Subhasita ca ya vaca, to have words well spoken; this is the way to auspiciousness.

Serve the interests of the people

These are the times when the Tatmadaw is making endeavours in every aspect to enhance the political, economic and military might of the nation. Our genuine goodwill and efforts have been proved and are being proved with deed, not words. While there is an opportunity to discharge your duties in the service of the nation, I would like to urge you comrades to serve the interests of the people as the true patriotic Tatmadawmen that you are.

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
(From address at the parade of the 57th Anniversary Armed Forces Day)

YANGON, 12 March — On the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Mauritius, which falls on 12 March 2004, Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Sir Anerood Jugnauth, President of the Republic of Mauritius. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe sends message of felicitations to President of Mauritius

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects accommodation, drills practising of parade columns

YANGON, 11 March—Chairman of the Leading Committee for Observance of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day member of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win this morning inspected parade columns which will participate in the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade. At 8 am, Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win arrived at Yangon Command Headquarters where parade columns are being accommodated. The Chief of Armed Forces Training was welcomed there by Vice-Chiefs of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint, Maj-Gen Aung Kyi and Brig-Gen Nyan Win, Parade Commander Brig-Gen Min Thein, Reserve Parade Commander Col Nyi Tun, Deputy Commander of Yangon Command Col Wai Lwin, Deputy Adjutant-General Col Khin Soe, Deputy Quartermaster-General Col Lin Maung, column commanders of Kyanzittha and Myawady columns and senior military officers.

At the hall of the Yangon Command Headquarters, Staff Officer (Grade-I) (Q) Lt-Col Thein Hsint of Yangon Command reported on accommodation of the parade columns in the compound of the headquarters.

Next, the column commanders reported on accommodation of the parade companies and drills practising.

(See page 10)

Four political objectives

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

Four economic objectives

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

Four social objectives

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

59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative special features on pages 7, 8 and 9.

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Perspectives
Friday, 12 March, 2004

Tatmadaw always in the service of the nation and its people

When we study the history of mankind, we will see that there emerged organized groups for defence purpose because of the requirement to safeguard their own families and collectively defend their own communities. Hence, the armed forces have been indispensable for every independent people and nation since early history. If we look at the current world affairs, we will see that there still exists the use of force in solving problems. In this regard, all the countries of the world are striving to defend themselves. The Tatmadaw was born of the anti-colonialist struggle, the anti-fascist resistance and national liberation movements. It was also born of the people in accordance with the historical needs. The Tatmadaw was founded with the aim of carrying out national political tasks. It was the rallying point of patriotic politicians and youth, who have vowed to sacrifice their lives for the nation and its people.

As the Tatmadaw was formed with the good sons of the national people, it has always safeguarded and protected the people in times of emergency. It had to save the nation once in 1948 when the internal strife was on its prime time, again in 1958 when political crisis broke out, another time in 1962 when the Union was on the verge of disintegration and once again in 1988 when plots were made to break up the nation and the Tatmadaw.

In the successive eras, the Tatmadaw has possessed the three capabilities namely the military capability, the organizational capability and the administrative capability and has always served the interests of the people. Upholding the Three Main National Causes— non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty— the Tatmadaw is safeguarding the nation and carrying out its three main tasks— to discharge national defence duty, to undergo training and to implement public welfare tasks.

At present, the Tatmadaw Government is striving with might and main for emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation, the national goal, and thanks to the united efforts the Tatmadaw people are now witnessing the fruitful result of these endeavours. Nowadays, science and technology has been in the process of change and progress with rapid momentum. At such a time, the Tatmadaw is trying to be a modern one to protect the lives and properties of the people while efforts are being made to build a new nation.

We firmly believe that the Tatmadaw, which has always protected and safeguarded the nation and the people, will always serve the interests of the State and its people.

59th Anniversary
Armed Forces Day Objectives

— To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the State’s seven-point policy programme
— To crush internal and external destructive elements hindering 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”

Ambassador U Khin Maung Aye presents credentials to President of Portuguese Republic

Yangon, 12 March — U Khin Maung Aye, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the Portuguese Republic, presented his credentials to His Excellency Mr Jorge Fernando Branco De Sampaio, President of the Portuguese Republic, on 26 February 2004, in Lisbon. — MNA

Symposium on soft tissue lesions

Yangon, 11 March — The Society of Rehabilitation Medicine of the MNA (Myanmar Medical Association) will organize a Symposium on soft tissue lesions at Auditorium (A) of the MNA in Thiribhuv Road here from 8 am to 12 noon on 14 March 2004. All interested medical doctors, students, physiotherapists and medical personnel are welcomed to participate. — MNA

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

Myanmar Gazette

Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein meets with departmental personnel at Talay assembly hall. — MNA

TV relay stations inspected in Tachileik

Yangon, 11 March — Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, accompanied by Director-General of the Information and Public Relations Department U Chit Naing, Deputy Chief Engineer of Myanmar Radio and Television U Myint Aung and officials, arrived at Tachileik Township on 9 March morning. Brig-Gen Aung Thein met with departmental employees at the assembly hall and heard reports. Later, he attended to the requirements and inspected departmental offices.

Next, the deputy minister and party went to Namtai village in Mongpaliu region, where he met with townsmen and heads of Maternal and Child Welfare Association of the village and inspected Namtai TV relay station. Arriving at Kyanglat in Tachileik Township in the afternoon, the deputy minister met with local national races. He also met with departmental staff, village heads and townsmen at the assembly hall and heard reports. Later, he oversaw the TV relay station there. In his meeting with departmental staff and townsmen at Talay and Kyanglat, the deputy minister urged them to work hard for regional development in concert with local people like a family. — MNA

Myanmar Trade Fair 2-5 April

Yangon, 11 March — The Myanmar Trade Fair 2004, to be organized by Quartz International Co Ltd, with the permission of the Ministry of Commerce, will be held at Yangon Trade Centre on Upper Pazundang Road from 2 to 5 April. Local and foreign-made cosmetics and consumer products, textile, fashions, plastic goods, foodstuff, electric and electronic equipment, construction materials, household goods, stationery and packaging materials, machinery and parts, traditional medicines and so on will be displayed at the fair. — MNA

KNPP opens fire on bus in Loikaw

Yangon, 11 March — About five KNPP terrorists opened fire on a GMC bus with number plates Kha/6597 driven by Ko Maung On en route from Loikaw to Bawlakhe, Kayah State, at a place four miles away from Bawlakhe with 40mm launcher and small arms. Therefore, Ma Redeer, 19, daughter of U Maung Ko of Kyithaya Ward, Loikaw, was dead as she was hit at the head. Ma The Ei Hlaing, 18, daughter of U Chi Hlaing of Narratun, Loikaw, Ko Win Ko, 28, son of U Myint Swe of Dawtama Ward, Loikaw, U Thein Aye, 42, son of U Sit Tar of Kyithaya Ward, Loikaw, and Ma Chaw Su Hlaing, 18, daughter of U Bo Cho of Ngweuang Yawthit, Prisao Township, were wounded.

The wounded persons are under medical treatment at Loikaw General Hospital. The Tatmadaw column is in hot pursuit of the terrorists. — MNA

MS Crystal Serenity of US-based Crystal Cruises Ltd with 439 passengers and 636 crew members on board arrives Thilawa Port on 11-3-2004 morning. — mna
Disguised gunmen kill two Americans, translator in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 11 March—Gunmen posing as police at a makeshift checkpoint south of Baghdad killed two American civilians and their Iraqi translator—all employees of the US-led coalition, US officials said Wednesday. In another southern area, four Iraqi policemen died in a shootout with a local militia.

