 18 January 2004. At present, the division has 72 hospitals including nine 16-bed hospitals that were upgraded from 25-bed facilities, one 25-bed hospital, one 200-bed hospital that was upgraded from one 200-bed facility, and two 200-bed hospitals, up from 65 in 1988. After designating Maubin region a development zone, the Government has built a new 200-bed hospital in the region in its drive to develop its health sector. Offering free treatment for cleft lip and palate patients at the facility was auspicious news for me.

We first visited the women’s ward, and met with two cleft lip patients — Ma Hnin Malar Khaing, an eight grader, and Ma Ei Thazin Phyo, a second grader. When compared with their photos taken before the surgery, they looked completely like all other normal girls.

When we interviewed Ma San Htoo, a native of Tawtawanaung village in Maubin Township, she happily told us that Chairman of Maubin District Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Sein Maung and wife Daw Kalya Win and denture expert U Sein Hsan from the Myanmar Dental Association spotted the young girls and suggested the parents to wipe him out. He grew up as his father had no wish to do so. But as he had undergone surgical treatment were feeling great joy on seeing his faces in the mirrors, but also the goodwill of the State, who had not only treated him but also sponsored his education. He was a person with cleft lip and gum and palate and uneven teeth. Moreover, he had a neoplasm under his nose. The local midwife thought that he was a baby orgy, and suggested the parents to wipe him out. He grew up as his father had no wish to do so. But as he was poor, he had to live with his inborn features. The team cured the patients from 8 am to 8 pm daily, and some days up to 10 pm. Physician U Thein Wai and health staff of Maubin also rendered assistance to the team.

The team’s initial target was to cure 70 patients, but expectant mothers and patients who were suffering from heart or lung complaints were not fit to undergo surgical operation. It made arrangements to take ten patients to Yangon where hospitals have better equipment than the ones in Maubin. The District and Township Union Solidarity and Development Associations, Red Cross Brigades and local volunteers also took part in the project. A luncheon was held in honour of the physicians of the team and volunteers at Toe Shwewa Hall in Maubin on 16 January 2004. While witnessing the launching of the project with the leadership of the State and supervision of the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, I remembered my late uncle U San Khin. He was a person with cleft lip and palate and uneven teeth. Moreover, he had a neoplasm under his nose. The local midwife thought that he was a baby orgy, and suggested the parents to wipe him out. He grew up as his father had no wish to do so. But as he was poor, he had to live with his inborn features. The team expressed their thanks for the Government again and again.

The team cured the patients from 8 am to 8 pm daily, and some days up to 10 pm. Physician U Thein Wai and health staff of Maubin also rendered assistance to the team.

The team comprised Dr U Ko Ko Maung, Dr U Aung Lwin Oo, Dr Daw Kyi Kyi San, matron Daw Khin Mar Cho, senior nurse Daw Deint Chant Woun, nurse Daw Kalya Win and denture expert U Sein Hsan from Yangon. For seven days from 10 to 16 February 2004, the team cured the patients from 8 am to 8 pm daily, and some days up to 10 pm. Physician U Thein Wai and health staff of Maubin also rendered assistance to the team.

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Prime Minister attends ceremony to hoist Htidaw and consecrate Theindawgyi Pagoda in Pyawbwe

YANGON, 19 Feb — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party left Mandalay by Tatmadaw helicopter on 18 February morning and arrived in Hsaudaung Village, Pyawbwe Township, where they were welcomed by Brig-Gen Khin Maung Aye and Brig-Gen Hla Myint of Meiktila Station, social organizations and local people.

A ceremony to hoist Shwehtidaw atop Thayagon Village and paid homage to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijjabala. The minister and wellwishers donated offerings to members of the Sangha. Afterwards, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko accepted K 2 million for the pagoda and the ordination hall donated by Chair- man of Chammyay Tawwin Co U Tin Maung Win, Managing Director U Maung Ko and wife. The Sayadaw delivered a sermon and the con- gregation shared merits gained.

Then, the Htidaw hoisting ceremony followed. The Prime Minister and wife and wellwishers conveyed Seinbudaw, Hgetmyat- nadaw and tiers of Htidaw round the pagoda. The Prime Minister and wife and party then conveyed them atop the pagoda by the decorated car- riage. At the auspicious time, the Prime Minister hoisted Seinbudaw and Hgetmyat- nadaw atop the pagoda and sprinkled scented water on them. At the same time, wellwishers hoisted Htidaw atop encircling pagodas. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt performed the rituals of golden and silvery showers to mark success of the ceremony. Next, the Prime Minis- ter and wife paid homage to Buddha images in the ordi- nation hall. They then sprayed scented water on stone inscriptions of Wipula Maha Ordination Hall and the bell on the platform of the pagoda. And, the General and wife shared merits gained. Afterwards, mem- bers of the Sangha consecrated the pagoda. Later, the Prime Minister and wife of- fered 'soon' to the Saya- daws. Next, the General and wife and party went to Yadanaya Manaung Tawya Maha Thiri Mingala Zingyan Monastery in Thayagon Village and paid homage to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vijjabala.

