95th birthday of Myingyan Sayadaw celebrated

YANGON, 8 March — A ceremony to celebrate the 95th birthday of Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Myingyan Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobhita was held in conjunction with the tenth founding anniversary of Five Nikayas and Tri Pithakas Sarthintaik in Dagon Myothit (South) Township and to honour two brilliant members of the Sangha at the Sarthintaik in Dagon Myothit (South) Township.

Daw Kyang Kyang, wife of Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council and also Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, attended the ceremony.

Also present on the occasion were SSMNC Vice-Chairman Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Thayet Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kesara, Secretary Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Magway Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara, member Sayadaw of the SSMNC, Daw Mya Mya San, wife of Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint and officials.

Deputy Director U Myo Tun and officials reported on matters related to the extended project. They were welcomed there by Deputy Director of IDU and party inspected construction of the extended project.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint met with local farmers and gave instructions on extended cultivation of paddy and cotton. Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party inspected water supply to the farmlands at milepost No 11.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects extension of irrigated area of Thittetgon Diversion Weir in TadaU Township

Lt-Gen Ye Myint, accompanied by the commander and officials, arrived at the briefing hall of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. They were welcomed there by Deputy Director of IDU and party inspected construction of Mezali diversion conduit being undertaken at milepost No 12/4, water supply to the farmlands at milepost No 11/4 and preparations for cultivation of paddy and cotton.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party inspected water supply to the farmlands at milepost No 11.

Four political objectives
* Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
* National reconsolidation
* Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution

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

F & R Minister receives guests

YANGON, 8 March — Minister for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun met Mr Hiroshi Kanematsu, Managing Director of Nissho Iwai International (Singapore) Ltd and party sharing merits at 95th birthday of Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobhita. — MNA

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To boost production for higher living standard

The Union of Myanmar is a land where national people have been living in unity and amity for ages. Today is the time when all-out efforts are being made so that peace and stability prevails all over the nation and it can keep abreast of the development of other nations of the world. At such a time like this, it is incumbent upon the entire national people to cooperate with the government in keeping the peace and stability already achieved, raising the momentum of national development and strengthening the national economic life.

The government is meeting all the requirements for parallel development of various regions across the Union and for enhancement of social and economic life of the national people.

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe went on an inspection tour of Taninthayi Division, Mon State and Kayin State from 25 February to 3 March and inspected the development tasks being carried out in respective regions, giving guidance on work to be done.

In his meeting with members of Kayin State Peace and Development Council, departmental personnel, members of social organizations, Tatmadawmen and their families at the hall of No 22 Light Infantry Division, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe said that, as the government has laid down all the necessary foundations for development, all those at regional levels are required to strive for self-sufficiency and economic development of their respective regions.

The government has been spending a lot on the construction of roads and bridges in Kayin State. Moreover, primary education schools, the Hpa-an University, the Government Technological College and the Government Computer College have been opened in Kayin State. Moreover, primary education has been extended to the Hpa-an region. The government is meeting all the requirements for parallel development of various regions across the Union and for enhancement of social and economic life of the national people.
Guerrilla attack injures American in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 8 March—Guerrilla fired at least seven rockets on the US coalition headquarters in Baghdad Sunday night, hitting a hotel used by US occupation officials and wounding one American, the military said. It was the biggest attack on the Green Zone in weeks.

A series of explosions echoed across central Baghdad from the strike, sirens blared, and smoke and flames were briefly visible in the Green Zone, the heavily guarded area where the US-led coalition is based.

Five rockets hit the Al-Rasheed hotel, where some civilian contractors are living and a coalition dining hall is located. A US civilian contractor was wounded, the military said.

The rockets were fired around 7:30 pm from a white SUV parked outside the Green Zone near the former Foreign Ministry building. The SUV burst into flames during the barrage, and US troops found two rockets in a rack on the vehicle. The troops then blew up the vehicle, a military spokesman said.

The Al-Rasheed is located across the street from the Baghdad Convention Centre, where many coalition offices are located. The centre was where Iraq Governing Council intended to sign an interim constitution on Friday, but a last-minute political dispute delayed the ceremony. Council members said they hoped to sign the document Monday.

Earlier Sunday, some 500 US soldiers, backed by tanks and helicopters, raided Baghdad’s biggest dairy processing plant, in the western suburbs of the capital, looking for specific militant suspects. Four people were arrested, battalion commander Lt Col Tim Ryan told The Associated Press.

Troops entered the grounds of the eight-building plant without incident and checked identity papers of the workers, separating men and women.

After the raid, soldiers handed out Arabic-language newspapers printed by the coalition, and handbills offering rewards for information about suspected militants or bomb makers. The Green Zone comes under occasional mortar or rocket fire, but Sunday night’s barrage was the biggest attack in weeks.

Inside the Green Zone, employees at the Baghdad Convention Centre, where the US military press office is based, fled into the basement, said Army 1st Sgt Stephen Valley, a military spokesman.

“Everyone’s OK. Everyone’s been accounted for,” Valley said. “They’re all down in the basement.”

Shortly after the blasts, a US Army OH-58 Kiowa helicopter, a surveillance aircraft, and an Apache helicopter flew low over the nearby Tigris River, possibly in an attempt to seek out the heat signature of the rocket launchers. The helicopters use infrared sights to seek out the heat left by the rocket tubes. —Internet

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Syria, Turkey start preparation for free trade

DAMASCUS, 8 March—Syria and Turkey on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding on preparations for free trade between the two countries, official Syrian news agency reported.

According to the MoU, the two sides agreed on forming a joint committee, which holds meetings once every six months. Its first meeting was set at the end of April in Ankara. Meanwhile, a work team was also formed to deal with the establishment of an agricultural free zone between the two countries.

The MoU was signed after two-day talks, during which the two sides discussed various issues, such as the establishment of border commercial centres, a free agricultural area and gas-energy networks, as well as Turkish investment in Syria, air transportation and how to transfer Turkish expertise in the stock market. —MNA/Xinhua

Belgian boy, 11, saves mother after heart attack

BRUSSELS, 8 March—An 11-year old Belgian boy managed to resuscitate his mother after she collapsed with a heart attack, just days after he received first aid training in school, a Belgian daily said on Saturday.

“I’m no hero. I just did what I had to do,” Ayrton, his proud father said. Ayrton’s mother received a pacemaker and is now out of hospital. —MNA/Reuters

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China to add corn, cotton on futures market

BEIJING, 8 March—Corn futures will likely be put on China’s commodity futures market as early as April or May and cotton futures may get the green light shortly.

Zhu Yuchen, president of the Dalian Commodity Exchange, one of China’s three futures exchanges, was quoted by Monday’s China Daily as saying that they are preparing for the corn futures trading.

“We are not sure of the timetable yet since it needs final approval from the State Council but hopefully it will be in April or May,” Zhu said. “Or if regulators need more time, it may be settled in autumn.”

The exchange also plans to launch a new soybean contract soon to enrich its soy product series, insiders said.

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Fire chief witnesses Sunday’s attacks in Iraq

BAKHRAH, 8 March — Rick Morris grabbed his flak jacket and combat helmet, then headed for the nearest bunker Sunday when rockets were fired into Baghdad’s Green Zone.

“I could see the flashes and hear the explosions,” Morris, formerly of Lawrence, told the Journal-World a few hours later in a telephone interview.

Morris, the American fire chief for the Coalition Provisionsal Authority in Baghdad, estimated he was about a quarter of a mile away at one of the fire personnel’s ‘‘mountain’’ when the attack took place. He had been talking to someone who was cooking chicken over a barbecue grill.

Officials said rockets were fired from a sport utility vehicle parked just outside the coned-in Al-Rasheed hotel. The explosions caused some trees and brush to burn, but it ‘‘wasn’t a big deal,’’ Morris said, and his firefighters were not called out.