The deaths at the checkpoint came when the gunmen stopped the car Tuesday night outside Hillah, 35 miles south of Baghdad, Polish Col Robert Strzelecki said. The attackers shot the passengers and then took the vehicle, he said.

Polish troops later intercepted the car, arrested five Iraqis in it and found the bodies inside, said Strzelecki, speaking from the Camp Babylon headquarters of the Polish-led multinational force in Iraq. In Baghdad, a coalition spokesman confirmed the deaths.

Authorities did not immediately release the victims' identities. The Polish News Agency reported that one of those killed worked for the coalition Press office.

Checkpoints manned by Iraqis or coalition forces are common in Iraq's main roads, and this appeared to be the first time gunmen have posed as police at a roadblock.

Further south, Iraqi police tried Tuesday night to enter a building where a Shiite militia was holding two civilians in the city of Nasiriyah, a coalition spokesman said. In a shootout, four Iraqi policemen were killed and two wounded.

The standoff finally ended when Iraqi security forces stormed the building, rescued the civilians and arrested eight militia members, the spokesman said. One Italian Carabinieri officer was slightly injured.

The militia, known as Citizens' Security Group, acts as a security force for a number of Shiite political parties. Such militias, which in some towns try to enforce a brand of Islamic law, often have tense relations with the US-trained Iraqi police force.

In the western town of Qaim, near the Syrian border, gunmen killed two police officers and critically wounded a third Wednesday while the police were having lunch in a restaurant, police said. "Internet"

Iraq's US-backed police force targeted

KHADISYAH, 11 March—The police chief of this restive town west of Baghdad was recovering at home Wednesday after a roadside bomb hit his car this week. He's lucky—his predecessor was killed in an ambush about six months ago.

Back in the station, a ramshackle one-story building on the outskirts of Khaldiyah, officers explain their predicament: they are a small and poorly equipped force caught between a US military they don't trust and a public that resents America and its "collaborators."

US Iraq-backed police force has been the primary target in a recent spate of deadly bombings and assassinations blamed on foreign fighters and Iraqi insurgents—attacks that have raised questions about the preparedness and experience of the Iraqi security forces.

The questions are more pressing because of the expectation that Iraq security forces will take over more responsibility when the US-led coalition hands political power to Iraqis on June 30.

Nationwide, coalition officials report reduced crime rates and more Iraqi security forces deployed, but bombings against police stations have exposed the inadequacy of their defenses.

Maj Gen Mark Kimmit, the US military's deputy director of operations, told reporters in Baghdad on Wednesday that coalition troops will keep patrolling Iraqi cities after June 30. He said their withdrawal was not tied to any date, but to the Iraqi forces' capabilities.

Even a larger role—not to mention sole responsibility—could prove too much for Iraqi forces in a place like Khaldiyah, a conservative town of 100,000 on the Euphrates River.

It's a hotbed of anti-U.S. resistance in the Sunni heartland, a vast swath north and west of Baghdad where Iraqis are proud and deeply suspicious of US forces. Tribal US troops in the area have come under almost daily attack for months.

As in other restive cities nearby like Fallujah and Ramadi, many residents take out their anger at the Americans on the local police force who lack the firepower and resources to protect themselves. "Internet"

Over 10% of firms in Shanghai want to hire staff from HK

HONG KONG, 11 March—More than 10 per cent of enterprises in Shanghai intend to employ Hong Kong professional and executives in the next 12 months, the China Daily Hong Kong Edition reported Wednesday.

The newspaper said the report quoted a survey conducted last month also showing that Hong Kong staff are welcomed by Chinese enterprises worldwide.

The survey conducted last month also showed that Hong Kong staff are welcomed because of their good command of English, global perspective and management skills.

In the survey, the Hong Kong Professionals and Executives Association and the Shanghai human resources weekly interviewed 800 enterprises in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, of which 280 are located in Shanghai. MNA/Xinhua

China's Mainland contributes largest source of tourists to Macao

MACAO, 11 March—The Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) received 5.74 million visitors from China's Mainland last year. The Mainland has become Macao's number-one source of visitor arrivals.

Macao’s annual number of visitor arrivals from the Mainland has risen 3.5 times in the past four years since Macao’s return to its Motherland in 1999, when they totalled 1.64 million, according to the latest statistics from the Macao Tourism Office.

Joao Costa Antunes, director of the office said that Macao’s aim is not just to increase the number of visitors from the Mainland but also to extend their stay in Macao, which is currently averaged to just one night.

Under its work plan, the Macao Tourism Office will carry out a series of tourism-promotion activities targeting Mainland tourists, including an advertising campaign on newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations in the Mainland. — MNA/Xinhua

US occupation hinders Iraqi agriculture

BAGHDAD, 11 March—Once the region's most prosperous people, Iraqi farmers, are suffering under harsh living conditions since the occupation of Iraq last April.

In provinces such as Diyala and Tikrit, where former Iraqi resistance attacks, thousands of hectares of farmland and forest have been razed by the US occupation forces, the farmers claim they have been used as hideouts for Iraqi resistance fighters.

Hundreds of farmers have lost their income. Overnight. They are neither able to ask for compensation, nor have they been given a date by which they can replant their destroyed crops and resume work.

"They flattened our farmlands in front of our eyes," said an Iraqi farmer in Diyala. We are unable to work and feed our families anymore. They allege that Iraqi fighters had been using our farms as hideouts and it is not true."

Arrests have also badly affected the agricultural population in Iraq. Thousands of rural workers believed to be involved in anti-US forces attacks are being kept in US custody. One Iraqi farmer in Diyala says people from his community have been arrested and imprisoned for unlimited periods of time.

"Dozens of farmers in the area have been taken away from their homes. Their wives and children are lost and do not know what to do, especially since no charges are being made against the detainees and no one knows when they are going to be released," he said.

"We want to know if our people are really guilty or not, and how long they are going to be detained. That would let us determine how we are going to help their families.""Internet"
Pentagon pressed for Iraq war’s costs

WASHINGTON, 11 March—Pressed to estimate the cost of future operations in Iraq, the Pentagon has repeatedly said it is just too hard to do.

Now the ranks of disbelievers are growing—in Congress and among private defense analysts. Some say the Bush administration’s refusal to estimate costs could erode American support for the Iraq campaign, as well as the credibility of the White House and lawmakers.

“It is crucial that we have every bit of information so we can level with the taxpayer,” Democratic Representative Dave Weldon of Florida recently told Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld. “We don’t have that information now.”

“The White House plays hide and seek with the costs of the war,” said Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W Va. The object of their ire is President Bush’s proposed defence spending for the budget year beginning October 1—a $402 billion request that did not include money for the major military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It is not just Democrats who disagree with the administration’s approach. Republican chairmen of the House and Senate budget committees have pencilled in tens of billions of dollars for the two military campaigns—$30 billion in the Senate, an expected $50 billion in the House—in spending plans they began pushing through Congress this week.

Asked at a recent congressional hearing why costs for Iraq were not included in the administration’s budget, Pentagon comptroller Dov Zakheim replied: “Because we simply cannot predict them.”

Yet many contend the administration at least knows that roughly 100,000 soldiers will remain in Iraq for another year and could have budgeted an estimate or a placeholder request for that. — Internet

Blix likens Iraq war to witch hunt

BARCELONA (Spain), 11 March—Former UN chief weapons inspector Hans Blix on Tuesday likened the run-up to the war in Iraq to a witch hunt, and argued that the subsequent failure to find weapons of mass destruction would dent the public’s faith in the US and British governments.

