Serve to the best of ability and with utmost diligence

You comrades are steadfast in adhering to the Four Oaths for the sake of the nation, for the people and for the Tatmadaw. While safeguarding the nation on the one hand, you comrades have to serve the national interests at any time in any period. All threats to the nation have to be staved off without anyone's bidding. Similarly, I would like to urge you to serve to the best of your ability and with utmost diligence in whatever role you are assigned to in working for the benefit of the people.

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)

Emergence of a modern stadium contributes towards realization of government’s objectives on raising national sport standard

Prime Minister attends opening of modern Pyidaungsu Stadium in Muse, Shan State (North)

YANGON, 20 March—Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, accompanied by member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, the ministers, the deputy ministers, the Chief of Staff (Navy), officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental officials, left here by Tatmadaw aircraft on yesterday morning and arrived in Lashio, Shan State (North) at 10 am.

The Prime Minister and party were welcomed there by Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Hla Myint, Brig-Gen Soe Oo of Hsenwi Station, members of Shan State, District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials, social organizations, members of national race cultural troupes and local people.

After that, the Prime Minister and party, accompanied by Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, arrived in Muse by helicopter.

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

Next, the ceremony to open Pyidaungsu Stadium in Muse, Shan State (North) was held at the stadium at 11 am, attended by Chairman of Myanmar National Olympic Council Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, the ministers, the deputy ministers, the Chief of Staff (Navy), officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department, members of the District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials, social organizations, students, members of the national race cultural troupes, athletes and local people. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint and Chairman of So So Pyay Pyay Co Ltd U Sai Tun Aye formally opened the new stadium.

(See page 10)

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Better transport—key to national development

In its efforts to achieve harmonious development in all regions of the nation, the State Peace and Development Council is building many new infrastructures with the aim of promoting regional development and raising the living standard of national people.

On one occasion, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance that transportation plays a pivotal role in national development and thus roads are being built to strengthen friendship among national brethren and narrow the development gap.

In accordance with the guidance of the Head of State, arrangements are being made for better transportation throughout the country. According to the needs of the respective regions, new roads are being built, the old ones upgraded and new bridges on these roads are also being built.

The inauguration of Nantmaung Creek Bridge built by the Ministry of Construction in Momeik Township, Shan State (North), was held on 16 March. Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, officials and local people attended the inauguration ceremony. The old Nantmaung Bridge fell into ruin in June 2001 due to heavy rains. Therefore the new one had to be built. With the length of 300 feet and width of 12.5 feet, Nantmaung Creek Bridge is located on Momeik-Konwat road in northern Shan State. Thanks to the opening of Nantmaung Creek Bridge, local people have now easy access to towns in northern Shan State as well as other states and divisions via Momeik and Mogok. It is sure that with better transportation, economy in the region will make progress and friendship among national brethren will be strengthened.

As the Government is building new roads and bridges throughout the country, the number of road miles has now increased to 18,112 in nation, up from 13,635 in 1988. Along with the roads, the Government has also constructed 186 bridges with 180 feet and above in length and people are now using these transportation facilities. At a time when the Government is undertaking regional development and better transport, we would like to urge local people to maintain roads and bridges in their regions for their durability.

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”.

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.

Metta Yeikmon Cancer Foundation Chairman U Hla Tun dedicated K 50 million towards the fund of U Hla Tun, who is the President of the Shan State Cancer Society. Mr Hla also dedicated K 20 million for the construction of the Shan Cancer Society doctors’ residence.

Commander attends cash donation ceremony for construction of Letisana Sasana Yeiktha two-storey building in Pazundaung

YANGON, 20 March—The cash donation ceremony for construction of Letisana Sasana Yeiktha two-storey building in Pazundaung Township was held in conjunction with the ceremony to lay cornerstone of the building this morning, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing. Also present were Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, officials and local people.

The cash donation ceremony followed. The commander accepted K 15 million donated by Captain Thein Tun (Navy) (Retd); Lt-Cmdr Daw Mya Aye (Retd); K 10 million by Daw Marya Hshubhar and family, Daw Indara Hshubhar and family, U Jenny Hshubhar and family, U Rikiki Hshubhar and family, Daw Dura Hshubhar and family, Daw Roma Hshubhar and family and Daw Rudu Hshubhar and family. K 100 million by families of Ayeyarwady Naval Region Command; K 1.5 million each by Daw Mi Mi Khin and family, Dr U Thein Tun (Mahumying), Daw Si Si Tin and family, Lt-Cmdr Myo Aung (Retd); Daw Thida Oo and family, Daw Hshubhar and family, Daw Thida Oo and family. K 1.5 million each by Daw Mi Mi Khin and family, Dr U Thein Tun (Mahumying), Daw Si Si Tin and family, Lt-Cmdr Myo Aung (Retd); Daw Thida Oo and family, Daw Hshubhar and family, Daw Thida Oo and family.

For the cash donation, each family donated K 500 to the Shan State Cancer Society doctors’ residence. The commander handed over the gold casket for laying cornerstone of the building to the minister of the Shan State Cancer Society doctors’ residence.

Aung Thein Lin, Vice-Chairman of the Shan State Peace and Development Council Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Saw Tun, officials and local people attended the ceremony.

Commander attends cash donation ceremony for construction of Letisana Sasana Yeiktha two-storey building in Pazundaung

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Aung Thein Lin, Vice-Chairman of the Shan State Peace and Development Council Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Saw Tun, officials and local people attended the ceremony.
Nine killed in three attacks on eve of Iraq war’s anniversary

BAGHDAD, 20 March — A series of car bombings, mortar attacks, and assassinations left nine people dead across Iraq yesterday as military officials braced for further attacks in the run-up to tomorrow’s one-year anniversary of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Authorities said the milestone was an added cause for vigilance, though they couldn’t tell whether the rash of attacks this week had been coordinated.

“The best and only way to prepare for that is to be on the offensive,” said Maj Gen Martin Dempsey. “You can’t sit back and wait for terrorists to pick the point of his choosing to attack you.”

Yesterday’s toll included four Iraqis killed in an explosion near a hotel in the southern city of Basra, three Iraqi civilians, including a child, who were killed, along with 17 American troops injured, in a mortar attack on a fortified city hall in Fallujah, west of the capital city.

Guerrillas also fired mortar rounds at two US military bases on Wednesday, killing three American soldiers and wounding nine others. The US military said yesterday. The deaths brought to 567 the number of US troops killed in Iraq since the start of hostilities last year, according to Defense Department figures.

Late in the day, rockets also struck two hotels used by foreign contractors near the Green Zone, the secured area in central Baghdad where the US-occupied authority is based. There were no reports of serious injuries. The spate of attacks followed Wednesday night’s massive bombing at the Mount Lebanon Hotel in Baghdad.

The US military lowered the death toll in the suicide bombing of the Baghdad hotel on Wednesday to seven. Officials had earlier said 27 people were killed in the Baghdad bombing. It then revised that downward to 17 dead without providing an explanation. Hours later, the military said that just seven had been killed.

There was no clear explanation for the change but Iraq doesn’t have a centralized system for handling such tragedies, and with the bodies of victims going to different morgues, government departments and other agencies often disagree over death tolls.

The IGC went to the UN earlier this week saying it would welcome the UN’s assistance. The team, led by the UN envoy to Iraq Lakhdar Brahimi, will work on political arrangements leading to the creation of a new interim government.

Washington originally called for UN help after their plan to choose the government through a constitutional meeting was widely opposed.

After visiting Baghdad last month, Mr Brahimi said elections were impossible because of time constraints, but suggested other options for selecting a government, including expanding the Governing Council holding a conference.

Annan confirms UN return to Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, 20 March—The United Nations has finally confirmed it will play a role in Iraq’s future political process.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has said he will send a team to the capital Baghdad to help with the formation of a new interim government. The proposed transfer of power from the US-led coalition to Iraqi politicians is set for the end of June.

The UN pulled all its staff out of Iraq in October following two suicide attacks on its headquarters. In a letter to Iraq Governing Council (IGC) and the coalition, Mr Annan said the UN would rely on them to protect the UN team in Iraq.

The IGC wrote to the UN earlier this week saying it would welcome the UN’s assistance. The team, led by the UN envoy to Iraq Lakhdar Brahimi, will work on political arrangements leading to the creation of a new interim government.

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ESCAPs 60th session to be held in Shanghai

BEIJING, 20 March—The 60th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) of the United Nations (UN) is to be held in Shanghai of China from April 22 to 28 this year, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said at a Press conference here Thursday.

Prior to the session, the special body on Pacific Island Developing Countries (PIDCs), an ESCAP subordinate body, will hold its meeting from April 20-21, Kong said.

Themed “meeting the challenges in an era of globalization by strengthening regional development cooperation”, the session will cover a wide range of topics, including regional economic and social situation, poverty reduction, globalization and social issues.