“Unless we get toned (called out) specifically for something, we stay put,” Morris said. “We’re not going to risk ourselves for a bunch of trees. We’re here for the buildings.”

The Green Zone is about a 4-mile square area of buildings that includes the US Embassy and other US, international and Iraqi provisional government offices. It is noted for its trees and wide boulevards, but it also is surrounded by razor wire, berms and armed checkpoints. It still periodically is hit by rocket and mortar fire.

Bush accused of failing to fully equip US troops

WASHINGTON, 8 March — Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry accused the Bush Administration on Saturday of failing to adequately prepare and equip US forces for the war in Iraq.

Kerry, giving the Democrats’ weekly radio address, said US President George W Bush had misplaced priorities in Iraq, spending billions of dollars on contracts to Halliburton Co, but not providing troops enough body armour and other protective equipment.

The Massachusetts Senator said helicopters were flying dangerous missions without top-notch anti-missile systems, National Guard units were getting donated steel from local businesses to put homemade steel armour on their vehicles, and families were buying body armour for their sons and daughters.

“Families should be sending pictures and care packages to Iraq and the Department of Defence should be sending the body armour,” Kerry said.

“If I am President, I will be prepared to use military force to protect our security, our people and our vital interests,” he said.

“But I will never send our troops in harm’s way without enough firepower and support.”

Kerry called on Bush to support a bill in Congress to reimburse families who ‘‘had to buy the body armour this administration failed to provide’’.

He said he will introduce legislation later this month called the Military Family Bill of Rights “to prevent anything like this from ever happening again”.

And to ease the strain on the reserves from deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, Kerry said active duty forces should temporarily be expanded by 40,000 troops.

The Pentagon has said it will expand active duty forces by up to 30,000 over four years, but has resisted calls by many in Congress for a permanent increase.

“We cannot let the strongest Armed Forces in the world be weakened,” Kerry said. “We must resolve that America’s leaders will never let them down.”

China to open border trade with Tajikistan

Urgaov, 8 March — China will open its first border trading port with neighbouring Tajikistan in May, according to the port administration office of northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

The Kalaus Port will open on 25 May on the border along State Highway 314. Roads of both countries met at the port, said administration official Li Xinheng. People, goods and vehicles from both countries will be allowed to pass through the port, but the port would remain closed to third country nationals for the time being, said Li.

Chinese goods like rice, fruit and stationery are in demand in Tajikistan, but the lack of a direct trading port in the past meant goods had to be transported via a third country, which doubled or tripled costs. — MNA/Xinhua

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The exchange also plan to launch a new soybean contract soon to enrich its soy product series, insiders said.

Another futures exchange, Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange, located in central China’s Henan Province, has been applying for cotton futures. The application is in progress and may be allowed within the year, or even in the first half of the year, the exchange’s officials have said.

It also has a new wheat contract to be launched and is working on new products like sugar and rapeseed, said it Guangbao, a manager at the marketing department of the exchange.

Some foreign companies have dabbled in the futures market in China indirectly through the country does not allow them to conduct futures trading. “We are considering making some foreign companies special members of our exchange but they can not be dealers,” Zhu said.

Foreign companies can either foreign producers or consumers of the commodities traded in the country’s futures market. As one of the representatives of the securities and futures industry at the 10th National People’s Congress, Zhu submitted several proposals over the weekend to the legislature to amend the provisional regulation on futures trading management.

China to beef up human resources development in 2004

BEIJING, 8 March — China will beef up human resources development this year through implementing the strategy of relying on talented personnel to strengthen the country, the country’s top legislature was told Saturday.

Ma Kai, Minister in charge of the State Development and Reform Commission, made the remarks in his report to the legislature on the implementation of the 2003 Plan for National Economic and Social Development and on the 2004 Draft Plan for National Economic and Social Development.

“The top priority for our work in education will continue to be rural education. We will lose no time in improving the mechanism for ensuring adequate funding for rural education to make it more regular and institutionalized.”

He acknowledged that China will intensify its efforts to make nine-year compulsory education basically universal and to basically eliminate illiteracy among young and middle-aged people in the western region, he said.

“We will continue the project to renovate dangerous primary and secondary school buildings in rural areas and launch a national programme to make compulsory education universally available in poverty-stricken areas.”

Ma went on to say that China will intensify its efforts to make nine-year compulsory education basically universal and to basically eliminate illiteracy among young and middle-aged people in the western region, he said.

Russia rescues stranded polar scientists

MOGON, 8 March — Russian helicopters plucked a team of stranded scientists from deep within the Arctic Circle on Saturday after their research station was all but crushed beneath a wall of ice, officials told Reuters.

Emergency teams flew four hours from one of Europe’s most northerly settlements to reach the Severny Polyus-32 station, where the 12 unharmed researchers bided for three days in temperatures of minus 39 Cel- suis (minus 38 Fahrenheit).

“Two helicopters on Saturday evening delivered the 12 explorers from Severny Polyus-32 (Norway’s Arctic Spitsbergen archipelago),” an Emergencies Ministry spokesman said. — MNA/Reuters
Iraq death spurs push for Humvee armour

BAGHDAD, 8 March—In the days before his death, Private First Class John D Hart called his father to tell him how unsafe he felt riding around in Iraq in a Humvee that lacked bulletproof shielding or even metal doors.

It would be the last conversation Brian T. Hart would have with his 20-year-old son.

On Oct. 18 near Kirkuk, Saddam Hussein loyalists ambushed his son’s Army convoy, killing two. A hail of bullets killed the Bedford High School graduate while he fought from his Humvee.

For Brian Hart, a 44-year-old Bedford businessman, his only son’s last words have come to haunt him, especially after learning that other families who lost loved ones in Humvee attacks had complained to the Pentagon about the lack of armor in vehicles.

In fact, an average sport utility vehicle found on US roads provides more protection than Hart’s Humvee. “He would have been better off in a Toyota Highlander,” the father said.

Turning grief into action, Hart cobbled together a loose network of soldiers, their relatives, politicians, and defense contractors to pressure the military to beef up its Humvees. Since his son’s death, Hart has seen results: Since January, the Marine Corps has ordered $9 million worth of bulletproof Humvee door panels from Foster-Miller Inc. of Waltham, and last week the Army said it would double its order of heavily armored Humvees from its contractor.

More Humvees in Iraq still need extra protection, but Hart’s headway is remarkable for how quickly he has navigated the byzantine military-procurement system. Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, whom Hart enlisted in his cause, believes the father’s success can come only from a parent who “feels a desperate sense of loss that he doesn’t want it to happen to another parent.”

Most versions of the military transport known as the Humvee, short for High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, use body panels made from thin aluminum or fiberglass. That reduces weight but stops few bullets.

Iraqi killed, one wounded in Mosul attack

MOSSUL, 8 March—A shootout between Iraqi police and gunmen claimed the life of one civilian and left another wounded here, police and medical sources said.

Meanwhile, the 4th Infantry Division said it detained 27 individuals north of Baghdad in the region stretching from former dictator Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit to the Iranian border.

The attackers fired a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) at a police station in the Sukar neighbourhood in the centre of the city of Mosul, said police spokesman Abdel Azal Haffudi. “As they traded fire, a civilian passing in a car was mortally wounded and a passenger in a second car was hurt,” Haffudi said.

The man who died was struck by bullets to the head and shoulder, said Mosul hospital doctor Ahmad Abdullah Rajab.

A second doctor, Yazen Babeli, said the wounded man was hit in the hand and was in a stable condition. Mosul, 370 kilometres (230 miles) north of Baghdad, is the regular scene of attacks on Iraqi police by insurgents wishing to wreck US efforts to stand up a post-Saddam security force.