“The governments were like the witch hunters of past centuries. They were so convinced that there were witches in Iraq that every black cat became proof of it,” Blix said in Barcelona where he was honoured by the United Nations Association of Spain.

“The tendency was to view any evidence in a more serious light than was the reality. It’s clear that the September 11 attack on the United States drove the analysis,” he added.

The White House dismissed the criticism.

Blix said that intelligence information from the United States and other countries was exaggerated, and that politicians should have asked more critical questions.

“They were mistaken in their views, but I don’t think they acted in bad faith,” Blix said, referring to President Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and others who supported the war. “The consequences of that are political. Now people have less confidence in them.” — MNA/Xinhua

Singapore launches new destination brand to woo more visitors

SINGAPORE, 11 March — Singapore on Tuesday launched its new destination brand, “Uniquely Singapore,” to celebrate the special blend of traditions, cultures, modernity and all things intrinsic and unique to the island state of around four million people.

Speaking at a launching ceremony, Lim Neo Chian, Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB), said that Singapore has transformed and evolved dramatically over the years and today it is a city that thrives on modernity against a backdrop of rich history and tradition.

With the new destination brand, Singapore wants to share all these unique aspects about the city state with the world and invite everyone to come to the country to experience the quintessential Singapore experience for themselves, Lim said.

The launch of the new destination brand comes shortly after the announcement that the number of foreign visitors in Singapore hit more than 6.1 million, exceeding the STB’s efforts to promote Singapore as a premier travel destination to the world.

The STB believes that the new brand positioning will help Singapore achieve its targets of 7.6 million foreign visitors this year, a significant increase of 24 per cent from last year. — MNA/Xinhua

China’s foreign policy serves China’s development

BEIJING, 11 March — China’s foreign policy serves China’s development, said Chinese Vice-Foreign Minis- ter Wang Yi.

Wang made the remarks at a lecture on international situation and China’s foreign policy to 1,400 Chinese university students at Beijing University.

China’s foreign policy has understanding and support from the Chinese people, especially young people, who are the future of the nation, said Wang Yi.

China’s diplomacy will help create a long-term stable international environment and reciprocal cooperation for China’s economic development, he said.

While safeguarding national interests, China will also keep up with international trends, he said. — MNA/Xinhua

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Supervision primary task for Chinese legislature in 2004

BEIJING, 11 March — It is the primary task of the National People’s Congress (NPC) and its Standing Committee, China’s top legislative body, to strengthen and improve its supervision over the government and judicial organs in 2004, Wu Bangguo, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, said here Wednesday.

“We should explore still better ways of supervision and further improve our supervisory mechanism in order to promote a law-based administration and judicial justice,” said Wu in a report on his committee’s work passed by the NPC in Beijing.

The top legislator noted that the NPC Standing Committee this year would carry 11 special-topic work reports and handling letters of complaints from the general public.

“In the past year we heard and deliberated 11 special-topic work reports from the State Council and other government and judicial organs through other mechanisms,” said Wu.

In 2003, the NPC Standing Committee also received more than 57,000 letters of complaints from the public, he said.

“This year we plan to hear and examine reports of the State Council on the establishment and implementation of the quick-response mechanism for public health emergencies, the increase of farmers’ income and development of agriculture, the maintenance of market economic orders, law education among the public, as well as the saving and protection of water resources,” he noted. — MNA/Xinhua

“AIDS” cases increase in Fiji

Fiji, 11 March — Over ten new AIDS cases have been reported in Fiji so far this year, bringing to 142 the total number of AIDS cases in the tiny South Pacific island country. The country’s Health Ministry has expressed concern over the increasing number of young people contracting HIV, the Pacific Islands News Association reported Tuesday.

According to the ministry, 78 per cent of HIV and AIDS sufferers are in the age group of 20-39, with women accounting for 37 per cent of the cases. — MNA/Xinhua

China’s foreign trade surges 35.4% in first 2 months

BEIJING, 10 March—China’s foreign trade volume totalled 147.64 billion US dollars in the first two months of 2004, up 35.4 per cent year-on-year, latest figures from the General Administration of Customs show.

The volume included 60.97 billion US dollars in exports and 77.77 billion US dollars in imports, up 28.7 and 42 per cent respectively over the same periods last year. The General Administra- tion of Customs attributed the sharp increase to the rapid growth of China’s bilateral trade with key partners, growing exports of mechanical and electrical products and soaring imports of crude oil, iron ore and other raw products. — MNA/Xinhua

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US media performance on Iraq slammed in report

WASHINGTON, 11 March — Major US newspapers failed to challenge government assertions about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, both before and after the 2003 war, according to a study by the University of Maryland released on Tuesday.

The study, by the university’s Centre for International and Security Studies, concluded that newspaper coverage generally failed to adequately question the US administration’s efforts to link its campaign against Iraq and the “war on terror.” It also concluded that media coverage often echoed the administration’s argument that Iraq’s chemical and biological weapons were a serious and immediate threat.

“There are many journalists who are often involved in this kind of analysis,” said Francis Tam, chairman of the Macao Economic and Finance Tuesday.”

It has targeted to equitize 721 SOEs, including large ones in important industries in the next two years.

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Deadliest attacks in Iraq

The unipolar world dominated by a super power nation is leading the world to economic chaos, political anarchy, uncertainty and fear. The people of the world are not going to recover, and have peace for as long as threats are used for political and economic reforms that most of the world is not ready for and not willing to accept.
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day:

Tatmadaw serving the interest of the people

Transport facilities constructed across the nation

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*Tatmadaw members constructing Taunggyi-Shwenyaung Railroad for better transport in Shan State (South).*

Roads built by Tatmadaw members

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<th>State/Division</th>
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*Tatmadaw members contribute towards Aungban-Loikaw Railroad Project that will link Shan State (South) and Kayah State.*

*Tatmadaw members seen at the Kengtung-Mongphyat Road Project in Shan State (East).*

*Taungdwingyi-Magway Railroad Project being implemented by Tatmadaw members to ensure smooth transport in Magway Division.*
The Tatmadaw (Armed Forces) in perpetual service of the people

The Tatmadaw has stood as a consolidated national force throughout the course of the history of Myanmar. It is still standing as it has been before, and will be the same for ever.

Throughout the history of Myanmar, the Tatmadaw, founded with Myanmar nationals who were born in the Union, has served the interests of Myanmar nationals and protected the interests of Myanmar nationals who were born in the Union, own race and the Union.

Myanmar had experienced alien invasions and occupations. Even under such circumstances, the people of Myanmar were able to form national defence organizations on the basis of the national character of resisting enslavement, and fought back the invaders and won back their freedom. The lesson which can be drawn from those incidents is: were the strength of the Tatmadaw weak or were the national unity absent, independence and sovereignty could be lost. Myanmar was recorded as a strong nation in the pages of the history books written by westerners as there existed the national solidarity with the strong Tatmadaw.

Glittering throughout the history is the heritage which the ancestors bequeathed the Tatmadaw such as the crushing of alien invasion, the prioritizing of national solidarity, the safeguarding of independence and sovereignty, the ensuring of stability and the rule of law in the country, the keeping of public interests in the fore and the deterring of the danger of national disintegration based on the strength of the love of the country, own race and the Union.

The Tatmadaw came into existence with the determination to sacrifice their lives for the country and the race.

