Prime Minister views Made in India Show

YANGON, 20 Feb — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, accompanied by officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, arrived at Yangon Trade Centre on Upper Pazundaung Street in Mingala Taungnyunt Township where Made in India Show is being held under Myanmar-India bilateral trade and economic promotion programme, this morning.

He was welcomed there by Chairman of Yangon Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, deputy ministers, departmental heads, the president of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Rajiv Kumar Bhatia, Secretary of the Industrial Policy & Promotion Department of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of India Mr Lakshmi Chand, the chairman of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) of India and officials.

The Prime Minister and party viewed the booths of steel wares, industrial products, medicines and medical equipment, cosmetics, textiles, personal goods, weaving machines, leather wares, accessories, agricultural implements, hospital equipment, electric apparatus, furniture, rubber, beans and pulses and crops which are exhibited by 70 Indian companies.

The signing ceremony followed at the parlour of the centre. UMCCI President U Win Myint and Confederation of Indian Industry Past President Mr Rajive Kaul signed the agreement on Setting Up of Joint Task Force between the UMCCI and the CII.

The Prime Minister and party left the centre later in the morning. The admission-free trade fair will be kept open till 22 February.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt views products at Made in India Show.— MNA

Four political objectives
* Stability of the State, community peace and tranquility, 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

Commerce Minister meets Thai guests

YANGON, 20 Feb — Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone met with Chairman of the Standing Committee on Commerce of the House of Representatives of Thailand Mr Rewat Sirinukul, and delegation, accompanied by Thai Ambassador Mr Suphot Dhiraokasal, at his office today.

Also present were Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun, Director-General of Directorate of Trade U Nyunt Aye, Managing Director U Min Hla Aung of Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading and officials of Border Trade Department.— MNA

Attasammapanidhi ca, to establish oneself rightfully; this is the way to auspiciousness.
Participants in nation-building tasks

The State Peace and Development Council is endeavouring for the Union that is made up of 14 states and divisions to keep abreast of nations of the world and to stand tall among international community. Consolidating national unity, efforts are being made to relay the fruitful results of development undertakings to future generations.

Nowadays, border areas and national races development projects, projects for development of the 24 special regions and the five rural development tasks are being implemented. As special regions are being established in states and divisions to carry out development tasks, universities, colleges, government technical institutes and hospitals have emerged one after another.

The inauguration of the newly-constructed Government Technical Institute (Mohnyin) took place at the institute in Mohnyin Township, Kachin State, on 10 February morning, attended by Vice-Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen See Win.

Nowadays, changes for the better and developments have been made with greater momentum in the field of science and technology and electronics. Changes and development in science and technology are overwhelming the economic, health and social sectors of the whole human society.

Therefore, it is of paramount importance for the people to learn and apply science and technology to keep pace with changes and developments, and efforts have to be made to be able to produce outstanding intellectuals and intelligentsia.

Now, 147 students are attending Civil engineering course, Electrical (communication) engineering course, Electrical (power) engineering course, Mechanical (power) engineering course, Mechanical (Design) engineering course and IT engineering course that are being conducted at Government Technical Institute (Mohnyin).

A total of five institutions of higher learning have been opened in Kachin State for turning out human resources on science and technology — two technological colleges and two computer colleges in Myitkyina and Bhamo, and a government technical institute in Mohnyin.

In the past, students had to pursue their higher education in cities like Yangon and Mandalay but now they have the opportunities for higher education in science and technology in Aungmingala Pagoda in Thanlyin and a government technical institute in Mohnyin.

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”.

People’s Desire

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

Commander attends Htidaw hoisting and enshrinement ceremony of Aungmingala Hsutaungpyay Pagoda in Thanlyin

YANGON, 20 Feb— The ceremony to enshrine religious objects in Aungmingala Pagoda was held at Aungmingala Monastery in Kayinseik Model Village, Thanlyin Township, this morning, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Htay and Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein.

Also present on the occasion were Hanthawady Meditation Centre Sayadaw Agga Maha Kathinatha-caritya Bhaddanta Javana and members of the Sangha. Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko, No 1 Military Region Commander Col Tun Kyi, Secretary of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myint Kyi, Chairman of Yangon South District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Aung Pyay and members, social organizations, wellwishers and guests.

The ceremony was opened with three-time recitation of Namo Tassa. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Javana administered the Five Precepts. Next, the commander and wife offered Seinbudaw, Hgetmyatna-daw and provisions to a Sayadaw; Minister Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein offered ‘soon’ to the pagoda.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe offered diamond orb atop Aungmingala Pagoda. MNA

The ceremony ended with three-time recitation of Buddha Sasanam Ciram Tithanu. The commander and party went to 50-acre summer paddy field to broadcast the successful event to the field and to prune cultivation and production expenses of the local farmers. Next, the commander gave instructions to local officials to give advice to the local farmers to enable them to save cultivation expense.

ANGON, 20 Feb— Poppy plantations are being destroyed in 2003-2004 poppy growing season. A combined team comprising members of local Tatma-dawmen, local intelligence unit, Myanmar Police Force, departmental officials and local people, destroyed 22.35 acres of poppy plantations illegally grown near Nampockey Creek in Ikkamti Township on 10 February, making the total acres of destroyed poppy plantations grown in poppy growing regions in this year’s poppy growing season to 6,316.44 acres up to 10 February 2004. —MNA

The combined team seen destroying poppy plantations. — MNA

Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife offered ‘soon’ to the pagoda.
France, Germany want a UN resolution on Iraq

WASHINGTON, 20 Feb—France and Germany said Wednesday that a new UN Security Council resolution on the world body’s role in Iraq would be needed, prompting US concerns about possible delays in reconstruction efforts and in the planned hand-over of sovereignty this summer.

The US has been urging the United Nations to take a greater role in Iraq, but a new resolution may set up a new confrontation between the United States and two leading war opponents. The new complications arise as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan prepares to issue a report next week on how new Iraq government should be selected.

Annan was expected to tell the Security Council today that direct elections as scheduled for March could not be held until 2005 if the US-led coalition was not replaced by a UN mission. The US administration had said it was concerned about possible divisions within the UN and a possible rebuff to US policy.

They also feared that a debate over a new resolution could drag on long enough to force a postponement of the hand-over to a transitional Iraqi government. They also worry that it could provide the UN with enough leverage to force an overhaul of major infrastructure projects in the country, such as those for power plants and oil field redevelopement.

Any debate may reopen diplomatic wounds from the previous war period and suggests a repetition of a pattern in which the US has sought UN support but then been unhappy with the results. In 2002, the Bush administration asked a month ago for the Security Council’s backing for the US effort to oust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein but turned critical when it failed to get the Security Council’s blessing.

If the Security Council adopts a new resolution, the UN “might want to stop projects that we’re about to get underway. They might want to undo things that are already going,” said one US administration official, who asked to remain unidentified.

Such a move “could have really major effects,” the official said. The US official added that the administration was especially concerned about the French, although relations with the two countries have warmed since the Chirac government led opposition to the war. —Internet

Roadside bomb kills two more Americans in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 20 Feb—An explosion killed two US infantrymen in an insurgent centre west of Baghdad on Thursday.

The blast occurred as troops from Task Force All-American were investigating an earlier attack on a US convoy near Khalidiyah, a Sunni Triangle town about 50 miles west of Baghdad, witnesses said.

One Iraqi was killed and another US soldier was wounded, the US command and witnesses said. “About 20 US soldiers and two Iraqi policemen were on foot inspecting the area after the first blast,” witness Bilal Hardan said. “Then the second explosion came. I think they hit a land mine.”

US troops rounded up dozens of Iraqi suspects after the second attack, the witnesses said. The US command confirmed the American casualties but offered no further details.

