Bago Division facilitated with dams, reservoirs and sluice gates one after another in addition to regional development projects

Prime Minister attends inauguration of Shwe Hlay Sluice Gate in Kawa Township

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects entrance of Shwe Hlay Sluice Gate in Kawa Township.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, accompanied by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko and officials, the opening of the new Shwe Hlay Sluice Gate constructed by the Irrigation Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation took place at the pandal of the facility, with an address by the Prime Minister.

Also present were Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko, the ministers, the deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental heads, this morning left here by helicopter and arrived in Kawa Township, Bago Division, this morning.

They were welcomed there by Bago Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Southern Command Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko and officials. The opening of the new Shwe Hlay Sluice Gate constructed by the Irrigation Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation took place at the pandal of the facility, with an address by the Prime Minister.

In his address, the Prime Minister said that with a view to reclaiming wetlands and low-lying areas between Bago and Sittoung Rivers, the Government has been building sluice gates where necessary. The Shwe Hlay Sluice Gate is the fourth of its kind in the region.

The government built sluice gates one after another. Paddy can be cultivated on the wetlands along the Bago-Sittoung Canal both in monsoon and in summer. Those areas could not be put under crops in the past owing to the floods and sea water. He said he was pleased to know that valuable farmlands reclaimed are beneficial to local farmers and they contribute towards food sufficiency of the nation.

The agricultural sector plays the main role in ensuring sufficient basic needs of the people and strong national economy. And as for respective regions, the agricultural sector, a good basic foundation, plays the main role in ensuring regional food sufficiency, improving regional economy and elevating the living standard of local farmers.

In a bid to lay basic foundations to enable the nation to stand tall among the world nations, and to raise the national economy independently, the Government places emphasis on promotion of the agricultural sector.

Regarding the State’s economic objectives, measures are being taken for bringing about industry-based agriculture as the first step for the emergence of agro-based industrialized nation.

In particular, the Government places emphasis on advanced agricultural methods and high-yield strains of crops for boosting production. Being well aware of the concept that with the progress of the agricultural sector, the economic sector and development foundations will meet with the targets, the Government gives top priority to the agricultural sector.

Now, the Government has been striving for enabling the nation to catch up with the development of international community and to exist as long as the world does. Measures are being taken systematically for ensuring equitable development of all parts of the Union and improving economic and social life of the entire people.

In the process, the Government has been laying basic foundations such as manufacturing products in agriculture, livestock breeding, meat and fish, mineral and energy sectors, establishing small and medium industries, and trade businesses across the nation. Moreover, it has been constructing roads, bridges and irrigation facilities in the strategic places spending a huge sum of funds.

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

Sunday, 29 February, 2004

59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives

— To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the State’s seven-point policy programmes
— 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

Strive further for regional and national development

Development of a nation or a region and its stability and peace are interrelated. That is why the Government, in its drive to build up a peaceful, modern and developed nation, is placing great emphasis on national solidarity, regional peace and stability and prevalence of law and order.

In an attempt to ensure development of the entire Union, the State Peace and Development Council gives top priority to the tasks for upgrading of border areas that lagged behind in development due to internal armed insurgency.

Consequently, peace and stability has been restored in border areas, and local people have enjoyed fruitful results of regional development based on peace and tranquility.

Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye made an inspection tour of Muse the other day. At the meeting with local authorities, departmental officials and members of social organizations held in Muse, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye said that the Government has been implementing plans and projects for ensuring equitable development of all parts of the Union including Muse. With peace and stability, the projects can be implemented effectively and thoroughly, he noted.

In the past, Muse District encountered lack of peace and stability owing to the armed insurgency. But, now the entire Shan State (North) including the district with peace and stability is marching towards development speedily. Among the border trade centres, Muse can make largest import and export turnovers in the nation.

Entrepreneurs are thus not to give priority to short-term profit but to do border trade businesses most fairly.

Now, thanks to prevalence of peace and stability among the national brethren, tasks for economic and social development can be carried out peacefully without any disturbance across the nation including Muse District.

Therefore, the entire national brethren are urged to contribute more towards national and regional development tasks based on already-achieved concrete solidarity and amicable friendship, while enhancing peace and stability.

Hninzigon Home for the Aged holds annual general meeting

YANGON, 28 Feb — The 2003 annual general meeting of Hninzigon Home for the Aged was held at 9.30 am today at the Home with an address delivered by Administrative Board Chairman of the Home Capt Maung Tin (Retd) who presided over the meeting.

The annual report and balance sheet were submitted and new administrative board was elected at the meeting. The meeting then ended with concluding remarks by the meeting chairman.

Accompanied by royal relatives, His Majesty and Her Majesty arrived at venue at 8.30 pm. Just after the arrival of His Majesty and Her Majesty, the national anthem was played. His Majesty inspected the Guard of Honour comprising personnel from the Royal Brunei Armed Forces and the Royal Brunei Police Force.

After His Majesty had taken the dais, there was a march past by 87 contingents from government agencies, schools and other bodies accompanied by music and patriotic songs.

Armed Forces Day Objectives

— To overthrow the enemy
— 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”

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59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives

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Defence Services Museum to be closed temporarily

YANGON, 28 Feb — The Defence Services Museum on Shwedagon Pagoda Road, here, will be temporarily closed for the public beginning 1 March so as to decorate the museum for holding the exhibition to mark the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day. The exhibition will be kept open on 26 March 2004.

Brunei Darussalam celebrates National Day

YANGON, 28 Feb — Brunei Darussalam held its 20th National Day at the National Stadium in Bandar Seri Begawan on 23 February evening.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Muizzaddin Waddaulah, the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and Her Majesty the Raja Isteri Pengiran Hj Bolkiah. The ceremony was also attended by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, along with his wife, who are on an official visit to Brunei.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Muizzaddin Waddaulah inspect the guard of honour at the 20th National Day of Brunei Darussalam at the National Stadium in Bandar Seri Begawan on 23 February. — MNA

Officials leave

YANGON, 28 Feb — Myanmar Industrial Producers Association Executive Committee members Dr Aung Win Maung (Shwe Eya and Grand Master International Co) and U Hla Myint Shwe (United Pacific International Co) left here by air this afternoon for Osaka, Japan, to attend the 24th Kankeiren ASEAN management seminar from 1 to 5 March 2004. Officials concerned saw them off at Yangon International Airport. — MNA

Dr Aung Win Maung and U Hla Myint Shwe seen before departure at Yangon International Airport. — MMC/CI

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Muizzaddin Waddaulah at the 20th National Day of Brunei Darussalam at the National Stadium in Bandar Seri Begawan on 23 February. — MNA
Infant mortality tops Iraq health agenda

BAGHDAD, 28 Feb.—Health and Human Services Secre-
tary Tommy Thompson predicted on Friday a fast turn-
around for Iraq's health care system.

Thompson is leading an American delegation in Iraq that
includes top US officials in cancer care, infectious dis-
eses and maternal-child health.

"We think that with our expertise and with the wonderful
cooperation from the Iraqi medical community, we have a
chance to re-establish Iraq as a center of excellence,"
Thompson said. "We're looking at a very quick time frame."

Health officials will focus first on reducing Iraq's high
infant mortality rate, hoping to cut it in half by 2005.

The US delegation toured an American military hospi-
tal in Baghdad that is widely regarded as the best equipped
facility in the country.

Richard Butler says he was bugged too

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb.—Former United Nations chief
weapons inspector Richard Butler has said four countries
bugged his conversations as he held negotiations
attempts to disarm Iraq.

Butler, who was advising former Brit-
ish minister Clare Short's al-
legation that listening devices
had been planted in the of-
cines of UN Secretary Gen-
eral Kofi Annan, said he
was certain he was bugged
in his time at the United Na-
tions. "Of course I was, I
well aware of it," he told
ABC radio on Friday.

"How did I know? Be-
cause those who did it would
come to me and show me the
recordings that they had made
on others to help me do my
job disarming Iraq.

"They would say: we're
just here to help you and
they would never show me
any recordings they had made
on me."

Butler, executive chair-
man of the UN Special Com-
mission to Disarm Iraq from
1997 to 1999, told of diplo-
mats going to great lengths
to keep conversations under
wraps because they believed
the UN headquarters in New
York was full of spies.

"If I really wanted to have
a sensitive conversation with
somebody... I was re-
duced to having to go either
to a noisy cafeteria in the
basement of the UN where
there was so much noise
anybody... I was utterly con-
dent that I was bugged by
at least four permanent
members of the Security Coun-
cil," he said.