“It is of special significance for ESCAP to hold its 60th session at its birthplace,” said Kong, adding that China was looking forward to working jointly with all parties concerned to ensure the session was a great success.

The Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), the forerunner of ESCAP, was founded in Shanghai in 1947.

Guerillas kill two US Marines in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 20 March—Guerrillas killed two US Marines in Iraq, the US military said Friday, and an Iraqi journalist allegedly shot by American troops in Baghdad died of his wounds.

The attack on the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force occurred Wednesday while the troops were conducting “security and stability operations” in Anbar province, the statement said. Anbar stretches from west of Baghdad to the Jordanian border.

The US military provided no other details and said the names of the slain Marines were being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

An 1st Infantry Division soldier died early Friday from injuries suffered when the Bradley fighting vehicle he was traveling in rolled 200 feet down an embankment into the Tigris River near Beiji, 120 miles north of Baghdad.

Army spokesman Maj Neal O’Brien said the soldier had been flown to a US military hospital in Germany for treatment but later succumbed to his injuries.

Another soldier in the vehicle died during Wednesday’s accident, and one more remained in critical condition.

The latest deaths brought to 570 the number of US troops killed in Iraq since the start of hostilities last year, according to Defense Department figures.

In Baghdad, Powell urged Washington’s coalition partners Friday not to “run and hide” from their commitments to fight terrorism.

His press conference on a one-day visit was preceded by more than 20 Arab journalists walking out in protest against the shooting deaths of two Iraq reporters, allegedly by US troops.

Chinese Vice-Premier visits Cambodia

SIEM REAP (Cambodia), 20 March—Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi arrived here Friday afternoon to pay a five-day official visit to Cambodia at the invitation of Cambodia’s Deputy Prime Minister Sar Kheng.

Wu Yi was welcomed here by Sok An, Cambodia’s senior minister, and other Cambodian officials.

The aim of Wu’s visit is to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. The two sides are expected to sign a package of agreements on bilateral economic cooperation.

Wu Yi is scheduled to fly to Phnom Penh on Sunday morning. She will hold a bilateral meeting with Sar Kheng, and to pay courtesy calls to Cambodia’s acting Head of State and Senate President Chea Sim, Prime Minister Hun Sen and FUNCINPEC Party President Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

It is Wu’s second leg of her four-nation tour to Southeast Asia and South Asia that will also take her to Myanmar and Maldives. She had a three-day visit to Laos before she came here.
Gorbachev calls US-led war in Iraq a ‘great mistake’

Mexico City, 20 March—Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has described the US-led war in Iraq as a “great mistake” that increased the risk of terrorist attacks.

Invading Iraq was a “great mistake that led to terrorism and not the prevention of this scourge,” Gorbachev said at a conference on threats to peace hosted by Anahuac University on the outskirts of Mexico City.

The United States on Friday marked the first anniversary of the war, which it launched arguing it was part of its “war on terror.”

But the war has brought “severe consequences,” said Gorbachev, who led the Soviet Union from March 1985 to December 1991, when the 15-republic Communist superpower was dissolved.

“Every day we witness the consequences of the erroneous invasion of Iraq,” he said to the applause of 5,000 people at the university.

Democracy cannot be achieved by military force, he added.

Democracy is not imposed with tanks and missiles, but with respect of other peoples and international law, Gorbachev said.

“The war has also wounded US relations with traditional allies, the former Soviet leader said.

“Nobody doubts the economic, military and democratic power of the United States,” he said. “We recognize this and that (Washington) can be a world leader. But we do not believe in leadership through domination.”

“There is no other path than through the respect of international law and cooperation,” he continued.

“Everything else would be a great danger to the world.”—Internet

Study shows tuberculosis on the rise in big US states

Atlanta, 20 March—A global tuberculosis epidemic helped fuel a jump in cases last year in California, Texas, New York and 16 other states in 2003, but fell in the nation as a whole, Dr. Elieen Schneider, an epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About 11.5 per cent of the overall US population is foreign born.

The proportion of cases for this group was the highest since 1986, when the United States began collecting birthplace data for TB patients. TB cases rose in California, Texas, New York and 16 other states in 2003, but fell in the nation as a whole, Dr. Elieen Schneider, an epidemiologist with the CDC’s tuberculosis elimination division, said.

“We’re not sure if this is just a plateau or a resur- gence,” said Schneider, who added that a decline in TB among US-born residents contributed to the rising per centage of foreign-born patients captured in the 2003 data.

Five years ago, foreign-born patients accounted for 77.6 per cent of the nation’s TB caseload in California, Texas, New York and 16 other states in 2003, but fell to 61.4 million in 2050.

Once a leading killer, tuberculosis has been declin- ing in the United States since the height of the AIDS epi- demic in the early 1990s. AIDS attacks the immune system and renders the body unable to fight opportunistic infections such as TB.

Efforts to control the scourge, spread by coughing and close personal contact and usually cured with anti- biotics, have been stymied in part by the spread of TB oversea. An estimated eight million new cases are re- ported worldwide every year, leading to two million deaths.

In 2003 Mexicans accounted for about one quar- ter of foreign-born US pa- tients with TB. Filipinos, Vietnamese, Indians and Chinese also had high rates of the infection.

MENA/Reuters

US population may grow to over 400 million in 2050

Washington, 20 March—The US population would increase by 48.8 per cent from 282.1 million in 2000 to 419.9 million in 2050, with non-Hispanic Whites possibly dropping to half of the total population, the US Census Bureau announced on Thursday.

The non-Hispanic White population in the country would increase from 195.7 million to 210.3 million, an increase of 7 per cent, but its share in the total population would decrease to just 50.1 per cent in 2050 from 69.4 per cent in 2000.

Meanwhile, the nation’s Hispanic and Asian populations would triple over the next half century, interim population projec- tions released by the bureau showed.

The number of people of Hispanic origin would grow from 35.6 million to 102.6 million during the period, an increase of 188 per cent, dou- bling their share of the coun- try’s population from 12.6 per cent to 24.4 per cent.

The Asian population is projected to grow 213 per cent, from 10.7 million to 33.4 million, and their share of the population would dou- ble from 3.8 per cent to 8 per cent.

The Black population is projected to rise by 71 per cent from 35.8 million in 2000 to 61.4 million in 2050, raising their share of the population from 12.7 per cent to 14.6 per cent.

The female population is projected to continue to out- number the male popula- tion, going from a numeri- cal difference of 5.3 million in 2000 to 6.9 million in 2050, and the country’s total population is expected to top 300 million, with childbearing rates expected to remain low.

The projections for the resident population of the United States are based on Census 2000 results and as- sumptions about future childbearing, mortality and international migration, the Census Bureau said.

MENA/Xinhua

Demonstration to mark Iraq war anniversary

London, 20 March—Tens of thousands of protesters are expected to take to the streets of London to mark the anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq.

Madrid and New York are among cities around the world due to hold similar protests against the war and the continuing “occupation” of Iraq.

London’s event has been backed by the Stop the War Coalition, CND and Muslim Association of Britain.

Demonstrators will leave Hyde Park at 1200 GMT and march to Trafalgar Square.

Saturday’s protest is expected to attract large numbers of people, with coaches laid on from dozens of towns and cities across the UK.

London mayor Ken Livingstone, MP George Galloway, rail workers’ union leader Bob Crow and Guantamano Bay lawyer Louise Christian will speak at a rally.

Many campaigners are concerned by the continuing presence of US and other forces in Iraq.

Lindsey German, of the Stop the War Coalition, said: “We are continuing to march because we want to make clear the strength of anti-war feeling in this country.

“Everything we said about the war has turned out to be true and everything the government said has turned out to be a lie. The tragic events in Madrid shows clearly that we are not safer from terrorism.”

Kate Hudson, chairwoman of CND, said it was important to be heard in a “world slipping into a cycle of violence”.

“Every day more and more people are convinced by our arguments,” she said.

“We reiterate our call for a full public inquiry because the public has a right to know why we were taken to war.”

Anti-war campaigners will inflate a model of a Trident missile, accompanied by activists dressed up as weapons inspectors.

Hundreds of protesters march in San Francisco

San Francisco, 20 March—Police arrested 18 protesters in San Francisco marking the first anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq on Friday, a spokeswoman said.

Several hundred demonstrators marched down San Francisco’s main Market Street and others gathered in front of the worldwide headquarters of Bechtel, the privately held engineering firm involved in Iraq reconstruction projects.

A few people chained themselves together with plastic piping. Others played drums in a song, “Beckett out of Iraq.”

“Shut down the war profiteers,” another sign declared.

A police spokesman said those arrested were charged with blocking the street and refusing to move when requested.