The latest deaths brought to 545 the number of American service members who have died since President Bush launched the Iraq war on March 20. Most of the deaths have occurred after Bush declared an end to active combat on 1 May.

With casualties mounting in an election year, the Bush administration would like to transfer political power to the Iraqis by the end of June and shift more security responsibility to the US-trained Iraqi forces. —Internet

Bulgarian soldier in Iraq shoots at, wounds mate

BAGHDAD, 20 Feb—Private Zhivko Dolashkov, a soldier from Bulgaria’s second Iraq unit in Karkala has accidentally shot at and wounded his mate Georgi Miles on the territory of the camp Kilo. Dolashkov shot with his Makarov gun.

The wounded soldier has been rushed to a hospital in Baghdad. His life is out of danger. The accident occurred at about 4 pm Bulgarian time.

The commander of the battalion has ordered an investigation into the case. In August 2003 Private Pavlina Marinova Landeva from Bulgaria’s first peace-keeping battalion in Iraq shot herself as she used her weapon inattently. The injury was not a dangerous one. Bulgaria imposed penalties over the shooting incident and despite the fact that Landeva is said to have caused the wound herself, the General Staff of the Bulgarian army demanded that other soldiers should also be held responsible for the injury. Landeva and another two soldiers from the unit were recalled to Bulgaria.

Earlier in the day Defence Minister Nikolay Svinarov announced that the commander who will head Bulgaria’s third battalion in Iraq has already been selected. Minister Svinarov refused to disclose his name. Bulgarian troops have been deployed in Iraq as part of a 9,000-strong Polish-led multinational contingent.

Japan, Iran sign $2b deal to develop huge oilfield

TOKYO, 20 Feb—Japan and Iran have signed a two-billion US dollar deal to jointly develop the massive Azadegan oilfield in southwestern Iran, according to Japanese official sources Thursday.

An announcement of the agreement is expected to be made Friday.

The agreement will grant the Japanese consortium rights to develop the oilfield in southwestern Iran, close to the border with Iraq.

The two sides will sign a formal contract after deciding details such as ratios of investment and the duration of the development, the sources said.

Actual production is expected to begin in 2006 with an estimated maximum output of more than 400,000 barrels per day. The Azadegan oilfield is believed to have crude oil reserves of 26 billion barrels. The agreement will give Japan the largest oilfield it has ever developed independently.


But the talks had been stalled due largely to pressure from the United States which has urged Japan to withdraw from the project due to its concern about Iran’s alleged nuclear programme.

Japan lost its preferential negotiation rights in June last year, and Iran apparently considered an international auction at one point.

But after Iran said recently it would accept inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United States softened its stance, Japan decided to push for the project. —MNA/Xinhua

Animal husbandry booming in Heilongjiang Province

HARBIN, 20 Feb—North-east China’s Heilongjiang Province has been developing its animal husbandry business rapidly and contributed a great deal to local farmers’ income, said an official with the provincial agricultural department.

Heilongjiang abounds in dairy resources, having ideal conditions for expanding its dairy industry, said the official. As the key dairy production base, it boasts the country’s biggest fresh milk production and dairies processing industry.

In 2003, Heilongjiang’s gross livestock breeding output value amounted to 29.4 billion yuan (about 3.5 billion US dollars), an increase of 15.3 per cent over the previous year.

This year, the province will continue to focus on the growth of dairies sector and beef processing industry, the official said. —MNA/Xinhua

China to train millions of township enterprise employees

BEIJING, 20 Feb—The Ministry of Agriculture launched a training project Thursday, requiring all township enterprise employees in China to participate in pre-job and on-the-job training programmes.

Rural workers preparing to work in township enterprises, newly-recruited working staff, technicians and the managers of such enterprises will have to undergo training in professional knowledge and techniques, career ethics and law, and be awarded a “blue certificate” after completing the course.

Five million rural workers are expected to receive such training by 2008, and receive professional skills appraisal if conditions permit, as a move to attract rural labouers, especially those in need, to work in township businesses.

Only 9.1 per cent of China’s 480-million-strong rural labour force has received professional training, according to ministry sources.

The next five to ten years will witness a rapid increase in the supply of workers from the countryside, said the official, but secondary and tertiary industries will require more high-quality workers. —MNA/Xinhua

Japanese workers preparing to work in town-ship enterprise employees

A Polish soldier stands guard in front of the site where a car bomb exploded near his base in Hilla, 100 kms south of Baghdad. —INTERNET

Iraqi women weep as they stand in front of their house destroyed in a car bomb attack in the city of Hilla, 100 kms south of Baghdad. —INTERNET

Infantrymen in an insurgent centre west of Baghdad on. —INTERNET

A Polish soldier stands guard in front of the site where a car bomb exploded near his base in Hilla, 100 kms south of Baghdad, on 19 February. —INTERNET

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For the first time in Myanma history, the Ministry of Health and Population has published a report on the health situation in rural communities, a report that gives an insight into the life of the rural people. The report is the summary of the results of the rural health surveys conducted by the Ministry of Health and Population in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development and Livestock and the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. The report also shows how the rural communities are being affected by the wars in the 1990s.
545 US service members killed since beginning of military operations in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 20 Feb—As of Thursday, 19 February, 545 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, according to the Department of Defense. Of those, 376 died as a result of hostile action and 167 died of non-hostile 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, 405 US soldiers have died 261 as a result of hostile action and 144 of non-hostile causes, according to the military.

Since the start of military operations, 2,672 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department’s figures. Non-hostile injured numbered 415.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

Army Spc. Christopher Taylor, 25, Daphne, Ala., killed Monday in Baghdad when a roadside bomb hit his vehicle, assigned to the 1st Armored Division, 116th Military Police Company, Fairhope, Ala.

The ten-day old giraffe calf ‘Bungie’ is seen at the Zoo in Basel, Switzerland on 17 Feb, 2004.—INTERNET

Halliburton falling short in Iraq, says Pentagon

BAGHDAD, 20 Feb—Oil giant Halliburton is falling short in its billion-dollar commitments to supply US-led forces in Iraq and rebuild the country’s oil industry, a senior Pentagon official said on Thursday.

“There is no doubt that more needs to be done. We have to make sure that we can provide the services as quickly as they are needed,” Dow Zakhem, under secretary of defense and the Defense Department’s comptroller — chief financial officer — told Reuters.

Halliburton, mainly through its Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) subsidiary, is the biggest contractor for the US military in Iraq with more than $8 billion in deals covering everything from doing laundry, building bases and providing meals to repairing oil infrastructure.

A US draft audit has found evidence KBR might have overcharged by $61 million for bringing oil and gas products into Iraq via the Kuwaiti subcontractor, Alomania Commercial Marketing Co. Kuwait’s parliament formed a committee on Monday with broad powers to probe the deal.

The Defence Department is looking into the fuel issue and allegations that one or two KBR employees paid bribes to the subcontractor. In addition, military auditors are examining KBR’s pricing for meals it served to troops in Iraq and Kuwait.

Last week, Halliburton said in a Securities and Exchange Commission filing it had agreed to delay billing for $34.5 million until the auditors had completed their work. “We are looking at every aspect of Halliburton and every other contract in Iraq. KBR has total contracts that can come up to $15 billion. It is largest single combination of contracts. Naturally we have to spend a lot of time on it,” he said.

New Zealand tourist arrivals up in 2003

WELLINGTON, 20 Feb—The New Zealand tourism industry weathered global communions caused by disease, terrorists and the stronger NZ dollar, with more than 2.11 million foreign visitors arriving last year—a 3-per-cent increase over 2002.