"If I really wanted to have
a sensitive conversation with
somebody... I was reduced
to having to go either to
a noisy cafeteria in the
basement of the UN where
there was so much noise
and then whisper, or liter-
ally take a walk in Central
Park," he said.

Butler said he was bugged by
the Americans, British,
French and Russians.

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sources, I was utterly con-
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Park," he said.
Australian Iraq report under fire

BAGHDAD, 28 Feb.—A parliamentary report is expected to clear Australian politicians of sexing-up pre-Iraq war intelligence but critics have already labelled it inadequate and demanded a second probe.

Instead of targeting politicians, the report of the bipartisan joint committee on intelligence, to be tabled on Monday, will criticise the quality of the advice any agencies provided on the threat posed by Saddam Hussein, according to information leaked to the local media.

But the report’s authors, reportedly frustrated they could not access raw foreign intelligence or grill the Australian officials who prepared the pre-war reports, are expected to call for a second inquiry with stronger investigative powers.

The opposition Labor Party has gone further and demanded a royal commission, which has the power to force witnesses to give testimony.

“Irrespective of what is contained in this report, there is now so much available on the public record which cries out for a royal commission into Australia’s intelligence services and this government’s handling of intelligence material in the lead-up to the Iraq war,” opposition foreign affairs spokesman Kevin Rudd told reporters.

Rudd said a report in the Age newspaper quoting Defence Intelligence Organisation Director Frank Lewinwamp saying Australian intelligence agencies were pressured to fall into line with US assessments of Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction showed serious questions still needed to be answered.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer has repeatedly denied the government put pressure on intelligence agencies to bolster the case for war and said allegations that spy agencies had become politicised amounted to “defamation”.

Downer said the government would consider a second inquiry if the report recommended it, but insisted the government had been scrupulous in its use of intelligence in the lead-up to war.

“He did not believe inquiries by the United States, Britain or Australia into the quality of the intelligence would “reveal anything terribly exciting or surprising”.”

US President George Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, under pressure from their political opponents and media, have also established committees to investigate the quality of their pre-war intelligence.

Putin says war in Iraq encouraged terror

MOSCOW, 28 Feb.—President Vladimir Putin said Friday the US war in Iraq was a mistake that had encouraged terrorist actions there, adding that Russia would help bolster the UN role in the country.

Russia’s criticism of the war in Iraq strained ties with the United States, but Moscow and Washington have sought to move past the rift.

“We believed, and I continue to believe, that the military operation was a mistake, and the subsequent events have confirmed it,” Putin said at a meeting with students on a trip to Krasnoyarsk in central Siberia.

“Casualties keep mounting, and terrorists feel increasingly at home there,” Putin said, according to the ITAR-Tass news agency.

“This is a very dangerous process,” Putin said, adding that Saddam Hussein’s regime had prevented terrorists from coming to Iraq.

Putin said that the United States has come to realize the importance of the UN role in an Iraqi settlement. “We will work in cooperation with all those who are interested in that,” he added.

Chinese archaeologists have unearthed the well-preserved tomb of a general of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-317) in northwest China’s Shaanxi Province.

The tomb, containing the general’s remains, is located in Xianyang City, one of the most famous cities in ancient China. It consists of six parts including an inclined tomb passage, front and back chambers and entrance doors.

Objects unearthed included pottery basins, jars and jugs and kitchen ranges and water wells made of pottery. The archaeologists have also excavated a complete set of weaponry such as iron knives, bronze crossebows and forks and some copper coins.

The most valuable find was a seal engraved with the words “Imperial military marquis”, which shows that the status of the tomb owner was a general.

As the western and eastern Jin dynasties were short historical periods in ancient China and there was a turbulent situation at that stage, few cultural relics are left over from them.

Consequently, excavation of the tomb is of great value to the study of historical development in the Western Jin Dynasty, said a Chinese archaeologist.

China sets up high-level AIDS prevention committee

BEIJING, 28 Feb.—China’s Cabinet has set up a high-level committee to coordinate the country’s efforts to prevent and curb the spread of AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome), official sources said Thursday.

The organization, known as the AIDS Prevention Committee, was established to coordinate the country’s efforts to prevent and curb the disease across all departments and institutions of the central government and local governments.

Addressing the first meeting of the committee, Vice-Premier Wu Yi said China should increase its sense of urgency in its efforts to prevent and curb the disease across the country.

AIDS has been on the rise in China, and it will have grave impact on the country’s economic and social development and social stability unless it is brought under control before it is too late, said the Vice-Premier, who is in charge of the country’s Ministry of Health.

The committee was designed to improve the leadership of the Chinese central government over AIDS prevention and treatment, and coordinate the prevention and treatment in areas hit hard by the disease, said the Vice-Premier.

Wu said the committee will mainly be in charge of formulating major policies, programmes regarding AIDS prevention and control, and help resolve major issues in the fight against the disease, and mobilize departments and institutions of the central government, local governments and the whole society to do a good job in the battle against AIDS.

She said China will continue to implement its policies to offer free anti-virus treatment to AIDS victims if they are farmers and the needy in urban areas, and provide free anonymous blood tests for people in areas hit by the disease so as to have accurate information of the epidemic situation.

The country will continue to offer free education to orphans whose parents died of AIDS, and the financial costs will be covered by local governments, said the Vice-Premier.

Putin said that the United States has come to realize the importance of the UN role in the country. “We will work in cooperation with all those who are interested in that,” he added.

EIJING, 28 Feb.—The most serious charge against lifestyle guru Martha Stewart has been dropped. The US federal judge overseeing the trial of the multi-millionaire dismissed on Friday the most serious charge of securities fraud, which carried a maximum 10-year prison term.

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Blix says I suspect US bugged me before Iraq war

**LOndon, 28 Feb** — Former UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix said he suspected both his United Nations office and his New York home were bugged by the United States in the run-up to the Iraq war.

Blix told the Guardian newspaper that suspicions had been spied on by the Iraqis, but to be bugged by the US he described as “disgusting.”

Blix said his worst fears were realised when he was shown a set of photographs by a senior member of the Bush administration which could only have been obtained through underhand means.

“It feels like an intrusion into your integrity in a situ-

ation when you are actually on the same side,” he told the Guardian, speaking from his home in Stockholm.

His claims will pour fur-

ther fat on the fire following claims by a former British cabinet minister that Britain spied on UN Secretary General Kofi Annan during the same period. “If you had something sensitive to talk about you would go out into the restaurant or out into the streets,” Blix said.

Blix admitted he had no conclusive evidence that the US had bugged him, but said his suspicions were first raised when he had trouble with his phone connections at his New York home.

“It might have been some-

thing trivial or it might have been something installed somewhere. I don’t know,” he said.

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Greenspan criticized for suggesting Social Security cut

**WASHINGTON, 28 Feb** — US Democratic presidential contenders on Wednesday criticized Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan for his suggestions that future Social Security and Medicare benefits be cut in order to reduce the soaring budget deficit.

Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, the front-

runner in the Democratic presidential race, said cut-

ting Social Security would be “the wrong way to cut the deficit.”

“If I’m president, we’re simply not going to do it,” he said during a campaign stop in Ohio, one of the 10 states holding contests Tuesday.

Senator John Edwards of North Carolina, Kerry’s chief rival for the nomina-

tion, called an “outrage” Greenspan’s proposal to cut Social Security while making President George W. Bush’s tax cuts permanent.

In testimony to the House Appropriations Committee Wednesday, Greenspan said that as some 77 million baby boomers, those born after World War II, begin to retire in as early as 2008, the nation will face major budget shortfalls.

Greenspan warned that raising taxes to meet future benefits for Social Security and Medicare programmes poses a risk to the economy, saying the fiscal gap should be closed primarily “from the outside up.”

He suggested future cuts in Social Security and Medi-

care to avoid tax increases. Distancing himself from Greenspan, Bush said he did not believe current retirees’ benefits should be cut, but restated his support for allowing younger workers to invest a portion of their Social Security taxes in private accounts.

In his budget proposal sent to the Congress early this month, Bush proposed to cut by half within five years the budget deficit which has been soaring and reached a record $521 billion in US dollars this year.

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Chinese top legislator meets Thai Princess

**Beijing, 28 Feb** — Wu Bangguo, chairman of China’s National People’s Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, met here Friday with Thai Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

Wu extended congratulations to Sirindhorn, who was awarded the hon-

ourful “friendship ambassador” Thurs-

day by the Chinese People’s Associa-

tion for Friendship with Foreign Coun-

tries.

As good neighbours, friends and part-

ners, Wu said, China and Thailand main-

tained a healthy and stable momentum in developing relations.