A Liberal San Francisco has been a leading US centre of opposition to President Bush’s decision to wage war against Iraq, and thousands were arrested a year ago in large demonstrations after the start of the conflict.
Blix says Iraq war may have worsened terror threat

**CHICAGO, 20 March —** The invasion of Iraq has polarized the Middle East and may have worsened the threat of terrorism, former United Nations weapons inspector Hans Blix charged on Thursday.

On a tour of the United States to promote his book, *Disarming Iraq*, Blix criticized US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair for engaging in a “wish hunt” to justify the US-led invasion of Iraq one year ago.

In a speech sponsored by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, Blix listed the negatives he believes have resulted from the war: polarized societies in the Middle East, a rift in NATO, and no easing in the threat of terrorism.

“The terrorism threat has not abated,” he said. “When you think in light of the March 11 train bombings in Spain that killed more than 200, Blix said ‘it’s clearly an increase in the terrorism.’

“It was… al-Qaeda or some related terrorist movement trying to tell states that they should not participate in the actions in Iraq,” he said.

Blix said his task of seeking weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was undermined by the Bush and Blair governments.

“They are politicians, and we understand the need for hype. But still, as citizens, as voters, we want critical thinking, we want sincerity, not advertising hype,” he said.

Blix said the US could play a key role in a fight against terrorism. “First of all, the struggle against terrorism must be a multilateral one, and I think the United States realizes that,” he said.

“This is not just an alliance of the willing, of big, powerful states, but must have the rest of the world behind it. — MNA/Reuters

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**Vietnam’s automobile, motorcycle component imports to fall**

**Hanoi, 20 March —** Vietnam is forecasting to see year-on-year falls of 15 per cent and 100 per cent in import turnovers of automobile and motorbike components, respectively in the first quarter of this year.

The country will import around 80 million US dollars’ worth of automobile and 45 million dollars’ worth of motorbike components in the period, local newspaper *Transport* quoted sources from the Ministry of Trade as saying.

The expected decreases are mainly due to the local weakened purchasing power of automobiles and motorbikes, since automobile prices have risen considerably in recent months, and reduction in motorbike registration is being applied by authorities of Hanoi, Vietnam.

Vietnam recorded sales of 3.385 million automobiles in the first two months of this year, a year-on-year decline of 24.1 per cent, mainly because of higher special consumption taxes imposed on automobiles.

Value-added taxes on imported automobile components since January 2004, in the first half of the year, is 37.81 per cent, Hanoi news report said.

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**China launches charity campaign to help poor**

**Beijing, 20 March —** China has launched a charity campaign to help the poor and those hit by natural calamities. So far, some 100,000 pieces of garment have been collected and are ready for distribution.

Tang Shengwen, Deputy Secretary-General of the Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) said the campaign, co-sponsored by the RCSC and the Sanliuyi Du Sports Goods Company Ltd., will run from March 10 to April 18 in eight provinces or municipalities, including Beijing, Liaoning, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Hubei, Guangdong, Shaanxi and Sichuan.

The campaign aims to encourage people to help the needy, Tang said.

People can donate clothes to Sanliuyi Du Sports Goods stores, which are scattered in many shopping malls of the eight provinces or municipalities. The company will collect, wash, and disinfect the clothes and send them to the RCSC. The RCSC will then distribute the clothes.

The campaign showed the love and care of the whole society to vulnerable groups, Tang said.

YANG Feng, marketing manager of the Sanliuyi Du company Ltd. said the company will hold another three or four similar campaigns later this year. — MNA/Xinhua

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**Brahimi says most Iraqis want UN help on transition**

**United Nations, 20 March —** Iraqis overwhelmingly want the United Nations to help Baghdad set up a transitional government and prepare for elections, top UN aide Lakhdar Brahimi said on Friday, dismissing reports Iraq had invited the world body only under US pressure.

While there are definitely Iraqis who have doubts about a UN role in the transition, “from everything we know, the overwhelming majority of the people of Iraq, within and outside of the Governing Council are really demanding and pressing the United Nations to come back again,” Brahimi told reporters.

He had been asked whether his planned imminent return to Baghdad as head of a UN political team had been soured by reports that Paul Bremer, head of the US-led occupation authority in Baghdad, had to pressure the 25-member Iraqi Governing Council to issue an invitation.

Brahimi said UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who stood by his side as he spoke, “has always said that we are not looking for a job, and we are not dying to go to Iraq.”

“And if the United Nations is not needed, that is perfect from our point of view. But I think the Iraqis in the Governing Council and out of the Governing Council are overwhelmingly demanding that the UN plays a role,” he said.

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**Pakistan’s fighter plane crashes**

**Islamabad, 20 March —** A fighter plane of the Pakistani Air Force crashed near the central Pakistani city of Jhang on Friday while on routine mission, according to a statement of the Air Force.

“The Pakistani Air Force regrets with regret that an F-7 fighter aircraft, while on a routine operational training mission, crashed 20 miles west of Jhang (Punjab Province),” it said.

The crash apparently occurred due to technical malfunction, it functioned.

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Filipino protesters display an anti-US placard during a protest outside the US embassy in Manila on 19 March, 2004. Dozens of anti-war activists protested on one-year anniversary of the US-led attack on Iraq. — Internet

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**Central America questions military role in Iraq**

**San Salvador (El Salvador), 20 March— Central America’s token military role in Iraq faces increased questioning by local politicians and residents wondering why 740 troops from the tropical isthmus are needed in the turmoil of the Middle East.

Largely unnoticed amid the violence in Iraq, soldiers from El Salvador and Honduras have been clearing mines and providing medical care in central Iraq since last year.

Their humanitarian work is an effort by some Central American countries to build on close trade and immigration ties with the United States, which has been eager to share the military burden in Iraq.

But a Nicaraguan troop contingent withdrawn in February complaining of a lack of funds and the 380-member Honduran light infantry unit is due to leave when its mandate finishes in July.

Replacement Honduran troops are unlikely to be sent.

A former rebel leader in El Salvador is threatening to bring home his country’s 360 troops if he wins the presidential election on Sunday.

“Of course we are going to pull them out. That is no surprise,” leftist candidate Schaffik Handal told a news conference on Friday.

Opinion polls show Handal trailing conservative Tony Saca who on Friday softened previous support for the continuation of Salvadoran forces in Iraq beyond the end of their original one-year term. ‘Tissomething that has to be revised when the time comes,’ he told Reuters.

Analysts say the incoming Spanish Socialist Prime Minister’s decision to withdraw Spain’s troops from Iraq if the United Nations does not take charge there by the end of June is alsoswaying the Central Americans, whose troops are under Spanish command in Iraq.

The events in Spain in recent days have cast doubts on the presence of the Central American troops in Iraq, said Salvadoran political scientist Napoleon Campos. The Central American troops have not been involved in major incidents in Iraq.

President Arnoldo Alemán and Panama do not have standing armies. Guatemala has not sent troops to Iraq. — MNA/Reuters
Iraq in the aftermath of US invasion

The worst attacks in Iraq

After US and allies invasion of Iraq on 20 March 2003, Iraqi people are facing many difficulties and remain hopeless. More and more Iraqis are becoming victims of the US-led invasion against Iraq.

Iraqis mourn for their relatives who died in an explosion in Baghdad.

Iraqis, carrying the wounded, run from the explosions in Kirkuk on 2 March 2004.

Iraqis view the scene of destroyed houses adjacent to Baghdad's Mount Lebanon hotel on 18 March 2004, after a powerful bomb blasted in the building in which 4 people were killed.

The worst attacks in Iraq

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Death toll</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>From 19-8-2003 to 23-2-2004</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2-3-2004</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17-3-2004</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18-3-2004</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>692</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Iraqi man carries a wounded boy as he runs away from the explosions in Kerbala on 2 March, 2004.
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day:
Tatmadaw always making efforts for national development in the interest of the people

Facts about Dawlan Bridge across Hlaingbwe River

- **Location**: Dawlan Village, Hlaingbwe Township, Kayin State
- **Length**: 1,000 feet
- **Width of motorway**: 13 feet and seven inches
- **Kind of the bridge**: Type Bailey (steel frame)
- **Permitted load**: 30 tons
- **Launching date**: 18-3-1998
- **Completion date**: 13-3-1999
- **Opening date**: 23-5-1999

A Tatmadaw of noble spirit and high morale


The Tatmadaw (Armed Forces) in perpetual service of the people

“As you, the Tatmadawmen, were born of the people, you are the Tatmadawmen of the people. Therefore, you are to serve the interest of the people when you have no combat and training duty. You will have to undertake the community welfare tasks in wherever regions you are, regarding those regions as your native places.”

It is the guidance Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe has given to the Tatmadawmen to engage in the community welfare tasks in his address delivered at the graduation parade of the 46th Intake of the Defence Services Academy. Thus, the Tatmadawmen are undertaking the development tasks all over the country when they have no combat and training duty.