UAE invests $11b in industrial sector over three years

ABU DHABI, 8 March—The United Arab Emirates has invested about 11 billion US dollars in industrial sector over the past three years to ease its leaponing upon crude export earnings, the official WAM news agency reported Saturday.

Most of the investments were channelled by the private sector, which has become the focus of a government programme to diversify its oil-reliant economy and ensure a stable income in the long term, according to a report released by the Ministry of Finance and Industry on Friday.

The industrial capital grew from around 2.6 billion dollars in 2000 to 2.7 billion dollars in 2001, to 2.83 billion dollars in 2002 and nearly three billion dollars in 2003, the report said.

The sector’s contribution to the GDP stood at 13.8 per cent, with a value of 10 billion dollars. Industrial output totalled about 18.2 billion dollars while manufacturing units exceeded 2,500, employing nearly 262,812 people, the report added.

Like other Gulf states, the UAE has targeted the industrial sector in its economic diversification programmes, given its relatively small farming and tourism potential.

The programmes have paid off in terms of industrial exports, which jumped to nearly three billion dollars last year from less than one billion dollars 10 years ago, the ministry said.

The deal came after GM and its Chinese partner bought a Daewoo vehicle plant in Yantai at the end of 2002, which now produces the Buick sail compact car.

According to the other agreement signed Sunday, GM, SAIC and Shanghai GM took over Junbei GM, a domestic van maker, and 25 per cent held by the Lianping Development Group, Lianao Energy General Co and the Shenyang Automotive Industry Asset Management Co.

With Sunday’s agreement, GM reduced its stake to 25 per cent while SAIC acquired 25 per cent and Shanghai GM got 50 per cent.

The vehicle plant started to produce GM’s Chevrolet Blazer sport utility vehicles and pickups in 2000.

Shanghai GM will be in charge of the management of the two new companies, GM said.

“The two deals represent a significant extension of our strategic partnership with SAIC and Shanghai GM,” said Phil Murtaugh, chairman of GM China Group.

Shanghai GM, half-and-half held by GM and SAIC, is the third largest passenger car maker in China.

Nepali man killed by rhino

KATHMANDU, 8 March—A Nepali young man was killed by a rhino Saturday morning in central Nepal, the Nepal National News Agency reported.

Juthe Lopchan, 25, was attacked by a one-horned rhino in Bachauli Village of Chitwan District while he was going to camp near the news agency quoted Shiva R Bhatta, chief conservation officer of the district, as saying.

The man was rushed to a nearby hospital for treatment, but he died on the way. Bhatta said.

A total of 14 persons died and 11 others were wounded in the attacks by tigers and rhinos around the Royal Chitwan National Park in the past few months, he noted.

A US Special Forces Chinook helicopter hovers low above the Tigris River near the former Presidential Palace (background right) of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein located at the ‘Green Zone’ in Baghdad, Iraq late afternoon on 7, March, 2004. — Internet

GM, SAIC merge two auto companies in China

BEIJING, 8 March — General Motors (GM) and its Chinese partner Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp (SAIC) signed agreements to merge an engine plant and a vehicle plant in China Sunday.

Monday’s China Daily said the two companies and their joint venture Shanghai GM will acquire a Daewoo Motor’s engine joint venture plant in Yantai, a port city in east China’s Shandong Province, according to the agreement signed in Beijing Sunday.

The engine venture will be renamed Shanghai GM Dongyue Automotive Powertrain Co Ltd and will have an annual capacity of 300,000 engines and transmissions, GM said in a statement Sunday.

GM will have 25 per cent stake of the plant while SAIC has 25 per cent and Shanghai GM has 50 per cent.

The engine plant, founded in 1996 with an investment of 2.28 billion yuan (275.3 million US dollars), was equally owned by Daewoo Motor, an auto maker of South Korea, and the First Automotive Works Corp (FAW), China’s biggest vehicle producer based in northeast China’s Liaoning Province.

The two partners sold the company to the Shandong International Trust and Investment Corp. in 2002 after Daewoo’s bankruptcy in 2000.

The deal came after GM and its Chinese partner bought a Daewoo vehicle plant in Yantai at the end of 2002, which now produces the Buick sail compact car.

According to the other agreement signed Sunday, GM, SAIC and Shanghai GM took over Junbei GM, a domestic van maker, and 25 per cent held by the Lianping Development Group, Lianao Energy General Co and the Shenyang Automotive Industry Asset Management Co.

With Sunday’s agreement, GM reduced its stake to 25 per cent while SAIC acquired 25 per cent and Shanghai GM got 50 per cent.

The vehicle plant started to produce GM’s Chevrolet Blazer sport utility vehicles and pickups in 2000.

Shanghai GM will be in charge of the management of the two new companies, GM said.

“The two deals represent a significant extension of our strategic partnership with SAIC and Shanghai GM,” said Phil Murtaugh, chairman of GM China Group.

Shanghai GM, half-and-half held by GM and SAIC, is the third largest passenger car maker in China.

Nepal National News Agency
Kerry says Iraq trip possible but not on ‘front burner’

JACKSON, 8 March—Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry on Sunday left the open possibility of making a trip to before the November 2 election, but said he wanted to avoid any “sense of politicization.”

The four-term Massachusetts senator and decorated Vietnam War veteran said he would prefer to have a group of congressmen and senators — Democrats and Republicans — discuss in the press the situation in Iraq he knows in his role as the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman.

He replied: “That’s a possibility and it’s something that’s been discussed. But I don’t want any sense of politicization in that regard.”

Kerry, who visited the war in Iraq but has since been highly critical of the way President Bush conducted it, said he would like an assessment by “people that I trust” with the experience and knowledge “to make some judgments as to where we are today.”

“Do I have the power to ‘send’ people, but as a US senator and the essential nominee of the party ... I do have a responsibility to get the best information possible,” he told reporters in Jackson, Mississippi.

Asked if he would go himself, Kerry replied: “That’s a possibility and it’s something that’s been discussed, but the government’s difficult and I don’t want any sense of politicization in that regard.”

Book of 407 handwritten letters of Soong Ching Ling to be published

BEIJING, 8 March—A book containing 407 letters handwritten by Soong Ching Ling, former honorary president of China and wife of Dr Sun Yat Sen, will be published, Beijing Daily reported on Saturday.

The letters, written by Soong between 1942 and 1981 when she died, were sent to her relatives and friends at home and abroad.

Exchanging letters with relatives and friends was one of the most important things during Soong’s late years, and she used to write about a dozen letters on one day sometimes, said He Dazhang, deputy director of a study centre under the Soong Ching Ling Foundation.

He also suggested exchanging letters with relatives and friends to relieve them of the “tense” of the times, said He Dazhang.

The government should have a plan to monitor the climate system, which is crucial for meteorological research and forecasts, China should start monitoring atmospheric aerosol and chemical elements as soon as possible,” he told a seminar on measures against climate change.

He also suggested accelerating the development of a national climate system model, which would improve climate forecasts.

The government should coordinate strategies and actions in foreign affairs, energy resources and economic fields, which would benefit sustainable development and national security.

The government should improve strategic research on meteorological issues. China urgently needs to strengthen its capability to deal with the changing climate,” Qin said.

Meteorologists said further global warming would influence the Earth’s water cycle by increasing evaporation and changing the span of distribution and region of rainfall, which would make disasters like floods and droughts more frequent and serious.

China would face worse water shortages as global warming would increase evaporation in its seven major valleys, of which the annual natural runoff has been declining in recent years.

According to the CMA, MNA/Xinhua

Saudi Arabia, China sign natural gas deal

RIYADH, 8 March—The Saudi government signed on Sunday morning a deal on natural gas drilling and production with the China National Petrochemical Corp (SINOPEC), according to a SINOPEC official.