According to figures released by Statistics New Zealand Thursday, one-third, or just over 700,000 visitors, came from Australia, 264,800 from Britain and 211,600 from the United States.

In a statement Thursday, Tourism Minister Mark Burton said that the increase was “truly remarkable”, especially given the challenges the industry had faced.

“In a year marked by terrorist events, international conflict, and the outbreak of the (severe acute respiratory syndrome) SARS virus, finishing the year even with 2002 would have been outstanding,” he said.

Burton described the industry’s success as “no accident”, saying that the government had worked closely with Tourism New Zealand to leverage off high-profile events such as the films “Lord of the Rings” trilogy and “Whale Rider”, and implemented a regional programme to bolster regional and cultural tourism.

Tourism supported one-in-11 jobs for the country, contributed 9 percent of the GDP and was second only to dairy in export earnings, he said.

Meanwhile, 6 percent more New Zealanders took overseas trips in 2003 compared with 2002.

Saudi Arabia, Yemen, to settle border disagreement

RIYADH, 20 Feb—Saudi Arabia and Yemen issued a joint statement Wednesday stressing closer cooperation in curbing smuggling and infiltration along their common frontier.

The statement was issued after Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh’s two-day visit for official talks focusing on the Saudi construction of a barrier along the border. Yemen sees the wall as a violation of the 2000 border agreement between the two countries.

The statement said the two sides agreed to run joint border patrols, put up security checkpoints, determine crossing points for shepherds and increase security arrangements on sections where smuggling and infiltration are most likely to occur.

“Security of the two nations is a joint responsibility that must be borne by their security institutions, which must cooperate and work together constantly to remove what might hinder that,” the statement added.

Last month, Saudi Arabia started constructing a barrier along its border with Yemen to prevent smuggling of weapons and khat, a stimulant popular in Yemen.

Yemeni media recently criticized Saudi Arabia for building the concrete wall. They said the wall is being constructed in a disarmed area, and tribes in the border area have complained the barrier splits their farms and properties and makes transport difficult.

Ancient Penglai Port to be restored in east China

JINAN, 20 Feb—The city of Penglai, in east China’s Shandong Province, would invest hundreds of millions in the renovation of its ancient port, restoring it to its original look, according to sources from its cultural heritage bureau.

One of China’s four leading ancient ports, the port of Penglai guaranteed the shipping between northeast China’s Liaodong Peninsula and east China’s Shandong Peninsula and it also served as a vital port for the travel to Japan and Korean Peninsula during Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

As the ancient port was increasingly exposed to trash pollution in recent years, the local government invited experts from Shanghai’s prestigious Fudan and Tongji universities to make a restoration plan for the ancient naval port.

According to the plan, Penglai City government had decided to invest 450 million yuan (about 55 million US dollars) to preserve and renovate the port facilities within four years.

Australia may lift Philippine banana ban

Canberra, 20 Feb—Australia’s quarantine agency recommended the lifting of a two-year ban on banana imports from the Philippines on Thursday but said strict conditions should be set to protect the 370 million Australian dollars (291 million US dollars) local industry.

Biosecurity Australia issued a revised draft report outlining the change but there was no immediate word on when a final decision would be taken. The import risk analysis report will be available for public comment until April 23.—MNA/Reuters

The French army patrol blocks the road between Iraq’s city of Hill and Baghdad on 19 February.—INTERNET
NO LET-UP IN ANTI-OCCUPATION ATTACKS

Heat and dust covers a US tank in the city of Khaldiyah. Two US soldiers and one Iraqi were killed in a bomb blast near Khaldiayh, 80 kilometres (50 miles) west of Baghdad, a military spokesperson said.—INTERNET

Two US soldiers stand guard on a highway after closing it following a warning of a roadside bomb on the outskirts of Baghdad on 19 February.—INTERNET

Iraqi women grieve over the death of Iraqi Civil Defence Corps major Mohammad Abdul Jalil, his wife Iman and his daughter during their funeral in the village of al-Hasowa. —INTERNET

Polish soldiers secure a military base in Hilla after two suicide bombers struck at the Polish military base in central Iraq, killing at least seven Iraqis and wounding dozens, including at least 58 coalition troops.—INTERNET

US soldiers question Iraqis as they patrol to search for the source of mortar barrage launched against a US base at Abu Ghraib, on the western edge of Baghdad, Thursday Feb, 19, 2004 and on the previous evening. The US command said attackers fired 33 mortars and five rockets between 6:30 pm and 6:50 pm on Wednesday.—INTERNET

A Polish soldier walks through the rubble, as Iraqis survey the damage to their homes. Feb 19, 2004 after two explosives-laden trucks were detonated outside a Polish military camp in Hillah, south of Baghdad on Feb, 18, 2004. —INTERNET
UN against Iraq polls before occupation ends

UNITED NATIONS, 20 Feb— UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has decided to oppose quick elections in Iraq before the US occupation relinquishes power on June 30 and suggest an alternate timeframe for a poll, diplomats said on Thursday.

But Annan will not recommend or at least a week how to choose a caretaker government that would assume sovereignty until elections could be held. The US plan of caucuses in 18 provinces has been virtually discredited.

“As you know, it’s a complicated situation,” Annan’s senior envoy, Lakhdar Brahimi told reporters when he arrived at UN Headquarters. “The Iraqis have a lot of confidence in the United Nations and I am sure that the United Nations will try to help.”

Brahimi, who just returned from Iraq, has concluded that organizing fair elections by June 30, as Iraqi Shiite leaders want, was not feasible, UN officials said. But he and Annan have not yet decided on the shape of an interim government to take office on June 30, diplomats said.

Annan will probably give a “window” for elections for a permanent legislature and government to be held earlier than the United States had envisaged, as between late this year and early in 2005, the diplomats said.

He is expected to suggest that the elections be held simultaneously with a referendum for a new Constitution. UN officials said there was no question of delaying the June 30 handover of power, important to the Bush Administration before the November presidential election as it struggles to build-back violence by insurgent groups.

The United States had proposed a caucus plan all but abandoned by both Iraqi and US leaders. That proposal, announced on November 15, caused such a compounded caucus system in Iraq’s 18 provinces to select members of an assembly, who would in turn form a provisional government. Elections for a permanent government would then be held in late 2005.

Rich countries must share for benefits on earth

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 Feb— Rich countries looking to stem the loss of plants and animals on Earth and to profit from their genes must stump up the money, Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak said on Wednesday.

“My attitude and mindset of companies from developed countries towards the sharing of wealth must come about if we are to move forward on biodiversity conservation and on development of nature’s full potential,” he said in his opening address.

Malaysia, a tropical Southeast Asian nation, is one of a dozen so-called mega-diverse countries around the world that are home to exceptional numbers of species.

Its forests harbour rare tigers, orangutans and elephants among 286 identified species of mammals as well as thousands of flowering plants and tens of thousands of invertebrates. Off its coasts lie some of the world’s richest coral reef systems.

But like nearly all such nations it is also a developing country, albeit a relatively rich one, meaning conservation is not top priority...

Australia battles locust swarms after drought

SYDNEY, 20 Feb— A massive outbreak of crop-eating locusts has been triggered by heavy rains that broke the worst Australian drought in a century to generate record crops and flood parts of the outback.

It is the worst outbreak since up to 100 billion of the pests were swamped in December 2000. “We’re talking mega-numbers here...you’d just be speculating on exact numbers,” Walter Spratt, operations manager for the Australian Plague Locust Commission, said on Thursday.

Australia’s big wheat, barley and canola crops have just been harvested and are safe in silos around the country, but locusts are breeding near sorghum and cotton crops.

