Laying groundwork for emergence of developed and peaceful democratic State

Measures are being taken for increase in per capita income and development of national economy, for national solidarity to be strong and politics to be stable, for elimination of internal insurgency so that the rule of law and tranquility prevail, and for developing highly qualified human resources in our country as preparatory groundwork for the emergence of a developed and peaceful democratic State.

Senior General Than Shwe
Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

(From address delivered at the parade of the 56th Anniversary Armed Forces Day)
PERSPECTIVES
Let’s strive for perpetuation of the Union

Peace and stability, economic growth and human resource development are the most fundamental requirements for the development of a nation or a region. But, for a nation like the Union of Myanmar where more than 100 national races live, national unity and Union Spirit are also necessary in addition to these requirements.

In his meeting with members of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council, District and Township Peace and Development Councils and social organizations, departmental personnel, national race leaders, entrepreneurs and townswomen at the city hall in Lashio on 20 March, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said that spiritual development should be cultivated as it strengthens the nationalistic spirit and Union Spirit.

Appointing of Ambassador agreed on

YANGON, 25 March — The Government of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr Daniel Mulhall, at present the Ambassador of Ireland to Malaysia, as the non-resident Ambassador of Ireland to the Union of Myanmar.

After regaining independence, due to the deterioration of national unity and the lack of regional stability, the Union of Myanmar lagged behind in development. The Tatmadaw Government, immediately after its assumption of State responsibilities, realized that national economy would be strong and, national development and perpetuation of the Union possible only with regional peace and strong national unity. Accordingly, it made constant efforts towards this end and achieved considerable success.

Now, in the regions where peace and stability prevails, national people and their leaders are working in concert with the government for regional development by successfully implementing such enormous plans as border area development plan.

As a result, border areas are developing at the same rate as other regions and the socioeconomic life of the people living in the border areas has improved. Moreover, they are essaying to wipe out the cultivation of poppy and production of narcotic drugs once and for all from the soil of Myanmar by implementing the 15-year plan for elimination of narcotic drugs with added momentum.

Due to the cooperation between national race leaders, regional authorities and local people, this plan is meeting with considerable success.

We would like to call upon the entire national people to strive for the perpetuation of the Union by maintaining regional peace and stability, national unity and success already achieved in all national endeavours.

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”.

Quizz on general knowledge

YANGON, 24 March — The 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Exhibition will be held at Defence Services Museum on Shwedagon Pagoda Road here from 26 March to 4 April. At the ‘nation-building endeavours’ booth, a quiz on general knowledge will be organized.

Amateur Open

YANGON, 24 March — Tiger Myanmar Amateur Open-2004 organized by the Myanmar Golf Federation continued this morning at Yangon Golf Club, Danyingon, here.

After the second round, Myo Min Aung fired 143 strokes including 71 double holes.

Information Minister tours Monywa District

YANGON, 24 March — Secretariat Member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (Central) Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Huan visited the Shwezigon Pagoda in Monywa and donated K 10,000 to the pagoda on 21 March morning.

The minister discussed matters on cleanliness of the pagoda with members of the pagoda board of trustees on the pagoda platform.

The minister held a meeting with local people in Ton Village, Salinay Township. The minister fulfilled the requirements and presented publications to the village library.

Later in the morning, the minister also met with local people and members of social organizations at Haukutok village in Salinay Township and discussed assistance to be rendered for rural development. The minister presented a TV set to the village, school textbooks to the village basic education primary school and publica- tions to the village library through officials. Monywa District Information and Public Relations Department and District USDA publications to the village library.

Next, the minister went to Thanyetkyay village and inspected the ruined primary school and attended to the needs.

In the afternoon, the minister met with local people at Haukka village in the township and presented K 50,000 for renovation of the post-primary school, K 50,000 for renovation of Thanyetkyay village primary school, books to the village library and school textbooks and exercise books to the schools.

Monywa District IPRD also donated publications to the village library.

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.

Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day:

Book Fair

Sarpay Belkman

# 378,384 Upper Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Yangon (former PPI head office)
19 to 28 March 2004 (from 9 am to 5 pm)

Myanmar Federation of Women’s Affairs
Plenary Meeting of State/Division Organization for Women’s Affairs
Yangon
28-29 March 2004

Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Huan meets with local people at Haukuto village in Salinay Township. — MNA

Afterwards, the minister held a meeting with township level departmental officials at Salinay Township PDC office.

On the occasion, the minister discussed matters related to renovation of schools, upgrading of roads and implementation of rural development tasks.

At the meeting with the village folks at Kyadet village, the minister discussed cultivation of crops with water from artesian wells.

On 22 March morning, the minister addressed the opening of self-selling library donated by Pakokku U Ohn Pe at Shardaw village.

In his address, the minister said that in accord with the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe on opening of more libraries throughout the nation for development of human resources the Ministry of Information has been opening libraries throughout the country. The minister urged the villagers to maintain the library for its durability.

He thanked the donor and presented publications to the library through Pakokku U Ohn Pe. Wellwishers also donated K 650,000 to the library built at a cost of K 4 million.

The minister formally unveiled the signboard of the library.

In the afternoon, the minister inspected the wall magazine to mark the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day at NyaungU District IPRD and left necessary instructions.

MNA
582 US service members killed since beginning of military operations in Iraq

Baghdad, 24 March—As of Tuesday, 23 March, 582 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq a year ago, according to the Department of Defence. Of those, 394 died as a result of hostile action and 188 died of non-hostile causes, the department said.

The British military has reported 58 deaths; Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Bulgaria, five; Ukraine, three; Thailand, two; Denmark, Estonia and Poland have reported one each.

Since 1 May, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 444 US soldiers have died — 279 as a result of hostile action and 165 of non-hostile causes, according to the military.

Since the start of military operations, 2,920 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department. Non-hostile injuries numbered 434.

The latest death reported by US Central Command: A 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division soldier died Monday from a non-hostile shooting in Mosul, Iraq.

The latest identifications reported by the Department of Defence:
— Marine Lance Cpl Andrew S Dung, 20, Foster City, Calif., killed Monday by hostile fire near Ar Ramady, Iraq, assigned to 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force; Camp Pendleton, Calif.
— Army Pfc Christopher E Hudson, 21, Carmel, Ind., killed Sunday by an explosive in Baghdad, Iraq; assigned to the 2nd Squadron, 12th Armoured Cavalry Regiment; Fort Hood, Texas.

Subway trains in Singapore to have marshals soon

Singapore, 24 March — Singapore will soon deploy marshals on subway stations and trains as part of its efforts to fight terrorist activities.

Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Security and Defence Tony Tan made the announcement on Sunday.

Tan stressed the need for the country’s subway stations and trains to be safeguarded as many Singaporeans use the facilities daily.

He noted that the recent bomb attacks on the railway stations in the Spanish capital of Madrid highlighted the urgency to adopt a multi-faceted approach to counter-terrorism.

Currently, Singapore has already provided air marshals for some of its international passenger flights.

Rocket hits Baghdad’s Sheraton Hotel

Baghdad, 24 March — A suspected guerrilla rocket struck a central Baghdad hotel used by foreign contractors and journalists early Wednesday, but caused limited damage and no injuries.

“There’s evidence of some sort of rocket hitting the hotel at about the sixth floor,” said one guest at the Ihsat Sheraton hotel.

The powerful blast, about a third of the way up the hotel, shattered some windows and smashed concrete.

The blast shook people from their beds inside the hotel and in nearby neighbourhoods. Iraqi police and US-led occupying forces blamed Saddam Hussein sympathizers and foreign Islamic militants for guerrilla attacks in the country since the former Iraqi president was toppled last April.

Tuesday, guerrillas shot dead 11 Iraqi police and police trainees in two separate daylight attacks, the latest deadly strikes against Iraqis working with the US-led occupation.

China to raise ideological, moral standards of young people

Beijing, 24 March — China says it faces serious challenges in raising the ideological and moral standards of its 367 million people under 18 years old, such as the negative effects of dishonesty, cheating, superstition, evil cults, pornography, drug addiction, money worship and corruption in the world of some grown-ups.

The Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council issued a package of proposals Monday on improving the ideological and moral standards of young people, saying that great changes at home and abroad have broadened the all-round development of young people, and new thoughts and influences arising from the Internet.

The Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council issued a package of proposals Monday on improving the ideological and moral standards of young people, saying that great changes at home and abroad have broadened the all-round development of young people, and new thoughts and influences arising from the Internet.

The fast expansion of the Internet and other new media created new channels for young people in learning and entertainment, while harmful information is also spreading fast and corrupting the souls of some young people, it says. Under the influences of various negative factors, a small number of young people had empty minds and their behaviours were out of tune, and some even committed crimes.

The document says that the ideology and morality of the young people in China have direct bearing on the quality of the Chinese nation as a whole and the prospects of the country and the destiny of the Chinese nation.

The majority of the young people in contemporary China love the motherland, strive for progress, treasure unity and friendship, civilized behaviour and politeness, it says.

The document acknowledges that there is room for improvement in the work of both governments and the society.

Some leading officials in some regions and departments have insufficient understanding of the work of raising ideological and moral standards of young people, according to the document.

IFATCA seeks to provide more sophisticated service

Hong Kong, 23 March — More than 800 air traffic controllers and aviation experts from almost 80 countries worldwide were gathering here on Monday to discuss ways for providing more sophisticated, efficient and well-coordinated air traffic control (ATC) services.

Hong Kong Secretary for Environmental Protection and Labour Stephen Ip said at the opening of the annual conference of the International Federation of Air Traffic Controllers’ Associations (IFATCA) Monday that “looking ahead, as more airports open in different parts of the world, and with airlines flying to more destinations to meet the increasing demands of the travelling public, I envisage air traffic worldwide will grow in leaps and bounds.”

He said as air travel continues to grow, airspaces and airport congestion problems are becoming more acute. All these call for worldwide efforts.

He added that answers to these challenges lie in enhancing the reliability of ATC hardware and software, harmonizing ATC rules and protocols, maintaining a vigilant oversight of ATC standards, and investing in human resources to ensure that ATC professionals are well-trained to meet the highest standards.

Hamas spiritual leader Yassin killed in Israeli attacks

Gaza, 23 March — Palestinian Hamas spiritual leader Sheik Ahmed Yassin was killed early Monday in Israeli missile attacks, Hamas officials confirmed.

Witnesses said Israeli Apache helicopters fired three missiles at Yassin and his two bodyguards as they left a mosque and killed them instantly.

Four people were killed and 17 wounded in the attack, witnesses said.

Ambulances and fire trucks raced to the scene.

Hamas demonstrators protest against the assassination of Hamas founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin in Baghdad’s Azamiya neighbourhood, Iraq, on 23 March 2004.
Nine police recruits killed in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 24 March— Gunmen opened fire on a van filled with police recruits south of Baghdad, killing nine, and assailants shot and killed two policemen—twin brothers—north of the capital. Early Wednesday, attackers fired a rocket that struck the Sheraton Hotel, where foreign contractors and journalists stay. Security guards said there were no reports of casualties.

The slain were the latest to target police and other Iraqis who work with the US-led occupation.

The rocket hit a sixth-floor ledge, and the explosion left the lobby strewn with glass, said security guard Rabah Nasser.

US soldiers protect the Sheraton, which is ringed by a concrete blast wall to ward off bomb attacks. A US military spokesman said he had no information on the blast.

Tuesday’s roadside attack in the south took place between Musayeb and Hillah when a car pulled in front of the minibus and assailants spray-painted it with small arms fire, police in Hillah said.

A US military official confirmed that nine people died and said two were wounded. Iraqi police said one wounded trainee survived.

In the northern city of Kirkuk, gunmen in a car killed two policemen and wounded two others, police Capt. Abdil-Salam Zangana said. He identified the slain victims as twin brothers Ahmed and Mohammed Kadhimi, killed as they were parking their car in a main square and as worshippers left a nearby mosque.

Iraqi police fired in the air after protesters burned two police cars and two hand grenades were thrown at the governor’s office, witnesses said. Television footage showed US soldiers remaining behind at the building, protected by concrete blast barriers, as police with assault rifles moved down the street to disperse the crowd. At least two police and three protesters were wounded.

China, Cambodia sign package of cooperation agreements

PHNOM PENH, 24 March— China and Cambodia on Tuesday signed a package of agreements aiming to further strengthen economic cooperation and trade between the two countries.

At a ceremony attended by visiting Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, the two sides signed nine cooperation documents, including five exchanges of notes, three memorandums of understanding and an agreement.

Under the agreement, the two countries decided to strengthen their economic and technical cooperation.

Under the exchanges of notes, the Chinese side will provide a grant of two million yuan (241,800 US dollars) for goods for King Norodom Sihanouk, and 400 sets of police motorcycles for the Cambodian Government.

It also will conduct preliminary technical study of the missing link section of the trans-Asia railway network in Cambodia, launch human resources training programmes in the country, and make a study of the rehabilitation of the office buildings and library of Cambodia’s Senate.

The Chinese Government also agreed to have a feasibility study of Kirirom III hydropower project and to cooperate on Sihanoukville Textile Industrial Park project.

“People have forgotten there’s a war going on over there,” said Roberta Taylor, Mark Taylor’s mother. “The flags are all tattered. The yellow ribbons are tattered.”

Iraqi security guard shot dead in northern Iraq

MOSSUL, Iraq, 24 March— An Iraqi security guard was shot dead and three others were wounded in the northern city of Mosul on Monday when assailants opened fire on them as they were walking to work, Iraqi security officials said.

The men worked for the Facility Protection Service, an organization set up by the US Administration in Iraq to guard embassies, ministries and other administrative offices and buildings.

“On FPS individual was killed and three were injured by small-arms fire this morning,” Lieutenant Colonel Hailal Othman, the assistant director of the FPS in Mosul, told Reuters.

“One civilian was also injured in the incident.”

Security guards, police and other Iraqis working for organizations established by US authorities in Iraq have increasingly been targeted by insurgents.

Three northern California servicemen killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 24 March— Three Northern California men are among the latest US soldiers to die from injuries suffered in Iraq.

Marine Lance Corporal Andrew Dang of Foster City was killed Monday about 60 miles west of Baghdad. The Defence Department said the 20-year-old was hit by hostile fire.

Army First Lieutenant Michael Vega, 41, died Saturday at a hospital in Washington, DC, nine days after a vehicle accident in Iraq. Vega was raised in Vallejo, and most recently lived in San Joaquin County.

Army Major Mark Taylor of Stockton, 41, also died Saturday during a rocket attack in Fallujah. Taylor was a surgeon, just about four days from completing his second deployment in Iraq.

“People have forgotten there’s a war going on over there,” said Roberta Taylor, Mark Taylor’s mother. “The flags are all tattered. The yellow ribbons are tattered.”

Six British scientists trapped in Mexico cave

MEXICO CITY, 24 March— A team will attempt to rescue six British scientists trapped for five days in a cave in Mexico, a rescue service spokesman said late on Monday.

The scientists became trapped after part of the cave collapsed. They managed to contact colleagues outside via satellite phone.

The spokesman, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the six were in good health.

Delhi University, University of West Indies sign MoU

PORT-OF-SPAIN, 24 March— Delhi University of India and the Institute of Business, University of West Indies (UWI) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to promote bilateral links between the two institutions in the field of education.

The MoU will provide for student and faculty exchanges, promotion of joint research and summer projects for post graduate and doctoral students between the two institutions.

The memorandum of understanding was signed by the India’s High Commissioner for Trinidad and Tobago Virendra Gupta and Dr. Ralph Bulgosh, Executive Director of the Institute of Business, UWI for the respective institutions.

“India attached great importance to its continuing cooperation with fellow developing countries in the area of human resource development and building institutions of higher learning," Gupta said at the signing ceremony.