The deal was inked by Saudi Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Ali Bin Ibrahim Al-Naimi and chief of SINOPEC Wang Jiming.

The agreement, covering an area of 40 square kilometres in the south of Saudi Arabia’s Rub Al Khali Province, was also signed by the chairman of the leading Saudi Arabia oil provider, Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO), Wang said reporters after the signing ceremony.

Wang said the project was a landmark in the Sino-Saudi ties in general and the bilateral economic and trade cooperation in particular.

Under the deal, SINOPEC and ARAMCO will launch a company for drilling and production at a contracted zone with ARAMCO holding a 20-per-cent quota.

The commission has determined that the rocket launch failure last November was caused by a hole in a booster nozzle in the H-2A rocket. —MNA/Xinhua

Japan to resume launch of weather satellite

TOKYO, 8 March—Japan plans to reuse the old H-2A rocket and launch a new satellite for weather observation as early as in November to replace an aging satellite.

According to Japan Space Activities Commission, Japanese experts have almost completed investigations on a failed launch last year.

The commission will complete a report Monday on the cause of the failed launch last November of the domestically built H-2A rocket that was going to place into orbit two spy satellites.

The government has decided that the rocket launch failure last November was caused by a hole in a booster nozzle in the H-2A rocket. —MNA/Xinhua

Gibson’s Jesus movie races past $200m

LOS ANGELES, 8 March—Filmmaker Mel Gibson fed the hungry multitudes at the North American box office as his gritty biblical epic “The Passion of the Christ” smashed past the 200 million-US-dollar sales mark after just two weeks.

According to estimates issued on Sunday, the movie has sold 212 million-US-dollar worth of tickets since its February 25 release (including three million US dollars in private group sales the prior two days), placing it in the same blockbuster league as recent Oscar-winner “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.”

The total includes estimated sales of 51.4 million US dollars for the current Friday-to-Sunday period, a dip of just 39 cent from the previous weekend. Most big films usually lose about half their business in the second weekend. —MNA/Reuters

Chinese expert proposes measures against global warming

BEIJING, 8 March—China must take urgent measures to avoid the worst effects of global warming, said Qin Dahe, meteorologist and director of the China Meteorological Administration (CMA).

CMA statistics showed temperatures in China had risen by 0.4 to 0.5 degree Celsius over the past century, slightly lower than the global average increase of 0.6 degree.

Qin called on the government to increase investment in research on climate change, its causes, its impact on China and effective measures against it.

“The government should have a plan to monitor the climate system, which is crucial for meteorological research and forecasts. China should start monitoring atmospheric aerosol and chemical elements as soon as possible,” he told a seminar on measures against climate change.

He also suggested accelerating the development of a national climate system model, which would improve climate forecasts.

The government should coordinate strategies and actions in foreign affairs, energy resources and economic fields, which would benefit sustainable development and national security.

Qin said.

The government should improve strategic research on meteorological issues. “China urgently needs to strengthen its capability to deal with the changing climate,” Qin said.

Meteorologists said further global warming would influence the Earth’s water cycle by increasing evaporation and changing the span of distribution and region of rainfall, which would make disasters like floods and droughts more frequent and serious.

China would face worse water shortages as global warming would increase evaporation in its seven major valleys, of which the annual natural runoff has been declining in recent years.

According to the CMA, MNA/Xinhua

US military vehicles block a highway as a US soldier collects evidence at the scene of a roadside bombing in Baghdad recently. —Reuters

Beyoncé Knowles accepts the Entertainer of the Year award at the NAACP Image Awards, Saturday night, on 6 March, 2004, in Universal City, Calif. —INTERNET

Oscar-winner “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King”. —INTERNET

Kerry says Iraq trip possible but not on ‘front burner’
My defective heart — myocardial infarct — treatment abroad

Myat Than Oo

The day was Friday 17 October 2003, all of a sudden, I was drained and felt tired, as if it was being infused into my nostril to ease my throat, while listening to the Pali Pathana. I experienced pain inside my chest. Therefore, I rolled out a locally made mat with fine texture on the floor, and lay down for a while, I sensed some sort of squeezing my heart out.

My better-half Nwe Nyu asked me “what was happening?”, and I replied, “I am tired”, while I was still lying down on the mat. At that moment, I felt pain in the stomach and would like to release, and therefore I went to the toilet. My whole body was sweating profusely as if I came out of a shower.

I started experiencing severe pain in the chest which continued to radiate out into my arm and up to my jaw. My wife took blood pressure with a sphygmomanometer, and found out it was falling down to a very low level. My heartbeat was less than forty beats in a minute.

Never in my lifetime, I have ever encountered something like that. In the context of my experience — in reading and in witness — I assumed that it might be a deadly heart attack.

I myself had witnessed on one occasion an operation where a heart attack could kill people instantaneously. My mind went into chaos when I thought that I might possibly die of such heart attack, and that I was in disorder. I was scared that I might die. My vision was withering in the dimness and the darkness was creeping over me as if it was going to swallow my whole body.

My wife phoned my daughter and my son-in-law, who resided at the next town.

My son-in-law immediately arrived and took me to the Bahosi Medical Centre — which is nearest to my apartment — about the condition of my health.

On arrival at the Bahosi Medical Centre, I was received into their care and put on a monitor. The Electro Cardiogram was immediately taken as Dr Daw Myat had arranged in advance. An oxygen tank was put into my nostril to ease my breathing. The medication drip was being infused into my veins. I could not read the name of the medication given to me as my eye was blurred.

The doctor on duty was reading and evaluating the result of my ECG and told me that some of my arteries were blocked.

Over the past years, I have read a bit here and there on some medical articles and medical short stories and — with this background — I was sure that I was hit with myocardial infarct. The medical officer on duty at the Bahosi Medical Centre informed me that I was hit with myocardial infarct. The medical officer on duty at the Bahosi Medical Centre informed me that I was hit with myocardial infarct. The medical officer on duty at the Bahosi Medical Centre informed me that I was hit with myocardial infarct. The medical officer on duty at the Bahosi Medical Centre informed me that I was hit with myocardial infarct.

Despite the severe pain inside my chest, I was much relieved to hear and learn that I was to be escorted as soon as possible to the Yangon General Hospital. Straight away on learning that I was hit with myocardial infarct, I was desirous to be treated at the Yangon General Hospital, and for that matter I have had strong reason.

Words that were told recently by my friends — are still fresh in my mind with firm impression.

“Hey brother! Nowadays a lot of private medical clinicians are booming in Yangon. Of course they are fine. However, we have to keep in mind that if some of us fall into either neurology case or heart attack case, then rush the guy to the Yangon General Hospital. You may take the patient to any private clinic and consult your favorite physician; provided that the nature of illness is not in a hurry. Whatever you say, the Yangon General Hospital is the best institutions for emergency neurology problem and urgent situation of heart problem.”

At the stress of 1100 hours, I was at the Emergency Unit of the Yangon General Hospital.

No later than 1130 hours, I was in the Cardiac Care Unit (CCU) of the Cardiac Care Unit.

The October sun radiated heat, but I did not slip into unconsciousness. At the Cardiac Care Unit — which is called CCU in short form — a team of doctors consisting of Senior Physicians (cardiology, Heart Specialists and nurses) and that their worked in harmony to save lives.

Under the shower of these loving kindness, I felt that all my illness melt away. After getting treatment for five days at the Cardiac Care Unit, I was moved to the medical ward for further treatment.