The state visit by President Hu Jintao to Thailand last year gave new impetus to bilateral ties, Wu said.

With the spirit of “treating neighbours well and keeping them as partners,” Wu said, the Chinese leadership and the Thai side would further develop friendly and cooperative ties.

He valued the contributions made by the royal family in promoting relations with China. He said the NPC would strive to strengthen cooperation with the Thai Na-

tional Assembly, in a bid to spur comprehen-

sive development of ties.

He also briefed Sirindhorn on China’s economic and social situation and prepara-

tions for the upcoming second session of the 10th NPC.

Sirindhorn said she was very pleased to see great changes in China on her visit.

She hoped to learn more about the coun-

try and contribute more to cultivating friendship.

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Iraq’s Olympic suspension lifted

**Baghdad, 28 Feb** — The International Olympic Com-

mittee has lifted the suspension of Iraq, enabling its athletes to compete at the Athens Olympics 2004 under the national flag.

The new Iraqi Olympic Committee was elected last month, and its return was ratified at a meeting in Athens.

The committee’s new chief, Ahmed al-Samarrai, said this month he was “the right way to cut the outlay side”.

Kerry, who made no effort to draw sharp distinctions with the Massachusetts senator on most issues just five days before a crucial 10-state “Super Tuesday” showdown, and the two agreed frequently.

The prime contenders for the nomination to challenge Bush defended their votes to authorize the war in Iraq, and said they opposed gay marriage but believed the issue should be left to the states.

Kerry, who has dominated the Democratic race with wins in 18 of the first 20 contests, said he favoured the death penalty only in cases of terrorism. But asked in the debate at the University of Southern California about a child killer, he said he would “want to strangle that person with my own hands”.

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Miss Universe 2004 Amelia Vega of the Dominican Republic is cheered by children of the Aldeas SOS in Managua, Nicaragua, on Friday, 27 Feb, 2004. Vega is being invited to attend the Miss Nicaragua pageant. —Internet
Iraqi pipeline attacked north of Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 28 Feb — An Iraqi oil pipeline running between two refineries was on fire on Friday after coming under attack north of Baghdad, an official said.

“We have dispatched crews to put out the fire and assess the damage,” an oil official told Reuters. Reuters television footage showed a section of the pipeline ripped apart and on fire on the outskirts of Samarra, a Sunni Muslim city around 100 kilometres north of Baghdad.

The pipeline runs from the Dora refinery near Baghdad north to the Baiji plant through al-Jazeera, the Sunni area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where most attacks against the US-led occupation forces have come.

Iraqi refineries have been raising output in the last two months in an effort to beat petrol shortages.

Sabotage has focused on the north and targeting Iraq’s internal network, running between oil fields, refineries, and storage facilities, and the country’s export pipeline to Turkey, which has been shut since the war.

A recent attack on a pipeline near the holy Shi’ite city of Kerbala raised fears sabotage was spreading south.

MNA/Reuters

Sichuan Province has more state-level scenic zones

CHENGDU, 28 Feb — South-west China’s Sichuan Province has had its four scenic zones included on the list of state-level tourism zones.

Located at the juncture between Shaanxi and Sichuan provinces, the Guangwu Mountain-Nuoshui River scenic zone boasts 128 karst caves in an area of 1,000 square kilometres.

With forest coverage of more than 90 per cent, the zone is home to more than 2,300 kinds of plants and over 200 species of animals.

The other three scenic zones are the Tiantai Mountain, Langmian Mountain and Bailong Lake. Sichuan boasts not only many world natural and cultural heritage sites, such as the Nature Reserve at Jiuzhaigou, Mt Qingcheng, the Irrigation System at Dujiangyan and Mt Emei and the Giant Buddha at Leshan, but also snow-capped mountains and pastureland, attracting many tourists from home and abroad each year.

Sichuan is also home to most of the 1,000 giant pandas living in the wild. Of China’s 120 state-level scenic zones, 15 are located in Sichuan.

The province earned 42.08 billion yuan ($5.08 billion US dollars) in tourism income last year, a year-on-year rise of 10.7 per cent.

MNA/Xinhua

“ISS” astronauts avoid spacewalk due to suit problem

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — Mission controllers on Thursday were forced to curtail the spacewalk that left the International Space Station empty for the first time after one of the two astronauts’ spacesuit was found to be malfunctioning.

US astronaut Michael Foale and Russian cosmonaut Alexander Kaleri stepped out of the space station at 4.17 pm EST (2117 GMT). Their spacewalk was scheduled to last about five hours and 45 minutes.

However, after about three hours into the job, Kaleri reported that the cooling system inside his spacesuit was not working right, which prompted the Russian mission controllers to end their tasks early at 8.12 pm EST (0112 GMT) Friday.

“Initial indications are that a sublimator in the cooling system on Flight Engineer Alexander Kaleri’s spacesuit failed,” the US space agency NASA said in a statement.

The sublimator is part of a system that removes heat and humidity from a spacesuit.

The mission went smoothly until the problem occurred and NASA said the two astronauts completed about 60 per cent of their scheduled jobs, including the installation of a torso-like device to measure the effects of radiation on simulated human tissue.

Among the tasks accomplished was the retrieval of a set of retro reflectors from the aft end of the station’s Zvezda Service Module. The retrieval will assist the preparation of navigational data for next year’s arrival of a new European automated supply ship.

Mission controllers stressed that the early-ending of Thursday’s spacewalk will not affect the future operations of the space station.

The spacewalk was deemed unusual because normally, when two astronauts are conducting spacewalk outside the International Space Station, a third person will remain inside to monitor systems or assist in a crisis.

MNA/Xinhua

Rafsanjani says US policy on Iran doomed to failure

TEHERAN, 28 Feb — Iran’s powerful former president said Friday that the United States’ efforts in Iran, such as backing opposition forces or sparking new struggles against the Iranian regime, were doomed to failure.

Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who is also chairman of the country’s Expediency Council that decides on important state affairs, told worshipers in a weekly prayer session that he was pleased over the heavy voter turnout of last Friday’s parliamentary elections.

Iran’s Interior Ministry has announced that about 50 per cent of the country’s 46 million eligible voters casted their ballots in the controversial elections, in which the conservatives won back their majority control over the Majlis, or Parliament.

Rafsanjani described the outcome as a big defeat of Iran’s arch-foes like the United States, referring to US President George W. Bush’s remarks that he had been disappointed by hearing the results of the elections in Iran.

The US plan was either to have people they wanted win the elections or for the people not to show up at the polls, “he said.

The conservative Iranian official said the parliamentary elections were a great success for the country on the international stage and Iran would keep open its door to all states for cooperation except the United States and Israel.

The elections were held after some 2,400 reformist candidates were disqualified for running for the polls by the conservative Guardian Council.

Most reformist parties, except President Mohammad Khatami’s Association of Militant Clerics, boycotted the elections.

Iran’s reformist parties, who have been supporting Khatami’s social and political reform plans, failed to retain their control over the Parliament.

— MNA/Xinhua

UN Public Service Awards to be presented at Shanghai forum

BEIJING, 28 Feb — The United Nations Public Service Awards to recognize outstanding achievements and contributions in local government applications will be presented at Shanghai, sources said here Friday.

The awards will be presented by the United Nations Economic Department of Social Affairs (UN/DESA) at the fourth Annual Forum on City Informization in the Asia-Pacific Region (CIAPR IV) to be held in China’s largestmetropolis Shanghai, from May 20 to 22, 2004, said the sources with the organizing committee.

More than 20 internationa organizations and 50 cities will attend the forum, which would attract about 800 foreign politicians and business leaders and technical professionals worldwide, said Yang Xiong, Vice-Mayor of Shanghai and also the president of the forum.

The award will also stress that the early-ending of Thursday’s spacewalk will not affect the future operations of the space station.

The spacewalk was deemed unusual because normally, when two astronauts are conducting spacewalk outside the International Space Station, a third person will remain inside to monitor systems or assist in a crisis.

MNA/Xinhua

Cyprus aims to become regional research centre in applied tech

NICOSIA, 28 Feb — The Cyprus Government has decided to make the island a regional research centre in the field of applied technology.

Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism George Lillikas said Thursday.

Lillikas was speaking during a Press conference on a proposal by the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) on establishing in Cyprus a Research and Technological Institute on the Environment and Public Health and a similar programme to be available at Harvard University in Boston.