“It is crucial for both countries to develop their respective knowledge bases thereby enabling them to formulate directions for future growth,” he said. — MNA/PTI

Calligraphy, painting auction to be held in Beijing

BEIJING, 24 March— A three-day auction dedicated to Chinese calligraphy and paintings will start in Beijing on Friday.

A total of 1,703 calligraphy items and paintings spanning from ancient times to the modern era, including original works of famous Chinese painters Qi Baishi, Wu Zuoren and Zhang Daqian, will be put up for sale at the auction, which will be hosted by Sungari International Auction Co Ltd.

It will be the largest of its kind and the artistic works will be arranged into seven specialized groups, according to Zhao Yu, art adviser of Sungari International.

Sungari International Auction Co Ltd.

MNA/Xinhua
Jimmy Carter criticizes Bush, Blair for waging war on Iraq

WASHINGTON, 24 March—A national consumer group asserted on Monday the Bush Administration has wrongly blocked public access to important auto safety data, including information about warranty claims and consumer complaints.

In a lawsuit filed in federal court, Public Citizen challenged a 2003 Transportation Department regulation that restricts Freedom of Information Act requests for some auto industry documents held by the government.

As part of landmark auto safety legislation prompted by the Firestone tire debacle, Congress ordered the industry in 2000 to regularly turn over safety data to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Lawmakers did not require the information be kept confidential.

The Firestone saga involved deadly blowouts and rollovers of mainly Ford Explorer sport utility vehicles. Firestone, a unit of Japan’s Bridgestone Corp., eventually recalled millions of tires.

The disclosure order is designed to give regulators, who did not pick up on the Firestone tire and rollover problems until they became the subject of lawsuits and media reports, a much better chance of identifying defect trends early.

NHTSA, in fact, credited the early warning data with helping it to flag a potential defect that led to another large recall of a different Firestone tire model last month.

The Transportation Department approved a rule last July permitting it to withhold data on warranty claims, child restraint systems, some consumer complaints, tires and auto dealer reports. The agency said confidentiality was necessary to prevent “substantial competitive harm” to manufacturers.

But Public Citizen said the government did not prove that releasing the data would hurt the industry. “Similar information gathered by the DOT in defect investigations has been routinely disclosed in the past,” the group said.

A NHTSA spokesman declined to comment on the suit, but noted the confidential data represents a small part of the information that auto makers, equipment manufacturers and other companies must submit.

Consumers have access through the NHTSA website to details on crashes, injuries, deaths, and foreign recalls. But Public Citizen Attorney Amanda Frost said the Administration had pushed through a significant exemption to the Freedom of Information Act on critical data. “The agency has failed to show how disclosure would harm manufacturers, but this exemption would surely harm consumers,” Frost said. —MNA/Reuters

US wrongly kept auto safety data secret

WASHINGTON, 24 March—A national consumer group asserted on Monday the Bush Administration has wrongly blocked public access to important auto safety data, including information about warranty claims and consumer complaints.

In a lawsuit filed in federal court, Public Citizen challenged a 2003 Transportation Department regulation that restricts Freedom of Information Act requests for some auto industry documents held by the government.

As part of landmark auto safety legislation prompted by the Firestone tire debacle, Congress ordered the industry in 2000 to regularly turn over safety data to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Lawmakers did not require the information be kept confidential.

The Firestone saga involved deadly blowouts and rollovers of mainly Ford Explorer sport utility vehicles. Firestone, a unit of Japan’s Bridgestone Corp., eventually recalled millions of tires.

The disclosure order is designed to give regulators, who did not pick up on the Firestone tire and rollover problems until they became the subject of lawsuits and media reports, a much better chance of identifying defect trends early.

NHTSA, in fact, credited the early warning data with helping it to flag a potential defect that led to another large recall of a different Firestone tire model last month.

The Transportation Department approved a rule last July permitting it to withhold data on warranty claims, child restraint systems, some consumer complaints, tires and auto dealer reports. The agency said confidentiality was necessary to prevent “substantial competitive harm” to manufacturers.

But Public Citizen said the government did not prove that releasing the data would hurt the industry. “Similar information gathered by the DOT in defect investigations has been routinely disclosed in the past,” the group said.

A NHTSA spokesman declined to comment on the suit, but noted the confidential data represents a small part of the information that auto makers, equipment manufacturers and other companies must submit.

Consumers have access through the NHTSA website to details on crashes, injuries, deaths, and foreign recalls. But Public Citizen Attorney Amanda Frost said the Administration had pushed through a significant exemption to the Freedom of Information Act on critical data. “The agency has failed to show how disclosure would harm manufacturers, but this exemption would surely harm consumers,” Frost said. —MNA/Reuters

French President to visit Russia

PARIS, 24 March—French President Jacques Chirac will pay a working visit to Russia on April 1-2, Chirac’s office confirmed on Monday.

Chirac is expected to arrive in Moscow on April 1 for talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin, said Chirac’s office. His visit to Russia was first announced earlier by Moscow.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder is also expected to visit Russia at the beginning of April, probably on April 2, although the journey has yet to be officially announced.

Chirac and Schroeder telephoned Putin two days after Putin’s March 14 re-election to ensure him of their desire to reinforce ties between the European Union (EU) and Russia. Chirac’s last visited Russia last May when he participated in the ceremonies at the 300th anniversary of Russia’s second largest city of St. Petersburg before flying for the G-8 summit in the French town of Evian on 1 June. —MNA/Xinhua

Mexico to host World Water Forum in 2006

MEXICO CITY, 23 March — Mexican President Vicente Fox announced Monday that his country will host the 4th World Water Forum in March 2006, the first time the week-long triennial meeting on water scarcity was held in a American state.

“There isn’t a simple formula to solve the recent global water crisis,” Fox told a ceremony Monday at Los Pinos Presidential House marking the World Water Day, noting that water was a “strategic and national security matter.” —MNA/Xinhua

US soldier killed by friendly fire in northern Iraq

BAGHDAD, 24 March—A US soldier was killed by friendly fire before he was about to start off on a patrol in northern Iraq, the US military said in a statement on Monday.

His unit made a test fire ahead of the patrol near Samarra, 110 kilometres north of Baghdad, on Sunday, killing the soldier, said the statement.

The accident is under investigation, it added.

After the latest incidents, 397 US soldiers have been killed by hostile fire since the US-led war broke out a year ago while 186 other soldiers died in non-combat accidents during the period. —MNA/Reuters

Gunmen kill five Iraqi police trainees

MUSAQABAH (Iraq), 24 March—Gunmen shot and killed at least five Iraqi police trainees on Tuesday, but the Iraqi police said they were killed in an accident.

There have been several drive-by shootings in the Hilla area in recent weeks, and drive-by attacks have been on the increase throughout the country. —MNA/Reuters

Demonstrators release balloons and carry a banner in support of French TV cameraman Fred Nerac who has been missing in Iraq since March, outside Le Louvre museum in Paris, on Monday, 22 March, 2004. —AP/ARIS

Canada welcomes WTO ruling

OTTAWA, 24 March — The US Government has no legal grounds for the heavy duties it imposed on Canadian softwood, Canada’s Trade Minister said Monday in reaction to a World Trade Organization (WTO) ruling.

“This is a major victory for Canada,” the WTO’s panel’s message is clear: the countervailing and anti-dumping duties imposed by the United States on Canadian softwood lumber exports are baseless,” International Trade Minister Jim Peterson said in a statement.

The US International Trade Commission (ITC) was wrong to conclude that imports of Canadian softwood were likely to increase, a finding it used to justify slapping heavy duties on the lumber, the WTO said in a ruling released Monday. —MNA/Xinhua

Gunmen kill five Iraqi police trainees

MUSAQABAH (Iraq), 24 March—Gunmen shot and killed at least five Iraqi police trainees on Tuesday as they headed to work in the town of Hilla, south of Baghdad, witnesses and hospital officials said.

Television footage showed a yellow minibus riddled with bullet holes, the seats splattered with blood.