On that beautiful morning when I moved to the outer medical ward, a young doctor came to my bed and checked my health condition and put on record in the medical chart. Then she asked “Uncle Gyi, Did you know what had happened to you?” I replied in a meek voice “I think it was myocardial infarct. The doctor flashed a beautiful smile. Yes, you are right! According to your personal history as told by your family members, you have been smoking cigarettes for forty years. And you are a diabetic person for more than ten years. In the laboratory report, your cholesterol level is in the upper limit. Therefore, you are indeed very high-risk persons to be infected with myocardial infarct. Uncle Gyi, “when you discharge from the hospital, we will let you know what to avoid and what to abide”.

11 killed in tanker crash in southern Nigeria

Lagos, 8 March — At least 11 people were killed in Nigeria’s southern state of Oyo on Saturday evening when a petrol tanker ran into a crowded market, local newspaper Sunday Punch reported.

The accident, which occurred at Ojoo along the highway between Banjand, the capital of Oyo, and Lagos, was caused by a brake failure, said Olawawusi Familoni, an official from the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC).

The bus was then out of control and ran into the market and a building. The driver, however, survived the accident. There was no report how many people were injured. But Olawawusi estimated the figure at more than 10. The accident came barely 10 days after about 70 passengers of a luxury bus were killed when the bus ran into a stationary petrol tanker along the Badan-Ile Expressway at about midnight. Poor conditions of roads and motor vehicles plus over-speeding, overloading and reckless driving by drivers are blamed to the main cause of the frequent road accidents in the West African country.

According to the FRSC, Nigeria loses over 7,000 of its citizens to death and another 27,000 to severe injury annually to road traffic accidents.

MNA/Reuters

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. Second best time is now.
Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects …

(From page 1)

After that, Lt-Gen Ye Myint arrived at small canal N1 at milepost No 7/4 and inspected water supply there. In the briefing hall of Thittetgon Diversion Weir, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party arrived at Thittetgon Diversion Weir and inspected water supply there.

At the briefing hall of Thittetgon Diversion Weir, Lt-Gen Ye Myint heard a report presented by Chairman of Kyaukse District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Tin Ohn on inflow of water into the diversion weir and water supply to farmlands.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint gave instructions on effective use of irrigated water and extended cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy.

Later, Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspected inflow of water into the diversion weir and gave necessary instructions.

Thittetgon Diversion Weir is situated near Thittetgon Village, Myiththa Township, Kyaukse District and it is of reinforced concrete type.

The diversion weir is 12.5 feet high and 400 feet long. Its catchment area is 949 sq. miles. 86.37 per cent of expansion project has been completed. On completion, additional 6,000 acres of irrigated area will emerge.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party arrived at milepost No 385/5 on Kyaukse-Myiththa road section and inspected paving the road there. General Manager of Honpan Co Ltd U Sai Philip reported on work being carried out by Lt-Gen Ye Myint.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspected construction of two concrete bridges at milepost No 380/1 and the tar melting centre of the company at milepost No 376 near Kwatet Village, Wandwin Township.

U Sai Philip reported on collection of tar, gravel and sand, running of tar melting plant, and paving of the road. Lt-Gen Ye Myint gave necessary instructions.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party inspected construction of railway line to milepost No 349/5 at the entrance to Meiktila. After that, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party left there and arrived in Meiktila in the afternoon.—MNA

Daw Kyaing Kyaing presenting offertories to a Sayadaw at the 95th birthday of Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sobhita. — MNA
Lt-Gen Tin Aye attends ceremony to donate cash for the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade while Maj-Gen Myint Swe delivers an address. — MNA

Minister inspects soap factory

YANGON, 8 March — The special course No 1/2004 for electricians conducted by Industrial Coor- dination and Inspection De- partment was opened at the training hall on Kyaikwaing Pagoda Road in Mayangon Township this morning. Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung spoke on the occasion.

Also present were Deputy Ministers for Indus- try-1 Brig-Gen Thein Tun and Brig-Gen Kyaw Win.

The directors-general and managing directors of depart- ments and enterprises, course instructors and train- ees. Minister U Aung Thaung said the special courses were conducted for development in technology, human resources and utiliza- tion of energy resources. He urged the trainees to learn the subjects at the course and apply the knowledge in the respective fields.

Altogether 59 trainees are attending the four-week course.

The minister inspected soap factory of Myanma Pharmaceuticals Industries in Mayangon Township.

Managing Director of MPI U Myint Oo and the factory manager reported on matters related to the fac- tory. The minister and the deputy ministers applied the sites for soap and puri- fied oil factory projects and gave instructions.

UMFCCI meets CCPI in Officials

YANGON, 8 March — General Secretary U Sein Win Hlaing, Joint General Secretary-1 U Myo Nyunt and executives of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry met with Sen- tor Adviser Mr Chao Zhenwei and officials of CCPI under Guangdong Sub Council of Guangdong Province, the People’s Rep- ublic of China, at UMFCCI today.

They discussed pro- motion of cooperation, ex- ports, imports and transport, holding of trade fairs, and invitation of Myanmar en- trepreneurs to trade fairs to be held in Guangdong Province, and gems trade.

Price winners in ASEAN quiz: Ma Zin Mar Lwin (first), Maung Zaw Win Khaung (second), Maung Aung Kyaw Oo (third), and Maung Thaw Oo Aung (consolation prize). The quiz was held on 4 March at MRTV. — MNA
Evidence confirms ancient Tagaung city situated on west bank of Ayeyawady

YANGON, 8 March — It is shown in Myanmar old history books such as the book on the ‘History of Tagaung’ and the book on the ‘History of Momeik’ that ancient Tagaung city had thrived many years before Christ and that at that time the city was situated on the west bank of Ayeyawady river. In reality, Tagaung city, however, is located on the east bank of Ayeyawady river.

Teaming up with geologists, experts, historians and archaeologists, the Ministry of Culture made field trips to nearby areas of Tagaung city under the close supervision of Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung from 23 to 26 February 2004 in order to justify the actual location of the city.

According to research findings, it is concluded that there must have been an old water course of Ayeyawady river flowing in the east of present Tagaung city. Geologists also estimated that the time in which the change of the water course of the river occurred between 4000 and 6000 years ago.

It has therefore been proved that people had been settling in the original Tagaung city, an ancient city in Myanmar, which has been located in the vicinity of the present Tagaung city on the west bank of Ayeyawady river since over 4000 years ago before the water course of Ayeyawady river changed.

Pyu-Myanmar tribes have been settling on the soil of Myanmar with the start of their own civilization since time immemorial. As the change of the water course of Ayeyawady river has been brought to light, the people of Myanmar can now take pride in the higher civilization of ancient Tagaung city.

Such findings will also be able to rebut with evidence the scoffs at Myanma history books as though what was said in them were legendary.

Military parade columns continue drills

YANGON, 8 March — The military parade columns which will be taking part in the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade continued practising their parade drills at the Resistance Park from 5.30 am to 9 am today.

Anawratha Column led by Column Commander Col Aung Kyaw Oo, Kyansittha Column led by Column Commander Col Thein Than, Baganazaw Column led by Column Commander Col Thaing Win, Nwawde Column led by Column Commander Cape Aung Thaw, Aungzeya Column led by Column Commander Col Tin Wai, Hsipyushin Column led by Column Commander Col Oo Kyaw, Bandoola Column led by Column Commander Col Maung Ko Ko, and Myawady Column led by Column Commander Col Myint Ko Ko, Myawady Column led by Column Commander Col Kan Nyunt, and Aung San Column led by Column Commander Col Maung Maung Than practised parade drills under the command of Parade Commander Brig-Gen Min Thein. Chairman of the Management Committee for Observance of 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day and Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Vice-Chiefs of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint and Brig-Gen Nyan Win, and senior military officers watched and inspected the parade columns practising drills.

FAO to disseminate advanced technologies on dairy products production in Myanmar

YANGON, 8 March — A ceremony to sign an agreement on Small-scale dairy technology transfer and training- TCP/MYA/TCP/001(T), which will be conducted under the sponsorship of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, took place at the meeting hall of the office of the director-general of the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department this morning.