The Tatmadawmen crushed the colonists’ hand in hand with the people, erecting a milestone of victory history. In addition, they have been safeguarding the nation’s independence and sovereignty, sacrificing lives, blood and sweat. Together with the people, they are carrying out public welfare tasks in the march towards a modern and developed nation.

As they were born of the people, they are serving the people’s interest.

Not only have they striven to regain independence and safeguarded the lives and property of the people, but have also built irrigation facilities for agriculture, reclaimed land and built roads and bridges. Moreover, they have carried out the task to develop the rural areas and remote border regions.

The people’s interest.

People, they are serving the developed nation.

The geographical condition of the nation permits rivers to flow from east to west or south to north in any region of the country.

Hence, the Government has been building bridges on a network of roads the length and breadth of the nation for the people’s interest. The nation’s bridge builders are Public Works, the Directorate of Myanma Railways and the Military Engineers.

Roads and bridges are the strength of the nation. In the past, the transport links run from the north to the south of the nation on the east of Ayeyawady River. But now, master plans have been laid for the convenience and satisfaction of the passengers. The geographical condition of the nation permits rivers to flow from east to west, or south to north in any region of the country. Hence, the Government has been building bridges on a network of roads the length and breadth of the nation for the people’s interest. The nation’s bridge builders are the Public Works, the Myanmar Railways and the Directorate of Military Engineers.

The Tatmadawmen were born of the people, they are serving the developed nation. Moreover, they have been safeguarding the nation’s bridge builders.

The Tatmadawmen have been erecting a milestone of victory history. In addition, they have been building bridges on a network of roads the length and breadth of the nation for the people’s interest. The nation’s bridge builders are Public Works, the Myanmar Railways and the Directorate of Military Engineers.

The geographical condition of the nation permits rivers to flow from east to west, or south to north in any region of the country. Hence, the Government has been building bridges on a network of roads the length and breadth of the nation for the people’s interest. The nation’s bridge builders are the Public Works, the Myanmar Railways and the Directorate of Military Engineers.

The Tatmadaw built the first facility, the Pathaung Bridge, on Myeik-Taninthayi-Kawthaung Highway in Myeik Township, Taninthayi Division. The bridge has facilitated the transport of towns and villages on the Yangon-

Bridges built by Tatmadawmen

The people of the nation travel or transport goods by land, water or air. Of the three means of transport, water transport consumes much time, while the cost of air transport is high. Hence the most reliable means of transport is the road transport. In this regard, motorways, railroads and bridges are required for the convenience and satisfaction of the passengers. The geographical condition of the nation permits rivers to flow from east to west, or south to north in any region of the country. Hence, the Government has been building bridges on a network of roads the length and breadth of the nation for the people’s interest. The nation’s bridge builders are the Public Works, the Myanmar Railways and the Directorate of Military Engineers.

The Tatmadaw built in the whole nation 21 large foot bridges it has built or is building, five have already been put into service, and another two are soon to be opened. The remaining four are under construction. As for the under-180-foot bridges we have built many bridges.

“Before the existence of the Dawlan, travelling from Hpa-an to Kawkareik in goodwill towards the people.

Ngamoeyik Bridge in Dagon Myothit (East) in Yangon Division, is the second bridge built by the Tatmadaw.

Our team interviewed head of the Ngamoeyik Bridge Project Maj Aung Maung Nyein Chan, head of the Ngamoeyik, the second bridge built by the Tatmadaw.

Mawlamyint-Ye-Dawe-Myeik-Taninthayi-Kawthaung Highway. As they are the sons and daughters of the people, they are always serving the public interest. They have always crushed the enemies trying to endanger the lives and property of the people.

The Tatmadaw continued to build bridges in Sagaing Division. It has built 21 large

(See page 9)
Poem
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

March, the month of Sun art

* When decayed, drying leaves herald summer
  Gantgaw, mango ready their sprouts
  The wind takes the mist in all directions
  Letpan and Pauk in bloom
  * When that crimson touches your heart
  There’s reminiscence of the past
  On Myanmar land they intruded, stayed
  Anti-fascist resistance spreads nationwide
  * In celebrating victory with resonance
  Everyone throughout Myanmar is involved
  Kayah, Kachin, Kayin and Shan
  Chin, Rakhine, Mon, Bamar
  In unity, they are of one mind.
  * With one mind, taking victory flowers repeatedly
  Will march together, will sacrifice life
  Toward regaining independence thoughts are fixed
  People’s Tatmadaw will lead
  No discrimination between hills and plains
  * For 59 years over patriotic Tatmadaw
  Has marched on doing public duty
  With zeal and zest, in nobility
  The red victory flag skyward
  Ever-fluttering, it stays.
  * With mind set on marching toward the future
  Peaceful, developed and flourishing Myanmar
  We’ll build together, this modern beauty
  Dependent only on strength within
  Let’s do that organized in solidarity
  Brethren all rejoice together till eternity
  We’ll work for flourishing of the seven-step Road Map.

Poem
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

March, the month of Sun art

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Bridges built or being built by the Tatmadaw

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Bridge</th>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Length (Feet)</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Dawlan Hlaingbwe</td>
<td></td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ngamoeyeik Yangon</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Pahtolon Myeik</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Pahtolon Kani</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Lapin Kani</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Tein Mingin</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>under construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Myoma Kani</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>under construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Yonebin Lewe</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>under construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ahsonchaung Tatkon</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>under construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ngalaikchaung Pyinmana</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>under construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Hsinthechaung Pyinmana</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>under construction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Emergence of a modern…

(from page 1)

Next, the Prime Minister and party planted a Tawin coconut sapling at the entrance to the stadium to mark the opening of the sports facility.

After that, the Prime Minister unveiled the stone inscription of the stadium and sprinkled scented water on it and the first session of the opening ceremony ended.

Next, the second session of the opening ceremony continued at the stadium.

Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing made a speech. He said that in accord with the uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation out of the four social objectives, the opening of new modern stadium in Muse, the border town in Shan State (North) is an honour for both the local people and the State.

The new stadium is the fruitful result of the guidance of Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt which calls for building a new sports facility to be in conformity with development of Muse, he noted.

The Government spent over K 600 million on construction of the sports facility which can hold 2,140 spectators on each side of the centre of the town and it was difficult to upgrade it. Therefore, the opening of such a new stadium in Muse is an effective representation of the Head of State and much assistance of the Prime Minister, he said.

He said old sports ground was in the narrow region of the city and it was not possible to develop the sports for Shan State and the nation, he stressed.

Shan State (North) has been able to produce 15 athletes representing the nation and they are now participating in the international sports events, he disclosed.

He said that Shan State (North) is to strive to produce more new generation athletes by holding the sports events in accord with the programmes laid down by the Ministry of Sports and the State.

Next, Minister for Sports made a speech. He said that the government is making all-out efforts for the emergence of a new modern and developed nation. At such a time, priority is being given to improvement of the sports standard like the wellowers, the athletes are to strive to be able to bring glory to the nation with sporting spirit.

The new Muse Stadium opened today will be able to produce many athletes and contribute to enhancing the friendship between Myanmar and China through sports as it is situated at the border of the two countries.

In conclusion, the minister called on the local people, staff of the Ministry of Sports and members of local sports and physical education committee and local authorities to safeguard the sports facility for its durability.

Next the Prime Minister delivered a speech. He said opening of such a new stadium in Muse is an effective development for uplift of health and fitness of local people and for urban development of Muse.

He said it is true that emergence of a modern stadium contributes towards the realization of the objectives on raising of national sport standard of the government.

He said the Union of Myanmar is a Union formed with over 100 national races. The government is laying emphasis on harmonious development of all parts of the Union and enjoyment of better foundations on regional development by all national people.

The government made endeavours for reconsolidation of national solidarity in border areas that lagged behind in development due to lack of regional security and peace in the past. With regional peace and stability the government built better foundations for transport, economic and regional development with greater momentum, he said.

He said Muse is a border town and border trade has developed well there in accord with the market-oriented economic system. Therefore it is an economically and socially significant region, he added.

He said the government implemented systematic plans for development of Muse so that progress has been made in regional development including national solidarity, regional peace and tranquility and transport. In a short time, Muse has greatly changed and developed, he said.

Now Muse has become a city with modern high-rise buildings, hotels, departmental store of international standard which are characteristics of a city.

He said old sports ground was in the narrow region of the centre of the town and it was difficult to upgrade it. Therefore, an urban development project was drafted. He said he permitted to build a modern stadium with stands and a 400-metre track during his inspection tour in Muse in March 2003.

Emergence of a modern stadium is a significant characteristic of developed Muse being a town bordering the People’s Republic of China, it is necessary for the town to improve its standard in accord with the development of the neighbouring country so that it can promote dignity of the nation and its people, he said. He pointed out that it is important to preserve traditional culture and customs.

