To improve economic, health and education sectors

It is our duty to protect the life and property of the people so that they will be able to live with peace of mind and to create an environment in which they will be able to earn their living freely. Economic infrastructures have been built to ensure economic development in all the regions across the Union. To avoid a situation in which only one or two major cities are well-developed and all the rest of the nation have to depend on them socially and economically, 24 development regions have been established and measures are being taken to improve economic, health and education sectors and to narrow the gap among the regions.

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

(From address delivered at the graduation parade of the 4th Intake of Defence Services Medical Academy)
Further strengthen Sino-Myanmar friendly ties

The Union of Myanmar has always practised an independent and active foreign policy and maintained friendly relations with neighbours and other countries in the region, adhering to the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence. It has always been on good terms with global nations especially with her neighbours. Economic, trade and cultural cooperation with neighbouring countries are being enhanced.

The Union of Myanmar established diplomatic ties with the People’s Republic of China on 8 June 1950. Both countries share over 2,000 kilometres of border and have been living on friendly terms throughout their long history. It is encouraging to see that the friendly ties between the two countries are flourishing. Head of State Senior General Than Shwe paid a goodwill visit to the People’s Republic of China from 6 to 11 January 2003. During his visit, discussions were held to promote the bilateral economic and trade cooperation. With goodwill, the People’s Republic of China has been rendering assistance to Myanmar in its development endeavours.

Vice-Premier of the State Council of the PRC Madame Wu Yi is now on a goodwill visit to Myanmar at the invitation of State Peace and Development Council Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received and had discussions with her at Naypyidaw. Madame Wu Yi is on a goodwill visit to Myanmar. She held discussions with Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and Chinese Vice Premier Madame Wu Yi.

It is certain that the Sino-Myanmar friendly relations will further be strengthened through promotion of economic, trade and cultural cooperation.

Prime Minister sends congratulations to Malaysia

YANGON, 25 March—Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of congratulations to His Excellency Dato’ Sri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, who has been re-elected as Prime Minister of Malaysia.—MNA

Prime Minister sends felicitations to Bangladesh

YANGON, 26 March—On the occasion of the Anniversary of the Independence Day of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh which falls on 26 March 2004, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent message of felicitations to Her Excellency Begum Khaleeda Zia, Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.—MNA

FM sends felicitations to Bangladesh

YANGON, 26 March—On the occasion of the Anniversary of the Independence Day of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh which falls on 26 March 2004, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung has sent message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr M.Morsheed Khan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.—MNA

U Soe Win accredited to New Zealand

YANGON, 26 March—The Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Soe Win, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the Commonwealth of Australia, concurrently as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to New Zealand.—MNA

Myanmar Gazette

YANGON, 25 March—The State Peace and Development Council has appointed the following persons as heads of service organizations shown against each on probation from the date they assume charge of their duties.

(a) U Tha Oo
Rector
Pro-Rector
Ministry of Education
(b) U Wai Tin
Air Mandalay, Wilson
Sittway
Sittway University
Higher Education Dept
Lower Myanmar
Ministry of Education
(c) U Soe Myint
Rector
Pro-Rector
Hinthada University
Higher Education Dept
Lower Myanmar
Ministry of Education

Myo Min Aung leads Tiger Golf C’ship

YANGON, 25 March—The Tiger-Myanmar Amateur Golf Championship continued for the third round at Yangon Golf Club in Danyingon this morning. Myo Min Aung was leading with 213 strokes after the third round. Their second round were: Zaw Myint and Zaw Win with 222 each were behind the leader. Bo Bo scored 224 and Naing Lin with 225. The championship is being organized by Han Event Management together with co-sponsors Canon, Ping Golf Equipment, Grand Plaza Parkroyal Hotel, Air Mandalay, Wilson and Imperial Jade Drinking Water. The fourth and final round continues tomorrow.—MNA

UMFCCI officials meet Thai guests

YANGON, 25 March—Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry Vice President U Aung Lwin, Joint Secretary-1 U Myo Nyunt, Joint Secretary-2 Dr Maung Maung Lay and CEC member U Myat Thin Aung met with a four-member delegation headed by Governor Mrs Anchalee Chavanich of Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand at the UMFCCI head office yesterday morning. They discussed matters on investment, trade affairs, industrial zones and economic cooperation.—MNA