Some sources said as many as nine men were killed, all of them training to join the new Iraqi police force. A Reuters cameraman saw five of the victims.

Mexican President Vicente Fox announced Monday that his country will host the 4th World Water Forum in March 2006, the first time the week-long triennial meeting on water scarcity was held in an American state.

“There isn’t a simple formula to solve the recent global water crisis,” Fox told a ceremony Monday at Los Pinos Presidential House marking the World Water Day, noting that water was a “strategic and national security matter.” —MNA/Xinhua
Since the start of the US invasion of Iraq on 20 March 2003, a total of 684 Americans and allies died in hostile and non-hostile action in Iraq. Iraqi guerrillas have resisted the intruders and as a result Americans and allies have suffered a high toll of casualty.
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day:

Joint endeavours made by the Tatmadaw and the people in carrying out nation-building tasks

### Railroads being built by Myanmar Railways and the Tatmadaw in Namhsan, Shan State (South)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Railroad</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Namhsan-Ponchaung</td>
<td>55 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Hsaikkhaung-Ponchaung</td>
<td>48 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>103 miles</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tatmadaw members from No 55 LID lay sleepers at the Hsaikkhaung-Ponchaung railroad section.

Tatmadaw members from No 55 LID carry out land preparations for construction of Namhsan-Ponchaung railroad section.

Tatmadaw members from No 55 LID lay sleepers at the Hsaikkhaung-Ponchaung railroad section.

Tatmadaw members from No 55 Light Infantry Division in action at the Hsaikkhaung-Ponchaung railroad section site.

### Railroads constructed by the Tatmadaw in Namhsan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.</th>
<th>Work progress</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Completion of embankment</td>
<td>70.13 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Laying rock</td>
<td>56.52 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Laying sleeper</td>
<td>50.12 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Laying railway line</td>
<td>47.47 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mongheik-Kaunghsai railroad section</td>
<td>10.23 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pyinthaig-Htiri railroad section</td>
<td>4.30 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Myanmar Tatmadaw endowed with twelve fine traditions

Myanmar Tatmadaw played a crucial role in the national independence struggle while engaging in the anti-colonialist struggle and the anti-fascist resistance. Myanmar Tatmadaw is to be considered as an organization that has suited the historical needs. It is not for nothing that Myanmar Tatmadaw came into existence. This is what made Myanmar Tatmadaw unusual.

Tatmadawmen from different national races had worked together for long years with a sense of spirit de corps among them, sacrificing one’s life for another; loving kindness and loyalty they showed each other were none but firm Union Spirit in the Tatmadaw; and efforts therefore should be made to keep Union Spirit alive and dynamic all over the country.

It was on 27 March 1945 that the Tatmadaw together with the people waged the anti-fascist resistance a milestone in the history of Myanmar. Systematically organized and well-trained from BIA, to BDA, and to PBF, the Tatmadaw reached a level at which it could fight the enemy face to face. It can also stand as an institution that can organize and represent the entire national people. From the fight against the fascists, the Tatmadaw improved itself to be the National Tatmadaw capable of representing the State and the entire mass of the national people. Being one with the people and winning full public support, Myanmar Tatmadaw became the Tatmadaw which can endure hardship, which makes heroic sacrifices, the Tatmadaw which does not seek personal gain, the Tatmadaw of noble spirit and high morale, the Tatmadaw which possesses true quality of overcoming obstacles, the Tatmadaw which can endure hardship.

To present the significant and noble attributes of Myanmar Tatmadaw are beyond compare with other nations that have suited the historical needs of Myanmar. From the fight against the enemy face to face. It can also stand as an institution that can organize and represent the entire national people. From the fight against the fascists, the Tatmadaw improved itself to be the National Tatmadaw capable of representing the State and the entire mass of the national people. Being one with the people and winning full public support, Myanmar Tatmadaw became the Tatmadaw which can endure hardship, which makes heroic sacrifices, the Tatmadaw which does not seek personal gain, the Tatmadaw of noble spirit and high morale, the Tatmadaw which possesses true quality of overcoming obstacles, the Tatmadaw which can endure hardship.

The Tatmadaw always upholds the Four Oaths, never breaches the promise it has sworn on the country and the people. It mirrors that the Tatmadaw not by any means would betray the national cause. The members of the Tatmadaw are those who have pledged to risk their lives for their country, their people and their Tatmadaw. Apart from winning back the independence and sovereignty of the country on 27 March 1945, Com-mander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe provided guidance with respect to the Tatmadaw's collaboration in the national causes. The Tatmadaw endeavored to protect the country without considering any privileges like salary and food ration. The Tatmadaw was dedicated to protecting the country without mercy and to shield the country from any means would betray the national cause. The Tatmadaw launched military operations to defeat the alien invasions and could drive them out of the motherland.

Apart from winning back the independence and sovereignty of the country on 27 March 1945, Com- mander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe provided guidance with respect to the Tatmadaw's collaboration in the national causes. The Tatmadaw endeavored to protect the country without considering any privileges like salary and food ration. The Tatmadaw was dedicated to protecting the country without mercy and to shield the country from any means would betray the national cause. The Tatmadaw launched military operations to defeat the alien invasions and could drive them out of the motherland.

Apart from winning back the independence and sovereignty of the country on 27 March 1945, Com- mander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe provided guidance with respect to the Tatmadaw's collaboration in the national causes. The Tatmadaw endeavored to protect the country without considering any privileges like salary and food ration. The Tatmadaw was dedicated to protecting the country without mercy and to shield the country from any means would betray the national cause. The Tatmadaw launched military operations to defeat the alien invasions and could drive them out of the motherland.

Union Spirit is the spirit that binds together the entire national races regardless of their different regions as well as the spirit taking roots on the nationalistic spirit that cherishes the single motherland. The Tatmadaw has to shoulder immense national defence duties: to protect the sovereignty of the country and to shield the country from the danger that can tear it apart. The abilities and efficiency needed for national defence duties should be acquired through training. Moreover, Tatmadaw members are to be equipped with Union Spirit in discharging community welfare services where they are assigned.
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

The Tatmadaw acquires abilities and efficiency needed for discharge of national defence duties through training.

Poem

Noble companion of Tatmadaw

(Verse hailing the Tatmadaw)

With equal drops of sweat, we shall repay
We’ll march together, traditionally pretty flowers
Feel tired? Even then won’t rest
For those who want to part, will deal as comrades true
Till axe-handles are eliminated, we’ll work hard overtime
The way we’re striving, won’t rest till sunset
Only when colonial troubles had ended, the hangers-on start anew
Hands held with the Tatmadaw, will not end this noble partnership
Without fail you come along, straight together
In this Union our abode, we brethren together in harmony
The people shall meet us, with sweet words
Matter of welcoming you with songs, to enjoy refuge in future without harm
Noble seven-step policy, to lead us to the winning post
To get closer to the Golden Land, ushering us with Golden Dream
In correct Myanmar policy, joyous in pursuit of same path
New era shall reflect specially, loving couples, shall also rejoice.

Tekkatho Tin Kha (Tr)

Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

Myanmar Police Force, Myanmar Fire Brigade and Myanmar Red Cross Brigade have undergone military training to take part in national-defence duties and nation-building tasks. In addition to those organizations, Myanmar war veterans with Union Spirit and vast military experience and the Union Solidarity and Development Association, made up of over 20 million members, are also capable of brilliantly serving the interest of the people hand in hand with the Tatmadaw.

Together with reserve forces, the Tatmadaw, upholding Our Three Main National Causes, has stood as the force capable of defending and safeguarding the nation and the people at risk to their lives.

With regard to national-defence and nation-building duties, Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, at the 56th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade, gave guidance, calling on Tatmadaw members to participate with might and main in defending the country with their lives, to uphold Our Three Main National Causes at the cost of their lives and to abide by the Twelve Traditions of the Tatmadaw with “The Brave Never Die” spirit. Tatmadaw members have made a strong resolve to continue to stand as a reliable force for the people by following the guidance.