He urged officials and local people to make efforts for strengthening the existing bilateral friendship, enhancing bilateral cooperation for common interest and improving border trade equally.

He spoke on raising of sport standard of Muse District and turning out brilliant athletes. He said southern Shan State produced a lot of athletes who bring honour to the nation. He believed that the town will also produce such brilliant athletes after emergence of a modern stadium.

He urged officials to make endeavours for turning out outstanding athletes in accord with the lofty aim, “Myanmar sports—the world to conquer”.

In conclusion, he urged them to make progress of Muse, to maintain regional peace and stability and strengthen national solidarity and to improve socio-economic life of local people based on patriotism and Union spirit. He wished for success of the athletes of the new stadium.

Next, Chairman U Sai Tun Aye of So So Pyay Pyay Co Ltd presented K 20 million—10 million each for education and sport sectors to the Prime Minister.

Chairman U Sai Tun Aye also presented K 10 million for education fund of Shan State (North) to Li-Gen Aung Hwee and commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing.

He handed over related documents to Deputy Director-General of Shan State produced a lot of athletes who bring honour to the nation. He believed that the town will also produce such brilliant athletes after emergence of a modern stadium.

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Demonstration and lecture on Myanmar traditional dance held

YANGON, 20 March— The demonstration and lecture on Myanmar traditional dance, organized by Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation (Cultural Working Group), was held at City Hall, here, this afternoon. Present were Vice-Presidents of the federation Daw Khin Lay Thet and Daw Than Nwe and officials, Patron of the Yangon Division Organization for Women’s Affairs Daw Khin Thei Huy and guests.

Vice-President Daw Than Nwe spoke on the occasion. Adviser Prof Daw Khin Nu gave lectures on culture of Myanmar dance and Academy Daw Nwe Nwe San performed dances. Later, Vice-President Daw Than Nwe presented gifts to Prof Daw Khin Nu, Academy Daw Nwe Nwe San and leader of the music troupe U Khin Maung Tin. — MNA

**Economic Working Group of Myanmar Women’s Affairs**

YANGON, 20 March— The Economic Working Group of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation met with those in charge of township economic working groups in Yangon Division at MICT Park on Hlne Universities’ Campus in Hlne Township this morning. Present on the occasion were Vice-Presidents Daw Khin Lay Thet, Daw Than Nwe and Daw Khin Khin Win, General Secretary Prof Dr Daw Khin Aye Win and Secretariat members, Founder of Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Association Prof (Retd) Daw Yi Yi Myint and officials.

First, Economic Working Group leader Daw Khin Kyi Myint and Professor (Retd) Daw Yi Yi Myint gave speeches. Officials reported on future tasks of the working group. Next, those present took part in the discussions. Later, Daw Khin Kyi Myint gave concluding remarks. — MNA

**Sanitation tasks carried out for cleanliness of Yangon City**

YANGON, 20 March— Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of YCDC Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin visited Tarmadawmen, members of Myanmar Police Force, staff of Yangon City Development Committee and the people carrying out sanitation tasks to hail the 59th Anniversary of the Armed Forces Day in Yangon municipal area this morning.

The commander and the mayor inspected dredging of the drain and tasks for proper drainage from U Wisara Road to Padomma Sports Ground in Sangyoung Township and attended to the needs.

Next, they looked into unblocking of drains along Anawratha Street in Pabedan, Latha and Lannawdaw Townships. They also inspected sanitation tasks in Mingala Taungnyunt Township and gave instructions on sanitation tasks and dredging and unblocking of drains to be carried out under the supervision of respective officials.

Similar tasks were carried out in Kamayut, Dagon, Mayangyan, Hline, Kyimyindaing, Serekhan and Bahan townships in the same morning.

Afterwards, the commander and the mayor inspected tasks for upgrading of Kandawgyi Gardens and left necessary instructions. — MNA

**Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division holds meeting**

YANGON, 20 March—The Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division held its work coordination meeting at the meeting hall of All Private Bus Lines Control Committee (Yangon Division) Head Office on Layaunskant Street in Tamway Township yesterday evening, with an address by Chairman of the Supervisory Committee Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Commander Col Wai Lwin and the military region commanders, the station commanders, Secretary of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Lt Col Myint Kyi and members, the Supervisory Committee members, the Chairman of District Peace and Development Councils, the registrars of the universities and colleges in Yangon and officials.

First, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe gave instructions on measures to be taken by members of the Supervisory Committee for the convenience of the people who are travelling downtown Yangon and from Yangon to other parts of the nation.

Next, members of the Supervisory Committee reported on measures taken for ensuring smooth and secure transport for the people who are travelling downtown Yangon and in other states and divisions by car, train, air and sea, and for the people who are commuting downtown Yangon by bus, circular train, ship and powered boat, the registrars of the universities and colleges and officials on arrangements to be made by the Supervisory Committee for the convenience of teachers and students; and the chairman of bus lines running in Yangon Division on steps taken for enabling drivers and conductors of the respective bus lines to follow the prescribed traffic rules.

The meeting ended with the concluding remarks by Chairman of the Supervisory Committee Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe. — MNA

Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein cordially greets a delegation member at the dinner. — MNA

**PRC delegation visits Mindhamma Hill**

YANGON, 20 March—The visiting Chinese writers delegation headed by Chairman of the Writers Association of the People’s Republic of China Mr Wang Chenglu and party by Managing Director U Myint Thein of PPE and leader of the Chinese writers delegation Mr Wang Chenglu gave speeches. Later, the deputy minister and guests were served with the dinner. — MNA

**Miwaf economic working group leader Daw Khin Kyi Myint delivers an address at the meeting. — MNA**

**Dinner hosted to Chinese writers delegation**

YANGON, 20 March— Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein attended a dinner hosted to Chairman of Writers Association of the People’s Republic of China Mr Wang Chenglu and party by Managing Director U Myint Thein of Publishing Enterprise at the Central Hotel on Bogyoke Aung San Street yesterday evening.

Also present at the dinner were managing directors of enterprises and directors-general of department, advisers, officials, the chairman of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association and guests. Managing Director U Myint Thein of PPE and leader of the Chinese writers delegation Mr Wang Chenglu gave speeches. Later, the deputy minister and guests were served with the dinner. — MNA

**Miwaf economic working group leader Daw Khin Kyi Myint delivers an address at the demonstration and lecture. — MNA**

**Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division meets**

YANGON, 20 March—The visiting delegation of enterprises and directors-general of department, advisers, officials, the chairman of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association and guests. Managing Director U Myint Thein of PPE and leader of the Chinese writers delegation Mr Wang Chenglu gave speeches. Later, the deputy minister and guests were served with the dinner. — MNA

**Punishment meted out to instructions on measures to be taken by Yangon University and colleges, Chairmen of District Peace and Development Councils, Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Thein Lin left necessary instructions. — MNA

**Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division meets**

YANGON, 20 March—The supervisory committee for ensuring smooth and secure transport in Yangon Division held its work coordination meeting at the meeting hall of all private bus lines control committee (Yangon Division) head office on Layauktan street in Tamway township yesterday evening, with an address by chairman of the supervisory committee chairman of Yangon Division peace and development council commander of Yangon command Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

Also present on the occasion were deputy commander col Wai Lwin and the military region commanders, the station commanders, secretary of Yangon Division peace and development council lieutenant-colonel Myint Kyi and members, the supervisory committee members, the chairman of district peace and development councils, the registrars of the universities and colleges in Yangon and officials.
Turkey has been continuing to take steps to reach its target of full EU membership with the same determination. We believe that the Turkish, friend and ally, Germany, would maintain its pioneering role in the continuation of this process without any problems, Gul said.

Describing Germany as the biggest economic and commercial partner of Turkey, Gul said: “We think that we should seek ways to further improve our comprehensive and multilateral cooperation.”

“If we believe that meetings held under the Turkish German Cooperation Council will help us reach positive consequences in regard to problems about sectors and new cooperation opportunities,” he said.

China water diversion project registered as trademark

Beijing, 20 March—“Nan (South) Shui (Water) Bei (North) Diao (Diversion)”, a proper noun in Chinese widely known among the general public for China’s massive South-North Water Diversion Project, has been registered as a trademark for a kind of drinking water.

Beijing’s Beijing Morning Post reported that a drinking water company in central China’s Hubei Province has advertised its products in another Beijing-based newspaper, which says “the ‘Nan Shui Bei Dia’ drinking water will be diverted to Beijing within 30 days,” with “Nan Shui Bei Dia” being attached to an exclusive symbolic trademark.

However, this practice was questioned by some lawyers, who said it was not “proper” to use a “proper” name to indicate a key national water project as a trademark and the advertisement was misleading.

The Danjiangkou Water Resources Company, manufacturer of the “Nan Shui Bei Dia” drinking water, applied for the trademark to the Trademark Office under China’s General Administration for Industry and Commerce via the Hubei Provincial Trademark Office (HPTO), the Beijing Morning Post said.