Prime Minister sends congratulations to Malaysia

YANGON, 25 March—General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of congratulations to His Excellency Dato’ Seri Abdullah Haji Ahmad Badawi, who has been re-elected as Prime Minister of Malaysia.—MNA

People’s Desire

- Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
- Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation
- Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
- Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

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 in hand with the entire people
- To build up a strong and efficient Tatmadaw to uphold “Our Three Main National Causes”

459 tourists arrive by cruiseliner

YANGON, 25 March—Under the supervision of the Ministry of Hotels & Tourism and with assistance provided by the Ministry of Transport and arrangements made by Tour Mandalay Co, MS Prinsendam cruiseliner carrying 459 tourists arrived Thilawa Port here this morning. The tourists in groups were scheduled to visit Yangon downtown, Bagan and Mandalay. The vessel will leave here on 26 March evening.—MNA

459 tourists arrive by cruiseliner

Myanmar Federation of Women’s Affairs

Plenary Meeting of State/Division Organization for Women’s Affairs

Yangon

28-29 March 2004

Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day: Book Fair

Sarpay Beikman

84, 378, 384 Upper Bo Aung Kyaw Street, Yangon (19 to 28 March 2004, from 2 pm to 5 pm)
Guerillas attack US convoy in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 25 March — Guerillas attacked a US military patrol west of Baghdad early Wednesday and an ensuing fight left three civilians dead and two US soldiers injured, the US military and Iraqi hospital officials said.

The fighting came after assailants shot at a van carrying police recruits south of Baghdad, killing nine, while gun- men killed two policemen in the north. The slayings Tues- day were the latest to target police and other Iraqis who work with the US-led occupation.

Associated Press Television News footage of the after- math of the fighting in the town of Fallujah, 55 kilometres west of Baghdad, showed two civilian cars burned, blood- stains on the ground and bullet holes in walls, as well as two wounded Iraqis being taken into a hospital.

“American troops came under attack while they were patrolling in the main street,” Fallujah resident Ahmed Ali said. The US military said two “coalition personnel” were injured. The pair were airlifted from Fallujah to a combat hospital after ambushers detonated a roadside bomb and raked their vehicle with gunfire, a US official said.

Muthana al-Jumeli, a doctor at Fallujah General Hospi- tal, said three civilians died and three others were wounded.

Fallujah is a hotbed of insurgent activity.

On the eastern outskirts of Baghdad, three civilians - a three-year-old boy, his grandmother and a male relative - were killed when an explosion destroyed the car they were riding in, according to relatives. Six other people were injured in the blast, which relatives said was caused by a mine in the road.

Also before dawn Wednesday, attackers fired a rocket that struck the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad, where foreign contractors and journalists stay. The rocket hit a sixth-floor ledge and the explosion left the lobby strewn with glass.

Iraq handover still faces many hurdles

BAGHDAD, 25 March — A US plan to turn Iraq into an example of democracy in the Middle East is stymied with obstacles and time is running out to overcome them with less than 100 days to go until handover time.

The White House, accused of choosing June 30 as the sovereignty transfer date to fit a domestic timetable for the presidential election in November, must work hard to convince a suspicious Iraqi public that the political process underway is in their best interests.

Iraq’s US-backed interim Governing Council signed a temporary constitution earlier this month to oversee its transition to democracy under a directly elected assembly that will draw up a permanent charter next year. But the United Nations has yet to endorse the text — a move seen as crucial to give it a sense of legitimacy but which would also isolate Iraq’s most influential cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani and his followers, who have already heavily criti- cized the document.

A UN team is due to arrive in Baghdad within days to advise officials on how to elect a new caretaker government to take control from July 1.

It will also help to create the mechanisms for direct elections to a national assembly by the end of January. But on Monday, Sistani threatened to boycott the team if the United Nations endorses Iraq’s interim constitution in a Security Council resolution.

Pentagon finds Iraq deals riddled with problems

WASHINGTON, 25 March — A report by the US Defence Department’s inspector-general has found major problems with some of the early contracts to rebuild Iraq, including poor planning, pricing and a lack of oversight.

According to the report, the inspector general’s web site, procurement rules were not followed in 22 of 24 deals awarded by the military on behalf of the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad and its now-defunct Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA).

Many of these contracts, the biggest of which was to create an Iraqi media network, were not competitively bid.