Present on the occasion were Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Deputy Minister U Aung Thein, Resident Representative of FAO in Myanmar Mr Tang Zhengping, heads of departments under the ministry, the general secretary of the Myanmar Livestock Breeding Federation, and officials.

Mr Maung Maung Nyunt, Director-General of the LBVD, and Mr Tang Zhengping made speeches on the occasion. Next, they signed the agreement and exchanged the documents.

The programme will be launched for two years from 2004 to 2005 with US$ 0.356 million funded by the FAO under the technological cooperation. The programme will provide breeders with such advanced techniques as the preservation of the quality of cattle milk for long-term consumption, and the manufacturing of value-added milk-based products.

Drive safely

Thai minister and party conclude visit

YANGON, 8 March — A Thai delegation headed by Minister of Sports and Tourism Mr Sontaya Kunplome, who was here on a study tour at the invitation of Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, left here by Thai Airways this evening. The Thai minister and party were seen off at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu, Thai Ambassador Mr Suphot Dhirakaosal, heads of department under the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism and officials of Thai Embassy.
Russian oil

GENEVA, 8 March — Jailed Russian oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, former chief of Russian oil giant YUKOS, has been sued for money laundering and funding crime groups in Switzerland.

A former Swiss banker and a Luxembourg financier filed the lawsuit against Khodorkovsky and his two complices with Swiss judiciary authorities. They said Khodorkovsky embezzled tens of millions of US dollars in a 1995 deal to buy Russia’s Avisma company and transferred most of the money to bars in Switzerland, according to media reports here Saturday.

A Swiss Government spokesperson confirmed the reports but declined to say whether Khodorkovsky’s bank accounts have been frozen. The spokesperson would not provide details of the action Swiss judiciary authorities have taken.

Swiss police carried out simultaneous raids on companies across four Swiss cantons on Thursday in connection with a Russian probe into YUKOS.

Officials said the investigation was authorized after receiving a request for international assistance, which the US authorities investigating the embattled oil company.

The former head of YUKOS and Russia’s richest man, Khodorkovsky was jailed in Russia last October on charges of tax evasion and fraud.

MNA/Xinhua

Guangdong has China’s biggest transient population

GUANGZHOU, 8 March— South China’s Guangdong Province has the biggest transient population in China, figures from the provincial committee for comprehensive treatment of social order show.

Guangdong is home to 21.3 million transients, or one-third of the national total. The province has 2.75 million rented apartments, and over 40 per cent of transient population live rented accommodation.

Guangdong is a global base for processing trade, offering many opportunities to job seekers.

MNA/Xinhua

Overnight explosion in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 8 March — A loud explosion was heard in Baghdad just before midnight on Sunday, but the US military confirmed it was a controlled explosion.

A powerful blast was heard at midnight (2100 GMT), which rattled windows and shook buildings in the capital of the city of Baghdad.

The US military confirmed the blast, saying it was a controlled explosion, not a guerrilla attack.

“That was a controlled explosion by US forces,” said a spokesman for the 1st Armoured Division in charge of security in Baghdad. Earlier, the US military said they had no immediate information on the cause of the explosion.

The blast came less than five hours after the US-led coalition headquarters in Baghdad was hit by a barrage of rockets.

Earlier on Sunday evening, several explosions followed by warning sirens were also heard in central Baghdad. Iraqi police later confirmed that the blasts were caused by at least 10 rockets fire, but there were no casualties. The police said the rockets were fired from a parked car and the attackers had already fled.

They found explosives in the car along with two rockets that had not been fired.

The place being attacked is near the headquarters of the US-led coalition authority, or the “Green Zone”, where the Iraqi Governing Council is due to sign the interim constitution Monday in the nearby conference centre.

A building near the conference centre was seen on fire, and US helicopters are being seen on the sky to search the attackers.

On the eve of the repeatedly delayed signing ceremony for the interim constitution, US-led forces have been on high alert for possible attacks aimed at disrupting the signing of the first post-war basic law for Iraq.

MNA/Xinhua

Chavez talks warns US over oil supplies

CARACAS (VENEZUELA), 8 March — Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez warned Washington to stop backing anti-government protesters as he could affect oil supplies to the United States.

He once again accused US President George W Bush of his Government’s financial efforts to oust him and recalled that Venezuela, the world’s No 5 oil exporter, was traditionally a leading supplier of oil to the US market.

“What is it this (US) Government is trying to do? Destabilize its secure (oil) supplier?” Chavez asked during his weekly “Hello President” television and radio show.

MNA/Reuters

Cuban Vice-President expresses support for unification of Africa

KAMPALA, 8 March — Cuban Vice-President Lazo Hernandez on Saturday expressed his country’s support for the unification of Africa as a single unit if the continent is to compete with the rest of the world.

The Cuban Vice-President made the remarks when he paying a courtesy call to Ugandan Vice-President Gilbert Bukeinya at the Parliament Building in Kampala, according to Radio Uganda on Saturday.

Hernandez asked the government of Uganda to reconsider the reopening of its embassy in Havana to facilitate relations between the two countries.

MNA/Xinhua

World Boxing Council (WBC) super bantamweight champion Mexico’s Oscar Larios (R) lands a punch onto the face of Shigeru Nakazato of Japan during their 12-round title bout in Saitama, north of Tokyo, on 6 March, 2004. Larios defeated Nakazato by unanimous decision. — INTERNET

The 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative postcard.
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Dated: 9 March, 2004

British tourist killed in Turkish avalanche

Ankara, 8 March — A British tourist was killed on Friday after he was swept away by an avalanche at a popular skiing resort in eastern Turkey, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Five tourists from Canada and Britain were trapped under the avalanche at the Palandoken Skiing Centre in Erzurum Province, one of the most important winter tourism facilities in Turkey.

The body of Alasdair Ros, 60, was recovered by search and rescue teams while the other four survived the avalanche, the report said — MNA/Anatolia

Claims Day Notice

MV SEA BRIGHT VOY No (603)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SEA BRIGHT VOY No (603) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9-3-2004 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.P.W.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

Shipping Agency Department

Myanmar Port Authority

Agent for: MS Advance Container Line

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Drive Safely
Study highlights global threats to bird populations

Johannesburg, 8 March — A new report by BirdLife International says more than 1,000 of the world’s birds face extinction and that agricultural expansion in Africa and unsustainable forestry in the tropics pose grave threats.

The report, “State of the World’s Birds 2004”, brings together for the first time in one document the existing research about the status and distribution of the world’s birds.

Some of its key findings include:
- One in eight of the world’s birds — or 1,211 species in total — faces extinction.
- Over 7,500 sites in nearly 170 countries have been identified as important bird areas.
- Agricultural expansion and intensification threaten 57 percent of important bird areas in Africa.
- Sixty-four per cent of globally threatened birds, most of them in the tropics, are threatened by unsustainable forestry.
- Alien invasive species threaten 67 percent of the endangered species on oceanic islands.

In total, 129 bird species have been classified as extinct since 1500.

“State of the world’s birds presents firm evidence that we are losing birds at a rate that biodiversity at an alarming and ever increasing rate,” said BirdLife Director Michael Rand.

The report, which was released on Monday, also highlights some success stories which it says show what can be done to save species from extinction.

For example, it says the short-tailed albatross was thought to be extinct until its rediscovery in small numbers on Tori-shima, off Japan, in the 1980s.

Since then, management in the Pacific and improved commercial fishing methods which do not accidentally hook birds have helped numbers recover to around 1,200 pairs.

The black robin, endemic to the Chatham Islands off New Zealand, was reduced to just five individuals in 1980 — the smallest population of any bird species for which precise numbers were known.