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But like nearly all such nations it is also a developing country, albeit a relatively rich one, meaning conservation is not top priority...
The taste of peace and stability of the Union

Moe Htet Myint (Delta Region)

Rivers and streams winding down the snow-capped mountains of Myanmar run into the sea. Rivers and streams are the main source of the mighty Ayeyawady. Like the artery of the nation, the river flows continuously to the sea with tremendous force till reaching the delta where it splits into many branches for draining into the sea. Rivers and streams are the main source of the mighty Ayeyawady. Like the artery of the nation, the river flows continuously to the sea with tremendous force till reaching the delta where it splits into many branches for draining into the sea.

Kachin State where the Khakaborazi, the only year-round snow-capped mountain in Southeast Asia region, and the largest inland lake, are located within the far east zone of Haimalay, the Assam-Myanmar metamorphic zone and the temperate zone of Myanmar. Plans are under way to form the Khakaborazi National Park, the Mohnam Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Phokananzari Wildlife Sanctuary in Kachin State to become the Myanmar northern forest complex.

The Ministry of Construction built the Bhamo-Mansi-Momeik-Mandalay Road; Bhamo-Mansi-Myitkyina road, and the Phonkanrazi Wildlife Sanctuary in Kachin State during the World War II. Myitkyina-Shwebo-Mandalay way. As the road is linked with the Ledo town in the far north of Myanmar are the round snow-capped mountain in Southeast Asia region, towering magnificently high above the sky as the pride of Myanmar.

The taste of peace and stability of the Union

In fact, national unity has enabled the national brethren to enjoy the taste of peace and stability of the Union.

Speaking at the dinner, Prime Minister General Moe Htet Myint (Delta Region) said: “It is true that the brethren at the ceremony are enjoying the taste of peace and stability of the Union. I feel as if it is a reunion of the members of the same family. It is true that the brethren at the ceremony are enjoying the taste of peace and stability of the Union.

As the road is linked with the Ledo town in the far north of Myanmar are the round snow-capped mountain in Southeast Asia region, towering magnificently high above the sky as the pride of Myanmar.

The Government has built roads including Myitkyina-Shwebo Road; Bhamo-Mansi-Momeik-Mandalay Road, the Hukaung Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Indawgyi, the largest inland lake, are located within the far east zone of Haimalay, the Assam-Myanmar metamorphic zone and the temperate zone of Myanmar. Plans are under way to form the Khakaborazi National Park, the Mohnam Valley Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Phokananzari Wildlife Sanctuary in Kachin State to become the Myanmar northern forest complex.

Moe Htet Myint (Delta Region)

The taste of peace and stability of the Union

In fact, national unity has enabled the national brethren to enjoy the taste of peace and stability of the Union. In fact, national unity has enabled the national brethren to enjoy the taste of peace and stability of the Union.

On 29 December 2003 evening, attended by the two MCs, who were ethnic Kachin leaders of New Democratic Party, and Kayah State National Races Liberation Front Front, and Kayin, Mon, Chin, Kayah and Wa peace negotiators, members of Kachin traditional cultural troops and guests. The two MCs, who were ethnic Kachin ladies, announced the opening of the ceremony.

Kachin traditional cultural troupe members sang the song “The brethren of the Union”. Chairman of the Inlon Innan Festival Organizing Committee Reverend Gregory Nawdin and Chairman of the Nyon Foundation Rev Dr Salwe Jum made speeches.

Kachin traditional cultural troupe members sang the song “The people who love Myanmar.”

Speaking at the dinner, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt in his speech expressed his pleasure to meet with the national brethren again at the ceremony commemorating the honourable farming festival of the ethnic Kachin people in unity and oneness. I feel as if it is a reunion of the members of the same family. It is true that the brethren at the ceremony are also enjoying with happiness the peace and stability as well as the taste of tranquility of the Union family born of the national brotherhood in the Union.

Like in all other states and divisions, the Government has built roads, bridges, institutions of higher learning, schools, hospitals and dams and canals for the development of education, in particular. The Ministry of Construction built the 320-foot Myanlyin in Wanmyin Township, Kachin State, on Bhamo-Myitkyina Road. The reinforced concrete bridge was built at a cost of K 70.3 million and 0.15 million foreign currency.

The Tanai Creek Bridge is on the road from Tanai to Nanyin in the state. The Ministry of Construction built the 942-foot facility that is 12 feet wide and has a maximum load-bearing capacity of 30 tons. The Tanai-Nanyin Road is a section of Myitkyina-Tanai-Nanyun Union Highway. As the road is linked with the Ledo town in the neighbouring India, it is well-known as the Ledo Road during the World War II. Myitkyina-Shwebo-Mandalay strategic road has been built, and Bhamo-CIU-Mahaing Bridge in Mohyn Township was opened in June 2003. The 200-foot bridge is located on Shwebo-Myitkyina Road. It is the first major bridge on the road important infrastructure helping facilitate the transport between the state and the regions in central Myanmar.

The taste of peace and stability of the Union

In fact, national unity has enabled the national brethren to enjoy the taste of peace and stability of the Union.

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Maykha passes through Nagon and Khawbude townships for many miles, while Malikha flows through Putao, Machanbaw, and Sumprabum townships almost the same length before merging together at a place north of Myitkyina thereby forming the Ayeyawady. The area of Kachin state is 34,379 square miles, comprising 18 townships and 691 village-tracts. We left Myitkyina by car and made a brief stopover on the Bala Min Htin Bridge. Under the bridge, we saw the Ayeyawady flowing impressively through the rock boulders.

Monsoons had retreated, and the winter was coming. The weather was cool as the land was surrounded by forests and mountain ranges. The freezing waters of Nanmyinkha Creek was flowing wildly along the mountain valleys. The current slowed down when it reached the place near Washuang village, for the Washuang Dam had stopped the flow of the creek to store water in its reservoir. While looking at the dam, I remembered a poem which featured all the names of the dams in the whole country. But now there are 294 dams and 265 river water pumping stations, 168 over 180-foot new bridges the length and breadth of the nation.

The Government has built roads including Myitkyina-Shwebo Road; Bhamo-Mansi-Momeik-Mandalay Road, Myitkyina-Mogaung-Mandalay Road; Bhamo-Momauk-Myitkyina road; and Bhamo-Katha-Tagang-Mandalay Road linking Kachin State with other regions of the Union. It has also built large and small bridges at all necessary places of the roads. The bridges include the 320-foot Myanlyin in Wanmyin Township, Kachin State, on Bhamo-Myitkyina Road. The reinforced concrete bridge was built at a cost of K 70.3 million and 0.15 million foreign currency.

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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.

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 in Moemei-Mogok Road, Myitkyina-Sumprabum-Putao road and Bhamo-Mansi-Nambikam Road are being upgraded. Paoua in Chupwe Township has been developed into a modern town.

A major bridge in the far north of Myanmar has been named Bala Min Htin, a Myanmar hero. It is a 2,688-foot long bridge supporting a 28-foot wide motorway flanked by two six-foot pedestrian lanes on both sides. Construction began on 7 August 1995 and the facility was opened in 1998.

Peace and stability development of the Union of Myanmar can be felt through the progress of Kachin State. In fact, national unity has enabled the national brethren to enjoy the taste of peace and stability of the Union.

(Translation: TMT)

(Keyword: 20-2-2004)
The Seminar on ICT Linkages Connecting India & Myanmar held

YANGON, 20 Feb — The Seminar on ICT Linkages Connecting India & Myanmar, co-organized by Myanmar Computer Federation and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), was held at MICT Park in Insein Township this afternoon, attended by Chairman of e-National Task Force Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brig-Gen Thein Zaw.