Agreement on Myanmar-Thai investment cooperation signed

YANGON, 19 Feb — Minister for National Planning and Economic Develop- ment U Soe Tha met with Minister for Industry Mr Phinij Jarusombut at his office at 10.30 am today. Also present at the call were directors-general and deputy directors-general of departments under the Min- istry of National Planning and Economic Develop- ment.

The Thai Minister and party were accompanied by Ambassador of Thailand Mr Sophot Dhirakosaol and offi- cials of the Office of Board of Investment (BOI) of Thailand. After the meeting, the ceremony to sign the agree- ment on investment coop- eration between Myanmar Investment Commission and BOI was held.

Also present on the oc- casion were Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Thai Minister for Industry Mr Phinij Jarusombut, officials of the Ministry of NPED, the Ministry of Foreign Af- fairs and the office of At- torney-General, officials of BOI of Thailand and the Thai Ambassador.

At the ceremony, Direc- tor-General Daw Than Nwe of Foreign Economic Rela- tions Department, on behalf of the MIC, and General Secretary Mr Somphong Wanaph, on behalf of BOI of Thailand, signed the agreement.
2,763 drug-related cases exposed in 2003

YANGON, 19 Feb — The Tatmadaw, the Myanmar Police Force and the Customs Department exposed 2,763 drug-related cases in 2003.

The authorities seized 1,481.4978 kilos of opium in 2003. 568.0827 kilos of heroin in 968 cases, 156.25 kilos of morphine in two cases, 51,7375 kilos of opium oil in 51 cases, 203.868 kilos of low grade opium in 200 cases, 85.2016 kilos of marijuana in 194 cases, 74.68 litres of phensedyl in 24 cases, 4,002,524 stimulant tablets in 472 cases, 0.6 kilo of caffeine in one case, 102.0001 kilos of phenyl acetic acid and 2,562.24 litres of acetic anhydride in one case, 36,903,837 litres of chemical liquid in 18 cases and 7,045,3216 kilos of chemical powder, 289 cases for failure to register and 92 other cases.

Action was taken against 3,848 person — 3,117 men and 731 women — in connection with the cases in 2003.

In the same year, the Tatmadaw and the MFP exposed seven opium refineries in Shan State (North) and seized narcotic drugs, chemical liquid and paraphernalia.

In 2003-2004 poppy cultivation season, up to 31 January, a total of 5,573.916 acres (2255.73 hectares) have been destroyed in Shan State (North), Shan State (South), Shan State (East), Kachin State, Kayah State and Sagaing Division.

In comparison with the seizures during the year 2002, 234,195 kilos more of heroin and 10,463.418 litres more of chemical liquid were seized in 2003. Altogether 381,7775 kilos less of opium, 196,7688 kilos less of marijuana, 263,774 litres less of phensedyl, 5,397,270 less stimulant pills, 1415.6047 kilos less of ephedrine and 391,0484 litres less of acetic-anhydride were seized in 2003. The number of cases exposed in 2003 were 136 cases with 443 culprits less than that of in 2002.

Philippines Secretary of Foreign Affairs concludes visit

YANGON, 19 Feb — After paying an officials visit to the Union of Myanmar at the invitation of Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines Ms Delfa Domingo Albert and delegation left Yangon International Airport by air this evening.

The Philippines Secretary of Foreign Affairs and party were seen off at the airport by Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department, officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Philippines Ambassador Mme Phoebe A Gomez and embassy staff.

Yesterday evening, Minister U Win Aung received the Philippines Secretary of Foreign Affairs and party and hosted a dinner to the guests. — MNA
Hard work brings regional progress...

YANGON, 19 Feb — Under the programme for promotion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Myanmar and India and with the sponsor- ship of the Ministry of Commerce, the opening of “Made in India Show” jointly conducted by the Indian Embassy to Myanmar and the Confederation of Indian Industry of the Republic of India took place at Yangon Trade Centre in Mingala Taungnyunt Township here this morning.