The Tatmadaw has firmly stood by the people and defended and safeguarded the nation’s independence and sovereignty in successive eras. And now, the Tatmadaw has been carrying out national-defence and nation-building tasks to the best of its ability in cooperation with the entire people. Therefore, the Tatmadaw is worthy of highest honour as it is endowed with the twelve noble traditions.

*****

(Translation: KTV + MS)
Lt-Gen Kyaw Win attends broadcasting of fertilizers in Lashio, Mongayi townships

YANGON, 24 March — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Kyaw Win of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Chairman North-East Command Major-Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, attended the third scattering of fertilizers on the 150-acre Hsinhsweili hybrid summer paddy plot at Nampaung village-tract, Lashio Township on 21 March morning.

An official reported on work progress. The commander gave an account of measures for ensuring local rice sufficiency. Lt-Gen Kyaw Win presented gifts to local farmers. In his speech, he said that successful introduction of Hsinhsweili hybrid paddy in the rainy season and summer will help boost production and supply rice capita income and living standard of local farmers. He called on departmental personnel and local people to take part in regional development project and to make efforts in building up a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, the commander and officials also attended the broadcasting of fertilizers on the 90-acre Hsinhsweili high-yield paddy plot in Mongayi Township. The commander and officials were taken for making greater progress in cultivating monsoon and summer paddy.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win met with officers and other ranks and their families of local regiments and units at Mongayi Station and elaborated on extended agriculture and livestock breeding and collective efforts for regional development. — MNA

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than highlights locals’ participation for success of rural development plans

YANGON, 24 March — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than of the Ministry of Defence inspected a pepper plantation at Natatunmyaw in Kwechaung village-tract, Thandwe Township on 20 March.

Accompanied by Chairman of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Commander of Western Command Maj-Gen Aung Htwe and Col Myint Soe of the Paramilitary Station, officials of State Peace and Development Council Office, local authorities and officials, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than met with pepper farmers and urged them to grow other crops such as seasonal vegetables and summer paddy, beans and pulses and winter crops in addition to pepper.

An official of Myanma Agriculture Service reported to him on pepper growing method and disease prevention measures and gave replies to questions raised by the farmers.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspected operation theatre, laboratory, medical store and wards. At his meeting with local people at the hospital, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than said the Government is implementing the nationwide and regional development. This will develop only if there is progress in the rural areas as well as urban areas. His visit to Ywama Model village is for its development. The villagers are taking part in building the Taungup-Maei highway and the road linking the highway and the village. The village now has a station hospital and health care centres and a high school. A computer will be provided for the school. Efforts should be made to raise farming to develop the village. The villagers are urged to grow other crops such as seasonal vegetables and summer paddy, beans and pulses and edible crops after harvesting monsoon paddy. Local strains of chicken should be raised in addition to prawn breeding and fishing.

Plans that are being laid down and implemented by the Government will achieve success only with the participation of the local people. He called on departmental personnel and local people to take part in regional development project and to make efforts in building up a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

During inspection of Maekya-Kyunghkpyi section of Taungup-Maei highway, Taungpyong-Taungkyin Mer paddy plot at Nampaung village-tract, Villagers have contributed cash and labour in building the six miles four furlongs long all-weather road linking the highway and the village.

In Maei, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than met with local people and officers and undertook the project for Maekya-Kyunghkpyi section of Taungup-Maei highway. The commander and Chairman of Thandwe District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Tin Tint gave a supplementary report.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than said that the Government has opened primary, middle and high schools in rural areas, and upgrading them as necessary. It is also opening more hospital stations and dispensaries and disseminating health knowledge, taking disease prevention measures and treating patients. In addition, it is also making arrangements for rural transport development and supplying potable water to villages and striving to develop the agricultural sector.

Maekya will gain further progress as it lies at the junction of An-Taungpyong Highway and Taungpyong-Taungkyin Mer paddy. Scientific methods should be introduced to the regional agriculture to raise per acre yields of crops. The Government can provide only ideas and draw rural development plans. But the local people themselves will have to strive for development of their own regions.

After the wellwishers had explained the purpose of their donations, the deputy minister gave a word of thanks to them. Today, wellwishers donated a total of 5,892 kinds of books and journals in total. Among them were 375 copies of Yangon Directory and 375 copies of Mandalay Directory worth K 1,125,000 in total; Daw Swe Swe Aung and Daw Wai Wai Aung, 1,350 copies of novels worth K 461,550; Daw Tin Nyu and family, 955 copies of Lomnayal women magazine worth K 95,500; Daw Tin Ma Oo of Myobeshit book house, 360 copies of Ne-ru-te novel and 360 copies of Taik-pwe-win-a-may novel worth K 252,000, Major Tin Win (Rd) of Pale book house, 190 copies of books on economy worth K 190,000; U Khin Maung Win and 13 friends in Japan, 100 copies of Thu-do-hun-kyaw-daw book worth K 55,000, U Win Myint in Japan, 100 copies of books on religion worth K 40,000; U Myat Thwin of Shwemithina Co Ltd, 200 copies of Dagon annual magazine worth K 10,000; U Khin Maung Than and family, 108 copies of magazines and journals worth K 7,525; U Ko Thu Rei of Shwemithina Co Ltd, 58 copies of magazines and journals worth K 4,000; and U Khin Maung Tin and family, 230 copies of books on fiction and non-fiction.

Brig-Gen Aung Then accepted the donations and presented certificates of honour to the wellwishers. Altogether 70 trainees will attend the course, which last two weeks. — MNA

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win accepts cash and kind for Tatmadawmen

YANGON, 24 March — The third cash donation for Tatmadawmen who will participate in the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade was held at Defence Services Supplies Regime Hospital, Myeik, on 24 March afternoon, attended by Chairman of Leading Committee for Museums Museum on Shwedagon Pagoda Road, here, this afternoon.

An official reported on work progress. The commander and officials also attended the scattering of fertilizers on the 90-acre Hsinhsweili high-yield paddy plot in Mongayi Township. The commander and officials were taken for making greater progress in cultivating monsoon and summer paddy.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win met with officers and other ranks and their families of local regiments and units at Mongayi Station and elaborated on extended agriculture and livestock breeding and collective efforts for regional development. — MNA

USDA Secretariat member Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan accepts cash donations. — MNA

USDA multiplier course opened

YANGON, 24 March — The opening ceremony of the basic organizational multiplier course No 20 for the executives of Mingala Taungnyunt Township Union Solid Peace and Development Association was held in conjunction with a cash donation ceremony at the office of the association in the township this afternoon.

Member of the Secretariat of USDA (Central) and in-charge of Mingala Taungnyunt Township USDA Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan attended the ceremony and delivered an opening address. In his speech, Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan spoke of the need to open cultural and moral courses, vocational courses, computer courses, music and drawing courses and sports courses for the youths in the summer.

At the cash donation ceremony, Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan presented K 20,000, which was accepted by the Joint secretary of the township USDA. The chairman of Mingala Taungnyunt Township Peace and Development Council presented K 15,000, the administrative officer of the township development affairs department presented K 10,000, the company commander of the township auxiliary fire brigade, K 20,000; Police Lt-Col Than Ngwe of the township, K 10,000; and U Maung Maung Aye and U Tin Win Aung, K 10,000. Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan accepted the donations and presented certificates of honour to the wellwishers. Altogether 70 trainees will attend the course, which last two weeks. — MNA

Books and journals donated to IPRD

YANGON, 24 March — Wellwishers donated books to the Libraries of the Information and Public Relations Department under the Ministry of Information at the meeting hall of the IPRD (Head Office) on Panasonad Street here this morning. Present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, directors-general and managing directors of departments/enterprises under the ministry and others.