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The British colonialists adopted divide-and-rule policies with intent to sow distrust among national brethren introducing laws and rules in order to prolong their occupation of Myanmar and seize the national brethren introducing them. They also informed the people that there would never accept the anti-colonialist struggle and suppress the people. Moreover, they lured national people by offering positions. They also set the national brethren against one another by sowing the seeds of discord among them. To launch the anti-colonialist movement, Myanmar people formed national political groups like YMBA and GCBA. Likewise, there broke out farmers movement led by Saya San, the oilfield workers' strike of 1300, and the university anti-colonialist struggle. Therefore, thirty comrades went to Japan to receive military training on Hainan island. They took measures making contacts with organizations within and without the country to prepare for BIA because they believed that there would be resistance against any foreign troops and governments until Myanmar regained its independence as BIA was formed solely for that purpose. The Myanmar Tatmadaw, also known as BDA, coordinated with the entire national races possessing patriotism and nationalism as well as with the People's Movement Party (Socialist Party) and the BCP in a bid to form AFPFL.

After reorganizing BDA as Myanmar Tatmadaw, military commands were established to fight the fascists. Pyay, Thayawady, Insein and Hinthada regions were designated as the military command-1; Htanwaywa, Pyapon and Maubin regions as the military command-2; Pathein, Hinthada and Myaungmya regions as the military command-3; Bago, Shwegyin and Thatan regions as the military command-4; Mawlamyine, Dawei and Myeik regions as the military command-5; Pymmann, Toungoo and southern Shan State regions as the military command-6; and Thayet, Alan, Magway and Mbinu regions as the military command-7.

Throughout the independence struggle, the Tatmadaw changed its name from BIA, to BDA, to Burma Army, and then to Burma Patriotic Army. The national and political course of Myanmar history had met its turning point. On 27 March in 1945, the Tatmadaw in tandem with the people launched the nationwide anti-fascist resistance, which stood as a prominent event of Myanmar independence struggle. It was on 27 March of 1945, Anti-fascist resistance day, that the Myanmar Tatmadaw started life as the Tatmadaw founded with much blood and sweat.

Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

students' boycott against colonial education. They showed their disapproval of the colonial education by opening national colleges and schools all over the country. Later, the anti-colonialist movements of the people from all walks of life including monks changed from political campaign to armed struggle. Therefore, thirty comrades went to Japan to receive military training on Hainan island. They took measures making contacts with organizations within and without the country to prepare for BIA because they believed that there would be resistance against any foreign troops and governments until Myanmar regained its independence as BIA was formed solely for that purpose. The Myanmar Tatmadaw, also known as BDA, coordinated with the entire national races possessing patriotism and nationalism as well as with the People’s Movement Party (Socialist Party) and the BCP in a bid to form AFPFL.

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of national people who would never accept the governance of any foreign nations and as a shining and glittering white star on the red canvas. It is absolutely true that the Myanmar Tatmadaw has striven, is still striving and will continue to strive its utmost for the perpetuation of national freedom, defence and stability. To continue to carry out such tasks successfully throughout the course of history is the eternal commitment of the Myanmar Tatmadaw.

Myanmar national races such as Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan took part in the anti-fascist resistance in the earliest patriotic and nationalistic spirit by doing their bit. As they also informed the Tatmadaw of the fascists’ operations, the Tatmadaw could launch guerrilla attacks on the fascists’ bases and made them suffer loss of numerous lives and weapons. Thus, the fascists came to respect and fear the unity forged between the Tatmadaw and the people.

Although the Tatmadaw did get in touch with the British ally and received weaponry assistance and military training in fighting the fascists, it never let
Some of Thirty Comrades undergoing military training in a jungle.

Hitantbin through Yangon with more than 20 army vehicles fully loaded with Tatmadawmen and arrived at Bago on 14 July. They also passed through Bago, DaikU, Nyaungglaybin and Penwegon. On the narrow as well as thickly-muddy road leading to Kunchaungwa, the easternmost part of Penwegon were some 30 army vehicles moving at a snail’s pace crossing through a grassland.

They reached Kunchaungwa village at 4 pm on 12 July. The motor road ended there with Sittaung river laying at the top of the village. Sittaung river not only snaked away but also had a raging torrent. It being the rainy season, the waters at the foot of mountains were flowing angrily carrying with it everything that was on its way.

Moreover, at the river banks there were also full of whirlpools. The tiredness and weariness of Tatmadawmen crossing the river to reach Natthankwin village were hard and great.

The Tatmadaw fought Sittaung Basin battles over a period of one month from 14 July to 15 August of 1945. During the fight, the Tatmadaw fought six major battles, eight skirmishes, six patrol engagements, and 16 raft battles, killing over ten thousand fascists and capturing 740 as prisoners of war. The world came to acknowledge the military prowess of the Tatmadaw, the national image of Myanmar people, at Sittaung Basin battles.

Field Marshall Slim from the British allied forces acknowledged that Sittaung Basin battle not only destroyed No 28 fascist army completely but also could crush militarism of the fascists.

After regaining the independence on 4 January of 1948, the Tatmadaw extended its regiments and battalions by establishing Burma Army Headquarters, Northern Command, Southern Command and Rakhine Military Headquarters.

Later, Myanma Tatmadaw (Navy) and Myanma Tatmadaw (Air) were also set up. In doing so, it was decided in the pre-independence period in July 1947 to build Myanma Tatmadaw (Navy) with the basic strength of two frigates, 13 naval vessels for port security, two minesweepers and three other ships. During that time, the buildings belonging to the Royal Air Force were also handed over to Myanma Volunteer Air Force. As the strength of the force was very little, a total of 77 air force personnel were mobilized in October and November 1947 and were also given training. It was on 24 December of 1947 that Tatmadaw (Air) thus came into existence. Later on, Tatmadaw was integrated into the armed forces comprising Army, Navy and Air Force in November 1947.

Summing up, history stands witness to the fact that the Tatmadaw hand in hand with the people waged the anti-colonialist struggle, the anti-fascist struggle and the national freedom struggle and established itself as a strong national Tatmadaw, Union Tatmadaw and Myanma Tatmadaw to become a national force. The Tatmadaw is not an organization which is subject to and is used by a certain organization influenced by a certain person. Nor is it a mercenary army. As the unity between the Tatmadaw and the people always flourishes, it is firmly believed that the Tatmadaw will shoulder the national responsibilities at the cost of their lives, blood and sweat always standing by the people.

Poem

Tatmadaw for the people

* In each and every era Of our history
Significantly outstanding for the State
Comrades all, sacrificing life and blood
With arm outstretched, taking turns
We managed to be able to build.

* On each and every page Of our history
Our home, our nation, the Golden
Myanmar
With solidarity and capability
Getting strength to use as mast
We nurtured and succeeded.

* Taking that success as witness
The nation of a new century
In military service, he endeavoured
With peace obtained, whole nation shines
To the prosperous station that lies ahead
Shouldering and carrying in turn
Transport in one manner
Or going forward companion like
That’s Tatmadaw for the people
We have high regards, beloved comrade.

Thiha Aung (Trs)


Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects accommodation,....

YANGON, 11 March — The Youth Painting Contest (2004) of Myanmar-Thailand Cultural Identity was held at the University of Culture (Yangon) on 2 and 3 March.