It was attended by Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, ministers, the mayor of Yangon, deputy ministers, the Indian Ambassador to Myanmar, the ambassadors of foreign embassies in Yangon and staff, departmental heads, the president of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and members, officials of social organisations, journalists and guests.

Former President of the Confederation of Indian Industry Chairman & Managing Director of NICCO Corp Ltd Mr Rajive Kaul and Indian Ambassador Mr Rajiv Kumar Bhatta made speeches on the occasion. Secretary of the Industrial Promotion and Development Department under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Mr Lakshmi Chand briefed those present on the show.

Next, Minister Brig-Gen Pyi Sone gave an introductory speech. The Indian Ambassador and officials handed over the book on bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two countries to Minister Brig-Gen Pyi Sone.

The Commerce Minister and the Indian Ambassador cut the ribbon to open the show.

After the opening ceremony, the ministers, deputy ministers and guests viewed the booths of the show.

The free show will be kept open until 22 February.

Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines visits Shwedagon Pagoda, Myanma Gems Mart

YANGON, 19 Feb — Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines Ms Delia Domingo Albert and party, accompanied by officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador of the Republic of Philippines Mme Phoebie A Gomez and officials, this morning visited the Shwedagon Pagoda. Members of the Pagoda Board of Trustees welcomed and conducted them around the pagoda. Afterwards, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs signed in the visitors’ book and made cash donation.

Next, they viewed the bell built by King Thayawady at the north-east corner and the original Htidaw donated by King Mindon in 1871. Then, the guests proceeded to Myanma Gems Mart where they were welcomed by officials of Myanma Gems Enterprise. Later, the Philippines guests viewed jewellery displayed at the mart.

Seminar on foreign investment opportunities of Myanmar held

YANGON, 19 Feb — Minister for Industry of Thailand Mr Phinij Jarusombut and party held the seminar on foreign investment opportunities of Myanmar at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel at 2 pm today.

Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Industry of Thailand Mr Phinij Jarusombut and party held the seminar on foreign investment opportunities of Myanmar at Kandawgyi Palace Hotel at 2 pm today.

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The State Peace and Development Council
The Body Organ Donation Law
(The State Peace and Development Council Law No. 1/2004)
(from page 1)

Chapter II
Aims
3. The aims of this Law are as follows:-
(a) to enable saving the life of the person who is required to undergo body organ transplant by application of body organ transplant extensively;
(b) to cause rehabilitation of disabled persons due to disfunctioning of body organ through body organ transplant;
(c) to enable carrying out research and educational measures related to body organ transplant;
(d) to enable increasing the number of body organ donors;
(e) to cooperate and to obtain assistance from government departments and organizations, international organizations, local and international non-governmental organizations, companies and individuals in body organ transplant.

Chapter III
Formation of the Committee relating to Donation of Body Organ
4. The Government shall form the Committee relating to Donation of Body Organ consisting of the following persons:-
(1) Minister Chairman
The Ministry of Health
(2) Representatives from the relevant Government departments and organizations Members
(3) Appropriate experts and professional personnel Members
(4) A person assigned responsibility by the Minister of the Ministry of Health Secretary
(b) may if necessary, determine a Vice-Chairman and a Joint Secretary in the Committee.
5. A member of the Committee relating to Donation of Body Organ who is not a Government servant is entitled to receive remuneration prescribed by the Ministry of Health.

Chapter IV
Functions and Duties of the Committee relating to Donation of Body Organ
6. The functions and duties of the Committee are as follows:-
(a) laying down the policy for carrying out successfully the work of donation of body organ in accordance with the aims of this Law;
(b) giving guidance for carrying out educative measures in order to enhance the number of body organ donors;
(c) giving guidance to be systematic in respect of quality control, procurement, storage and issuance of body organs;
(d) in carrying out body organ transplant giving guidance for conducting research and educational measures relating to the said task;
(e) carrying out measures to nurture expert and research personnel and technicians for body organ transplant;
(f) giving guidance and supervising the functions relating to donation of body organ;
(g) stipulating terms and conditions for exporting body organs to other countries and importing body organs from other countries;
(h) obtaining assistance from the government departments and organizations, international and non-governmental organizations, local and foreign companies, individuals and accepting donations and equipment, maintaining systematically, allocating and permitting use of them.
7. The Committee may direct the relevant Department to determine the receiving units in areas needing the same.
8. The Committee may form technical working committee as may be necessary, and determine duties and functions thereof.