“Our accession to the European Union, the role which we want to play as the EU’s bridge with the surrounding countries, the scientific human force we maintain and our geographic position create favourable conditions to promote Cyprus in the field of research”, Lillikas said. — MNA/Xinhua
The New Myanmar and her pleasant environs

Yadanasi Sayadaw (Loilem)

Myanmar has many regional and immediate neighbours lying in her environs. Thailand is bordering Shan State, Kayah State, Kayin State and Tanintharyi Division. Laos is bordering eastern Shan State. In the east of Laos are Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Brunei. The ten ASEAN nations including Myanmar are standing with pride in the region and are trying to promote the ASEAN+3, the ASEAN+6, the ASEAN+10 and the ASEAN+5. The ASEAN members or the ten neighbouring countries are source of the bright and pleasant environs of Myanmar.

Likewise, Kachin State and Shan State are bordering the People’s Republic of China. Since yore, Myanmar and China have been good neighbours living under the spirit of friendship and unity. The PRC and her neighbours — the Republic of Korea and Japan — are extending its trade and relations with the People’s Republic of China.

Under the ASEAN Investment Area (AIA) the investors from other member nations can enjoy equal rights with the local investors. Thus, it has become important for the production enterprises of Myanmar to be able to compete with the industries of the foreign investors. As there are encouraging signs, the production enterprises and the trade enterprises of Myanmar will make themselves ready for the new situation.

The Bali Concord II was laid down at the Ninth ASEAN Summit held in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2003. It is based on three pillars — the security community, the economic community and the social and cultural community for the future of the ASEAN.

The vision of the first pillar (the security community) is to support peace through the extended ASEAN cooperation, and to set up an ASEAN enjoying greater peace and stability through the solving of the problems peaceably between nations in an environment that is free from foreign interference and that respects each other’s sovereignty.

The vision of the second pillar (the economic community) is to ensure free flow of goods, services and investments among the member nations, to bring about fair economic development, and to reduce poverty and socio-economic gap by creating the ASEAN into a single market and single production area.

The third pillar (the social and cultural community) hopes to set up a peaceful and prosperous environment through the improvement of the social standards of people from all walks of life, promotion of the education standards, setting up of an infectious diseases free society, extension of relations between academics and artists, and cultural preservation and exchanges.

If the pillars can be erected firmly, the ASEAN will become a family fully enjoying security, economic strength, and social and cultural values. Thus, Myanmar will have to make necessary arrangements from now on. Hence, Myanmar will have to make arrangements to fully implement the development programmes.

The Summit Meeting on Economic Cooperation Strategy between the four countries — Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand — was held successfully in Bagam in November 2003. The meeting has envisaged to increase competitiveness and generate growth at the borders of the four nations; to facilitate relocation of agri-cultural and manufacturing industries to areas with comparative advantage; to create employment opportunities and reduce income disparity among the four countries; and to enhance peace, stability and shared prosperity for all in a sustainable manner.

Under the ASEAN+3 programmes, Myanmar is extending its trade and relations with the People’s Republic of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The nation is also extending trade and relations with India under ASEAN+India.

(To be continued)

(Translation: TMT)


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

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidaded
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appeased

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.

The second best time is now.
Bago Division facilitated...

(From page 1)

Besides, steps are being taken to ensure good social foundations of education, health and culture in all parts of the country. Therefore, Bago Division, a reliable one for the nation, is being facilitated with dams, reservoirs and sluice gates one after another in addition to regional development projects.

Altogether 39 dams and reservoirs including Shwe Hlay sluice gate were constructed in Bago Division out of 157 dams and reservoirs built across the nation from 1988 up to date.

The government has spent nearly K 23,800 million on 39 dams and reservoirs in Bago Division out of spending K 68,800 million on 157 dams and reservoirs the length and breadth of the nation. Medium and small scale dams and reservoirs were built in Bago Division since the division is a hilly one with many creeks and rivers and it is difficult to build large scale dams and reservoirs. In so doing, more funds have had to be used.

Shwe Hlay sluice gate, benefiting 25,000 acres of farmland in Waw Township, Myi Kyonkya sluice gate benefiting 30,000 acres of farmland in Kawkaw Township, Tawa sluice gate benefiting 32,000 acres in Thanatpin Township including Shwe Hlay sluice gate will benefit 30,000 acres of farmland in Kawkaw Township.

Shwe Hlay sluice gate opened today will benefit not only farmers in Bago and Yangon Divisions but also the tasks for greening the 30-mile radius of Yangon City.

With sluice gates, local farmers will be able to carry out tasks for land preparation in the wetland areas on either side of Bago-Sittoung canal.

Shwe Hlay sluice gate will benefit 20,000 acres of farmland in Kawkaw Township and 15,000 acres of farmland in Kayan Township numbering 35,000 and contribute to farmers in the two townships.

Conditions that are beneficial to farmers are being created and it is a result born out of the goodwill of the government which calls for building a peaceful community with the emergence of economic and social infrastructures for the entire nation.

The farmers, on their part, are to make concerted and collective efforts for improvement of economic life of rural people and development of agricultural undertakings, realizing the genuine goodwill of the State.

The government with the aim of serving the interests of the farmers is introducing free paddy marketing system, abolishing the system to sell fixed paddy to the government and efforts will have to be made to boost the per acre yield and produce more quality paddy. Continued efforts are to be made to serve the interests of farmers, distributing modern cultivation techniques, fertiliser and quality paddy strains to farmers, in addition to building irrigation infrastructure such as dams and sluice gates.

The farmers are to strive for the emergence of a stable paddy market, enhancement of their socio-economic life and national development while making efforts for improvement of agricultural undertakings.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister called on local people to strive for improvement of their socio-economic life with the effective use of irrigation facilities created by the State, to make efforts together with the government for national development, safeguard the sluice gate for its durability and to actively take part in successful realisation of the seven-point political programme of the State by doing their bit.

Next, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin explained that the government has been providing assistance to the agricultural infrastructure which is suitable for States and Divisions for long term development of the agricultural sector. More and more sluice gates, dams and river water pumping projects are being implemented with a view to ensuring socio-economic development as well as boosting of agricultural production. It is estimated that about K 49,000 million have been spent on implementation of dam and floods prevention projects to be able to benefit over 2 million acres of land in the nation. At present, a total of 39 dams and sluice gate projects are contributing toward success of cultivating double and multiple cropping in about 625,000 acres of farmlands in Bago Division.

In lower Myanmar, Bago Division is a region on which agricultural tasks can rely. Fertile land exists in the division for growing not only paddy, pulses and beans, edible oil crops and industrial crops but also the crops which can earn foreign currency. Therefore, feasibility surveys were conducted at rivers and creeks originated in the middle Yoma (mountain ranges) and then dams, diversion weirs and sluice gates projects were built. In addition, Yenwe, Phyu saung and Khaubang multi-purpose projects are being implemented for ensuring supply of water for agricultural purpose as well as for generating hydro-electricity.

Next, the commander spoke on the occasion. Then, Secretary of Kayin Township USD Aye Naing spoke words of thanks.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt formally unveils the stone inscription of the Shwe Hlay Sluice Gate in Kayin Township, Bago Division. — MNA
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspected …

(from page 16)

It is imperative to form administrative machinery at different levels in effectively managing the affairs of a country and the township level officials play a leading role in making the administrative machinery sharp and dynamic, he stressed.

In Myanmar, not only administrative machinery at different levels but also work committees at different levels from central to state, division, district, township and rural regions have been formed and steps are being taken for developing of economic, educational, social and transport sectors of the State, he noted. At present, the high-ranking officials and central level officials have been making strenuous efforts, targeting right down to grassroots level. Likewise, only when state, division and township level officials are striving, making field trips right down to grassroots level will the national objectives be successfully implemented. Nowadays, some district and township level officials are weak in taking measures and the national objectives will not be fully implemented should departmental officials and local authorities be discharging duties perfunctorily.

The government enlisting the strength of national intellectuals and intelligentsia is now making all-out efforts alongside the people for building a modern and developed nation, relying on own wealth. At such a time, service personnel are to make integrated and well-coordinated efforts for regional development and improvement of the economic life of the regions, people, avoiding the practices of bureaucracy that made only a perfunctory effort.

The township level officials are responsible for harmonious and equitable development of all villages in their area, to make arrangements that contribute to the people, touring right down to grass-root levels, he said.

They are to make integrated and well-coordinated efforts with goodwill for the national development as a committees comprising the members of the Township Peace and Development Council, the departmental and local social organizations. Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U Soe Myint Win reported on location and area of the township, rainfall, cultivated areas, cultivation of monsoon and dry season, paddy, food supply, cultivation of edible oil and pulses and beans, livestock production, and implementation of five rural development tasks and requirements.