It was pulled back from the brink of extinction through nest protection and supplementary feeding and now numbers around 250.

Birds are recognized by biologists as “indicator species” as their status highlights the health of the broader environment.

“The decline of bird populations in many parts of the world is of considerable concern, indicating a fundamental flaw in the way that we treat our environment,” the report said. — MNA/Reuters

More damage found in babies of moms who drink

Washington, 8 March — US researchers said on Monday they had found a whole new level of damage in babies born to mothers who drank heavily during pregnancy — this time to the nerves in their arms and legs.

The study, published in the journal of Pediatrics, is the first to look beyond the well-known damage to the brain and spinal cord in babies of mothers who drink and to find damage outside the central nervous system.

“Infants born to mothers who drink heavily during pregnancy are known to be at risk for mental retardation and birth defects,” Dr Duane Alexander of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which directed the study, said in a statement. “This is the first study to show that these infants may suffer peripheral nerve damage as well.”

Working with a team at the University of Chile, the researchers found the damage was still there when the children were a year old.

The experts examined 17 full-term, newborn infants whose mothers drank heavily during pregnancy and compared them to 13 newborns whose mothers did not drink. They defined “heavy drinking” as four or more, a standard drink being a can of beer, one glass of wine or one mixed drink.

The drinkers were counselled about the dangers and offered help, but many continued to drink heavily anyway, the researchers said.

The children’s upper and lower limbs were examined with a machine that stimulated the nerves using a machine that passed a mild, painless electric current through the skin and recorded the electrical activity of the nerves to determine if they were damaged.

— MNA/Reuters

UN says Lesotho needs international aid for survival

Maseru, 8 March — About a third of Lesotho’s population will need food aid this year due to a drought in the tiny African kingdom where the farming industry has already been badly hit by an AIDS epidemic, UN officials said on Saturday.

“Any hopes have been dashed by yet another drought,” James Morris, executive director of the United Nations’ World Food Programme (WFP), said on Saturday.

“Hundreds of thousands of people, many of them infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, will once again need the help of the international community to survive.”

The WFP has helped feed more than 375,055 people in Lesotho over the past year, and estimates that as many as 700,000 will need food help in the coming year.

— MNA/Reuters

Baltimore water taxi sinks, 7 missing

Baltimore, 8 March — A water taxi carrying about 25 people capsized in Baltimore harbour during a brief storm on Saturday afternoon and rescue officials said seven people were missing, feared dead.

Baltimore Fire Department said 18 people were rescued, two of whom suffered cardiac arrests. Police and Coast Guard search and rescue teams, including divers, were looking for the missing.

Fire Department spokesman Kevin Cartwright said the small boat sank about 4 pm. off Fort McHenry in Baltimore’s scenic Inner Harbour, a popular tourist destination in Maryland’s biggest city.

— MNA/Reuters

People try computers at an IT fair. UN member nations should promote longer-lasting computers and recycling of old equipment, to avoid high-tech environmental hazards, said a study. — Internet

Rock musician arrested on gun, drug charges in NY

New York, 8 March — Rock musician David Crosby was arrested early on Saturday on marijuana and gun possession charges at a Times Square hotel. New York police said Crosby, who previously served prison time on drug charges, was freed after appearing in court and posting bail of 3.500 US dollars.

The 62-year-old musician, who rose to fame with the Byrds and later Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young in the late 1960s and 1970s, was charged with criminal possession of a weapon and unlawful drug possession, said Manhattan District Attorney spokeswoman Barbara Thompson.

A hotel manager at the Downtown Guest Suites hotel called police after a maid searching for identification in a green canvas bag Crosby left in a room discovered a small quantity of marijuana, a .45-caliber gun, ammunition and knives, Thompson said.

— MNA/Reuters

James Bond is too tall to be a modern British spy

London, 8 March — James Bond, Britain’s most famous fictional secret agent, would be feeling rather shaken and stirred to learn he would be too tall to be a modern day spy in the country’s spy agency.

New guidelines for MI5 — Britain’s domestic intelligence service — stipulate that Britons applying to field agencies should not be taller than five feet 11 inches so they do not stand out, Britain’s Sunday Telegraph reported.

That would rule out all the actors who have starred as the suave, unfappable Bond who worked for MI5’s sister foreign spy agency M16 in the 007 movies. Bond stars Sean Connery, Roger Moore, George Lazenby, Timothy Dalton and Pierce Brosnan are all 6 feet or taller, the paper said.

“You should be able to blend into the birds and be loved with sand — a day no taller than five feet 11 inches for men and five feet eight inches for women,” the application form reads. — MNA/Reuters

British Customs arrest Gambian woman with illegal animal products

New York, 8 March — A Gambian tribewoman has been arrested at a London airport with her bags crammed with illegal seals, catfish and goat meat.

Nemneh Nyana Jaieth, 48, was arrested after arriving on Friday from Banjul, Gambia, with 85 kilos of illegal animal products in her bags. Customs and Excise said Sunday.

“That’s a significant amount of meat — more than the weight of an average adult male,” said spokesman Kathryn Corcoran.

— MNA/Reuters

Unwashed for 10 years, smelly Kenyan gets scrubdown

Nairobi, 8 March — A Kenyan villager who has not bathed in 10 years was stripped and scrubbed clean by neighbours sickened by the stench, local media reported on Saturday.

Four neighbours swooped on the 55-year-old man in rural western Kenya, tying him up with a rope before washing him in public, the daily Kenya Times said.

It took four hours to clean the man, whose body was also soiled with sand to remove a thick layer of filth.

The man, a bachelor, has promised to shave in a few days and now hopes to find a wife, the newspaper said.

— MNA/Reuters

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— MNA/Reuters
Arsenal swagger into FA Cup semifinals

PORTSMOUTH (England), 8 March— Holders Arsenal swaggered into the FA Cup semifinals after outclassing Portsmouth in a 5-1 win at Fratton Park on Saturday.

France striker Thierry Henry and Sweden midfielder Fredrik Ljungberg both scored a goal in each half and Ivory Coast defender Kolo Toure drilled another in the first half stoppage time. Substitute Teddy Sheringham, who also scored in a 1-1 league draw with Arsenal at Highbury in September, got Pompey's consolation goal in the closing minutes.

The Premier League leaders, who followed champions Manchester United into Tuesday's draw after their 2-1 quarterfinal at Old Trafford on Saturday, were too good on the night for a side battling to avoid relegation.

Victory brought Arsene Wenger's men closer to a third league and Cup double under their French manager and their goal of becoming the first club to win three consecutive Cup Finals under Wenger.

Their fluid passing and movement of the ball left the Pompey defence chasing shadows in a game that had already slipped from the hosts' grasp as they headed in halftime. Arsenal's new Spanish forward Jose Antonio Reyes signalled their intent just two minutes after the kick-off when he smashed a shot against the Pompey crossbar. Though Arsenal did not settle quickly, Henry poached their first after 25 minutes when a deflected ball fell into his path and the France striker cracked his shot past a helpless Shaka Hislop.

Arsenal kept up the pressure, with skipper Patrick Vieira heading just wide from a corner, but they had their only close call of the half just minutes later when Ivica Mornar failed to get on the end of Nigel Quashie's cross. However, Pompey's consolation goal in the closing minutes.

Aslom's second half stoppage time.

The Lille striker presented the home side with victory after he was set up by Slovenian international Milenko Acimovic eight minutes after the interval to fire the ball past Anderlecht goalkeeper Fabien Cool.