Also present were members of the e-National Task Force, the Indian Ambassador and officials, chairmen and officials of Myanmar Computer Federation, Myanmar Computer Scientists Association, Myanmar Computer Industry Association, officials of Confederation of India Industry (CII) and enthusiasts. The Indian Ambassador and the minister gave speeches. The seminar concluded in the evening. — MNA

Minister watches performance of Indian cultural troupe

YANGON, 20 Feb — Under the programme of cultural exchange and cementing friendship between the two countries, a ten-member Indian cultural troupe performed country music and an evening of folk dances from India at the National Theatre this evening. Among the audience were Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung and wife, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Rajiv Kumar Bhatia, diplomats and officials of foreign embassies in Yangon, directors-general of the Ministry of Culture and departmental officials.

Before the dances, the minister and the ambassador formally opened the performance. Next, the Indian cultural troupe performed the dances. Later, the minister and the ambassador presented a bouquet to the troupe. — MNA

Import-substitute domestic industrial products exhibition opened

YANGON, 20 Feb — The opening of import-substitute domestic industrial products exhibition organized by the Cottage Industries Department under the Ministry of Cooperatives took place in conjunction with the meeting 2004 at the department on Thudhamma Street in North Okkalapa Township this morning.

Present on the occasion were ministers, deputy ministers, departmental heads, officials, chairmen of cooperative syndicates and industrialists.

The master of ceremonies explained the purpose of the exhibition and meeting 2004. The director-general of the Cottage Industries Department and the chairman of the Industrial Cooperative Syndicate U Tun Yi formally opened the exhibition and meeting 2004. The minister unveiled the signboard of the exhibition. The minister and guests viewed 54 booths of the exhibition. The free exhibition opens daily until 22 February from 9 am to 6 pm. — MNA
COMMANDER MEETS OFFICERS AND OTHER RANKS WHO WILL TAKE PART IN 59TH ANNIVERSARY ARMED FORCES DAY PARADE

YANGON, 20 Feb—Chairman of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Supervisory Committee Brig-Gen Nyan Win and senior military officers, Parade Commander for the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade Brig-Gen Min Thein, the reserve parade commander and colonnade commanders, battalion commanders, company commanders, officers and other ranks.

First, Chairman of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Supervisory Committee Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe met with officers and other ranks who will participate in the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade at the hall of Yangon Command this morning.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Parade working group for Observance of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint, Vice-Chairman Brig-Gen Nyan Win and senior military officers, Parade Commander for the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade Brig-Gen Min Thein, the reserve parade commander and colonnade commanders, battalion commanders, company commanders, officers and other ranks.

First, Chairman of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Supervisory Committee Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe made a speech. He stressed the need for officers and other ranks of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air), members of Myanmar Police Force, Fire Brigade and Red Cross, who will take part in the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade, to successfully implement the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day objectives—to strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the State’s seven-point policy programme, to crush internal and external destructive elements hindering 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 and to build up a strong and efficient Tatmadaw to uphold ‘Our Three Main National Causes’. He added that those who will take part in the parade are to strive in unity for enhancing the standard of the parade ceremony, observing rules and regulations strictly.

Next, Chairman of Parade working group for Observance of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint reported on matters related to the parade. Vice-Chairman of Parade working group for Observance of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Brig-Gen Nyan Win gave instructions on rules and regulations. After that, Parade Commander for the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade Brig-Gen Min Thein explained parade procedures and matters related to the parade, Vice-Chairman of Parade working group for Observance of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade.

MINISTER FOR LABOUR U TIN WIN ADDRESSES SECOND MEETING OF ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOR NATION-BUILDING ENDEAVOURS EXHIBITION

YANGON, 20 Feb—Minister for Labour U Tin Win addresses second meeting of Organizing Committee for National Building Endeavours Exhibition.

ancient hsaddan cave all-round renovation

YANGON, 20 Feb—The Leading Committee for All-round Renovation of Ancient Hsaddan Cave in Hpa-an, Kayin State, held a meeting at the office of the Ministry of Culture on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here this afternoon.

It was attended by Chairman of the Leading Committee Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Member Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, Members Deputy Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko and members.

The chairman of the Leading Committee delivered a speech on the occasion. In his speech, the chairman gave instructions on forming of a work committee for launching all-round renovation tasks in June and preservation of the edifice without damaging its original style.

The secretary of the Leading Committee reported on all-round renovation tasks, followed by a general round of discussions.

The chairman gave closing remarks.

Development works inspected

YANGON, 20 Feb—Col Myint, Director-General of the Development Affairs Department under the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs, together with officials, inspected development works in various townships in northern Chin State on 17 and 18 February.

On 17 February, the director-general and party arrived at Haka and inspected the Chin State Development Affairs Department. He left necessary instructions. Next, he inspected the construction of Ha Ohsan bridge across a creek and tarring of Yimmabin road. He also gave necessary instructions to officials concerned to keep the town green and pleasant. He also inspected the site for building the Township Development Affairs Department office. They proceeded to Thantlang and inspected the development works, paving of Haungtain road.

On 18 February, the director-general met with staff at the Falam Township Development Affairs Department Office. He also went to Tiddim and Tonzang and inspected development works.

Organizing Committee for Nation-building Endeavours Exhibition meets

YANGON, 20 Feb—Chairman of the Organizing Committee for Staging National Building Endeavours Exhibition of 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Minister for Labour U Tin Wim delivered an addresses at the second coordination meeting of the committee at Defence Services Museum on Shwedagon Pagoda Road here this afternoon.

The minister gave a speech on display of latest photos, data, maps and graphs related to project implementation of ministries concerned and timely completion of tasks for displaying the exhibits.

Those present participated in the discussions. The minister inspected the booth of the Ministry of Labour after the meeting.

Drug liaison officers, Thai drug control committee officers and UNODC officers seen at opium-substitute plantations in Shan State.
China publicizes list of 656 spam servers

BEIJING, 20 Feb — The Internet Society of China (ISA) Wednesday publicized a blacklist of 656 spam servers across the world, and set a deadline for them to stop sending junk mail.

Of these spam servers, 62 are on the Chinese mainland, 65 in Taiwan Province, six in Hong Kong and 523 from outside China. The ISA will closely monitor the operation of the servers on the list. Sanctions will be imposed on those which continue sending junk mail after March 20. Once these servers stop sending junk mail, the ISA will eliminate them from the blacklist, said Li Yuxiao, an ISA official.

In order to fight against the increasing amount of junk mail on the Internet, the ISA publicized two separate lists of a total of 397 spam servers in 2003, and imposed a large-scale spammer blockade against servers which refused to stop their activities. Email messages from the sanctioned servers were automatically refused by recipient servers.

The new blacklist was the result of several months’ monitoring work by the state-run Internet Society of China, which is made up of 140 members drawn from private companies, schools and research institutes. The Beijing-based group aims to promote the development of the Internet throughout the country.

The number of Internet surfers in China grew to 79.5 million at the end of 2003, up 34.5 per cent over the previous year, making it the world’s second-largest Web population after the United States, the China Internet Network Information Centre said on its web site.

Many Chinese Internet users have been complaining that their email in-boxes are being choked with junk mail daily, and some have had to give up email addresses used for years.

An estimated 50 per cent of all email messages in circulation by the end of 2003 could have been unsolicited “spam”, which may have cost as much as 20.5 billion dollars in wasted technical resources, a report from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has warned.

Road accident kills 11 in Egypt

CAIRO, 20 Feb — Eleven people were killed and three others wounded in a road accident in northeastern Egypt at dawn on Wednesday, the official MENA news agency reported.

The tragedy occurred when a vehicle that carried the victims collided with a truck on the Matrouh-Siwa Road, MENA said.

The injured were taken to Matrouh Hospital for treatment, the report said.