Chapter V
Donation of Body Organ
9. A person who has attained the age of 18 may donate his own body organ.
10. The surviving wife, husband, son or daughter, parent, brother, sister or one of the relatives may donate the deceased’s body organ if there is no objection in the family.
11. The receiving unit may accept donation of the body organ in accordance with the stipulations.
12. The receiving unit on accepting the donation of the body organ shall:-
(a) register the donor’s name and particulars in the body organ donors’ register;
(b) issue body organ donor card to the donor or the surviving wife, husband, son or daughter, parent, brother, sister or one of the relatives who donated the body organ;
13. On knowing that the deceased is the donor of the body organ, the responsible person of the hospital or clinic where the donor died, or a responsible person from home shall inform the nearest receiving unit immediately.
14. (a) The body organ donor may, by surrendering the body organ donor card inform the receiving unit to cancel the donation of the body organ
(b) If the receiving unit is informed under sub section (a), it shall cancel the name of the donor from the body organ donors’ register.

Chapter VI
Removal of the Body Organ
15. Only the expert or technician who is prescribed by the Ministry of Health is authorized to remove the body organ.
16. A person who is authorized to remove the body organ has the right to remove the body organ of any of the following persons:
(a) person who donated his body organ;
(b) unclaimed body of the deceased;
(c) the deceased person whose body organ has been donated by the surviving wife, husband, son or daughter, parent, brother, sister or one of the relatives under section 10.
17. The police surgeon shall, if requested by the person who is authorized to remove the body organ, permit the removal of the body organ of the deceased person involved in any crime. However, it shall not permit on the occurrence of any of the following:-
(a) being a person who plans to his death has written a letter of having no desire to donate the body organ;
(b) in completeness of the post-mortem examination by the relevant police surgeon of the body organ to be removed;
(c) objection by the surviving wife, husband, son or daughter, parent, brother, sister or one of the relatives.
18. On being informed under section 13, the receiving unit shall arrange to remove or take away the body organ within the prescribed time.

Chapter VII
Storage and Distribution of the Body Organ
19. The receiving unit shall store the body organ which is removed in accordance with the stipulations.
20. The receiving unit shall carry out the following in accordance with the stipulations:
(a) distribution of the body organ that has been received for transplant;
(b) distribution of the body organ which is of no use in transplant for educational purpose or research.

Chapter VIII
Offences and Penalties
21. Whoever sells or buys the body organ for considera-
tion shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, and may also be liable to a fine.
22. Whoever abets the commission of the offence provided in section 21 shall, on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, and may also be liable to a fine.

Chapter IX
Miscellaneous
23. With respect to donation of the eye, which is part of body organ, it shall be carried out in accordance with the provisions contained in the Eye Donation Law.
24. The Ministry of Health may form necessary working committees.
25. The Ministry of Health:-
(a) shall bear the expenditures of the Committee;
(b) shall undertake to carry out the office work of the Committee.
26. No suit or prosecution shall lie against the person who is authorized to remove the body organ for any activity which is done in good faith under this Law.

The provisions contained in section 21 shall not apply to the matters carried out in accordance with the terms and conditions prescribed by the Committee.

(Sd/)/ Than Shwe
Senior General
Chairman
The State Peace and Development Council
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV YANGON STAR VOY NO (346)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANGON STAR Voy No (346) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-2-04 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MS EAGLE CORPORATION
Phone No: 256988/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV MAS SUTRA VOY NO (053)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAS SUTRA Voy No (053) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20-2-04 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.P.I where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: MPS PREMIER SPECTRUM
Phone No: 256988/378316/376797

India begins count of endangered river dolphins

KOLKATA (India), 19 Feb— Using searchlights mounted on boats, Indian wildlife officers began on Tuesday the first census of the nation’s river dolphins who are nearing extinction because of fishing nets and water pollution.

India has between 1,200 and 3,000 riverine dolphins that live in fresh water rivers in at least five Indian states and the salty waterways of the Sunderbans delta near the Bay of Bengal.

A century ago, thousands of river dolphins were reported swimming along huge stretches of major rivers and the north and east including the holy Ganges and the mighty Brahmaputra.

They are as endangered as the better known tigers, if not more endangered,” Subrata Pal Chowdhury, West Bengal State Wildlife officer, told Reuters.

Dozens of rare dolphin get killed each year after getting snared in fishing nets or slashed by boat propellers.

Others die due to sewage, toxic effluents and pesticides that flow into India’s rivers from cities, factories and fields—MNA/Reuters

World slipping in goal of fresh water to poor

On this 19 Feb — The world is slipping behind a UN goal of supplying fresh water by 2015 to more than half a billion people in developing nations who currently lack it, the head of a UN Commission said on Tuesday. Governments agreed at a 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg to work out by next year national plans for halving the proportion of people with no access to fresh water by 2015, now 1.2 billion people or one in five of the world population.