U Soe Moe Than donated 375 copies of Yangon Directory and 375 copies of Mandalay Directory worth K 1,125,000 in total; Daw Swe Swe Aung and Daw Wai Wai Aung, 1,350 copies of novels worth K 461,550; Daw Tin Nyu and family, 955 copies of Lomnayal women magazine worth K 95,500; Daw Tin Ma Oo of Myobeshit book house, 360 copies of Ne-ru-te novel and 360 copies of Taik-pwe-win-a-may novel worth K 252,000, Major Tin Win (Rd) of Pale book house, 190 copies of books on economy worth K 190,000; U Khin Maung Win and 13 friends in Japan, 100 copies of Thu-do-hun-kyaw-daw book worth K 55,000, U Win Myint in Japan, 100 copies of books on religion worth K 40,000; U Myat Thwin of Shwemithina Co Ltd, 200 copies of Dagon annual magazine worth K 10,000; U Khin Maung Than and family, 108 copies of magazines and journals worth K 7,525; U Ko Thu Rei of Shwemithina Co Ltd, 58 copies of magazines and journals worth K 4,000; and U Khin Maung Tin and family, 230 copies of books on fiction and non-fiction.

Brig-Gen Aung Then accepted the donations and presented certificates of honour to the wellwishers. After the wellwishers had explained the purpose of their donations, the deputy minister gave a word of thanks to them. Today, wellwishers donated a total of 5,892 kinds of books and journals worth K 2,242,675 in total. — MNA
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt addresses coordination meeting to hold Myanmar Traditional Maha Thingyan Festival — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, …
(form page 1)

The Prime Minister delivered a speech. He said Myanmar traditional cultural Thingyan festival will be held in accord with Myanmar traditional customs. It is therefore necessary for the people to participate in the festival politely and gently, while refreshing themselves with cool water. They also need to discharge the State duties with renewed strength in the New Year and preserve and safeguard the essence of Myanmar style and culture and national character.

He said it is the Thingyan traditional festival that Myanmar people cherish and value. The festival includes religious and cultural activities such as throwing water on each other, taking Sabbath, setting animals free, donating blood and taking caring of elderly people. It is a festival that Myanmar people preserve the traditions.

He spoke on preservation of Myanmar culture and避免了alien culture and habits and quarrels during the festival.

He said efforts are being made with greater momentum among the youths in order to love and cherish Myanmar traditional culture and customs.

He said it is necessary for officials to take measures for control and supervision of the revellers to see that they participate in the Thingyan festival happily.

He called for preservation of Myanmar traditional customs in accord with the lofty aims of the Thingyan festival and participation in the festival happily.

Next, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe reported on works on discipline, Yangon Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin on preservation of traditional customs and prize distribution. Those present also reported on the respective works.

Next, the Prime Minister took part in the discussions.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt addresses coordination meeting for celebration of Thingyan Festival — MNA

Yangon, 24 March — A coordination meeting for celebration of Myanmar traditional cultural Thingyan festival was held at Zeya Thiri Beikman Hall on Konmyintha this evening, with an address by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Present were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, the ministers, the Yangon mayor, the deputy ministers, the director-general of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of departments, chairmen of District Peace and Development Councils in Yangon Division, delegates of social organizations, chairmen of Thabin, Music and Motion Picture Asiayons and officials.

The Prime Minister delivered a speech. He said Myanmar traditional cultural Thingyan festival will be held in accord with Myanmar traditional customs. It is therefore necessary for the people to participate in the festival politely and gently, while refreshing themselves with cool water. They also need to discharge the State duties with renewed strength in the New Year and preserve and safeguard the essence of Myanmar style and culture and national character.

He said it is the Thingyan traditional festival that Myanmar people cherish and value. The festival includes religious and cultural activities such as throwing water on each other, taking Sabbath, setting animals free, donating blood and taking caring of elderly people. It is a festival that Myanmar people preserve the traditions.

He spoke on preservation of Myanmar culture and avoiding alien culture and habits and quarrels during the festival.

He said efforts are being made with greater momentum among the youths in order to love and cherish Myanmar traditional culture and customs.

He said it is necessary for officials to take measures for control and supervision of the revellers to see that they participate in the Thingyan festival happily.

He called for preservation of Myanmar traditional customs in accord with the lofty aims of the Thingyan festival and participation in the festival happily.

Next, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe reported on works on discipline, Yangon Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin on preservation of traditional customs and prize distribution. Those present also reported on the respective works.

Next, the Prime Minister took part in the discussions.

Yangon, 24 March — A coordination meeting for celebration of Myanmar traditional cultural Thingyan festival was held at Zeya Thiri Beikman Hall on Konmyintha this evening, with an address by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Present were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, the ministers, the Yangon mayor, the deputy ministers, the director-general of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of departments, chairmen of District Peace and Development Councils in Yangon Division, delegates of social organizations, chairmen of Thabin, Music and Motion Picture Asiayons and officials.

The Prime Minister delivered a speech. He said Myanmar traditional cultural Thingyan festival will be held in accord with Myanmar traditional customs. It is therefore necessary for the people to participate in the festival politely and gently, while refreshing themselves with cool water. They also need to discharge the State duties with renewed strength in the New Year and preserve and safeguard the essence of Myanmar style and culture and national character.

He said it is the Thingyan traditional festival that Myanmar people cherish and value. The festival includes religious and cultural activities such as throwing water on each other, taking Sabbath, setting animals free, donating blood and taking caring of elderly people. It is a festival that Myanmar people preserve the traditions.

He spoke on preservation of Myanmar culture and avoiding alien culture and habits and quarrels during the festival.

He said efforts are being made with greater momentum among the youths in order to love and cherish Myanmar traditional culture and customs.

He said it is necessary for officials to take measures for control and supervision of the revellers to see that they participate in the Thingyan festival happily.

He called for preservation of Myanmar traditional customs in accord with the lofty aims of the Thingyan festival and participation in the festival happily.

Next, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe reported on works on discipline, Yangon Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin on preservation of traditional customs and prize distribution. Those present also reported on the respective works.

Next, the Prime Minister took part in the discussions.
India asks SAARC countries to widen pace of eco integration

New Delhi, 24 March — Asking SAARC countries to deepen and widen the pace of their economic integration, Indian Prime Minister called for a multilateral tax treaty for the region and a forward-looking investment regime.

Addressing the first meeting of the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) inter-governmental expert group on investment, arbitration and avoidance of double taxation here, Foreign Secretary Shankshank said such a tax accord would offer greater and greater sensitivity to the one another’s concerns and pave the way for ambitious goals like free trade area, an economic union, open borders and a common currency for the region.

“We have the potential, talent and resources to make South Asian economic powerhouse of the world. We must therefore seize the moment or else be content with being marginal players on the world stage,” he said.

Emphasizing the need for deliberations on investment regime to be forward-looking, taking cognizance of recent changes, Shankshank said it should be conducive to promotion of intra-SAARC private investment flows.

It should also increase the competitiveness of the SAARC region by evolving coordinated investment promotion programmes and regional approach to investments.

He noted that the successful conclusion of SAFTA was a landmark achievement and sent a clear signal of the strong commitment of the member states to forsaking eco ties.

At the SAARC Summit, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had proposed development of greater eco stakes in each other would naturally result in greater sensitivity to the one another’s concerns and pave the way for ambitious goals like free trade area, an economic union, open borders and a common currency for the region.

“We have the potential, talent and resources to make South Asian economic powerhouse of the world. We must therefore seize the moment or else be content with being marginal players on the world stage,” he said.

Emphasizing the need for deliberations on investment regime to be forward-looking, taking cognizance of recent changes, Shankshank said it should be conducive to promotion of intra-SAARC private investment flows.

It should also increase the competitiveness of the SAARC region by evolving coordinated investment promotion programmes and regional approach to investments.

He noted that the successful conclusion of SAFTA was a landmark achievement and sent a clear signal of the strong commitment of the member states to forsaking eco ties.

At the SAARC Summit, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had proposed development of greater eco stakes in each other would naturally result in greater sensitivity to the one another’s concerns and pave the way for ambitious goals like free trade area, an economic union, open borders and a common currency for the region.
Abdullah takes oath of office as Malaysian PM

KUALA LUMPUR, 24 March—President of the National Front, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Monday afternoon took oath of office as Prime Minister a day after the Front won the 11th general election by more than a two-thirds majority in the 219-seat Parliament.