Earlier this month, 19 people were killed and four others injured in a road accident on a highway about 190 kilometres south of Cairo. Road accidents, caused by hazardous roads, careless driving, speeding and badly maintained vehicles, are frequent in Egypt.

According to official figures, traffic accidents kill about 5,000 people and wound 24,000 others annually.

Indian Minister says Buddha’s teachings more relevant today

BOH GAYA, 20 Feb — India’s Tourism Minister Jagmohan on Thursday said Buddha’s message of “ahimsa” (non-violence) and peace has far greater relevance in today’s world driven by sectarian violence and hatred.

Speaking after the dedication ceremony of the Mahabodhi Temple here in eastern part of the country, where Buddha is believed to have attained Enlightenment, which was attended by Buddhist scholars and monks from 25 countries, Jagmohan thanked UNESCO for accepting his ministry’s proposal to declare the temple as a world heritage site.

Jagmohan also urged the government of Bihar State, where Bodh Gaya is situated, to improve infrastructure facilities at important Buddhist sites to attract pilgrims and promised all help to the state government in overcoming any fund shortage coming in way.

Annan welcomes Indo Pakistani dialogue

UNITED NATIONS, 20 Feb — Welcoming the continuing dialogue between Indian and Pakistan. Secretary-General Kofi Annan Thursday urged the leaders of the two countries to “approach the more difficult stages of talks in a spirit of compromise and visionary statesmanship”.

In a statement issued here, Annan appreciated the “steady progress” being made in the bilateral dialogue and said he is “heartened” by the agreement reached at the latest round of talks at the level of foreign secretaries and the commitment “reiterated” to discuss and arrive at peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, to the satisfaction of both sides and the people concerned.
Africa, EU seek to rescue global trade talks

MONROVIA (Kenya), 20 Feb — Africa and the European Union sought a compromise to help rescue global trade talks on Wednesday, but there were few new proposals to break the deadlock between rich and poor.

The meeting at a luxury resort on Kenya’s Indian Ocean coast aimed to bridge gaps between the United States and Africa which contributed to last year’s collapse of negotiations to promote free trade, seen as vital to the world economy.

European Union Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy encouraged African ministers to take a fresh look at existing EU proposals to help exporters in poor countries, who say trade rules are biased against them.

“Basically, we are still stuck,” Tanzanian Trade Minister Juma Ngasongwa said. “We are still holding our positions on agriculture, which is the important one.”

The Kenya meeting is part of wider efforts to revive the stalled round of negotiations held under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which sets the rules of global trade.

The WTO negotiations broke down at a meeting in Cancun, Mexico last September because of disputes over rich countries’ farm subsidies and whether to extend trade rules into new areas.

At stake is a deal to remove trade barriers that the World Bank says could add more than 500 billion US dollars a year to global incomes by 2015, lifting 144 million people out of poverty.

MNA/Reuters

Vietnam reports more high blood pressure patients

HANOI, 20 Feb — Up to 14.9 per cent of Vietnamese population suffered high blood pressure in 2003, fivefold compared to the rate in 1960.

Specifically, 3.5-4 per cent of local people aged under 40, 9.1-10.2 per cent aged 40-60, and 15.4-19.8 per cent aged 60-75 suffer the disease, local newspaper Young People reported on Thursday.

But, only two-thirds of the sufferers realized that they are victims of high blood pressure. Of them, one-third undergo frequent treatment.

In an effort to reduce the number of patients, Vietnam’s Health Ministry is strengthening propaganda about main causes of the disease: little exercise, obesity, smoking, and drinking.

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese doctors say separated Siamese twins “stable”

Shijiazhuang, 20 Feb — Conjoined twin girls, who were separated by Chinese doctors on Saturday, are both in a stable condition, doctors said on Wednesday.

The girls, Bao Bao and Bei Bei, were born joined at the chest and abdomen on 2 January.

Their parents are a farmer couple in Handan City, in southern Hebei Province of north China.

The infants could now drink milk without the help of stomach tube, said Fu Song, a surgeon with the No 1 Hospital attached to Hebei Medical University in the provincial capital of Shijiazhuang, where the three-hour operation was carried out.

Before the operation, the two infants were almost completely linked, doctor Fu said.

The well-being of Bei Bei, the younger of the two, who was diagnosed with a genetic heart condition, remained a concern, with the doctors saying her life would remain in danger for up to 12 months if another operation was not performed to correct the disease.

But it was not right to operate on Bei Bei as she was still too weak after the separation, said Fu.

A heart operation was planned as soon as she recovered from the initial surgery, Fu said.

The hospital performed the operation free of charge and will continue to care for the infants without charge, it said.

It was the third such operation on Siamese twins who were born joined at the chest and abdomen in China.

Twenty-seven sets of Siamese twins have been reported in China since 1949. 15 pairs of whom have undergone separation operations.

MNA/Xinhua

China launches nationwide public safety inspection

BRUNN, 20 Feb — The government has launched a nationwide campaign to check on hidden hazards in public places, following a series of major accidents at industrial sites or public facilities in the past few weeks, which claimed hundreds of lives across the country.

In an emergency notice dated February 17, the General Office of the State Council ordered local governments to be completely aware of the seriousness of the issue, and take measures to eliminate hidden hazards and curb the occurrence of accidents of all kinds in public places.

The State Council will send teams to study the causes of some especially serious accidents that occurred recently, according to the circular.

Governments at all levels should set up their own responsibility systems to ensure public safety and prevent such accidents, the notice says.

MNA/Xinhua

Netherlands appoints first HIV/AIDS Ambassador

BRUSSELS, 20 Feb — Dutch Foreign Minister Bernard Bot and Minister for Development Cooperation Agnes van Ardenne have appointed Laetitia van den Assum to the post of HIV/AIDS Ambassador, the first-ever Dutch ambassador on HIV/AIDS affairs, the Dutch Foreign Ministry announced Thursday.

The new ambassador is expected to deal with the broader dimension of the AIDS problem and the key focus areas of health, education, security and stability, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on economic development, according to the ministry.

Laetitia van den Assum, currently Dutch Ambassador to South Africa, has acquired extensive experience since in the field of HIV/AIDS when she worked at the Dutch Foreign Ministry as well as served as representative of the United Nations Children’s Fund in Tanzania.

With this appointment, the two ministers wish to show that the war on HIV/AIDS has a high priority, said the website of the ministry.

MNA/Xinhua
China to enhance relations with Romania and its Parliament

BEIJING, 20 Feb — Two Chinese leaders vowed to promote friendly relations with Romania and its Parliament here when they met with Valer Dorneanu, chairman of the Chamber of Deputies of the Romanian Parliament.

Wu Banggao, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress, said that China and Romania had enjoyed traditional friendship, and the cooperation between the two countries have maintained good momentum.

Chinese President Hu Jintao and his Romanian counterpart Ion Iliescu signed a joint statement last year, which laid the political foundations for the development of ties, he said, adding that China would promote cooperation with Romania in economy, trade and culture. Wu hoped the high-level exchanges of visits and the contacts between the young Parliament members would continue.

Jia Qinglin, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, told Valer Dorneanu that relations had developed despite ups and downs of the international and domestic situations since the two countries forged diplomatic ties 53 years ago. He said the Chinese new collective leadership valued Sino-Romanian friendship, and held Romania as a reliable friend in southeast Europe, and was ready to work with Romania to push forward ties.

Jia said the CPPCC and the Romanian Parliament had maintained smooth contact, which enhanced relations. Dorneanu said Romania and China had enjoyed long-term friendship, and the development of friendly relations had long been Romania’s top priority. He hoped the Romanian Parliament would further relations with the NPC and the CPPCC.