According to the HPTO, China’s Trademark Law does not stipulate that the name of a water project is not allowed to be registered as a trademark and the national trademark office has actually issued a certificate for the mark in January, 2003 to the company to confirm the validity of the trademark “Nan Shui Bei Dia”.

Meanwhile, the HPTO said so long as the drinking water is indeed from the Danjiangkou, as the advertisement goes, and reaches standards of health departments, its advertisement cannot be said to be deceptive.

“We should not interfere with the lawful business of a company”, the HPTO added.

The national trademark office said the registration conformed to legal procedures, so the company was granted a certificate.

An official named Chen with the general office of the South-North Water Diversion Project told Xinhua that the drinking water company “has nothing to do with the national water project” and that he hopes the national trademark office would withdraw the trademark.

So far, the Danjiangkou Water Resources Company has not been reached for comment.

China’s ambitious South-North Water Diversion Project, expected to require a total investment of about 486 billion yuan (60 billion US dollars), covers three sections, with the goal of relieving the country’s water shortage by diverting water from the Yangtze River.

Chinese universities to attract more foreign students

Beijing, 20 March—China’s education industry needs to attract more foreign students despite the increasing number of such students in recent years, according to Chinese Vice-Minister of Education Zhang Xinhong.

Chinese universities receive less foreign students than their foreign peers who can provide a better education for them, Zhang said at a Press conference here Thursday.

Statistics show that the ratio of foreign students attending China’s most prestigious Beijing University and Qinghua University is 2.4 per cent and two per cent of the total enrollment respectively, while the average per cent for world renowned universities is 20 per cent.

This situation requires China’s universities to enhance their measures, Zhang said.

Beside high-profile publicity campaigns, he suggested universities should design programmes more tailored to students with different backgrounds and purposes and in the fields which foreign students are most interested in.

Zhang said universities should help those students who come to study China’s legal system and economic development and hope to find internship opportunities in local organizations.

“To provide part-time job opportunities for them will be a better way, because we want to be engaged in real life,” Zhang said.

Once prohibiting foreign students to live off campus, China lifted the ban recently and more foreign students now can be integrated into local communities easily.

According to Zhang, China has established a comprehensive database for foreign students, administered by the Ministry of Education, local governments and the universities.

There is a special organization to design Chinese-teaching programmes for students from different areas of the world.

Chinese-invested $2.4b in infrastructure in western region

Beijing, 20 March—About 200 billion yuan (24.3 billion US dollars) of investment was spent in infrastructure projects in west China region in 2003, occupying 55.2 per cent of the country’s total annual investment to the region.

According to the report, the region spent 44.4 billion yuan (US dollars) in 2003, including 76 key projects.

Eight key projects were completed last year, including three road construction projects, an airport extension in Shaanxi Province and four west-east electricity transmission projects.

The gigantic and technically challenging Qinghai-Tibet Railway has stretched its track length to 317 kilometres, with 195 kilometres newly finished last year.

Another significant project is China’s west-east natural gas pipeline project, starting from Tarin in the Xinjiang Uyugur Autonomous Region to Shanghai.

The 3,900 kilometre gas pipeline used 11.65 billion yuan (1.4 billion US dollars) last year, and brought the total fulfilled investment to 21.6 billion yuan (2.6 billion US dollars), accounting for 49.7 per cent of the project’s total investment.
Experts say inhalant abuse rebounds among US youths

WASHINGTON,  20 March—The effects of a 1990s advertising campaign credited with reducing inhalant abuse among children are starting to wear off, and a new generation is at risk, US experts said.

While abuse of many other drugs such as marijuana is declining, young teens are starting to experiment again with inhalants such as glue or nail polish, government and non-profit group officials said.

They said they will renew efforts to warn parents and children about the dangers of “huffing” or “sniffing”, which can kill or leave users brain-damaged for life.

Those most likely to use them are young teens, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America said in a report.

The Partnership help organize an advertising campaign in 1995 that targeted children aged nine to 17 and their parents. Groups including the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration agreed it helped reduce inhalant use through its messages stressing the dangers of huffing.

“Today’s sixth-graders, who were too young to benefit from the campaigns of the 1990s, are now exposed to inhalant abuse as they enter middle school and are unaware of its risks,” the Partnership’s report reads.

Inhalants, from glue to spray-can computer keyboards, have always been the drug of choice for the younger set, said Dr Nora Volkov, head of the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

“They are widely available. They are cheap.” Volkov told a news conference: “They are highly addictive. They are very toxic.”

They can kill immediately by causing fatal heart arrhythmias, asphyxiating the user by sucking the oxygen from their lungs, or causing them to vomit and then suffocate.

Long-term abuse damages the brain’s white matter, first interfering with the ability to concentrate and later causing long-term cognitive damage.

**Austrakian farmers winning battle against locusts**

SYDNEY, 20 March—Australia is winning the battle against millions of marauding locusts, but the insects are laying eggs in preparation to attack ripe winter crops in six months’ time, officials said on Friday.

“I think we’re getting on top of it,” said Larry McHugh, chairman of the Australian Plague Locust Commission (APLC).

Aerial spraying will move to Cooamboon, 250 miles northwest of Sydney, on Saturday, as locust fighters attempt to knock out as many insects as possible before they lay eggs for the next generation.

But he noted reports of “test drilling” by locusts around the town of Dubbo, near Cootamundra, which was once invaded by the locusts this week.

Eggs laid by the locusts in holes drilled into the dry, baked earth would need rain to survive, he said, but if they did, they would hatch in October and be swarming by November.

So far the locusts have eaten into summer crops of oats and agricultural produce.

**China’s individual investors buying more on fund market**

BEIJING, 20 March—China’s individual investors are increasingly turning to mutual funds as a major investment channel, boosting the country’s fund sales.

Two securities investment fund management companies, the Citic Funds—Classic Allocation Fund and the Fortis Haitong Income Fund, netted over 10 billion yuan (1.2 billion US dollars) each from their sales, 80 per cent of which was purchased by individual investors, according to sources from the two companies.

Individual investors used to play a major role in buying fund units, but now, “individual investors have become the main buying force”, said Zhao Hongyu, marketing manager of the Citic Funds Management Co. Ltd.

The government continues to push the opening-up and stable development of China’s stock market, individual investors, who are at times victimized by bad corporate governance, in-house trading production, finance, telecommunication and insurance would be popular with fund management companies.

Against inflation expectations and low interest rates at present, part of the 11.06 trillion yuan (1.31 trillion US dollars) of individual bank deposits has also started to flow to the stock market via fund purchase.

The official media believe eight funds issued last month, including the Citic Fund and the Fortis Fund that reached a record 2.8 billion yuan (354 million US dollars), are also popular among individual investors, whose fund buying desire is boosted by an average 20 per cent economic return of last year’s fund market.

It’s common in foreign countries to put personal assets in the hands of professional institutions. Some in China have begun to accept the investment mode.

Against inflation expectations and low interest rates at present, part of the 11.06 trillion yuan (1.31 trillion US dollars) of individual bank deposits has also started to flow to the stock market via fund purchase.

We are looking at a shower of silver bullets,” McCulloch is calling on farmers to be vigilant, not lay eggs and hatchlings, and use free chemicals supplied by the Department of Agriculture.

AFLC (fixed-wing aircraft and spotter helicopters will assist the Wide Bay, 900 farmacias in Queensland to New South Wales (NSW) and into South Australia.

“In the afternoon the sky is just a silver haze,” Narnowie farmer and livestock agent Jason Hartin told the Land. “When the sun is over them you’d swear you were looking at a shower of silver bullets.”

**2.17 lakh turtles come for mass nesting along Orissa Coast**

KONARKA (Orissa), 20 March—An estimated 2.17 lakh endangered olive ridley sea turtles had visited the Nasi-II Island off Orissa’s (east Indian state) Gahirmatha Coast for mass nesting during the first week of March, official sources said.

The turtles, proving the sceptics wrong, had begun arriving along Gahirmatha Coast, India’s second largest rookery for these species, for mass nesting much to the joy of turtle watchers across the globe.

The sources said the threatened marine species, given the same protection as extended to tigers under country’s wildlife provisions, literally invaded the tranquil beach at Nasi-II in large numbers for mass nesting. By annual phenomenon otherwise called “Arribada” in Spanish.

The Divisional Forest Officer, Rajguraj Mangrove (Wildlife) Forest Division, Anup Kumar Nayak, who monitored the Arribada, said the olive ridleys arrived en masse at Nasi-II Island on 1 March night for laying eggs on the sandy beach. The arrivals continued up to March 8 night. While nearly 5,000 turtles turned up on March 1 to lay eggs, the figure shot up on the following days. An estimated 1.80 lakh female ridleys crawled onto the tranquil Nasi-II beach on March 2 and 3. About 32,000 turtles came to lay eggs during the last five days.