For development of the region, the Prime Minister managed to upgrade BEMS (Basic Education and Health Services) to BEPS (Basic Education and Health Services) and then to BEHS (Basic Education and Health Services) to Headmistress. The Prime Minister delivered a speech on the occasion, saying that the purpose of their tour was to fulfill the requirements for development of the region. He added that he droped in Kawa and Thanatpin townships to attend the opening ceremony of the development of its environment after attending the inaugura-tion of the Shwe Hlai Shlute Gate in Kawthaung Township. The Shwe Hlai Shlute Gate was opened in Thanatpin Township in 2002.

The Bago Kwingyi in Bago is an important port in the region like the Ayeyawady River. It is very inconvenient for the economic life of the regions to be the one loved by the people of the region in summer, he said.

He spoke of the need for a project to protect the fish and agriculture sector. Prevention of law and order, he said, is required to work in factories. As a result, he said, they need to create better conditions to be able to earn their living in peace under the protection of law.

He also said they are to undertake the tasks for prevalence of law and order and maintenance of judicial pillar in coordination with judges, lawyers, police officers and public officers. The government is making efforts to develop economy to be made for national development. The government is making efforts for food sufficiency and uplift of social standard of agri-culture, fish and meat sector and industrial sector. Agriculture sector is the base of the State’s economy. Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of economy as well is the first point in the four economic development projects.

He said the government is working to extend boarder areas development project, 24 region development project and Yangon Division development project and he urged the administrative bodies to take part in the implementation of the projects of the State to discharge their duties, to work harder, to avoid taking bribes and to improve the government's reputation at the grassroots levels.

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Pakistan seizes Afghan drugs after shootout

QUETTA (Pakistan), 28 Feb — Pakistani authorities seized more than 200 kg (440 lb) of opium after a shootout with smugglers near the Afghan border in the southern province of Baluchistan, officials said on Friday.

The drugs, valued around 3.8 million US dollars, were smuggled from Afghanistan and were destined for neighbouring Iran, a senior official of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) said.

The gunbattle erupted on Thursday night after smugglers fired on an ANF squad when it tried to stop their vehicles near the town of Saindak, 400 miles west of Quetta, the provincial capital.

“It was a violent encounter,” the ANF official said, requesting anonymity.

Three smugglers, including two Afghans and a Pakistani, were arrested, he added.

Two other smugglers, either killed or hurt in the shootout, were carried across the border by colleagues. The official did not know how many smugglers there were.

Blair battles to calm Iraq bugging row

LONDON, 28 Feb — Tony Blair battled on Friday to calm Iraq bugging row as former UN arms inspectors said the former prime minister’s claim that his phone had been tapped, “from the first day I was prime minister”, could damage Britain’s image in the world.

Eckhard told the BBC: “It is a threat to the former UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, to me and to a number of other people in the United Nations but the furor showed no signs of dying down as former UN officials complained their phones had been tapped.

“The British Prime Minister is clearly the bugging charge levelled by former minister Clare Short but warned critics like her of her dangers, saying he was prepared to “keep walking” to avoid “a day to rise above a row for the sake of the world.”

The former chief UN weapons inspector steered clear of the bugging charge levelled by former minister Clare Short when she claimed on Thursday that her phone had been tapped.

“From the first day I was prime minister, this was the first day I was prime minister,” he said.

“From the first day I entered my office they told me: beware, your office is bugged, your residence is bugged,” Bourtros-Ghali told the BBC.

“It is a tradition that member states that have the threat of capacity to bug will do it without hesitation,” he said.

Short, who was in government when London and Washington were seeking UN backing to attack Iraq, started a diplomatic storm with her claim on Thursday that Britain bugged the offices of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in the run-up to the war.

UN spokesman Fred Eckhardt said Annan would seek a fuller explanation from Britain’s ambassador of the allegations.

“It’s safe to say he would like a fuller explanation,” Eckhardt told reporters in New York. “I suppose when ambassador (Emily) Jones Parry returns from London there might be a chance for the two to have an exchange.”

Short, who resigned after the war, said she had seen transcripts of Annan’s conversations and that the spying “was being done for some time.”

But Richard Butler, a former chief UN weapons inspector in Iraq, added his voice to the spying row, saying “there was abundant evidence that we were being constantly monitored.”

“I had to go to the basement cafe in the UN where there were heaps of noise or I’d go and take a walk in Central Park and keep walking” to avoid eavesdroppers, he told BBC Radio.

His successor Hans Blix also said he had telephoned his phone had been tapped, according to media reports from Australia.

FBI’s disciplinary system seriously flawed

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — The FBI’s disciplinary system for employees has suffered from a widespread perception of unfairness and favouritism and slow and ineffective handling of cases, according to a report released on Friday.

The report by former attorney general Griffin Bell and former top FBI official Lee Cutfield found the perception of the FBI’s double standard, with management officials getting off easier than lower-level employees.

The report was requested by FBI Director Robert Mueller in May after congressional criticism of the FBI’s Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) and a perceived climate of retaliation against those who report misconduct by superiors.

“OPR as an operating entity has lost touch with its original mission and no longer effectively serves the director and the FBI as a whole,” according to the 67-page report.

The office was created in 1976 to make sure FBI employees conduct themselves with integrity and to investigate allegations of misconduct or criminal violations.

“It has an unfortunate lightning rod both outside and within the bureau as a perceived source of unfairness and favouritism that adversely impacts morale at a time in our history when this country depends more than ever on one of the world’s finest law enforcement agencies,” the report said.

After the September 11, 2001, attacks, the FBI’s top priority became protecting the United States from another terror attack. The report was released the same week the FBI said a number of FBI agents were under review by OPR for removing debris and other items as remembrances after the attack. The report was released the same week the FBI’s Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR) and a perceived climate of retaliation against those who report misconduct by superiors.

At least 10 killed in India train, bus collision

KOLKATA (India), 28 Feb — At least ten people were killed and about two dozen injured on Friday when a train and a mini bus collided at an unmanned crossing in India’s eastern state of West Bengal, police said.

They said the accident took place at the railway crossing in Kumki Village, some 300 miles north of the state capital Kolkata.

“About 30 members of a marriage party were in the bus when the train hit the bus,” said Inspector General of Police Chayan Mukherjee.

The injured, some of them in critical condition, were admitted to local hospitals, he added.

Accidents at unmanned railway crossings are common in India as it has one of the world’s largest railway networks with about 14,000 trains carrying more than 13 million passengers a day.

Injuries and deaths at unmanned railway crossings are common in India as it has one of the world’s largest railway networks with about 14,000 trains carrying more than 13 million passengers a day.

Indonesia’s Aceh rebels receive prison terms

JAKARTA, 28 Feb — An Indonesian panel of judges at Medan District court sentenced on Thursday 10 members of the separatist Free Aceh Movement (GAM) between two and 10 years in jail for acts of terrorism, The Jakarta Post reported Friday.

The 10, two of whom are under 18 years old, were sentenced to between two and 10 years in jail for acts of terrorism, The Jakarta Post reported Friday.

The sentence, which was the first in Indonesia to decide the fate of leading GAM personnel, the report said.

In the hearing, which was tightly guarded by dozens of police, the panel of judges sentenced GAM Medan district leader Manaf Aboi to 10 years in jail and his deputy M Yahya to six years.
China, US sign cooperation agreement on Aviation

Brussels, 28 Feb — Yang Yanzhong, Director of the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China (CAAC), and Marion C. Blakey, administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the United States, high talks and signed an agreement Thursday on bilateral aviation safety cooperation.

The two sides reached consensus on cooperation in flight standards, air traffic control, aircraft certificates, airport management and training.

According to the agreement, the two sides will strengthen cooperation in all areas. They will continue the fruitful cooperation in flight standards and will jointly carry out a project aiming to support China’s air traffic control to strengthen its safety, efficiency and compatibility. The two sides will enhance technical exchanges and cooperation on airport safety and management as well as improve training activities. — MNA/Xinhua

Wen Jiabao urges closer trade links with Denmark

Brussels, 28 Feb — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said here Thursday that China and Denmark should further expand cooperation in such fields as high technology, environmental protection, farming, animal husbandry and energy technologies.

Wen said during talks with visiting Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen that China and Denmark share great potential in further expanding bilateral trade. The two governments should encourage cooperation between small and medium-sized businesses of the two countries so as to expand trade and cooperation.

After the talks, Wen and Rasmussen attended a ceremony for the signing of five documents between the two countries, including a memorandum on tourist visas and two agreements on shipbuilding.

Noting that enhancing political mutual trust and expanding trade and economic cooperation are the foundation of bilateral relations, Wen said China is ready to increase high-level contacts with Denmark and fully utilize the consulting mechanism between foreign ministries of the two countries to step up coordination and cooperation in international affairs.