MNA/Xinhua

Wallstrom says EU, US likely at odds on GM foods for years

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 Feb—Transatlantic differences over the safety of genetically modified foods will drag on for years more and may widen and get worse, European Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom said on Thursday.

Disagreements over potential risks to human health and the environment from genetically modified crops such as maize and soy, vary the benefits and economic potential promised by their creators, has already sparked a US suit against the European Union at the World Trade Organization (WTO).

While EU countries are inching towards lifting a five-year unofficial ban on authorizing genetically modified organisms (GMOs) for use, the acid test of approvals for commercial plantings is unlikely any time soon.

“Both the EU and the US are likely to have different views about genetically modified products like maize and soybeans before any shipment to recipient countries, to help them decide whether to accept it,” Wallstrom said.

Issues of liability for any problem shipments, redress and labelling still need to be sorted out.

Wallstrom said biotech companies must shoulder blame for the way things had turned out in the international debate on GMOs and called on the industry to be more transparent about its activities.

MNA/Reuters

Ireland bans smoking in pubs

LOROISON, 20 Feb — The Irish Government has announced that smoking in pubs, restaurants and other enclosed workplaces in Ireland will be banned starting from March 29, according to reports reaching here on Wednesday.

Irish Health Minister Michael Martin said he hoped the ban would contribute to protecting the health of the nation. “Quite frankly, people should not have to be unwittingly exposed to this toxic substance,” he said.

Some bars have already begun setting up walls around cigarettes outside their premises as well as heated outdoor areas for smokers. The government has rejected proposals by some pub owners for allowing special smoking sections.

The ban will not apply to hotel rooms, prisons, nursing homes and psychiatric hospitals, reports said.

MNA/Xinhua

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MNA/Xinhua
Chinese scientists say Plants help clean poisonous soil

BEIJING, 20 Feb—Chinese scientists are developing a technology to create special plants that “suck” poisonous elements, mostly heavy metals, from soil.

Chen Tongbin, a senior researcher with the Geographical Science and Resources Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), is leading the research on soil recovery technology, which is funded by the state high technology advancement plan, initiated in March 1986 and known as the 863 Programme.

Soil recovery technology depends on poison-accumulating plants, widely regarded as “hyperaccumulators” in academic circles. The heavy metals accumulated by those plants are to be recycled. The primary targets of the technology are arsenic, copper and zinc.

A global leader in technology for collecting arsenic from soil, Chen’s team proved that a brake fern, Prothallium, grown on soil with a high arsenic content, was able to transport the metal from the soil to the plant’s leaves.

Since the 1980s, global scientists have blazed a new way in cleaning polluted soil with hyperaccumulators.

The plants and recycling technology would make heavy industries less environmentally damaging.

study says Aspirin may help prevent Hodgkin’s disease

WASHINGTON, 20 Feb—Regular Aspirin users may be protecting themselves against a form of cancer called Hodgkin’s lymphoma as well as against colon cancer and heart disease, US researchers reported on Wednesday.

In the latest report to suggest that Aspirin has effects that could prevent cancer, a team at the Harvard School of Public Health found that patients who took two or more Aspirin a week for five years reduced their risk of Hodgkin’s lymphoma, a type of immune system cancer.

Ellen Chang and colleagues questioned 565 patients with Hodgkin’s lymphoma and 679 healthy people about their use of Aspirin and related drugs called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents, or NSAIDS.

They found the regular Aspirin users were only 60 percent as likely as non users to be in the cancer group.

To their surprise, they found that regular users of acetaminophen, a non-aspirin pain reliever, nearly doubled their risk of the cancer— but said it may have been because patients started taking the drug to control their as-yet undiagnosed cancer symptoms.

Chang’s team said the study results would be confirmed in bigger studies but said it could be Aspirin actively prevents the immune disruption involved in Hodgkin’s disease.

“Given the extensive inflammation and immune dysregulation accompanying Hodgkin’s lymphoma, an attractive hypothesis is that anti-inflammatory drugs guard against the onset of disease,” they wrote in their report, published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

“If Aspirin use is indeed found to protect against Hodgkin’s lymphoma, this relationship could afford insight into the pathogenesis of the disease and offer possible clues toward its prevention,” they added.
**SPORTS**

**MNA/Reuters**

South Korea beat spirited Lebanon in opening qualifier

**SUWON** (South Korea), 20 Feb—Cha Du-ri and Cho Byung-kuk scored with close-range headers to secure South Korea a 2-0 win over Lebanon in their opening World Cup qualifier on Wednesday.

South Korea, who became the first Asian team to reach the World Cup semifinals in 2002, faced a tougher task than many had anticipated in seeing off a spirited Lebanon team on a cold clear night at the Suwon Stadium.

For most of the first half Lebanon team defended well in numbers and they could even have taken the lead in the 31st minute when they were awarded a penalty for a push by veteran striker Hao Haidong handed China a 1-0 victory.

As a result, the Malaysian team receives the silver medal, Singapore takes the bronze and the bronze medal originally awarded to the Thai team, is withdrawn, he said.

The medal boosted the Philippines' gold medal tally to 49, six ahead of Malaysia. Vietnam hosted the SEA Games for the first time from December 5-13 last year. — MNA/Reuters

**MNA/Reuters**

De La Hoya to face Hopkins for world championship

NEW YORK, 20 Feb—Oscar De La Hoya is looking to move up a weight division and take on Bernard Hopkins for the world championship in a big money bout this fall.

Unable to work out a deal with Felix Trinidad or Shane Mosley, De La Hoya has turned his attention to Hopkins (43-2-1, 31 knockouts), the undisputed middleweight champion, for a fight that could come as early as September 18.

"Bernard Hopkins is very, very dangerous," De La Hoya told Tuesday's Los Angeles Times. "I'm not doing this for the money. I'm doing it for history. This guy (Hopkins) is strong, an animal. I know I'm deep water."

No contracts have yet been signed but the LA Times said De La Hoya would tune up for Hopkins with a June 5 bout against World Boxing Organization champion Felix Sturm of Germany. — MNA/Reuters

**MNA/Reuters**

Vietnam whitewashes Maldives 4-0 in World Cup qualifier

HANOI, 20 Feb—Vietnam crushed the Maldives 4-0 in a 2006 World Cup Asian Zone qualifying match at the My Dinh National Stadium here on Wednesday.

Eight minutes into the match, Vietnamese half-back Phan Van Tai Em scored the opening goal from nearly 20 metres away. The host doubled its lead in four minutes later with a header by striker Nguyen Minh Hai from a Tran Truong Giang pass.

Phan Van Tai Em scored his second goal of the match in the 58th minute after his teammates had a series of tactful coordination just around the goal area. His powerful shot went up into the left high corner of the goal.

In the 77th minute, Pham Van Quyen sealed the victory for Vietnam by converting a penalty kick after a Maldives player fouled Le Van Truong.

Portuguese coach of the Maldives team, Manuel Goncalves Gomes said he was not surprised at the result at all. "Vietnam has recently made great progress. Maldives came here for learning," said Gomes. Vietnam will play Lebanon on March 31 and South Korea on June 19 for its Group Seven round robin play. — MNA/Reuters

**MNA/Reuters**

FIFA warns Laos over Tibet lapses

LONDON, 20 Feb — FIFA have warned Laos United that striker Mark Viduka will not be able to play in Saturday's game at Manchester United if he fails to join the Australian squad for Wednesday's friendly against Venezuela in Caracas.

World soccer's ruling body said in a statement on Wednesday that following a request from the Australian Soccer Association, it had asked the English FA to inform Laos of their obligation to release Viduka for the match. Viduka had been scheduled to fly to Caracas on Sunday but did not travel.