“This plan will not be in place in all countries by 2005,” said Boerge Brende, chairman of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development which follows up the Johannesburg goals.

“It’s clear that some countries haven’t thought about so far...and it’s obvious that the countries that are worst off in wa- ter,” he told a news confer- ence. “We must have plans in place or we don’t have a chance of reaching the 2015 goals,” Brende, who is also Norway’s Environment Minister, said about 100 environ- ment ministers would meet in New York on April 14-16 to review the water targets, and a related goal of improv- ing sanitation for an estimated 2.4 billion people.

The said water targets were “still doable...but it will be a big challenge”. Saharan Africa faces the biggest problems while In- dia and China seem better prepared despite their huge populations. Fresh water would have spin-off benefits in curbing poverty, improv- ing health or even in defas- sing potential conflicts in ar- eas with shared rivers, Brende said. — MNA/Reuters

World slipping in goal of fresh water to poor

One million French children live in poverty

PARIS, 19 Feb — One million children are living in poverty in France, many of them in one-parent families, according to a report released Tuesday by the French Daily Le Figaro.

The study, first of its kind, made by Council for Em- ployment, Income and So- cial Cohesion (CREC) on the basis of data from 1990 and 2000, found that nearly one child in 10 in France lives under the poverty line (1,170 euros, about 1,462 U.S.dol- lars, per month for one cou- ple with one child).

The CREC urged the French Government to es- tablish a public service to ad- opt a nationwide pro- gramme against child poverty, notably through improving the jobs taken by parents and building more apartments to which the mostly poor can afford and fighting the discrimination against immigrants.

MNA/Xinhua

Simplified Chinese character found on ancient roller

XI‘AN, 19 Feb — Simpli- fied Chinese characters could have a longer history than most people think, according to archaeologists in northwestern Shaanxi Province, who have recently found an an- cient stone roller ingrained with the simple, present ver- sion of the character “Wan”, which stands for “10,000” in Chinese.

The roller, 2.1 metres in diameter and 48 centimetres thick, was spotted in Qingshu Village of Meixian County, under the jurisdiction of Baosi City, said officials with the county’s cultural heritage bu- reau.

The mammoth stone had been left unattended outside a villagers’ courtyard when it enticed the officials’ interest during a recent survey in the area. Inscriptions on the roller suggested it was built during the reign of Emperor Wan Li (1573-1620), during the imperial Ming Dynasty, that lasted from 1368 to 1644.

The character “Wan” on a second stone roller unearthed in a nearby village, however, was in Chinese in complex form. Liu noted, though it dated back to the same period in history.—MNA/Xinhua

Philippine drug manufacturers urged to lower medicine prices

MANILA, 19Feb—Philip- pine drug manufacturers should lower medicine prices out of the sense of social re- sponsibility, the Department of Trade and Industry said Tuesday. Trade and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima ap- pealed drug companies to sell their products at more afford- able prices. “It would be a big relief for consumers if they could obtain medicine at a discount,” he said.

Citing pharmaceutical firm Glaxo Smith Kline (GSK), which has cut down prices of its essential medi- cine by 34 per cent as part of its value health programme, the secretary said the genuine healthcare service means making medicine within the reach of the poor.

MNA/Xinhua
**Parmalat founder’s son, daughter arrested in probe**

Investigative sources said the arrests in Parma, Rome and Verona, the three detentions since late January, included Tanzi siblings Stefano and Francesca, Calisto Tanzi’s younger brother Giovanni and executives with ties to the family’s travel assets.

The arrests came as Parma investigative sources put the amount of cash funnelled out of the dairy-to-cakes group at about 900 million euros, including 400 million euros into travel and tourism assets, above initial estimates.

“New elements emerged in the last month and a half of the investigation,” one source said. Calisto Tanzi said earlier in the probe that about 500 million euros in Parmalat funds were siphoned from the publicly listed company into travel group Parmatour and other family assets.

“Sheikh offloads of funds into the tourism firms was done through payments with false accounts from both (Parmalat and the tourism companies),” one investigative source said, adding that books of Cayman Islands unit Bonlat Financing Corporation were then used to hide the cash.

Tanzi’s daughter Francesca, 36, served on the board of Parmatour, the family’s main travel group, but has denied having a real management role. Calisto Tanzi told magistrates over the weekend that his daughter’s role in Parmatour was “marginal”, although other executives have said she guided the firm.

Stefano Tanzi, 35, sat on Parmalat’s board and had ties to Parmatour via its former holding company HIT. He was also a former chairman of Parmalat-owned soccer club Parma.