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Wednesday, March 10, 2004

16:40 Headline News
16:45 National News
16:50 Myanmar Natural Resources and Environment
16:55 Myanmar Geological Situation
17:00 Myanmar Cultural Museum
17:05 Myanmar National Radio and Television
17:10 Songs On Screen
17:15 National News
17:20 Discussion Points on Lacquerware College
17:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Come and See Myanmar”
17:30 National News
17:35 Exposition of Rare Crocodile Species Inhabiting in Fresh and Seawaters (I)
17:40 National News
17:45 National News
17:50 Myanmar Rattan Furniture for the Connoisseurs
17:55 Song of Myanmar Modern Song “Feel like an Earthquake”
18:00 National News
18:05 Folk Art of Pottery
18:10 Crocodile Species Inhabiting in Fresh and Seawaters (II)
18:15 National News
18:20 Outstanding Myanmar Women (II)
18:25 Song of Myanmar “Golden Land, Myanmar”
18:30 National News
18:35 Myanmar’s Pride: The Era of Myanmar Modernity
18:40 National News
18:45 National News
18:50 Myanmar Natural Resources and Environment
18:55 Myanmar Geological Situation
19:00 National News
19:05 Myanmar National Radio and Television
19:10 Songs On Screen
19:15 National News
19:20 Discussion Points on Lacquerware College
19:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
19:30 National News
19:35 Crocodile Species Inhabiting in Fresh and Seawaters (III)
19:40 National News
19:45 National News
19:50 Myanmar Natural Resources and Environment
19:55 Myanmar Geological Situation
20:00 National News
20:05 Journey to Research on Taron Rice
20:10 Song “Missing you so much”
20:15 National News
20:20 Outstanding Myanmar Women (I)
20:25 Song of Myanmar “Golden Land, Myanmar”
20:30 National News
20:35 Myanmar’s Pride: The Era of Myanmar Modernity
20:40 Ancient Pakhangyi Monastery
20:45 National News
20:50 Clothes decorated with Seaweed Colours in Plastic
20:55 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
21:00 National News
21:05 Fabulous Glassware Decorations “Come to Myanmar The Golden Land”
21:10 National News
21:15 Myanmar’s Ancient City Bagan
21:20 Myanmar Traditional Clothing
21:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Myanmar Panorama & Myanmar Sense”
21:30 Myanmar’s Ancient City Bagan
21:35 Myanmar’s Ancient City Bagan
21:40 National News
21:45 National News
21:50 Myanmar Natural Resources and Environment
21:55 Myanmar Cultural Museum (Keng Tong)
22:00 National News
22:05 Exposition of Rare Crocodile Species Inhabiting in Fresh and Seawaters (I)
22:10 Song “Feel like an Earthquake”
22:15 National News
22:20 Myanmar Rattan Furniture for the Connoisseurs
22:25 Song of Myanmar Myanmar Modern Song “Feel like an Earthquake”
22:30 National News
22:35 Crocodile Species Inhabiting in Yangon River
22:40 Early Silver Jubilee Era of Myanmar Modernity
22:45 National News
22:50 Folk Art of Pottery
22:55 Kham “The Art of Carving”
23:00 National News
23:05 Conservation of Forest Resources in Myanmar
23:10 Songs On Screen
23:15 National News
23:20 Discussion Points on Lacquerware College
23:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Myanmar Panorama & Myanmar Sense”
23:30 National News
23:35 Myanmar Traditional Tamarind Juice
23:40 National News
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24:35 Myanmar Traditional Handwork of Casting Decorations
24:40 National News
24:45 National News
24:50 Myanmar Natural Resources and Environment
24:55 Myanmar Geological Situation
25:00 National News
25:05 Myanmar Cultural Museum

WEATHER

Monday, 8 March, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain or thundershowers have been recorded in Rakhine State, upper Sagon, Bagaya Kyaw and Taninthayi Divisions and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Shan, Chin, Karen States, Mon State and Mawlamyine Divisions, (5°C) above normal in Taninthayi Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant day temperature was (40°C) in Aungmyar.

Maximum temperature on 7-3-2004 was 37.5°C (100°F). Minimum temperature on 8-3-2004 was 21.0°C (70°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 8-3-2004 was 65%. Total sunshine hours on 7-3-2004 was (9.0) hours approx. Rainfall on 8-3-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 3 mm (0.12 inch) at Yangon Airport and nil at Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 6 mph from Southeast at (15:10) hours MST on 7-3-2004.

Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 9-3-2004: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Shan and Rakhine States, lower Sagon, Mandalay Divisions, scattered in Kachin, Mon and Karen States, upper Sagon, Kayah, Yangon, Bago and Taninthayi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

State of the sea: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Shan and Rakhine States, lower Sagon, Mandalay Divisions, scattered in Kachin, Mon and Karen States, upper Sagon, Kayah, Yangon, Bago and Taninthayi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 9-3-2004: Likelihood of isolated or scattered thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%). Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 9-3-2004: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Mr Koichi Kato, Member of the House of Representatives of Japan, and party. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Japanese guests
YANGON, 8 March — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Mr Koichi Kato, Member of the House of Representatives of Japan, and party at Zeyathiri Beikman Hall on Kommyinttha Hall here at 4 pm today.
Present at the call were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Brig-Gen Than Tun and Director-General of the Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet.
Mr Koichi Kato and party were accompanied by Mr Yuji Miyamoto, Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar, and Mr Ichiro Maruyama, Japanese Counselor.

Prime Minister receives foreign guests
YANGON, 8 March — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Mr Koichi Kato, Special Adviser to the director-general of ILO, and party. — MNA

Advocacy and Training Workshop on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMCT) of HIV opened
YANGON, 8 March — The opening ceremony of Advocacy and Training Workshop on Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMCT) of HIV, jointly organized by the Health Department and UNFPA, was held at Grand Plaza Park Royal Hotel on Signal Pagoda Road here this morning.
Present on the occasion were Health Department Director-General Dr Wai Maung, project managers of the ministry, UNFPA Resident Representative Mr Najib M Assif and officials of UN agencies, heads of state and division health departments, township medical officers of Kalaw, Pyin Oo Lwin, Taungoo, Taungdwingyi, Kalay, Thandwe, Syriyang, Kyaukme, Hinthada and Sittwe townships, officials and those of social organizations.
The workshop continues till 12 March. — MNA

Pre-primary children’s skill contest
YANGON, 8 March — The 12th pre-primary children’s skill contest of Material and Child Welfare Association (branch), Defence Services General Hospital was held at the hospital in Mingaladon this morning. The children entertained the guests and the teachers and officials presented prizes and gifts to them. — MNA

Secretary-2 sees off Tatmadaw football and volleyball teams
YANGON, 8 March — Chairman of Defence Services Sports and Physical Education Administrative Committee Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant-General Li-Gen Thein Sein this morning saw off the members of Myanmar Tatmadaw football and volleyball teams led by Col Aung San Tin of the Adjutant-General’s Office of the Ministry of Defence, who will participate in the friendly tournaments to be held in India, at Mingaladon Airbase.
Together with the Secretary-2, Vice-Chiefs of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint and Brig-Gen Nyan Win, Vice-Adjutant-General Brig-Gen Hla Shwe, Director of Medical Services Col Than Aung, Director of Resettlements Maj-Gen Aung Thein, Provost Marshal Maj-Gen Saw Hla and senior military officers, officials of Tatmadaw soccer and volleyball subcommittees and Indian Military Attaché Col Jasvinder Singh Chopra also saw off the athletes. Before their departure, Secretary-2 Li-Gen Thein Sein met the athletes and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

Armed Forces Day Special Features
The 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day falls on 27 March 2004. The day is commemorated every year in recognition of and tribute to the relentless efforts and the spirit of sacrifice of the Tatmadaw in safeguarding independence and sovereignty.
In honour of the occasion, The New Light of Myanmar will feature articles, perspectives and poems of historical significance supported by the documentary photos as from 12 March 2004 under the programme “The Tatmadaw (Armed Forces) in perpetual service of the people”.

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