In one example, a contractor was paid even though he was on vacation. In another, vehicles were airlifted into Iraq at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars without proper approval. And in another, a media contractor was used to organize garbage removal.

“Many of the contracts are not well planned or executed. In one instance, an engineer was appointed to a job he had no experience in,” the inspector general reported.

“The work of the ORHA is often uncoordinated and haphazard,” the report said.

To try to stop the spending, the inspector-general recommended the ORHA, which is charged with overseeing billions of dollars in contracts, set up its own procurement department to make sure contracts are awarded competitively.

The report found most of the early contracts awarded to large companies by the ORHA failed to consider the cost, quality and time required for the work.

German President criticizes biased Western media

DAR ES SALAAM, 25 March — German President Johannes Rau has criticized Western media for biased reports about Iraq, saying it only focuses on problems on the continent and neglects its achievements, local newspaper Daily News reported Wednesday.

Speaking at the Mwalimu Nyerere Foundation in Dar- es-Salaam Tuesday, Rau, who is on a five-day visit to Tanzania, said that such an attitude is not helpful and should be altered.

“Does anyone in Germany know, for instance, that Tanzania is today a stable democracy and Botswana has high performance economy?” Rau asked. — MNA/Xinhua

Iraqi handover still faces many hurdles

BAGHDAD, 25 March — A four-day international information and communication technology conference opened in the Kenyan capital Nairobi Tuesday.

In his opening remarks, Chairman of the Kenya Informa- tion and Communication Technology Federation Mike Eldon said: “Kenya aspires to be competitive in world markets and remain the economic and communications hub of Eastern Africa.”

The conference will field a series of high-level training workshops to enhance the skills and knowledge of East Africa’s telecommunications service providers and users.

Chinese language learning centre opens in Damascus

DAMASCUS, 25 March — A Chinese language learning centre, the second of its kind in the Arab world with the first in the Egyptian capital of Cairo, opened here on Tuesday.

Syrian Cultural Minister Mahmoud Sayyed and the Chi- nese Ambassador in Syria Zhou Xiaohua attended the open- ing ceremony and cut a ribbon symboling the start of the centre.

A photo exhibition entitled “Magnificent China” was also held to celebrate the opening. Mahmood Sayyed told Xiaohua that the opening of the centre will further enhance the friendly relationship between Syria and China and promote bilateral cultural exchanges.

He also expressed appreciation for the advanced facilities in the centre and the beautiful natural and historical Chinese sceneries in the exhibition. Three kinds of facilities will be available in the centre according to different needs of local people, including common language, business-oriented class and weekend class.

As of today, over 100 Syrians has enrolled to learn the Chinese language. — MNA/Xinhua

International “IT” conference opens in Kenya

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In his opening remarks, Chairman of the Kenya Informa- tion and Communication Technology Federation Mike Eldon said: “Kenya aspires to be competitive in world markets and this will definitely raise the standards of living of Kenyans.”

He said it was necessary to introduce the concept of e- governance among East African countries, upgrade the infra- structure and develop human capacity to achieve the goal.

The conference will field a series of high-level training workshops to enhance the skills and knowledge of East Africa’s telecommunications service providers and users.

MNA/Xinhua

Blast heard in central Baghdad, smoke near hotel

BAGHDAD, 25 March — At least one loud explosion was heard in central Bagh- dad early on Wednesday, and a cloud of smoke rose near the Sheraton Hotel, Reuters witnesses said.

The US military said it had no immediate informa- tion. Guerillas have in the past targeted Baghdad hotels used by foreign contractors, business people and journal- ists. — MNA/Reuters

Oil fire : Iraqis watch the fire that broke out on Iraq’s oil export pipeline from the southern city of Basra, to the Faw peninsula on the Gulf in the Maamer zone 100 kilometres (62 miles) further south of Basra. — Internet

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MNA/Xinhua
Some guards, reserves sent to Iraq with doubtful health

WASHINGTON, 25 March—To meet the demand for troops in Iraq, the military deployed National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers whose medical fitness was doubtful.

The Kansas City Star found more than a dozen members of the Guard and Reserve who said they were shipped to Iraq with little attention paid to their medical histories. Some suffered asthma, diabetes or Tourette syndrome. Others had recent ailments.