An investigative source said the arrest was linked to “funds diverted by the family to the tourism sector through Parmalat” — MNA/Reuters

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**Nigeria imports $4m of “AIDS” drugs**

LAGOS, 19 Feb — Nigeria said on Tuesday it was importing antiretroviral drugs worth nearly 4 million U.S. dollars to end a four-month shortage threatening an ambitious anti-AIDS plan.

Health Minister Eyitayo Lambo said the first batch had arrived in Africa’s most populous country and was being distributed to the 25 HIV/AIDS treatment centres.

In 2002 Nigeria launched Africa’s biggest AIDS control programme aimed at distributing cheap generic drugs from India to an initial 10,000 adults and 5,000 children at subsidised monthly cost of 1,000 naira (7 U.S. dollars) per person.

UNAIDS and Health Ministry figures indicate that around 3.5 million of Nigeria’s 130 million people have the HIV virus — MNA/Reuters

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**Official says Nigeria suffers high cases of maternal deaths**

ABUJA, 19 Feb — Nigeria is one of the countries in the world that have the highest cases of maternal mortality, the News Agency of Nigeria reported Tuesday.

Health Minister Eyitayo Lambo was quoted as saying that the high prevalence of maternal deaths was evidence of poor maternal service delivery. “I am unhappy that maternal deaths, as a result of high-risk teenage pregnancies, either from unsafe abortion or delivery complications, contribute significantly to the high maternal mortality,” he said.

Declaring open the First National Consultative Summit on Reproductive Health on Monday in Nigeria’s capital Abuja, Lambo said about 40 per cent of pregnant women experienced pregnancy-related health problems during or after childbirth. — MNA/Xinhua

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**Report links breast cancer to antibiotic use**

**CHICAGO, 19 Feb** — Women exposed to higher amounts of antibiotics have as much as twice the risk of breast cancer, but it is not known if the treatment is an actual cause of the most common form of cancer affecting women worldwide, researchers said on Tuesday.

The findings however are consistent with an earlier Finnish study of almost 10,000 women and pending further research they underscore the need to use antibiotics prudently, the report said.

The study from the University of Washington in Seattle was based on a look at 10,219 women in a group health plan, some of whom were being treated for breast cancer.

Antibiotic use of the patients studied was determined by the prescription records maintained by the health plan.

It found that women who took antibiotics for more than 500 days, or had more than 25 prescriptions, over an average period of 17 years had more than twice the risk of breast cancer as women who had not taken any antibiotics.

The risk was smaller for women who took antibiotics for fewer days. But even with antibiotic use was also associated with death due to breast cancer ...” said the study, which was published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

“While the implications for clinical practice will not be clear until additional studies are conducted, the results of this study support the continued need for prudent long-term use of antibiotics and the need for further studies of the association between antibiotic use and cancer risk,” the report concluded. — MNA/Reuters

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**S Korea helps fund Cambodia’s vocational training**

Pnom Penh, 19 Feb — South Korea is helping fund a 26-million-U.S.-dollar vocational school with a loan agreement signed in 2002, a local newspaper reported Wednesday.

The vocational training school, scheduled to open next year, plans to teach skills such as hotel management, cooking, electronics repair, design and construction.

The project seeks to transplant the Korean Vocational Training System to Cambodia, the Cambodia Daily quoted South Korean Ambassador Lee Han Gon as saying. Officials plan for the school to offer training in 12 skill areas for 3,000 short-term students and 600 long-term students per year. — MNA/Xinhua

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**Two Japanese arrested in Manila for suspicious drugs**

MANILA, 19 Feb — The Philippine anti-drug opera-

Two Japanese nationals were arrested in Manila on Monday for suspected drug possession.

The police said the two Japanese, identified as Naohia Fukami and Yasuto Matsubara, were arrested in a departing check point inside the airport on Monday.

In a statement, Anselmo Avenido, Director-General of Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, said the suspects were frisked at the final check area when around 588 assorted tablets and capsules suspected to be illegal pills were found in their possession, police said Wednesday.

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EU shares threat assessments to boost Athens security

**BRUSSELS,** 19 Feb — The European Union has recommended its member states share daily threat assessments to boost security at major sporting events such as the Olympic Games in Greece and Euro 2004 soccer finals in Portugal.

Justice and interior ministers are set to approve on Thursday a handbook for practical cooperation between law enforcement agencies to prevent attacks on sports events in the European Union.