Leeds say the player has a hamstring injury, according to British media reports. — MNA/Reuters

**MNA/Reuters**

Pennant's Leeds loan extended for another month

LONDON, 20 Feb — Jermaine Pennant's loan spell at Leeds United has been extended until March 19, the struggling Premier League club said on its web site on Wednesday. The 21-year-old winger has been on loan at Elland Road from Arsenal since last August and has made 23 appearances for Leeds, scoring once. Relegation-threatened Leeds play Manchester United at Old Trafford on Saturday.

— MNA/Reuters

**Late Kubo strike gives Japan lucky 1-0 win**

SAITAMA (Japan), 20 Feb—Substitute Tatshiki Kubo snatched an injury-time goal to give Japan a lucky 1-0 win over Oman in their opening Asian 2006 World Cup qualifier on Wednesday.

Kubo pounced on a defensive error in the third minute of stoppage time to spare Japan's blushes after the home side had squandered a string of chances, Shunsuke Nakamura missing a first-half penalty in an absorbing Group Three match.

Italian-based midfielder Nakamura had a penalty saved in the 30th minute after Oman defender Khalifa Ayil was harshly adjudged to have brought down Naohiro Takahara. Japan were booted off the pitch at halftime by the crowd of 60,000 in Saitama and they continued to struggle after the interval in their first World Cup qualifier since 1997.

The Asian champions qualified for the 2002 finals automatically as co-hosts with South Korea.

Brazilian-born defender Alex squandered a decent opportunity for Japan in the 61st minute, volleying just wide from an acute angle after a clever pass from captain Hidehito Nakata.

Nakamura was guilty of another glaring miss in the 70th minute, firing over from point-blank range after a knock-down from Kubo. But with disgruntled fans streaming for the exits, Kubo came to Japan's rescue at the death, firing a low left-foot shot past Oman goalkeeper Ali Al-Habsi after an ill-timed stumble from Ayil.

"We were lucky but we expected a very hard match from Oman," said Japan's Brazilian coach Zico.

"There are no easy games at this level and Oman put us under enormous pressure in midfield. But the players were mentally very strong and kept battling right to the end." — MNA/Reuters

**Philippines awarded swimming gold medal from S-E-A Games**

HOUSTON, 20 Feb—Two months after the close of the South-East Asian Games in Vietnam, the Philippines was awarded a gold medal for the men's 4x200 metres freestyle relay swimming event, a Vietnamese sports official said here on Wednesday.

The gold medal was originally given to the Malaysian team due to a technical mistake associated with the race timing, said SEA Games Organizing Committee member Ngo Chi Thanh.

"We have re-examined and determined it was the clock's mistake," said Thanh.

As a result, the Malaysian team receives the silver medal, Singapore takes the bronze and the bronze medal originally awarded to the Thai team, is withdrawn, he said.

The medal boosted the Philippines' gold medal tally to 49, six ahead of Malaysia. Vietnam hosted the SEA Games for the first time from December 5-13 last year. — MNA/Reuters

**INTERNET**

France’s Louis Sauz (R) celebrates with team-mate Zinedine Zidane (R) after scoring against Belgium during their international friendly match at King Baudouin Stadium, Brussels on 18 Feb, 2004. — INTERNET
Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy
Implementation Steering Committee meets

YANGON, 20 Feb — Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy Implementation Steering Committee held a meeting at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmynytha, here at 4.30 pm today.

Speaking at the meeting, the Steering Committee Chairman Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said that Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy was approved at the Summit Meeting on Economic Cooperation Strategy among Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand, hosted by Myanmar in Bagan in November 2003. The meeting has also agreed to promote economic cooperation among the four countries and between the respective two countries. At the meeting, Myanmar has agreed to extend bilateral economic cooperation with Thailand. The agreement covers the relocation of manufacturing industries of Thailand, transport facilitation between the two countries, further development of border areas and raising of the standard of living, and industrial and infrastructure development. Thus, speedy realization of the agreement is required.

Yesterday, a Thai delegation led by Minister for Industry arrived in Yangon, and discussed with Myanmar counterparts the relocation of manufacturing industries, trade and economic development, tourism promotion, industrial and energy sectors, construction of deep-sea port in Dawei, and speedy implementation of Dawei-Kanchanaburi road, Myanmar will have to help facilitate the swift materialization of the discussions. Sector-wise discussions are invited for expeditious realization of agreements that serves the interest of both countries.

Secretary of the Steering Committee Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung reported to the meeting on the Myanmar-Thailand economic cooperation project to implement the Bagan Declaration and the tasks of the ACMECS.

The ministers and the deputy ministers presented sector-wise implementation and future programmes.

The Prime Minister looked into their requirements. Also present were member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo, the Yangon mayor, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department and officials. — MNA

Commander attends coord meeting of Yangon Division Development Affairs Committee

YANGON, 20 Feb — Yangon Division Development Affairs Committee held the coordination meeting to upgrade development tasks for 2003-2004 fiscal year at the meeting hall of the committee in Thanlyin at 11.30 am today, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe. Also present were No 1 Military Region Commander Col Tun Kyi, Secretary of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myint Kyi, Director of Yangon Division Development Affairs Committee U Kyaw Tawng Hkam Aung, Divisional Superintendent of Police U Nyunt Maung San of Public Works, Chairman of Yangon South District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Aung Pyay, township authorities and executive officers.

First, the commander gave a speech, saying that the township development executive officers are to cooperate with respective township authorities in carrying out development tasks in accord with the motto of the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs that towns and villages must quickly be developed. At present, the Government has laid down and is implementing five rural development tasks with a view to narrowing the development gap between rural and urban regions, he added.

As 12 outside townships of Yangon City municipal area are connecting with 33 interior townships, concerted efforts are to be made for enabling respective towns to have town characteristics, he said. Next, the commander stressed the need to strive for development of outside townships of the city municipal area in

Bangkok-based drug liaison officers view opium-substitute cultivation and development works in Shan State

YANGON, 20 Feb — Drug Liaison Officers being attached to Bangkok-based UN Drug and Criminal Office and embassies and senior officers of Thai Drug Control Committee Office went on one-day trip to view Yanghtaikya Village All-round Development tasks in Monghsat District, Shan State (East) and opium-substitute coffee and tea plantations in Wa region via Maesai-Tachileik on 17 February. On 17 February morning, Joint-Secretary of Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control Police Col Hkam Aung and officials welcomed the excursion group at the border bridge. They went to 1,000 acres of opium-substitute coffee plantations and 400 acres of woolen tea in Lweshaungson region where officials of the local national organization conducted the guests round the plantations.

Afterwards, the guests proceeded to Yanghtaikya All-round Development Model Village being jointly implemented by Myanmar and Thailand under the drug elimination programme. The guests viewed the primary school, the hospital and water availability in the village.

The excursion group included Deitning Project Executive Director-General MrDisnadda Dskul, UNODC Regional Director Mr Akira Hujino, Deputy Secretary-General of Thai Drug Control Committee Ms Rasamee Vistavet, drug liaison officers from 18 countries and DEA, INTERPOL officers totaling 136. — MNA

Lt-Gen Maung Bo and wife being welcomed at the reception Friday by Russian Military Attaché Col Victor S Timoshkov and wife at the reception of Armed Forces Day of the Russian Federation. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Honourable Minister for Industries & Public Enterprises of Assam

YANGON, 20 Feb — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Honourable Minister for Industries and Public Enterprises, Government of Assam Mr Bhubneswar Kalita and party at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmynytha at 4 pm today.

Also present at the call were Minister for Commerce and Industry UThura Aung Htet of the Protocol Department. The Indian Minister and party were accompanied by Indian Ambassador Mr Rajiv Kumar Bhatia.