Rasmussen said Denmark is willing to further political dialogue, expand trade and economic cooperation, increase cultural and technological exchanges and step up personnel contacts with China. Rasmussen restated that the Danish Government will stick to the one-China policy, saying that the current "reference" by the Taiwan authorities is of no good to peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits.

Wen and Rasmussen also met with Danish entrepreneurs accompanying Rasmussen to China after the talks. — MNA/Xinhua

Netherlands hit by snow storms

Brussels, 28 Feb — Heavy snowfall and icy conditions have seriously disrupted rail and road traffic in the Netherlands, Radio Netherlands reported Thursday.

Despite a warning from the national police force for motorists to stay at home if possible, snow, slippery roads and strong winds led to the second worst day of Dutch traffic jams ever on Thursday morning. From midnight onward, dozens of traffic accidents were reported, as well as damage caused by high winds. Snow ploughs were deployed, but hundreds of kilometres of traffic jams developed during the Thursday morning rush hour.

Traffic delays started early and by 7:00 am there were 48 traffic jams extending to almost 310 kilometres. The Dutch traffic information centre said at about 8.00 am there were 63 traffic jams with a total length of 860 kilometres. Thursday was thus likely to be recorded as the second worst day in Dutch motoring history, trailing the delays of February 8, 1999, when traffic jams extended to a length of 975 kilometres, the local news agency said.

The longest delay on Thursday was on the A2 in Den Bosch, Amsterdam motorway where a 57-kilometre traffic jam developed between the Deil and Amstel junctions. The rail network was badly hit by points failures. For several hours there were no trains in or out of Amsterdam. "Services are only now getting back to normal," said Radio Netherlands. — MNA/Xinhua
State pension scheme covers over 150m Chinese

CHENGDU, 28 Feb—More than over 150 million Chinese had joined the government-run pension schemes by the end of 2003, up 39 million from the end of 2002, said Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Security Liu Yongfu here at a national meeting on retirement insurance.

In 2003, pensions totalling 26.9 billion yuan (31.7 billion US dollars) were paid out in China, Liu said, adding 11 million self-employed workers and with no fixed jobs had joined the national insurance scheme, up 3 million from 2002. Last year, Chinese paid 358 billion yuan to the national insurance fund, 250 billion of which was collected through private and state-owned enterprises, up 20 per cent on year, he said.—MNA/Xinhua

World billionaires' wealth swells thanks to booming stock markets

New York, 28 Feb.—Forbes's New York-based, world-known business magazine said Thursday that the super-rich on its annual list of world billionaires saw a 15 per cent increase in their net worth, from $2.2 trillion to $1.9 trillion, this year.

According to the magazine, the number of billionaires in the world increased from 335 in 2003 to 380 last year. The ten wealthiest individuals increased their net worth by 500 billion US dollars worldwide.—CA

Viral diseases on rise in PNG

CAGAYAN DE ORO, 28 Feb—Viral diseases, including Japanese encephalitis, have been on the rise in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the country's English daily PNG Post-Courier reported recently.

The newspaper quoted its senior Health Department officer James Wangi as saying that Japanese encephalitis is one of the potentially deadly diseases, which are easily confused with malaria.

"Many people are getting sick of viral conditions but they are treated for malaria. In other words, the health workers are not looking for other viral conditions and this (Japanese encephalitis B) is one of them," he said.

A mission worker suffering from Japanese encephalitis was rushed by plane to Australia last week and is reportedly paralysed.

Wangi, the acting director for disease control, said Japanese encephalitis was not found in PNG until 1997, killing six at that time. Since then, the disease was reported in many parts of the country.

He said the disease is spread from animals such as pigs and birds to human beings by mosquitoes. When infected, the nervous system of a person’s brain may be destroyed and there is no cure for the disease, he said.

There is no supply of the vaccine in PNG because of its high cost, he said.—MNA/Xinhua

Ancient mountain stronghold found in S-W China

CUNING, 28 Feb—A mountain stronghold of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) was discovered in Yunnan County of Chongqing Municipality, southwest China.

The grand stronghold was built along the Jincheng Mountain, looking like the world famous Great Wall in Beijing, archaeologists said.

There were three beacon towers at the both ends and in the middle of the stronghold, connected by city walls, which were five kilometres long, five to seven metres high and 1.2 metres wide.

Archaeologists said that the stronghold had three gates. Words on a stele near a gate said that it was built in the Ming Dynasty.

Many parts of the stronghold were built on the cliffs of the Jincheng Mountain, using huge stones.

Experts were interested in and would make researches on how people managed to convey the stones onto the 1,400-metre-high mountain.—MNA/Xinhua

Over 100 million Chinese covered by medical insurance

Beijing, 28 Feb — A total of 108.95 million people in China had bought medical insurance by the end of last year, a senior labour and social security official said on Thursday.

Wang Dongjin, Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Security, said this is the first time the number of medical insurance policyholders exceeded 100 million in China, which has a population of 1.3 billion.

China’s medical insurance market is growing rapidly as China is restructuring its medical system to encourage the development of the commercial insurance market, and expanding market demand.

The vice-minister said an additional five million people classified as “flexible employees”, or self-employed, bought medical insurance in 81 per cent of prefecture-level cities across the country.

A total of 45.73 million employees had bought insurance policies for workplace injuries by the end of last year, up 1.67 million year on year.

The vice-minister said 36.48 million employees have purchased insurance policies for giving birth in 29 provinces by the end of last year, up 1.6 million over the previous year.

MNA/Xinhua

Europol smashes Internet child porn networks

AMSTERDAM, 28 Feb — Coordinated police raids across 10 countries on Thursday smashed a number of Internet child pornography networks and several people were arrested, European Union police agency Europol said.

Police seized computers, laptops, videos and other material containing images of child abuse and an unspecified number of suspects were being investigated.

The Hague-based Europol said in a statement that more than 40 locations were searched in simultaneous raids, with the main focus of the operation led by police in Wiesbaden in the central German state of Hesse.

The other countries involved in what it called operation “Odyssey” were Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Spain, Sweden and Britain, it said.

“Today’s operation has exposed a complex and organized hierarchical structure that Internet networks of paedophiles and child molesters are using to protect themselves from their identities and their atrocious activities,” Europol said.

Earlier this month, German police detained about 50 suspects in a probe into a suspected child pornography ring that also involved five other European countries.

MNA/Reuters

Shanghai police crack major illegal migration gang

SHANGHAI, 28 Feb — Shanghai police announced Thursday that they had arrested seven members of a gang suspected of organizing illegal migration.

A spokesman for the public security bureau said they also stopped 144 people from illegally entering other countries, and seized 42 passports and a large amount of other materials used in illegal migration, such as forged visas and letters of invitation from abroad.

Acting on a tip-off, police searched the home of Chen Yong, leader of the gang, in Baoshan District in May 2003 and found a large number of passports, plus copies of the materials used in illegal migration, which were five kilometres long, five to seven metres high and 1.2 metres wide.

MNA/Xinhua

Germans offered cash to quite smoking

BERLIN, 28 Feb — The German Health Ministry has promised to offer cash for those who quit smoking in order to encourage smokers to get rid of their addiction.

As part of the “Smoke Free 2004” initiative, smokers who kick their nasty habit for the month of May will be eligible for 10,000 euros (some 12,000 US dollars) in cash and prizes.

The competition is part of an international effort — with similar promotions in numerous other countries — organized by the World Health Organization.

Information on the campaign is available in drug stores, German rail service stations and other locations.

Health Minister Ulla Schmidt said that 34 per cent of German adults are smokers. Official statistics showed that 140,000 people in Germany die of tobacco-related illness every year.—MNA/Xinhua

Air China, ANA to start code-share cooperation

BEIJING, 28 Feb — Air China and Japan’s All Nippon Airways (ANA) signed a code-sharing agreement here Thursday on China-Japan routes operated by both airlines, including cooperation on frequent flyer programmes and airport lounge use.

From 28 March this year, Air China and ANA will commence code-share cooperation and jointly operate 95 flights per week from Beijing and Shanghai to Tokyo and Osaka.

ANA’s 56 weekly flights from Tokyo and Osaka to Beijing and Shanghai will carry the Air China code. Air China’s 39 weekly flights on the same routes will operate under Air China’s and ANA’s flight numbers.

Both airlines will also inaugurate flights from Hangzhou to Tokyo and to Osaka in their summer schedule, bringing the total code-sharing flights to 105 by 21 April.