"Major international sporting events face particular terrorist threats primarily associated with the public interest in these events," said a background note issued ahead of the meeting. "In the past, terrorists have used the Olympic Games as a platform for their activities." Eleven Israelis died after an attack by Palestinian gunmen at the Munich Olympics in 1972.

The handbook recommends that risk analysis and threat assessments be made on a weekly basis in the month before any large sports event and on a daily basis during the event. The reports should be shared among EU states.

It also states that while the host nation has overall responsibility, other EU members should help provide proper protection.

Any member state organizing an event should be able to ask for the deployment of police or intelligence officers from other EU states to fight specific terrorist scenarios, it adds.

Apart from the Athens Olympics, several EU states will host major events in the next three years such as Euro 2004, the 2006 soccer World Cup in Germany and the Rugby World Cup in 2007 in France. — MNA/Reuters

**Top clubs want compensation fees but no World Club Cup**

**BARCELONA,** 19 Feb — Europe’s top clubs agreed on Tuesday to press for compensation payments when their players are called up for international tournaments and stressed their total opposition to FIFA’s Club World Championship.

Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, the chairman of the 102 strong European Club Forum, told reporters: "All the clubs are of the opinion that it is fair to ask confederations, including UEFA and FIFA, to compensate clubs for the release of players for international tournaments." At the same time the clubs will continue to give their full support to national team football, but we hope that it will be possible to find a practical solution which is fair to all parties. While the clubs agreed to pursue that development, they also rejected proposals to re-launch the Club World Championship.

The tournament was held for the first time in 2000, but the 2003 tournament was cancelled because of a lack of funding. FIFA want to stage it again in 2005, but the clubs are opposed to the idea. In a statement they said they agreed to a reduction in Champions League matches this season to ease the workload on their players and to re-introduce the World Club Championship could be counter-productive. "It would be incoherent to support any additional tournament (so we have) unanimously agreed to reject, for a variety of reasons, any proposal for a FIFA Club World Championship," they said. Plans to impose salary caps on Europe’s top clubs were also dismissed, with the clubs believing that UEFA’s existing financial system would control players’ salaries in future.

The clubs also discussed the future of the UEFA Cup, whose format is due to change next season. Although there was an unanimous endorsement of the new format and the need to re-brand the competition, there was no unanimity on marketing aspects," the statement explained. "A compromise proposal is to implement the new format as from the 2004-05 season and to review results over a two-year period while carrying out further investigations into the viability of adopting a centralized marketing approach." — MNA/Reuters

**Nedved voted 2003 Czech Footballer of Year**

**PRAGUE,** 19 Feb — Juventus midfielder Pavel Nedved was named Czech Footballer of the Year for a third time on Tuesday.

Nedved, voted European Footballer of the Year in December, came on top in a poll conducted among Czech players and managers.

The 31-year-old also won the award in 1998 and 2000.

The Czech captain was rewarded for a series of outstanding performances for Juventus as they retained the Italian league title and reached the Champions League final in May.

However, Nedved missed the final through suspension after being booked in the semi-final, when his spectacular performance was a major factor in the defeat of competition favourites Real Madrid. Juventus lost the final on penalties to AC Milan.

Nedved also helped the Czech Republic to extend their unbeaten run to 19 matches and qualify for Euro 2004 finals in Portugal. "I would throw all these awards into a corner. I have almost all my money in a bank in the clearing house by the Central Bank last month. — MNA/Reuters

**France captain Desailly accepts his role has changed**

**BRUSSELS,** 19 Feb — France and Chelsea captain Marcel Desailly realizes he is no longer an automatic first choice for club and country but says he still believes he is good enough to play a part.

"The 35-year-old defender, who has 111 caps, starts for France in their friendly international against Belgium on Wednesday having missed their last two games against Germany in November and Israel in October.

He has not played for Chelsea since a 0-0 draw against Birmingham in the Premier League on January 18 after suffering a calf injury. "I was worried about his money before the match," Desailly said. "I still think I am up to it. I won’t carry on if I’m not up to it (but) I still enjoy going to training every day.”

Desailly said he felt the pressure of starting against Belgium on Wednesday, but was confident in the other defenders. "I will start a game and I feel pressure, it is true, but it is a good pressure," he said.

"Whoever players you choose, they are all good, they show it with their clubs. With Willy Sagnol, Lilian Thuram, Mikael Silvestre, Philippe Mexes, Jean-Alain Boumsong, myself, Bixente Lizarazu, the coach can sleep peacefully," he said.

France coach Jacques Santini said: "Certain players, like Marcel, need some stability and the coach also needs some stability. Marcel will therefore be in the starting 11.”