The ceremony was held at the Balai Rong Seri (Throne Room) of the National Palace here. The National Front, known as the Barisan Nasional (BN), grouping 14 component parties, has ruled Malaysia since its independence from Britain in 1957.

Abdullah, 64, signed the instruments of office witnessed by Chief Justice Ahmad Fairuz Sheikh Abdul Halim.

Present on the occasion were former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak. Earlier, Abdullah told a news conference at his official residence that the first Cabinet meeting of the newly-elected BN government would be held next Wednesday.

On the new Cabinet line-up, he said that he would need a little time to decide on the line-up, let’s leave it to the prime minister, he said.

"On whether there’ll be changes, on who’ll be in the line-up, let’s leave it to later. I don’t have anything specific yet," Abdullah said.

Besides, he said, the Cabinet line-up should have the capability to contribute to further enhancing the government administration, so that the people would be able to benefit from whatever policies and programmes implemented in their interest.

The Prime Minister also reminded the newly-elected BN members of Parliament and state assemblymen to work hard, to refrain from resorting to corruption, to uphold their core values and maintain their dignity and credibility, as well as to always give attention to the needs of the people.

Zambia seizes mill, hotels in anti-graft fight

LESEKA, 24 March — The Zambian Government said on Monday it had seized one of the country’s biggest mills and an upmarket tourist resort popular with foreign tourists in its widening anti-corruption crackdown.

President Levy Mwanawasa, who has launched a campaign against graft in 2002 and has made it the main focus of his rule, saying not to spare even his own successor, Frederick Chiluba, who sought bail after pleading not guilty to theft involving 40 million US dollars.

The seized mill, Manda Milling, provides ground maize, the southern African nation’s staple food, to most parts of northern Zambia, a senior officer in the anti-graft task force told Reuters.

Manda Milling is also run by the state. The anti-graft task force also seized Machinchi Bay lodge, one of Zambia’s popular beach resorts.

The task force, led by Justice Michael Taula, said it was following orders from the Treasury to freeze the assets linked to the Office of the President and the investment corporation.

"The task force on corruption has seized Machinchi Bay lodge in Siavonga and Manda Milling. It is continuing investigations into the plunder of national resources," Taula said.

Kalala did not give the size or the value of the seized companies, which also included a courier firm and a fishery.

"The government said in December that the functionaries of the country’s biggest mills and an upmarket tourist resort popular with foreign tourists will be placed under the state. The anti-graft task force has already seized farms and irrigation equipment, houses, limousines and cash since 2002."

Stem cells may not be able to heal damaged hearts

LOUGON, 24 March — New research by scientists in the United States has cast doubt on the ability of stem cells to mend a broken heart by repairing damaged muscle, but they may help it in a more indirect way.

In two reports published online by the journal Nature, scientists who injected stem cells from bone marrow into the hearts of mice that had suffered a heart attack said they did not turn into heart muscle cells.

"These studies demonstrate that the stem cells tested do not form new heart muscles when injected into damaged tissue," said Professor Loren Field of Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis.

Stem cells are master cells in the body that have the capability to transform into any kind of tissue. Researchers believe they have the potential to revolutionize medicine.

Scientists had hoped that stem cells could pave the way for new treatments for heart attack patients after finding that blood-forming stem cells taken from bone marrow could repair damaged heart muscles.

Clinical trials in humans are already under way.

But when Field and his colleagues and another team of scientists including Leora Balsam of Stanford University School of Medicine in California injected stem cells in the hearts of mice they found the cells survived but did not seem to change into new heart cells.

"If we are delivering bone marrow to patients with the expectation that it will regenerate the heart, that may not be realistic," Balsam said in a statement.

But the scientists noticed that mice with the transplanted stem cells did show an improvement in how their hearts pumped blood.

They suspect that instead of changing into heart muscle cells, the stem cells may help the damaged heart by recruiting new blood vessels that may help heart muscle cells that would otherwise have died to stay alive.

Field said the findings suggest there may be alternative and perhaps more efficient ways to heal damaged hearts.

"We’re all interested in finding ways of regenerating the heart. I think what this study points out is that it’s not easy,” Balsam added.

Study finds drug to prevent breast cancer not fully used

WASHINGTON, 24 March — A drug that cuts the rate of breast cancer by 50 per cent in women most at risk is not being used as much as it could be, because doctors are failing to offer it and some patients are confused about taking it, US researchers said on Monday.

Women may be afraid to take the drug Tamoxifen because it raises the risk of cancer of the uterus, as well as the risk of blood clots that can cause heart attacks, oedema or strokes, the team at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago found.

They looked at the records of 219 women with higher-than-average breast cancer risk. Only 63 per cent of the women were offered Tamoxifen and only 26 per cent actually took it, they found.

“Our findings indicate that both physician practice and the attitudes of at-risk women are responsible for low rates of Tamoxifen use,” the researchers wrote in their report, published in the American Cancer Society journal Cancer.

Tamoxifen, a pill used to treat breast cancer, has been shown to reduce cancer rates by 49 per cent in women who have a high risk of the disease either because they have had precancerous lesions, a strong family history, or for other reasons.

Women with these called atypical hyperplasia or lobular carcinoma in situ benefited the most. They had an 86 per cent reduced risk of invasive cancer when they took Tamoxifen.

And the study in Cancer showed these were the women most likely to be offered Tamoxifen.

“That makes sense,” said Dr Monica Morrow, a breast surgeon who led the study.

“What doesn’t make sense is that women significantly less likely to have side effects, such as premenopausal women and those without a uterus, did not accept Tamoxifen more frequently than other groups,” Morrow added in a statement.

She said better education is clearly needed. While Tamoxifen increases the risk of uterine cancers, the risk is so low to start with that it still remains unlikely than breast cancer.

“There clearly is a lot of confusion among women about the risks and benefits of Tamoxifen chemoprevention,” Morrow said.

"About 20 per cent of the people in this study who had been offered Tamoxifen refused to take it. That’s not unexpected given that it is a pill that has side effects," Morrow said.

The European Union has directed the ministers of agriculture, industry and commerce to appoint independent investigators into the plunder of national resources," said the Cabi-net. MNA/Reuters.

Kalala ruled the project was started to make use of the resources and properties, which also included Manda Milling.

The government said it would last week it would widen its anti-corruption fight to Europe, where buildings bought using public funds had been identified.

The anti-graft task force has already seized farms and irrigation equipment, houses, limousines and cash since 2002.
PM General Khin Nyunt attends …

(from page 16)

Managing Director of Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank U Than Yi and China Export Credit and Insurance Corporation Mr Yang Zilin signed the Government Concessional Loan Agreement for MPT Project Phase II between the Export-Import Bank of China and the Ministry of Finance and Revenue of the Union of Myanmar.

Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Col Hla Thwin Swe and PRC Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun signed the MoU of Cooperation for Promoting Trade and Investment between China Export and Credit Insurance Corporation and the Ministry of Finance and Revenue of the Union of Myanmar.

President of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Win Myint and Vice-Chairman of China Council for Promotion of International Trade Madam Gao Yan signed the MoU between UMFFCCI and China Council for Promotion of International Trade.

Governor of Central Bank of Myanmar U Kyaw Kyaw Maung and President of China Export-Import Mr Yang Zilin signed Loan Agreement on Hydraulic Steel Structure (Lot HSS-1) of Yeywa Hydro Power Project.

Director-General of Hydro Electric Power Department U Win Kyaw and President of China National Electric Equipment Corporation Mr Jing Xinsheing signed the MoU of Agreement for the Supply and Installation of Complete Equipment for Float Glass Production Line with Melting Capacity of 150 Tpd and For Tempered Glass, Laminated Glass and Mirror Glass Production Lines.

Managing Director of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise U Kyaw Shih and President of China CAMC Engineering Co Ltd Ms Luo Yan and President of China Huosuo Contracting and Engineering Corporation Mr Wang Shihong signed Contract for Establishment of No 4 Urea Fertilizer Factory at Taikkyi Township, Yangon Division.