The Nasi-II Island being located close to a sensitive deforestation installation in the Wheeler’s Island is free from human interference and protection.

The defence personnel had lent their active support in ensuring safe mass nesting working with forest staff who maintained vigil on the nesting site. —MNA/PTI

**Doctor says Muslim veil could cut cancer risk**

Riyadh, 20 March—Veiled women are protecting more than their modesty — they are also less prone to noise and throat cancers because their veils screen out viruses, a Canadian doctor was quoted on Friday saying.

Dr Nasser Kamal Malik, the Saudi Arabian, one of many who wear a full face-covering veil, suffered a low rate of the Epstein Barr Virus which causes nasopharyngeal cancer.

“The hijab (veil) is a protection against upper respiratory tract infection,” the Saudi Gazette quoted Malaker as saying. “In the kingdom, nasopharyngeal throat cancer is very low among women as compared to men.”

“It is interesting how a very simple social custom can have a profound effect on a human’s life,” said Malaker, head of radiation oncology at King Abdul Aziz Hospital in the conservative Muslim kingdom. — MNA/Reuters

**China’s individual investors buying more on fund market**

**India tests nuclear-capable “Prithvi” missile**

NEW DELHI, 20 March—India test-fired on Friday its short range nuclear-capable “Prithvi” missile, which is seen as a deterrent to neighbouring Pakistan, the Press Trust of India reported.

A Defence Ministry official said a test of the surface-to-surface Prithvi had been planned for this month as part of a regular series, but he had no immediate details.

The test came shortly after Pakistan tested on 9 March a ballistic missile, the Shilen II, which it says is capable of delivering nuclear warheads to all the cities in India.

PTI said the Indian missile, tested from an island in the Bay of Bengal, had a range of between 93 miles and 124 miles.

The two nations, which began peace talks last month, are expected to find more than half a century of hostility, carried out under underground nuclear tests in 1998 and have since been developing missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads. — MNA/Reuters

**THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Sunday, 21 March, 2004 13**
**Leeds United takeover announcement expected Friday**

**LONDON,** 20 March— Debt-laden Leeds United is expected to make an announcement about its financial future later on Friday, a source close to the Premier League club said.

The club has been in lengthy negotiations with a consortium of local businessmen.

A deal would end uncertainty over Leeds’ future after it announced in December it needed to find a buyer to avoid going into financial administration.

Leeds has racked up debts of around 80 million pounds (146.5 million US dollars) and reported a financial loss of almost 50 million pounds in the year to June 2003.

The problems date back to a spending spree on players under former chairman Peter Ridsdale and ex-coach David O’Leary, their confidence buoyed by Leeds’ progress to the Champions League semifinals in 2001.

Forced to cut back on its players’ wage bill, the club is facing relegation this season. It is bottom of the standings with 22 points from 28 games.

**Man United shocked, Ferdinand “devastated”**

**MANCHESTER (England),** 20 March— Manchester United expressed shock on Friday at the failure of Rio Ferdinand’s appeal against an eight-month ban and the defender admitted he was “devastated”.

An independent appeal commission on Thursday upheld Ferdinand’s suspension for missing a drugs test, shattering his hopes of playing for United again this season and representing England at the European Championship in Portugal.

“I’m disappointed, everyone is. There’s a sort of sense of shock about it,” Ferguson told a news conference.

“We are not saying anything at the moment, simply because we want to absorb all that was said yesterday, the findings, and take time to come to our own conclusions,” he added.

Ferdinand, who missed the drugs test at United’s Carrington training ground in September, had hoped to get a reduction in his suspension and told The Sun newspaper on Friday he was “absolutely devastated” by the verdict.

“The main thing keeping me going throughout this has been the possibility of playing again this season. This verdict has taken that hope away from me.”

The confirmation of Ferdinand’s ban means England’s defence has been breached even before they kick a ball at Euro 2004.

Ferdinand’s partnership with Sol Campbell was the cornerstone of England’s run to the 2002 World Cup quarterfinals.

Coach Sven-Goran Eriksson had made no secret of his wish to see Ferdinand’s ban reduced so he could take him to Portugal.

“If he could have a lesser punishment, I should be happy,” a hopeful Eriksson told Sky Sports News in the run-up to Thursday’s decision.

The Swede faces a tough task to find a replacement for the world’s most expensive defender, with Chelsea’s John Terry the most likely candidate.

Terry may lack flair going forward with the ball but was solid when it counted most, when he replaced Ferdinand for the 0-0 draw with Turkey in Istanbul that booked England’s place in the finals.

Terry has improved hugely in the new look Chelsea side this season and he can only benefit from his run to second place in the Premier League and a Champions League quarterfinal slot.

Terry has also worn the Chelsea captain’s armband frequently this season. With Ferdinand’s absence confirmed, his place alongside Campbell appears almost certain for England’s Euro 2004 opener against France on June 13.

**Ferguson looks to Spurs match to spark United recovery**

**MANCHESTER (England),** 20 March— Alex Ferguson hopes a victory against Tottenham Hotspur on Saturday will send a message to the rest of the Premier League that things are back to normal at Old Trafford.

The English champions have won only two of their last eight league matches, a record that has seen them slip 12 points behind leaders Arsenal and all but out of the title race.

United have 10 league matches remaining in the season, plus an FA Cup semifinal against Arsenal and, if they get through that, the final of the world’s oldest competition.

**UEFA reject Wales appeal over Russian dope case**

**LONDON,** 20 March— UEFA have turned down an appeal by Wales who wanted to be awarded a place at Euro 2004 after Russian midfielder Yegor Titov failed a drugs test.

UEFA banned the player and an extra player for a banned stimulant after Real’s Santiago Bernabeu told Real that the extra payment had been made as part of the deal.

The original transfer agreement had included Argentine Solari refused to move to move as part of the deal.

The original transfer agreement had included Argentine Solari in part-exchange, prompting Inter to make a formal complaint to FIFA claiming they were entitled to additional money for the Brazilian international.

CAS said Real had requested the annulment of FIFA’s decision four days ago. The appeal process would take up to four months and the result would remain confidential.

Ronaldo, 27, who joined Real on a four-year deal in 2002, signed a two-year contract extension earlier this month, saying he expects to see out his playing career at the club.— MNA/Reuters

The important thing is to get our ship in order and that is by winning football matches, and that is what we are expected to do,” Ferguson said.

“I’m trying to get back to a fit squad and in the process also get the confidence of the team back up. And training helps in that respect... It’s been very positive.

“You have to do that in training, reinforce the good habits they’ve always had, to encourage them and tell them that they are good.”

Along with suspensions to defenders Gary Neville and Rio Ferdinand, Ferguson has also faced injury problems in recent weeks and there is little sign of that easing on Saturday.

South African Quinton Fortune (knee) is definitely out and there are doubts over striker Louis Saha (achilles), captain Roy Keane (hamstring) as well as fellow midfielders Eric Djemba-Djemba, Kleberson and Cristiano Ronaldo.

**Real appeal over extra Ronaldo transfer fee**

**LAUSANNE (Switzerland),** 20 March— Real Madrid have appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to overturn FIFA’s decision ordering the Spanish giants to pay Inter Milan a 10 million-euro settlement over the transfer of Ronaldo, CAS said on Friday.

In November, world soccer’s governing body FIFA told Real that the extra payment should be made to Inter on top of the 15 million-euro fee after Real’s Santiago Solari refused to move to part of the deal.

The original transfer agreement had included Argentine Solari in part-exchange, prompting Inter to make a formal complaint to FIFA claiming they were entitled to additional money for the Brazilian international.

CAS said Real had requested the annulment of FIFA’s decision four days ago. The appeal process would take up to four months and the result would remain confidential.

Ronaldo, 27, who joined Real on a four-year deal in 2002, signed a two-year contract extension earlier this month, saying he expects to see out his playing career at the club.— MNA/Reuters

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**LONDON,** 20 March— UEFA have turned down an appeal by Wales who wanted to be awarded a place at Euro 2004 after Russian midfielder Yegor Titov failed a drugs test.

UEFA banned the player and an extra player for a banned stimulant after Real’s playoff match against Wales in November in Moscow.

Wales drew the first leg 0-0 in Moscow, a match Titov did not play in.

However, he played in the second leg which Russia won 1-0. “The Appeals Body based its decision in particular on the failure by the Welsh FA to present evidence of any implication of the Football Union of Russia in the alleged doping infringement,” a UEFA statement said on Friday.

“I’m trying to get back to a fit squad and in the process also get the confidence of the team back up. And training helps in that respect... It’s been very positive.

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**Lindsay Davenport follows through on a forehand return to spark United recovery**

**Manchester (England), 20 March—** Lindsay Davenport followed through on a forehand return by her opponent to spark United recovery.
Emergence of a modern stadium...