**Nigerian president to help Okocha get his money back**

**Lagos,** 19 Feb — Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo has promised to help national soccer captain Jay Okocha recover one million US dollars of his money from one of the country’s banks.

"The President has discussed the issue of the trapped funds in Societe Generale Bank with the Central Bank governor and he said something will definitely be done," Presidency spokesman Justin Abah said on Tuesday, quoting Obasanjo.

The Nigerian bank was suspended from the clearing house by the Central Bank last year. "I want to assure you... the bank will come to life and your money will not be lost," Abah quoted Obasanjo as telling Okocha at a meeting in the capital Abuja.

Okocha was named best player of the 2004 African Nations Cup, which finished in Tunisia at the weekend, after scoring four goals and steering Nigeria to third place. The 30-year-old midfielder, who plays for Bolton Wanderers in the English Premier League, had been worried about his money before the start of the African tournament. "I have almost all my money in a bank in Nigeria," he told Bolton’s web site last month. "Now the bank has a problem and I’m in real trouble. I really don’t know what to do..."

There had been fears that Okocha could even miss the finals because of the problem. "This money issue is now my big problem with Nigeria, so I want to continue to play for Bolton and earn money to take care of my family," he told a Lagos radio station last month. — MNA/Reuters

**Croata’s Ivan Klasnic (L) tries to block a shot by Germany’s Christian Worms (R) during their international friendly match at Poljud stadium in the Croatian port of Split, on 18 Feb, 2004.**

**MNA/Reuters**
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Minister for Industry of Thailand

YANGON, 19 Feb — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Minister for Industry Mr Phinij Jarusombut and party of Thailand at Zeyathiri Beeikman on Konmyninthia at 8 am today. Also present at the call were Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung, Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, and Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department. The Thai minister and party were accompanied by Thai Ambassador Mr Suphot Dhirakaosal.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt greets Thai Minister for Industry Mr Phinij Jarusombut.

Prime Minister receives Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines

YANGON, 19 Feb — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines Ms Delia Domingo Albert and party at Zeyathiri Beeikman on Konmyninthia at 4.45 pm today. Also present at the call were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Director-General Thura U Aung Htet and Ambassador of the Philippines Mme Phoebe A Gomez.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Philippines Ms Delia Domingo Albert and party. — MNA

Hard work brings regional progress and serves local people’s interest

YANGON, 19 Feb — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo arrived at Kyunsu in Myeik District on 16 February evening from Ma Kyone Galet village after attending the Salone Traditional Festival there in the morning.

At the town villa, Capt Win Shein (Navy) of the Taninthayi Naval Region reported to him on building of an island ring road and bridges on it. Lt-Gen Maung Bo attended to the needs. Accompanied by Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Coastal Region Command Brig-Gen Ohn Myint and officials, Lt-Gen Maung Bo met with departmental personnel, members of social organizations and townswelders in Kyunsu.

He said although Kyunsu is a town enjoying economic development, it cannot produce enough rice for its population yet. Departmental personnel of the regional branches and local people will have to make self-reliant and collective efforts to ensure rice sufficiency. They will have to reclaim more land for cultivation. Taninthayi Division is rich in natural resources. Practical hard work will bring actual progress to the region and serve the interests of the local people. The Government is implementing the 24-development-zone project and the five rural area development tasks in a harmonious way for progress of all the places of Myanmar. It is striving for all-round development of the entire Taninthayi Division. Salone Traditional Festival was held at Ma Kyone Galet village for progress of coastal islands and local people of the division. Departmental personnel are required to make field tours down to the villages for the success of the Government’s regional development drive. They will have to organize the local people to actively take part in the drive. Earlier completion of the projects will bring benefits sooner. Thus, instead of solely relying on the Government, departmental personnel and local people should make concerted efforts, with full patriotism, for accelerating the regional development drive.

After inspecting the ring road, Lt-Gen Maung Bo met with local authorities, members of social organizations and local elders at Talabaing village. Lt-Gen Maung Bo and Commander Brig-Gen Ohn Myint discussed means to develop the agricultural, livestock breeding, education, health and social sectors of the village.

Accompanied by Commander Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Brig-Gen Khin Maung and officials, Lt-Gen Maung Bo attended the ceremony to drive in stakes for building of beach resort hotels in Maungmakan Beach in Launglon Township. On arrival at the Pandal where the ceremony would be held, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party were welcomed by Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung and officials. Minister Brig-Gen Thein Zaw made a speech. Chairman of Myanmar Hoteliers Association and Myanmar Construction Entrepreneurs Association U Khin Shwe reported on arrangements for construction of the hotel.

Then, the commander gave a speech. He said that according to the Head of