The grand prizes for oil paint went to Ma Khai Oo Lwin (first year, painting, Yangon University of Culture) and Maung Zaw Ko Ko, third year, painting, State School for Fine Arts (Yangon); the grand prizes for water paint, to Ma Nyein Nyein Ei, fourth year, painting, Yangon University of Culture and Maung Win Zaw, second year, painting, Mandalay University of Culture; the second prizes to Maung Ye Kyaw Swa, third year, painting, Yangon University of Culture; Maung Than Hsaing, first year, painting, State School for Fine Arts (Yangon); Maung Min Zeya Oo, second year, painting, State School for Fine Arts (Yangon); Maung Zaw Lin Naung, second year, painting, State School for Fine Arts (Mandalay); and Maung Saw Kyaw Zaw, fourth year, painting, State School for Fine Arts (Yangon); and consolation prizes, to Maung Wai Phyo Thein, third year, painting, Mandalay University of Culture; Maung Shwe Thein, third year, painting, State School for Fine Arts (Yangon), Maung Su Su Aung, fourth year, painting, Yangon University of Culture, Maung Kyaw Hsang, fourth year, painting, Yangon University of Culture, Maung Kyaw Myo Than, third year, painting, Yangon University of Culture, Ma Zin Mar Nwe, fourth year, painting, Yangon University of Culture, Ma Khai Oo Lwin, first year, painting, Yangon University of Culture, Maung Su Su Aung, fourth year, painting, Yangon University of Culture, Maung Zaw Min Than, fourth year, painting, Yangon University of Culture.

The prize-presentation ceremony will be held at the multi-purpose hall of the National Museum at 9 am on 13 March. The prize-winning works will be displayed at the venue from 13 until 15 March.

Irrlans US “bullying” for UN nuke resolution

VIENNA, 11 March — Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations in Vienna said on Wednesday a draft nuclear resolution on Iran was the result of US “bullying” and European nations should have done more to stand up to Washington.

The United States said a resolution circulating among the International Atomic Energy Agency’s (IAEA) board members would tell Iran it would be punished if it defied the watchdog, but stopped short of reporting Tehran to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

“The three European countries tried their best. We expected more from our European colleagues,” Ambassador Piruz Hosseini told reporters, describing the US approach as “an act of bullying.”

“We think that a lot of bullying is involved here by the Americans to subdue a healthy process here,” Hosseini said.

We think that the Americans do not want to accept the fact that Iran is not for nuclear weapons programmes.”

The preliminary draft, still being revised by co-authors Austria and Canada, would call on “serious consultations between the United States and its allies France, Britain and Germany.”

Last month, the European Union’s “Big Three” told Iran they would try to block any resolution on Tehran’s nuclear programme in exchange for Iran’s promise to suspend everything related to its uranium enrichment programme.

MNA/Reuters
Chinese guests visit Shwedagon Pagoda

YANGON, 11 March — The visiting four-member writers delegation of the People’s Republic of China headed by Chairman of the PRC Writers Association Mr Wang Chonglu, accompanied by officials of the Printing and Publishing Enterprise under the Ministry of Information, paid a visit to the Shwedagon Pagoda this morning.

The members of the pagoda board of trustees conducted the guests round the pagoda. The delegation leader signed in the visitors’ book and made cash donations to the pagoda fund through officials.

Later in the morning, the Chinese guests arrived at the PPE (Head Office) on Bo Aung Kyaw Street here and paid a call on Managing Director U Myint Thein. Also present at the call were PPE General Manager U Thet Soe, deputy general managers and Chief Editor of the Sarpy Beikman U Maung Hlaing (Maung Swe Nge).

Cambodian leaders meet Chinese CPC delegation

Pnom Penh, 11 March — Top Cambodian leaders met separately Wednesday with the visiting Chinese delegation headed by Li Jingtian, Vice Chairman of the Organization Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

During the meetings, Chairman of the Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) and President of the Senate Chea Sim, Vice Chairman of the CPP and Prime Minister Hun Sen and Chairman of FUNCINPEC Party Prince Norodom Ranariddh and their Chinese counterpart briefed each other about their domestic conditions and exchanged views on Sino-Cambodian ties and regional and international issues of common concern.

Chea Sim and Hun Sen spoke highly of the steady and healthy development of friendly ties between Cambodia and China. They thanked CPC and the Chinese Government and people for their active support and aid for the development cause of Cambodia over the past years. Prince Ranariddh highly commended the great progress the Chinese people have achieved in various fields under the leadership of the CPC. He said the FUNCINPEC Party will never change its friendship policy toward China at any time and at any circumstance, and will support China’s cause of peaceful reunification. All Cambodian leaders reaffirmed that Cambodia will continue to adhere to the “one China” policy and will firmly oppose Taiwan authorities’ attempts to seek independence. Li Jingtian, who is also alternate member of the Central Committee of CPC, expressed thanks to Cambodia for its firm stand on the “one China” policy.

Li said the development of Sino-Cambodian good-neighbourly friendship is not only the common wish of the two peoples, but also serves the fundamental interest of the two people. He said China is willing to make joint efforts with Cambodia to elevate their good-neighbourly ties and friendly cooperation to a higher level.

Li and his delegation arrived here Monday evening on a five-day friendly visit at the invitation of the Cambodian People’s Party. — MNA/Xinhua

China launches first biobank

GUANGZHOU, 11 March — China recently launched its first biobank, a database with information on people’s medical history, lifestyle, occupation and blood sample for DNA analysis in Guangzhou, capital of South China’s Guangdong Province.

The programme, jointly funded by the Guangzhou No 12 People’s Hospital, the University of Hong Kong and the UK’s University of Birmingham, aims to create profiles for 50,000 Guangzhou people aged above 50 in four to five years, Wednesday’s Beijing Youth Daily reported.

“By tracing their information for a few years, we hope to investigate and determine factors that caused some fatal diseases, such as malignant tumours, coronary heart disease and diabetes,” said Jiang Chaoqiang, hospital director and also one of the three leading project managers. Information collection on the first 10,000 elderly people is scheduled to be finished by September, according to the hospital.

We target elderly people as the incidence of diseases is high among this group. A five to ten year monitoring will probably provide some results,” said Jiang.

“Another reason is that they don’t change their job and residence as often as the young and therefore are easy to track.” All the blood samples in the project could be used by the Guangdong, Hong Kong and British parties, but are solely owned by the hospital, which has invested heavily to prepare liquid nitrogen tanks to store the samples, according Jiang. — MNA/Xinhua

Car theft rampant in Czech Republic

PRAGUE, 11 March — Car theft has become more rampant in the Czech Republic with one car stolen for every 25 minutes, according to insurance releases by the Interior Ministry.

An average of 25,000 cars are stolen in the nation annually. Most of the stolen cars are smuggled to countries of the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Italy. Every tenth car on the used car market reportedly has something to do with criminal activities.

Besides, thieves also target at spare parts. “In this respect the thieves do not shun any model, which is decided by demand on the market,” the ministry said. — MNA/Xinhua

AIDS is a national concern.
HANOI, 11 March — The leaders of Vietnam and Cuba, two of the world’s last five Communist-run societies, pledged on Tuesday to stick together in their march to build socialism.

The secretary-general of Vietnam’s Communist Party, Nguyen Duc Manh, ended a four-day visit to Cuba where he visited Hanoi’s Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology and the Information Technology University supplied with Vietnamese computers.

“We are two small countries, fighters with experience, and we march forward together as an example,” Cuban President Fidel Castro said as he bid Manh farewell at Hanoi Airport.

“We will continue to together, Vietnamese and Cubans,” Manh said.

Vietnam and Cuba have been solid allies since Hanoi backed Hanoi in the Vietnam War four decades ago. They share a history of conflict with the United States, although the South-East Asian country has reached diplomatic and trade relations with its former adversary.

The Asian country supplies Cuba with 250,000 to 300,000 tons a year of rice, the Caribbean island’s main staple. Vietnam buys Cuban biotech products, including a vaccine against hepatitis B.