Air China has already signed individual code-share cooperation agreements with more than 60 international or regional airlines, including Lufthansa, United Airlines, Qantas, Austrian Airlines, SAS, Thai Airways and Elogan Air.

Air China’s president Li Jiaxiang said “The code-share cooperation with ANA is an important step taken towards the strategy of expanding bilateral cooperation and globalization of operations.”
Hu Jintao urges closer ties with Denmark, Europe

BRUSSELS, 28 Feb — A study released by the European Commission (EC) Thursday shows that there is no large scale migration from the acceding countries of the European Union (EU) to the EU, but a minor one.

The study shows that even under conditions of full freedom of movement, migration from all new EU member states to all current member states would be likely to be about 1 per cent of the working age population of the former over the next five years.

This means that approximately 220,000 people from 10 new EU member states would try to find job opportunities in the EU-15 every year. The figure is small compared to the EU’s total population of 450 million.

The study goes on to show that the typical potential migrant from the acceding countries is “young, educated to tertiary level, or still studying and living as a single person with no dependents”.

“The is an increasing trend.”

Hu Jintao urges closer ties with Denmark, Europe

The two countries should continue to make new progress in recent years.

Noting that the two countries have no contradiction of interests and share the common will to push forward bilateral ties, Hu said bilateral cooperation in various fields was on the right path.

Rasmussen said today is Denmark’s minister of foreign affairs.

Hu appreciated the Danish Government’s adherence to the one China policy and support for China’s reunification, saying the two countries should continue to strengthen exchanges, enhance understanding, expand common ground and deepen cooperation.

Rasmussen said in his current and first visit to China, he was deeply impressed with the long-standing history, rapid economic growth and bright prospects of development in the world’s most populous nation.

He said Denmark supports the continuous expansion of the strategic partnership between Europe and China so as to help maintain world peace.

Rasmussen said Denmark is ready to step up mutually beneficial cooperation with China in all fields.

Hu and Rasmussen arrived in China for a five-day work visit Tuesday. He will leave Beijing for home Saturday. During his visit, he held talks with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, met with the standing committee of the National People’s Congress and witnesses the signing of five cooperative documents between the two countries.

Besides Beijing, Rasmussen also visited Shanghai.

A Chinese man checks his mobile phone as he passes an advert promoting mobile phones.

A study released by the European Commission (EC) Thursday shows that there is no internal migration wave after EU enlargement.

Although single drugs are effective in treating the joint disease that affects 1 per cent of people worldwide, combining them produces better results.

“The combination gives a good effect on joint destruction measured by X-ray. There was not only a halt of progression in the destruction in most patients but also signs of repair,” Dr. Lars Klareskog, of the Karolinska Institute in Sweden, said in an interview.

He and his colleagues compared the impact of combination therapy to single drug treatment in a study of 60 rheumatoid arthritis patients who received either the drug etanercept or the standard treatment methotrexate alone.

Etanercept is sold under the brand name Enbrel by Amgen and Wyeth.

Six months of the treatments, the researchers said the combination therapy relieved symptoms better than either the drugs alone.

After one year, 35 per cent of patients taking the drug cocktail had a remission in symptoms, compared to less than 20 per cent in the single drug groups.

The combination therapy was well tolerated and did not produce any more side-effects than the single drug.

It appears that drugs with different actions are more efficacious when used together.

What is interesting in this case is that it occurs without producing additional side effects,” said Klareskog, who co-authored the findings of a Lancet medical journal.

Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic disease in which the body attacks the healthy joint tissues, causing inflammation and damage. Symptoms include swelling, difficulty moving and pain.

A toll fee of 89 cents per metric tonne per千米 will start operation in 2008, the government is projected to receive around 11 billion US dollars in revenue for 20 years from the massive gas pipeline project linking East Kalimantan with the heavily populated Java Island, according to a feasibility study report.

The government’s portion represents 36 per cent of the total 31.1 billion dollars in revenue expected from the gas pipeline project, which will start operation in 2008, said the report, made by consulting firm PT Pendawa. The government would get the bulk of the revenue.

The Indonesian government will be proven to be unfounded,” said European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs Margot Wallstrom.

However, the study also shows that there is the serious risk of “brain drain” from the acceding countries.

Investigation shows that about 2-3 per cent of the 15-24 age-group in these states indicated a firm intention to move. About one-third of those who did not express a firm intention to move are students and a quarter educated to university level.

Bush, Schroeder put bitter war feud behind them

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb — US President George W Bush and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder put their bitter feud over the Iraq war behind them on Friday.

“We’ve had differences in the past. But there’s nothing wrong with friends having differences,” Bush told reporte as he and Schroeder sat side-by-side in the Oval Office.

Schroeder said he told Bush of German concerns about the weakness of the dollar across the euro, which, he noted, feels is depressing German exports.

The official US position on the dollar — which Schroeder said Bush repeated to him — is that the Administration backs a strong US currency.

But a cheaper dollar has helped the United States cope with its current record trade imbalance because it makes US-produced exports cheaper in foreign markets.

Schroeder said Bush told him that while he is interested in a strong dollar, government officials only have a limited ability to influence currencies.

“Conveyed that we are obviously concerned about the euro-dollar relationship,” he said.

German officials have said they are still not convinced of the reasons for the Iraq war that Schroeder said he had to head off in a fight that stopped Germany, France and Russia from joining the United States, Britain and Spain.

European Union leaders on Friday in a summit in Copenhagen will try to find weapons of mass destruction that Bush has cited as the key justification to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

“We talked not about the past. We very much agreed on that. We have talked about the present and the future now. We both have a great interest in seeing a stable, democratic Iraq develop,” said Schroeder.

Besides Iraq, the two leaders discussed solving the problem of North Korea’s nuclear programme, finding peace in the Middle East and stabilizing Afghanistan.

Indonesian govt to get huge revenue from gas pipeline project

JAKARTA, 28 Feb — The government is projected to receive around 11 billion US dollars in revenue for 20 years from the massive gas pipeline project linking East Kalimantan with the heavily populated Java Island, according to a feasibility study report.

The government’s portion represents 36 per cent of the total 31.1 billion dollars in revenue expected from the gas pipeline project, which will start operation in 2008, said the report, made by consulting firm PT Pendawa. The government would get the bulk of the revenue.

The Indonesian government will get 3.1 billion US dollars in revenue for 20 years from the massive gas pipeline project linking East Kalimantan with the heavily populated Java Island, according to a feasibility study report.

The government’s portion represents 36 per cent of the total 31.1 billion dollars in revenue expected from the gas pipeline project, which will start operation in 2008, said the report, made by consulting firm PT Pendawa. The government would get the bulk of the revenue.

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“We’ve had differences...
Larsson double fires Celtic

GLASGOW, 28 Feb— Celtic began their quest to reach back-to-back UEFA Cup finals with a comfortable 3-0 home victory over Teipolice in a third round first leg match on Thursday.

The unbeaten Scottish Premier League leaders, who lost year’s final 3-2 after extra time to Porto, punished the Czech side twice in the opening 12 minutes at Celtic Park through goals by strikers Henrik Larsson and Chris Sutton.

Larsson headed a third in stoppage time to put the Glasgow side on course for the last 16 of the tournament they entered by the back door after being eliminated from the Champions League.

Swede Larsson was a constant threat, prodding the ball through the legs of Tomas Postulka on two minutes before Sutton rounded the goalkeeper to slot the second. Teipolice ousted Kaeris and Listerbur in 2002 UEFA Cup winners Feyenord in previous rounds but spent much of the first period defending, with Jiri Skala’s shot that flew narrowly wide their only noteworthy effort.

They were fortunate not to concede a third goal when Postulka saved from Stephen Pearson before Tomas Hulak again denied the Scotland midfielder by clearing off the line. — MNA/Reuters

Ronaldinho gives Barca the edge at Brondby

COPENHAGEN, 28 Feb—A second-half goal from Brazilian Ronaldinho secured Barcelona a 1-0 away win against Brondby in a UEFA Cup third round, first leg match on Thursday.

Ronaldinho was the difference on the two teams and his goal came after his own superbly struck free kick from 20 metres out thumped against the bar in the 63rd minute. The World Cup winner picked up the rebound on the left and placed the ball into the top corner of the net through the arms of Karim Zaza in the Brondby goal. "Ronaldinho’s goal was fantastic. He made the difference," Barcelona coach Frank Rijkaard told a news conference.