“They funnelled us through the medical part: boom, boom, boom,” said Michael Scott, an Iowa National Guard reservist. Scott said he was told by The Star, called on a couple of soldiers’ medical backgrounds before the sol-
diers were shipped overseas.

Each of the soldiers who spoke with The Star said they knew of others who—like themselves—were sent to Iraq despite health problems ranging from heart disease to allergies requiring refrigerated medications. Several said many soldiers did not get physicals; rather, medi
cal screeners asked them only a few cursory questions.

Once in Iraq, the soldiers faced severe conditions and a lack of medical care that often worsened their condi
tions.

David Lloyd, a 44-year
old mechanic with the Ten
essee National Guard, died in Iraq of a heart attack last August. His wife, Pamela Lloyd, said her husband hadn’t been aware he had a problem, but his autopsy showed three blockages.

UAE to host “Sister City Forum” in May

ABU DHABI, 25 March — The United Arab Emirates is to host “Sister City Forum” in Dubai on May 15-18, the official WAM news agency reported Tuesday.

More than 600 delegates from cities around the world are expected to join the forum sponsored by the UAE Government, a top munici
al official said Tuesday at the preparatory meeting of the event’s Supreme Organizing Committee.

The forum will seek to strengthen cooperation between Dubai and the cities with which UAE have twin
ning protocol and coopera
tion and friendship pacts, the official said.

They include Istanbul, Osaka, Beirut, Guangzhou and Shanghai, Geneva, Gold Coast, Casablanca, Damas
cus, Detroit and Jerusalem.

The official noted that cooperation would bolster in
teraction with these cities in economic, commercial, po
tical and technical fields.

During the event, each city will showcase its expe
rience in best practices, while cultural shows will also be staged by folk troupes from participating cities.

Early Pentagon contracts in Iraq were badly done, report says

WASHINGTON, 25 March—In awarding the first contracts in Iraq, the Pentagon “cut corners,” couldn’t show that it got “fair and reasonable” prices and didn’t follow up to see if the work was done properly, a new Defense Department inspector general’s report says.

Experts on contracting said Wednesday that the Pen
tagon report shows a dis
turbing, but not surprising, institutional problem with spending in Iraq that’s proba
bly far worse than the De
partment of Defence indi
cates.

The 68-page report shows that “no one’s mind-
ing the store,” said Steven Schooner, the co-director of the government procurement law program at George Washington University’s

law school. “The equivalent of this is to hire contractors to renovate my bathroom and say, ‘I’ll be back in a month.’ ”

The 18 March report, which reviewed contracts worth nearly $123 million—
a small percentage of the tens of billions of dollars being spent in Iraq—

Government officials didn’t monitor work on 13 of the contracts to make sure the jobs were being done.

Officials “inappropri
cally awarded personal serv
ices contracts” in 10 of the 24 cases.

Defence Department contract officers didn’t show that they were getting rea
sonable prices in 22 of the 24 contracts.

Thirteen of the contracts, worth $111 million, were essen
tially given out without a com
petitive bidding process. Those are “the kinds of deals that should have been

Open skies in the Middle East—Companies ready to test the water

WASHINGTON, 25 March—Airports across the Middle East region are ready to test the waters of the open skies policy in 2006 to boost regional aviation and related markets, the English newspaper Gulf News reported Tuesday.

“The adoption of an open skies policy by the civil aviation authorities across the region will only benefit the Middle East’s civil aviation sector,” said Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president of Dubai Civil Aviation and chairman of Emirates Group in the United Arab Emirates.

“For example, Beirut Interna
tional Airport recorded 20 per cent growth in 2003 as a result of the open skies policy,” he said.

The UAE official noted that civil aviation has grown into an industry that includes many diverse aspects as a
result of increasing globali
zation.

“With increasing glo
balization, rules of industrial competition and business location have changed dra
sically,” Al Maktoum said.

“International gateway airports are driving and shap
ing the urban development, giving rise to the emerging ‘airport cities.’ ”

Dubai International Air
port is a prime example of an airport city. Airports are now dealing with issues more
 than just aviation issues such as real estate, retailing, cargo handling, hotels, en
tertainment centres, logistics, e-commerce, warehousing and finance,” he explained.

“Airports themselves are not just functional areas where aircraft land and take off. Airports represent big business and require clear strategies and precise busi
ness sense,” Al Maktoum added.