Manh, who left for Belgium, said Vietnam would become an industrialized nation by the Year 2020.

Castro visited Vietnam in February 2003. Cuba has a joint venture in Vietnam that is supervising construction of the national highway following the Ho Chi Minh Trail—a network of jungle trails and trails linking northern and southern Vietnam and used as a resupply route for Hanoi’s forces operating in the south during the Vietnam War.

E China province attracts most foreign investment

NANNING, 11 March — Jiangxi Province in eastern China last year outperformed Guangdong Province in south China to become the top beneficiary of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country, Xinhua News Agency reported.

About 20.8 billion US dollars was registered as contracted foreign investment for 3,701 newly approved FDI projects in Jiangsu in 2003, a year-on-year growth of more than 56 per cent and 25.9 per cent respectively, according to figures from the provincial Bureau of Statistics.

By the end of 2003, Jiangsu had approved the establishment of 57,297 foreign-invested enterprises and actually used 77.67 billion US dollars, or 20 per cent of the province’s new contracted foreign investment.

S-W China municipality strengthens “AIDS” prevention, control

CHONGQING, 11 March — Southwest China’s Chongqing Municipal government is building up a stock of medicines to ensure the timely treatment of AIDS patients.

Located at the municipal hospital for infectious diseases, China’s first AIDS drug storehouse was entirely funded by the municipal government, said an official with Chongqing Municipal Health Bureau.

The storehouse would ensure all HIV-carriers receive the appropriate medicines within 24 hours of the confirmation of their infection, he said.

All medicines were imported from foreign sources, the official said, and the hospital would strictly test and manage drugs, and maintain patient confidentiality.

One month’s treatment would cost each HIV carrier an average of 3,000 yuan (363 US dollars).

Vietnam and Cuba vow to march together to socialism

HANOI, 11 March — Manh said.

Cuban President Fidel Castro backed Hanoi in the war against Saigon’s forces operating in the south during the Vietnam War. MNA/Reuters

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Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L. for BEROL CORPORATION P.O. Box 60, Yangon Dated: 12 March, 2004

Britain’s trade deficit hit record high in January

LONDON, 11 March — Britain’s trade deficit hit a monthly high of 4.6 billion pounds (8.55 billion US dollars) in January owing to a sharp slump in exports to non-EU countries, official figures showed Tuesday.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) said the deficit compared with 3.1 billion pounds in December and was far higher than analysts’ pre- dictions of 3.3 billion pounds.

Figures from the ONS showed that the trade gap in January reached 5.6 billion pounds but this was partly offset by service ex-ports.

Manufacturing output in January bucked the trend and rose 0.2 per cent even though the world’s dollar-weakened, the export market. Ex- ports of manufactured goods fell 8.0 per cent while im- ports edged higher.

Liberia reaffirms adherence to one-China policy

LAGOS, 11 March — Liberian interim government Chief Charles Gibson, who visited Taiwan in February, reiterated Tuesday that his country’s relations with China and ad-heres to the one-China policy.

Liberia supports China’s reunification, Bryant said in Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, when receiving the creden- dentials of China’s new Ambassador to Liberia, Lin Songtian.

Monrovia appreciates China’s assistance over the years and its active role as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

UAE to launch first international film festival

ABU DHABI, 11 March — The United Arab Emirates announced on Tuesday it will launch its first international film festival in expectation it would be a leading one in the Arab world.

The festival will run from December 6 to December 11, 2004, in Dubai, the official WAM news agency reported.

Neil Stephenson, festi- val director, told a Press con-ference here that the inaug- ural festival will feature 80 contemporary and classic films in seven main pro- grammes, such as “Arabian Nights,” “Hi-Tech Cinema” and “Contemporary World Cinema: From London to Teheran to Manila.” It will also include sidebars and short films, academic forums and workshops, he added.

Programmers are asked to be selective in their choice of films in order to avoid offending cultural sen- sitivities, said Stephenson.

However, while the fes- tival will not screen any Is-raeli- or Palestinian-made films, the film community organizers did not rule out featuring them in the future.

The festival, which will be held mainly at Dubai’s newly-built luxurious Madinat Jumeirah Arabian Resort, will be financed with an overall budget of 6 mil- lion dollars, while some 550 guests are expected to host the event.

Click to Enlarge

The storehouse would ensure all HIV-carriers receive the appropriate medicines within 24 hours of the confirmation of their infection, he said.

All medicines were imported from foreign sources, the official said, and the hospital would strictly test and manage drugs, and maintain patient confidentiality.

One month’s treatment would cost each HIV carrier an average of 3,000 yuan (363 US dollars). MNA/Xinhua
Study backs coffee as protective against diabetes

CHICAGO, 11 March — A study done in Finland, the heaviest coffee drinking country, provides more evidence that the world’s most widely consumed beverage may ward off adult onset diabetes, researchers said on Tuesday.

They said the reasons for the apparent beneficial effects remain unclear, though it was possible that certain components in coffee may indirectly help regulate blood glucose levels. It is also well documented that caffeine stimulates insulin secretion by the pancreas, the report said.

Type-II diabetes, the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, is linked to obesity and lack of exercise. It causes the body to lose its ability to use insulin properly to metabolize food, especially such obesity, type-II diabetes is a different disease caused by the destruction of key pancreas cells.—MNA/Reuters

Bush might be questioned longer by 9/11 commission

WASHINGTON, 11 March — The White House said on Tuesday it was possible US President George W. Bush could be questioned longer than the hour he agreed to by a commission investigating the September 11, 2001, attacks, an apparent concession that came after criticism from Democrat John Kerry.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan, asked several times if Bush would stick to his insistence Monday that he would complete his testimony before the commission be restricted to one hour, said it was scheduled for an hour but that "the President of course is going to answer all the questions they want to raise." "No body’s watching the clock," he said.

The shift in position came after the pre-sumptive Democratic presidential nominee, who has demanded that the commission be allowed to investigate the events before the bar," Kerry said in a statement issued by his campaign. "It’s good to see that the President has finally found a way out of this bind, and I hope that he will move forward with the Bush commission and really get to the bottom of this national tragedy."—MNA/Reuters

USAF investigating sexual assaults involving its personnel

WASHINGTON, 11 March — Prompted by nearly 100 accusations of rape involving US Air Force personnel in the Pacific region, the service said on Tuesday it has launched an investigation into how sexual assaults are being dealt with. The move is the latest in a growing series of incidents detailing problems of sexual attacks and alcohol abuse in the US military.

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld last month also ordered a probe into Pentagon measures to prevent sex attacks within the ranks after a spate of reports of male guards sexual assaults involving its personnel.

The findings in that newly released study suggested major flaws in reporting sexual assault claims and assistance to victims. The inquiry focused on air bases in South Korea, Japan, Guam, Singapore, Hawaii, Alaska and the island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

Air Force officials on Tuesday released a letter from General Michael R. Hayden, Chief of Staff, to all major commands ordering an assessment of sexual assault programmes.

"Striving to eliminate sexual violence and the climate that fosters it," was the top goal listed by Moseley in the letter dated February 24. He also emphasized ensuring an environment where victims have confidence to report and conducting appropriate investigation and prosecution of incidents.—MNA/Reuters

Ancient earthen pot with ostrich design unearthed in W China

LANZHOU, 11 March — An ancient earthen pot with an ostrich design, the first of its kind ever discovered in China, has been unearthed in Lanzhou City, western China’s Gansu Province.