Director-General of Hydro Electric Power Department U Win Kyaw and General Manager of China Construction Group Corporation Mr Jia Ding signed Commercial Contract for the Supply of Hydraulic Steel Structure (Lot HSS-1) for Yeywa Hydro Power Project.

Managing Director of Myanmar Ceramic Industries U Soe Yi and President of China National Technical Import and Export Corporation Mr Jiang Xinsheng signed the MoU of Agreement for the Supply and Installation of Complete Equipment for Float Glass Production Line with Melting Capacity of 150 Tpd and For Tempered Glass, Laminated Glass and Mirror Glass Production Lines.

Managing Director of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise U Kyaw Shih and President of China CAMC Engineering Co Ltd Ms Luo Yan and President of China Huosuo Contracting and Engineering Corporation Mr Wang Shihong signed Contract for Establishment of No 4 Urea Fertilizer Factory at Taikkyi Township, Yangon Division.

Director-General of Hydro Electric Power Department U Win Kyaw and General Manager of China Construction Group Corporation Mr Jia Ding signed Commercial Contract for the Supply of Hydraulic Steel Structure (Lot HSS-1) for Yeywa Hydro Power Project.

Similarly, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win and Deputy Minister of Commerce of PRC Mr Chen Jian signed MoU on National Theatre Renovation Project; MoU on rice milling machine installation project; MoU on feasibility study on combined harvester production project; MoU on feasibility study on small-scale hydropower project; study project on probation of quality sugarcane and cotton strains; MoU on geological and minerals exploration in Myanmar-China border region; and MoU Lashio-Muse railroad project in the morning.

MNA

Secretary-1 hosts dinner in honour of Chinese Vice Premier

YANGON, 24 March — Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win hosted a dinner in honour of Vice Premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China Madam Wu Yi and party, who are currently here on an official visit to Myanmar, at Zeyathiri Beikman on Kommyintha this evening.

The dinner was attended by Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Thein Sein, the ministers, the deputy ministers, the director-general of the State Peace and Development Council Office and heads of departments, PRC Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Li Jinjun and officials.

During the dinner, vocalists entertained the guests to the accompaniment of Myanmar Athan modern music troupe. After the dinner, artists of Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture presented cultural dances to the guests.

MNA

MPT Managing Director U Maung Maung Tin and ZTE Corporation President Hou Weigui of China sign agreement.—MNA

Myanma Ceramics Industries Managing Director U Soe Yi and China National Technical Import & Export Corporation President Mr Jiang Xinsheng sign MoU.—MNA

Secretary-1 Li-Gen Soe Win hosts dinner to Vice Premier Madam Wu Yi of State Council of PRC and party.—MNA
Deputy Secretary-General of Chinese State Council visits Naval Dockyard Command Headquarters in Thilawa

YANGON, 24 March—Deputy Secretary-General of the State Council Mr Xu Shaoshi and party, who accompanied Vice-Premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China Madam Wu Yi who arrived here at the invitation of Secretary of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, visited Naval Dockyard Command Headquarters in Thilawa in Thanlyin at 3 pm today.

They were welcomed there by Commander of Naval Dockyard Command Headquarters Rear-Admiral Paw Tun and officials.

At the briefing hall, Commander Rear-Admiral Paw Tun explained the construction of Thilawa Naval Dockyard Command Headquarters with the use of video tapes.

Next, President Madame Lao Yan of CAMCE Co which built the dockyard explained steps of construction. Afterwards, Commander Rear-Admiral Paw Tun and Deputy Secretary-General of the State Council Mr Xu Shaoshi exchanged souvenirs. Next, Deputy Secretary-General of the State Council Mr Xu Shaoshi and party signed in the visitors’ book.

The commander and party, the Deputy Secretary-General of the State Council and party visited the dockyard headquarters. Afterwards, the guests went to the site for construction of Thilawa Industrial Zone where Director U Tun Lin of Department of Human Settlements and Housing Development explained programmes for building the industrial zone.

Next, the Chinese guests viewed Thanlyin Bridge and arrived back here in the evening.—MNA

World TB Day observed

YANGON, 24 March—The World TB Day was observed at International Business Centre this morning, with an address by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint. The motto for this year is “Every Breath Counts, Stop TB Now!”

Also present were President of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, directors-general of departments under the Ministry of Health and officials, members of central anti-TB committee, work committee, members of Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), medical superintendents, WHO Resident Representative Dr Agostino Borra, resident representatives of the UN agencies, guests, members of the Ministry of Health and officials, international social organizations and non-governmental organizations and winners of TB Day commemorative poster and painting contest and artists who had performed in educational plays.

Minister Dr Kyaw Myint delivered a speech. He said the dreadful disease which kills many people all over the world has been noted since 3700 BC. Tuberculosis, the germ which causes tuberculosis was first found and announced to the world by German scientist Dr Robert Koch on 24 March 1882. This event changes the fate of tuberculosis patient to a new era.

Based on this finding, anti-TB drugs such as Inhantion Streptomycin and oral drug Isoniazid have been introduced in 1947 and 1951 respectively. Today potent anti-TB drugs are available to combat tuberculosis.

Thus in 1973, WHO declared TB as a global emergency and recommended that DOTS Strategy is the best way to combat tuberculosis.

Global figures showed that at present there are 8 million TB cases among which 2 million died annually. Seventy percent of TB cases are the ones who are in the age group of 15-54 years which can give the maximum economic output. We also found out that 95% of TB cases and 98% of TB deaths are from the developing countries. But there is a little knowledge about TB in the community.

He also explained programmes for combating tuberculosis.

The minister and party observed booths opened in the evening.—MNA

Wednesday, 24 March, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather will be fair in the whole country. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Chin, Shan, Kayah States, Sagaing, Ayeyawady and Tanintharyi Divisions, (5°C) to (6°C) above normal in Mandalay, Magway, Bago Divisions and and normal in the remaining areas. Significant day temperature changes were (42°C) each in Nyaungoo, Magway, Minbu, (41°C) each in Aunglan, Monwy. Maximum temperature was first found and an-}
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attends signing of MoUs between Myanmar and China

YANGON, 24 March — Myanmar and the People’s Republic of China signed a number of agreements today at Zeyathiri Beerimana on Kinnayntha here this afternoon, in the presence of Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and Vice Premier of PRC State Council Madam Wu Yi.

Also present were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, the ministers, the deputy ministers, heads of departments, officials, members of the PRC goodwill delegation, PRC Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun and party.

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win and Assistant Minister of Commerce of PRC Mr Chen Jian signed the MoU between the Governments of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of Myanmar.

First, the Secretary-1 and party cordially met with those present at the venue on 22 March, attended by Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win and officials. Mr Chen Fang also presented souvenir to the Secretary-1 and party. Later, the Secretary-1 inspected the plant.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party saw over running and controlling of the plant and the kiln, the power station and the packaging tasks. Lt-Gen Tin Aye conducted them round the respective sectors.

At the briefing hall, Member of the Board of Directors Col Aung San reported on the location and area of the plant, the purpose of building it and production process of cement. Furthermore, he reported that Hsinmin-2 Cement Plant is one to produce 700 tons of BS 12-1989 type day. Machinery for the plant were imported from Yunnan Machinery Import & Export Corporation. Similarly, the civilian construction tasks for the plant were carried out by AyonU Construction Co.

Next, Lt-Gen Tin Aye reported on arrangements made for manufacturing cement at Hsinmin-1 and Hsinmin-2 Cement Plants.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Tin Aye presented gifts to Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win and officials. Mr Chen Fang also presented souvenir to the Secretary-1 and party. Later, the Secretary-1 presented the fruits to Chinese engineers who participated in the construction of the plant.

Hsinmin-1 and Hsinmin-2 Cement Plants were built in Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Division. Hsinmin-1 produces 400 tons of cement a day with the use of wet process. The plant was opened on 15-5-2003.

Hsinmin-2 manufactures 700 tons a day with the use of dry process. — MNA