"It was an important victory but we haven’t won yet. We have to prepare in an optimal way for the second match." The Danish league leaders, coached by former Barcelona great Michael Laudrup, had matched their Catalan opponents manfully after a tentative start but the goal knocked the fight out of them and they face an uphill task in the second leg next week. — MNA/Reuters

Leverkusen beat Levski 2-0 to ease pressure on Houllier

LIVERPOOL, 28 Feb—Superb second-half strikes from Steven Gerrard and Harry Kewell gave Liverpool a 2-0 victory in their UEFA Cup third round, first leg against Levski Sofia on Thursday.

The victory will come as some relief to manager Gerard Houllier, who won the UEFA Cup with Liverpool in 2001 but has come under increasing pressure since his team were knocked out of the FA Cup by Portsmouth last weekend.

After another 67 minutes of frustration for the Anfield faithful, captain Gerrard opened the scoring with a tremendously struck left foot volley when Kostadin Vidolov’s clearing header dropped to him on the edge of the area. The goal gave Liverpool a shot of confidence and moments later Australian Kewell collected a short corner on the right, side-stepped his way past a defender and curled an exquisite effort past Dimitar Ivankov.

Up until that point Houllier’s men had looked incapable of finding a way through a well disciplined Bulgarian side, although Milan Baros was unfortunate not to win a first half penalty.

The Czech striker also headed wide when presented with a clear sight of the target but it was after the break that Liverpool, and Michael Owen in particular, managed to test Ivankov. But the England striker is not in confident form and three chances in quick succession went begging. Late on Baros again saw a penalty appeal turned down.

Despite the misses, Houllier will have enjoyed the evening — especially the moment five minutes from time when the fans in the Kop sang his name and when he stood up to applaud their support, he was cheered around the ground. The second leg takes place in Bulgaria next Wednesday. — MNA/Reuters

Last-gasp goal gives Valencia win over Besiktas

VALENCIA (Spain), 28 Feb—A last-gasp strike from Valencia defender David Navarro allowed his side to snatch a 3-2 win over Turkish champions Besiktas in their UEFA Cup third round, first leg at Mestalla on Thursday.

The young centre-back sent his looping header into the top corner after substitute Fabio Aurelio had opened a goal into his path in the fourth minute of injury time. "It was a strange game," said Valencia coach Rafa Benitez. "We had to fight back in the first half, almost lost it in the second and then ended up winning it. I’m not sure if we deserved it but you have to make the most of your chances."

Benitez was left set to earn a valuable away draw after a classy first-half double from Romanian midfielder Daniel Pancu had twice given his side the lead against the run of play.

Pancu’s first came in the 17th minute when he stepped his way past a fellow countryman and former Valencia striker Adrian Ilie and caught keeper Andres Navarro after being eliminated from the Champions League. The Danes had to fight for their chances. It was after the break that Liverpool, and Michael Owen in particular, managed to test Ivankov. But the England striker is not in confident form and three chances in quick succession went begging. Late on Baros again saw a penalty appeal turned down.

Despite the misses, Houllier will have enjoyed the evening — especially the moment five minutes from time when the fans in the Kop sang his name and when he stood up to applaud their support, he was cheered around the ground. The second leg takes place in Bulgaria next Wednesday. — MNA/Reuters

Beckham hairstyle banned in China’s under-17 national squad

NANNING (South China), 28 Feb— David Beckham may be one of the most idolized soccer stars in China but his ponytail hairstyle is strictly prohibited in the training camp of the Chinese under-17 national team here.

His Real Madrid teammate Roberto Carlos’ bare head cannot be simulated either under a rule of the Chinese Football Association (CFA). The rule was announced early this week when the spring training kicked off. The rule said: “Dyed hair, long hair and weird hairstyles are all strictly prohibited in the training camp and all players must cut hair short.”

Feng Jianming, director of the CFA youth department, told the players: “You must learn how to behave as a true man before becoming a soccer star.” — MNA/Xinhua

Roberto Carlos may be punished for retaliation in Munich

BERLIN, 28 Feb—Real Madrid’s Roberto Carlos could face disciplinary action for retaliating against Bayern Munich defender Martin Demichelis moments before the Brazilian scored in their Champions League match on Tuesday. UEFA said: “We’ve opened a disciplinary case against him and a decision will be announced by about 5 pm on Monday,” a spokeswoman for UEFA’s disciplinary panel in Nyon, Switzerland said on Thursday.

“There are many possible sanctions available. The most likely would be a suspension for one or several matches.” — MNA/Reuters

World Match

Play second round delayed by rain

CARLSBAD (California), 28 Feb—The start of the second round of the World Match Play Championship was delayed by heavy overnight rain on Thursday.

World number one and defending champion Tiger Woods plays South African Trevor Immelman, and number two Vijay Singh of Fiji meets American Tom Kite in the first round matches.

Kelly among highlights of the day’s scheduled matches.

— MNA/Reuters

World number one and Dubai Duty Free Women’s open defending champion Justine Henin Hardene of Belgium makes a backhand return to Spain’s Conchita Martinez during the quarterfinals of the Dubai Duty Free Women’s open tennis at Dubai Tennis Stadium, on 26 Feb, 2004.

Henin Hardene won, 6-1, 6-0. — Internet

ACROSS

7 Silly smile
8 Upper parts of legs
10 Cradle-song
11 Scope
12 Certain
17 Dutch earthenware
18 Greek letter
22 Vagrant
23 Humbug
24 Pact
25 Inn

1 Fun
2 Entreat
3 Open to bribery
4 Abridge
5 Remain
6 Puzzled
14 Notwithstanding
15 Traduced
16 Landry
19 Condition
20 Vacillate
21 Recompose

DOWN

1 Fun
2 Entreat
3 Open to bribery
4 Abridge
5 Remain
6 Puzzled
14 Notwithstanding
15 Traduced
16 Landry
19 Condition
20 Vacillate
21 Recompose
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party arrived at Kawa at 10.30 am today.

They were welcomed there by members of the District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials, social organizations and local people.

First, the Prime Minister and party arrived at the Kawa Basic Education High School where they were welcomed by members of the School Board of Trustees, Headmaster U Aung Than and teachers and students.

Next, the Prime Minister and party inspected computer-aided instruction room, electronic media (radio system), language lab, electronic media (video system) and others.

After that, the Prime Minister met with members of the Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials and social organizations at Kawa BEHS. The Chairman of Kawa Township Peace and Development Council reported on location and area of Kawa Township, population, weather, rainfall, cultivation of monsoon paddy and yield, cultivation of summer paddy, measures for extended cultivation of summer paddy, cultivation of edible oil crops and pulses and beans, self-sufficiency, health, education and requirements. Next, departmental officials reported on work being carried out in the respective sectors and requirements.

Next, the Prime Minister made arrangements for construction of Sittaung river crossing Bailey bridge on Kawa-Intagaw road, upgrading of two schools into high schools in the township, upgrading of a 16-bed facility into a 25-bed hospital and opening of one more station hospital and rural health care centres.

Next, the Prime Minister presented TV set, video set and a computer for the school through the headmaster and made arrangements for opening of the multimedia classrooms.

Next, the Prime Minister made a speech. He said that they were there to fulfill the needs for regional development after attending the opening of Shwe Hlai Sluice Gate held in Kawa Township this morning. He added that they were also there to know the prevailing situations for development in townships that are the basic regions and to fulfill the requirements.

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Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein delivers an address at the co-ordination meeting of the General Administration Department for 2003. — MNA

State, division, district and township level GAD officials urged to win respect and trust of people

YANGON, 28 Feb—The coordination meeting of General Administration Department for 2003 was held at the Ministry of Home Affairs this afternoon, with an address by Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

Present were Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Phone Swe, the director-general of Myanmar Police Force, directors-general of GAD and Prisons Department, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of departments and guests.

In his address, the Secretary-2 said the Ministry of Home Affairs is carrying out very important tasks of State security, prevalence of law and order, community peace and tranquility and community welfare services. GAD under the Ministry of Home Affairs has laid down the tasks of community peace and tranquility, regional development tasks and community welfare, and State and Division GAD officials are implementing those tasks in cooperation with district and township level officials. He said the objective of the State is to build a peaceful, modern developed nation and the future objective is also to build a discipline-flourishing modern democratic nation. The seven-point future programme of the State was laid down and it was publicly declared that a democratic state would be built, he said.

He said stability of the State, security and prevalence of law and order are essential in building a discipline-flourishing modern developed democratic nation. He said that the Head of State pointed out that good armed forces, good police force and good administrative bodies are required for ensuring stability of the State, security and prevalence of law and order.

He said the government is building the Tatmadaw into a strong, highly-qualified and modern one to be able to safeguard the nation as long as the world exists. The Myanmar Police Force Management Reform Committee was formed with six sub-committees.

(See page 9)