The 28-centimetre-tall pot, discovered by local archaeologists, has a pair of asymmetrical handles at the neck and the body respectively. The lower part of the pot are 10 ostriches of different forms and poses. Some are jumping and some are running, some have two feet while some have only one.

Wang Haidong, deputy director of Gansu painted pottery research association, said the painted earthen pot dated back about 3,200 years, belonging to the Majiaoyu culture type (about 3,300 BC to 2,050 BC). "It’s the first time an ostrich design on an ancient painted pottery has been found in China," said Wang. "Designs on ancient vesseIs often reflect the lives and environments of their makers, so it is possible that ostriches may have lived in Gansu region about 3,000 years ago. It is an important clue for research on the ecological environment at that time," Wang said.—MNA/Xinhua

Washington sniper Muhammad sentenced to die October 14

MANASSAS, 11 March — A judge sentenced John Muhammad to death on Tuesday for one of 10 sniper-style murders that terrorized the Washington area in 2002 and set October 14 as his execution date.

As expected, Judge LeRoy Millette confirmed last November’s verdict of first degree murder, and brushed aside Muhammad’s appeal, which had argued his conviction constituted a double guilty verdict.

"The findings from the National Public Health Institute in Helsinki are similar to results from other parts of the world," said the study.

In January, Harvard researchers said at 125,000 people found who drank six cups a day cut their diabetes risks by half over 12 to 18 years, while women who drank that amount had a 30 per cent lowered risk. A recent US study had also found similar results. "This study revealed unequivocal evidence for an interaction between coffee consumption and type-II (diabetes) independent of other risk factors," said the report published in this week’s Journal of the American Medical Association.

"Because the Finnish population drinks more coffee than other populations, we were able to determine the risk (of diabetes) at high levels of coffee consumption,” the authors added.

Indonesia’s dengue fever death toll hits 408

JAKARTA, 11 March — Indonesia’s dengue fever outbreak has killed more than 400 people this year and the death toll could keep rising, health officials said on Wednesday.

A spokesman for the Health Ministry said the dengue fever death since the start of the year was 408 people, with 29,643 cases across archipelago.

Thomas Suroso, director for animal-borne diseases at the Health Ministry, said in recent weeks the disease had peaked in some parts of Indonesia, but Jakarta was still one of only a number of trouble spots with growing cases."If we're going to get the leaders of the gang, that had the funds to finance the crime,” said Federal Police Agent Marcos Pereira in Rondônia, after a yearlong investigation involving 100 agents.

Miners and buyers have long seen the Roosevelt In- dian reserve in Rondônia as a diamond treasure trove in mineral-rich Brazil.

Rumours of massive diamond strikes have prompted thousands of wildcat miners or “garimpeiros” to try to invade the area in recent years. Illegal mining is now largely run by the Cinta Larga or “broad belt”. In- dians who live in the reserve, a federal police agent said. Diamond mining on Indian lands is illegal in Brazil.—MNA/Reuters

Brazilian police break top diamond ring

BRASilia, 11 March — Brazilian police have ar- rested leaders from one of the nation’s top diamond smuggling rings who are accused of illegally mining precious stones from an Amazon Indian reserve and shipping them abroad. The accused head of the ring, Marcos Gilkas, an Indian leader and three po- lice officers were among 14 people arrested on charges of illegal mining on the Rondonia State reserve and the formation of a gang to smuggle diamonds and launder money.

"We’ve got the leaders of the gang, that had the funds to finance the crime,” said Federal Police Agent Marcos Pereira in Rondônia, after a yearlong investigation involving 100 agents.

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Illegal mining is now largely run by the Cinta Larga or "broad belt”. Indians who live in the reserve, a federal police agent said. Diamond mining on Indian lands is illegal in Brazil.—MNA/Reuters
Robson says Newcastle need to step it up

Newcastle United manager Bobby Robson says his team have struggled to recapture last season’s form as they target a fourth-place finish in the Premier League and winning the UEFA Cup.

Robson knows his team have to improve to mount a serious European challenge, as they prepare to face Spanish side Real Mallorca in their UEFA Cup fourth-round first-leg tie at St. James’ Park on Thursday.

“We now have two big targets, the UEFA Cup and the Premiership fourth place,” Robson told reported on Wednesday. “We have to step it up and put it right and we are all working together on it. “We are aware we are not playing some football as well as last year. I have made some criticisms this week. The other day saying we had played one minute of football all season.

“We don’t keep the ball as well. lose it too easily and because of that we don’t build up attacks. “But we are still difficult to beat. We are fourth, not eighth or 12th. We are not easy knockovers.”

Newcastle finished third in the Premier League last season but failed to progress beyond the preliminary stages of the Champions League after losing on penalties to Partizan Belgrade in August.

After a stuttering start to the season, they are now fourth in the top flight and within reach of a Champions League berth for next season, but competition is fierce with Birmingham City, Charlton Athletic and Liverpool all close behind.

MNA/Reuters

German World Cup organizers shaken by bribe case

BERLIN, 11 March — Germany’s World Cup organizers said on Wednesday they were “shaken” and deeply hurt by charges of corruption that have been levelled at top Munich soccer executives over the construction of the city’s new stadium.

But leaders of the 2006 Organizing Committee, stressing there had nothing to do with the criminal investigation that was made public on Tuesday, said they were confident the stadium would be completed in time for the opening match of the finals.

“It’s terribly painful,” said Wolfgang Niersbach, vice-president of the Organizing Committee.

“We’ve always worked in a clean, clear and transparent fashion, and that was to be our motto for 2006. That this was possible at all hurts very much.”

He said committee president Franz Beckenbauer was “also shaken” by the probe by prosecutors into TSV 1860 Munich executives on suspicion they took bribes from a company that won the bid to build the 250-million-euro (350-million-US-dollar) stadium.

“I can only sincerely hope, based on what the finals mean for our country, that there won’t be anything else emerging that we don’t know about today,” Niersbach told NDR radio when asked about fears of irregularities at other stadium projects.

Germany’s Interior Minister Otto Schily, who is responsible for sport, said he hoped the probe would move forward quickly and rigorously to “limit the damage” to Germany’s World Cup.

“Newly Promoted

“I am very concerned about what is happening,” Schily said. “I worked in a transparent and clean manner. We are making our mark. These are the people who are responsible for the stadium.”

Arsenal, who won their first knockout round first leg tie 3-2 a fortnight ago, rounded off the 5-2 aggregate victory after Henry struck in the 14th and 34th minutes at Highbury.

The Premier League leaders were already set for the last eight when Celta’s Pablo Contreras was sent off in the 74th minute for a second yellow card, a bodyslide on substitute Jose Antonio Reyes.

Arsenal failed to exploit the extra man, but never loosened their grip on a game that brought the FA Cup semifinalists a step closer to emulating Manchester United’s 1999 Treble.

They will meet with momentum and movement off the ball proved too much for Celta, while Henry’s first Champions League goals at Highbury in over two years put the outcome beyond doubt.

Celta made a bright enough start, winning a series of corners and trying their luck from distance before striker Mauricio Pinilla smacked from the break only for his shot to be blocked.

Any Arsenal nerves were soon settled, though, when Dutch playmaker Dennis Bergkamp took possession on the edge of the area and twisted and turned his markers before slipping the ball through for Henry to rifle past Pablo Cavallo.

“The goal prompted gleeful Highbury chants of “Are You Watching Manchester?” a day after arch-rivals United were knocked out of the Champions League at Old Trafford by Porto.