(from page 10)

After attending their needs, the Prime Minister handed over an address, saying that as Muse is sharing border areas with the People’s Republic of China and Myanmar, the national personnel in Muse are to lay emphasis on promoting bilateral relationship and cooperation. At the same time, friendly relationship and economic cooperation are to be enhanced between the Union of Myanmar and PRC. As such, departmental personnel discharging duties in the border areas are to strive for more flourishing of bilateral relationship between the two countries. Efforts are to be made for correctly and promptly carrying out tasks so as to share mutual interest in the border areas.

Regarding the agreements of management of border regions between the two countries, the management of cooperation tasks are to be undertaken at the basic level. As Muse is a district level, the two sides will have to execute all concerns through the departments. Personnel officials are to go right down to grass-roots level and support the people to manage affairs to attend to the requirements of the people.

Similarly, the problems which cannot be solved at the basic level are to be submitted to above levels. The committees formed in respective sectors are to strive for achieving success with concerted efforts and collective leadership so as to have progress in their townships and districts. If arrangements are to be made to fulfill requirements of the people after realizing natural conditions of the rural areas, personnel can put in trust to the villages and the local national races and local people welcomed them.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Maung Aung, who accompanied the Prime Minister and party visiting Tiloka-Khaw Ya Pagoda on Yaykan Hill in Lashio, made a presentation on Tiloka-Khaw Ya Pagoda. The Head of the Tiloka-Khaw Ya Pagoda, Dr. Than Htwe Tun, welcomed them.

With the occasion, Director of Shan State Development Affairs Committee U Kyee Hlaing welcomed the visitors including the Prime Minister. The visitors then entered the Tiloka-Khaw Ya Pagoda and made a donation to the pagoda funds.

Next, they arrived at the Shwe Kyahri Hnyun. Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Maung Aung, who accompanied the Prime Minister, met with 70 staff at Shan State (North) Immigration and National Registration Department yesterday evening. At the meeting, the deputy minister elaborated on the tasks for accomplishment of the 12 objectives, the State’s seven-point policy programme and original tasks.

MNA

WEATHER

Saturday, 20 March, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers has been isolated in Kachin State, upper Sagain and Yanunthu Divisions and weather has been generally fair in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States, Mandalay, Sagain, Ayyarwady and Tannahthu Divisions, (6°C) above normal in Kayin State and about normal in the remaining areas. Significant day temperature were 2°C each in Mibun, Maing and Hpa-an.

Maximum temperature on 19-3-2004 was 39.6°C (103°F). Minimum temperature on 20-3-2004 was 17.6°C (64°F). Relative humidity at 9-30 hrs MST on 20-3-2004 was 76%.

Total sun shine hours on 19-3-2004 was (9.5) hours approximately.

Rainfall on 20-3-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 up to 20-3-2004 at Yangon Airport and nil at Kaba-Aye and central Yangon.

Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 30 mph from Southeast at (18:30) hours MST on 19-3-2004.

Bay inferece: Weather is partly cloudy in the South Bay and fairer elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 21-3-2004: Isolated rain or thundershowers are likely in Kachin State, upper Sagain and Yanunthu Divisions, weather will be generally fair in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Isolated rain or thundershowers are likely in Southern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 21-3-2004: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 21-3-2004: Fairly clear.

Summary of forecasts recorded at 12:00 noon for 19-3-2004:

Mandalay: (3°C) above normal at 12:00 noon.

Mawlamyine: (4°C) above normal.

Mawlamyine: (3°C) above normal.

Mawlamyine: (2°C) above normal.

Mawlamyine: (1°C) below normal.

Mawlamyine: (0°C) below normal.

Mawlamyine: (5°C) above normal.

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Mawlamyine: (81°C) above normal.

Mawlamyine: (82°C) above normal.

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Mawlamyine: (90°C) above normal.

Mawlamyine: (91°C) above normal.
Secretary-2 inspects factories in Shwepaukkan Myothit and North Okkalapa Township

Yangon, 20 March — Chairman of Myanmar War Veterans Organization Central Organizing Committee Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspected workshops and factories run by MWVO and Directorate of Resettlement in Shwepaukkan Myothit and North Okkalapa Township this afternoon.

Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, accompanied by Vice-Chairman of MWVO Central Organizing Committee Vice-Admiral (Retd) Kyi Min and officials, arrived at industrial zone in Shwepaukkan Myothit this afternoon. They were welcomed by member of MWVO Central Organizing Committee Director of Resettlement of the Ministry of Defence Maj-Gen Aung Thein and officials.

Staff Officer (Grade-I) of the Directorate of Resettlement Lt-Col Aung Gyi reported on area and location of factories under MWVO, investment and tasks being carried out, finished products of the factories, markets and factories to be built.

Director of Resettlement of the Ministry of Defence Maj-Gen Aung Thein gave a supplementary report. The minister inspected workshops in Shwepaukkan Myothit and North Okkalapa industrial zone. The Secretary-2 then gave instructions and left there.—MNA

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than tours Rakhine State

Yangon, 20 March — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by officials, left here by air and arrived at Thandwe in Rakhine State yesterday morning. They were welcomed at the airport by Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Chairman Western Command Commander Maj-Gen Maung Oo, Col Myint Soe of Taungup Station, local authorities and officials.

Together with Commander Maj-Gen Maung Oo and Col Myint Soe, they proceeded to Kyentieshi, Gwa Township, Thandwe District. There, officials reported on area, organizational set-up of Rakhine town development, agriculture and water supply. The commander gave a supplementary report. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than fulfilled the requirements and gave instructions on regional development tasks.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party inspected arrangements for construction of circular road. They looked into Kyentieshi People’s Hospital and Police Station and attended to the needs.

Afterwards, they inspected the Ngapali oil palm farm (branch) of Myanmar Perennial Crops Enterprise under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation near Kyunyo Village, Thandwe Township. They attended the presenting of a computer set donated by the State Peace and Development Council to Kyunyaky Village affiliated basic education high school in Thandwe Township.

On the occasion, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than delivered a speech. In his speech, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than said that in its attempt to build up a modern developed nation, the government has been implementing the five rural development tasks for progress of rural and urban regions. In realizing rural education promotion plan, measures are being taken for ensuring enrolment of all school-going-age children and upgrading of basic education schools. Multimedia teaching centres are being opened at the schools with the sponsorship of wellwishers under the leadership of the State. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than elaborated on necessary assistance rendered by the government for rural development.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than presented the computer set to the school officials, and cordially greeted those present.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than viewed the 75-acre pepper plantation and gave instructions.

Manager of Myanmar Agriculture Service U Hla Maung who accompanied Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than, disseminated pepper cultivation methods to local farmers.

During the inspection tour, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspected Thandwe-Kyeinthal section of Thandwe-Gwa Road Project.—MNA

River water pumping project, paper mill inspected

Yangon, 20 March — Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin and officials inspected Kyonzoke river water pumping project in Maubin Township this morning. Officials reported on the site for construction, rise and full of river water and the site for digging canal. The Minister made arrangements for the project.

The Minister and party inspected the site, the main canal and the site for the lake. The project lies on Kyonzoke River near Kyonzoke Village. On completion of the project, it will irrigate 9,000 acres of cultivable lands.

The minister went to the site of Maubin Paper Mill of Myanmar Jute Industries. Officials reported on installation of machines, future tasks, assistance rendered by departments concerned.

The minister gave instructions on early completion of the project. Next, the minister inspected quality of machines. The mill can produce 17 metric tons of writing paper a day. The minister also inspected harvesting of summer and monsoon paddy along the road.

He met farmers as well as Divisional Agriculture Coordination Committee members in Nyaungdon Township. Over 1.3 million acres of summer paddy were grown in Ayeyawady Division and 170,000 acres of paddy have been harvested.—MNA

Myanma Gems Emporium fetches over euro 18.2 million

Yangon, 20 March — Patron of Myanma Gems Emporium Central Committee Managing Director of Myanma Gems Emporium U Kyaw Oo and the central committee members.

The minister greeted local and foreign gem merchants and viewed the sale of gem lots through competitive bidding and left there. Under the 41st Myanma Gems Emporium Central Committee, sale of gem lots through competitive bidding was held from 9 am to 5 pm today as the fifth day and gem merchants bought 50 gem lots for euro 7,769,858.

The gem merchants also bought 503 jade lots at a price of euro 10,473,434 at 41st Myanma Gems Emporium. The 41st Myanma Gems Emporium fetched euro 18,243,292 up to date.

Lots of pearl will be on sale by tender system through competitive bidding tomorrow.—MNA

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than presents computer set for Kyaukkyi Village Affiliated BEHS to an official in Thandwe Township.

MNA

The 41st Myanma Gems Emporium in progress on Saturday.—MNA

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