Celta’s response was a dipping 25-metre shot from Peter Luccin which Arsenal keeper Jens Lehmann pushed over the bar.

But there was more punishment for the Spanish side in the 34th minute after another neat passing move for Henry and his strike left Bergkamp, fresh after being rested for Saturday’s 5-1 FA Cup semifinal demolition of Portsmouth, the ball back for Fredrik Ljungberg, whose cross was touched by Fernando Caneser on its way to giving the unmarked Henry an easy finish at the far post.— MNA/Reuters

Henry fires Arsenal into Champions League quarters

LONDON, 11 March — Thierry Henry steered Arsenal into the Champions League quarterfinals on Wednesday after scoring both goals in a comfortable 2-0 win over 10-man Celta Vigo.

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Lyon celebrate Champions League break through

LYON, France, 11 March — Olympique Lyon are relishing their place among Europe’s elite having reached the quarterfinals of the Champions League for the first time.

Brazilian midfielder Juninho Pernambucano’s 77th-minute goal faced the French club, who are also second in the Ligue 1 title race, a 2-0 win over Spanish side Real Sociedad on Tuesday and a 2-0 aggregate victory after Henry struck in the 14th and 34th minutes at Highbury.

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There is going to be a lot of pressure on the team and the players. We are playing the (French) championship and we are in the last eight in Europe,” Juninho said.

“We are making our mark. These are matches of reference for us now. It is the first time that this club has reached this level.

“We have to adapt to it and be ready. A hero? Me? No, perhaps it is because I scored the goal, but it was the whole team that did the job. If it is me or someone else, it is not important who scores the goals.”

Juninho said he would love it if Lyon were drawn against nine-times champions Real Madrid in the last eight.

“To play Real Madrid would, of course, bring me great pleasure,” said Juninho, the key midfielder in Paul Le Guen’s well-organized side.

“They have some Brazilians and it would be nice to meet them. But the most important thing for Lyon is that we keep making progress.”

Juninho’s goal against Sociedad was his fifth in this season’s Champions League, making him the competition’s second highest scorer.

“For me it is satisfying just to be here at a time when we are reaching another level with the team and the club,” he added.

“It was a very difficult match, as we expected, and as all matches in the Champions League can be. Maybe we did not play as well as we can, in possession, but we still deserved to go through.”

While Juninho played down his own prominent role, coach Le Guen explained why he left experienced Brazilian striker Giovane Elber out of his starting line-up.

“We needed a strong, physical and combative midfield, as we did in the first leg,” he said. “I felt that was important and so we did that.”— MNA/Reuters
Commander inspects Kyaukni agriculture and livestock breeding farm

YANGON, 11 March — Shan State Peace and Development Council Chairman and Eastern Command Commander Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint, accompanied by departmental officials, arrived at Kyaukni agriculture and livestock breeding farm of the command on 7 March morning.

At the briefing hall of the farm, the commander heard reports on arrangements for agriculture and livestock breeding work, the reclamation of farmland, the construction of dams for irrigation water, the storage of water in dams, the supply of electricity, and cultivation of perennial trees.

In response to the reports, the commander gave instructions on cultivation of ten major crops on farmland, the undertaking of livestock breeding work, and the cultivation of perennial crops. Next, a local farmer reported to the commander on condition of crops cultivated by 116 farmers on Kyaukni farmland. After hearing the reports, the commander attended to the required arrangements.

Later, the commander inspected the progress made in construction of dams in the farm, giving instructions on cultivation of shady trees and the installation of power lines in the area. — MNA

Preliminary meeting to build Youth Nurturing Unit held

YANGON, 11 March — Under the arrangement of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, the preliminary meeting to build Youth Nurturing Unit in Timah Village, Nam-un Village-tract, Muse Township, was held at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday afternoon. Present were Chairman of CCDAC Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Phone Swe and officials of the Health Department, the Social Welfare Department, the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Myanmar Agriculture Service, the Technical and Vocational Education Department, the Progress of Border Areas and National Races Department and Myanmar Police Force.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that there exists a large number of drug addicts in Shan State (North) area according to the current data. This is why drug addiction treatment hospitals and clinics are required in the region. Shan State (North) Additional Police Force Command Police Col Win Naing and party supervised land preparation tasks in Timah Village. On 4 March morning, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Hla Myint of North-East Command and the Deputy Director-General of MPF drove stakes for construction of the unit.

Next, the Deputy Director-General of MPF reported on the lay-out plan of the unit and strength of staff. Those present submitted their reports. The Minister then gave necessary instructions. — MNA

Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe addresses opening of seminar on strategy of IPPF, jointly organized by MMCWA and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

YANGON, 11 March — A ceremony to open a seminar on strategy of IPPF, jointly organized by Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), was held at Meldon Hall at the Sedona Hotel on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here this morning with an address delivered by Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, President of MMCWA.

Present on the occasion were Vice-President of MMCWA Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint and CEC members, President of the Supervisory Committee for Yangon Division MCCWA Dr Daw Khin Thei Hsu, Resident Representative of UN Population Funds Mr Najib M Assifi, Director-General of the Health Department Dr Wan Maung and officials, Director of IPPF of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Datuk Dr Raj Karim and officials, presidents of supervisory committees for MCWA at states and divisions, and guests.

On the occasion, Joint-Secretary of MMCWA Dr Nwe Oo read out the agenda of the opening ceremony. Next, Datuk Dr Raj Karim extended greetings, followed by a general round of discussions concerning the IPPF’s strategy. — MNA

Seminar on International Planned Parenthood Federation’s strategy opened

The meeting was attended by Bago Division Peace and Development Council Chairman and Southern Command Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko, Secretary Lt-Col Thein Lwin, the director of the department, officials and local authorities. At the meeting, the commander explained matters related to responsibilities of the department and urged officials concerned to cooperate in the regional development work and help implement the seven-point policy programme of the State.

— MNA

Bago Division GAD holds meeting

YANGON, 11 March — The General Administration Department of Bago Division held a working coordination meeting at Bayintnaung Hall in Toungoo on 8 March.

The meeting was attended by Bago Division Peace and Development Council Chairman and Southern Command Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko, Secretary Lt-Col Thein Lwin, the director of the department, officials and local authorities. At the meeting, the commander explained matters related to responsibilities of the department and urged officials concerned to cooperate in the regional development work and help implement the seven-point policy programme of the State.

— MNA

Armed Forces Day Commemorative Computer Quiz opened

YANGON, 11 March — A ceremony to open the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commemorative Computer Quiz, organized by the 12 Objectives of the State Exhibition Organizing Committee, was held at Defence Services Museum and Historical Research Institute on Shwedagon Pagoda Road in Dagon Township this morning.

Present were Chairman of the Management Committee for Observance of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commemorative Computer Quiz, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Chairman of the Working Committee for Organizing the 12 Objectives of the State Exhibition Director of the Ministry of Defence Maj-Gen Aung Thein, senior military officers, departmental officials, guests and members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association.

Director of the Ministry of Defence Maj-Gen Aung Thein gave an opening speech. Next, the commander accepted K 1.2 million for the preparations for the exhibition donated by SMI Co Ltd. and K 1 million by MHLG Co Ltd.

— MNA

Assistant Lecturer U Khin Maung Win of Yangon University of Computer Studies explained the questions in the quiz. Then, USDMA members answered the questions. The commander, the director and officials viewed round the competitions.

Altogether 75 USDA members of Kamayut, Tamway and Thanyin townships participated in the quiz which will last up to 20 March. — MNA

Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing speaking at preliminary meeting to build Youth Nurturing Unit. — MNA

Circulation 22,707