Official figures showed that the ongoing airport de
velopments and expansions could exceed 15 billion US dollars in the Middle East region out of the 50 billion US dollars all over the world, the report said.

Credit card delinquency hits new record high

WASHINGTON, 25 March — The percentage of US credit card payments that were past due increased to a new record in the final quarter of 2003, the American Bankers Association reported on a survey released on Tuesday.

The report said that seasonally adjusted percentage of credit card accounts that was more than 30 days past due rose to 4.43 per cent in the fourth quarter of last year, surpassing the previ
ous all-time quarterly high of 4.09 per cent in the third quarter of last year. However, delinquency rates for some other types of consumer loans dropped.

The association’s survey showed that the delinquency rate on a composite of other types of consumer loans, including auto loans and home equity loans, declined to a seasonally adjusted 1.89 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2003, down from 2.14 per cent in the previous quarter.

China launches nationwide check on teaching materials

BEIJING, 25 March — China has started a special nationwide check on the quality of teaching material, reference books, dictionaries and children’s reading material published last year, China’s publicatio
ns reported Tuesday.

This is the latest move adopted by the State Press and Publication Administra
tion (SPPA) to step up moni
toring of the country’s book market in 2004, which has been titled “The Year of Book Quality” by the SPPA.

China boasted over 190,000 kinds of publica
tions in 2003, among which some 110,000 were newly published. However, many errors were found in those books, especially in teach
ning material, reference books, dictionaries and chil
dren’s reading material, which aroused dissatisfac
tion among the general read
ers.

The SPPA therefore in 2003 launched a special check on dictionaries and exposed 19 unqualified ones.

During this year’s check, the SPPA said, publishers are required to first examine their own publications, and then the local publication authori
ties and the SPPA will give a spot check on their books.
**Widow of soldier in Jessica Lynch unit blasts Bush**

**Center Point (Texas), 25 March —** At a ceremony on Tuesday marking the one-year anniversary of the Iraq war, the widow of a soldier who died in the fight blasted President George W. Bush for “lying to America” to justify the Iraq war.

In bitter comments before the grave of Army Specialist James Kiehl, widow Jill Kiehl accused Bush of fabricating reasons to launch the invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

“The evidence that’s starting to come out now reflects the truth,” Jill Kiehl said, holding the couple’s 10-month-old son Nathaniel, born seven weeks after his father died.

She said, “I think the reasons for going over there were bogus and misleading.”

Bush justified the invasion on grounds that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and was linked to al-Qaeda, the Islamic extemist group blamed for the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and the Pentagon.

Jill Kiehl described herself as “bitter” about Bush’s decision to go to war on Iraq. “It’s upsetting that he (Bush) would have lied to America to get what he wanted,” Kiehl said.

“In a way, it’s like he used people. That’s how I feel. I think the reasons for going over there were bogus and misleading.”

Several members of the unit, not including Lynch, attended the ceremony in Center Point, 35 miles northwest of San Antonio.

Seven others were captured, including Lynch, who was held for nine days before US troops rescued her from a hospital.

**Fighting in Iraqi town kills two civilians**

**Fallujah (Iraq), 25 March —** Fighting in the turbulent Iraqi town of Fallujah killed two civilians and wounded two others after a roadside bomb injured two US soldiers on Wednesday, witnesses and the US military said.

A US military spokesman said guerrillas fired small arms after the bomb exploded at about 1.30 am (2230 GMT Thursday). Two soldiers had been wounded and a military vehicle destroyed.

Witnesses said the civilians were caught in the crossfire. Reuters television footage showed the bodies of two Iraqis in hospital after the clashes. It showed a woman and a boy were wounded.

**Iraqi working for “Time” magazine shot in Baghdad**

**Baghdad, 25 March —** An Iraqi working for “Time” magazine in Baghdad was shot and critically wounded on Thursday, the magazine said, the latest casualty in a series of recent attacks on journalists and staff of media organizations.

“A member of Time’s staff in Baghdad was shot and injured this morning,” the magazine said in a statement.

“Seven others were also wounded,” it said.

A translator working for Voice of America was shot dead in his car along with his mother and daughter in an apparently targeted attack. In January, gunmen opened fire on CNN convoy south of Baghdad, killing two Iraqi staff.

Some Iraqis working for foreign media organizations in Baghdad have also received threatening letters.

Guerrillas in Iraq have increasingly been focusing their attacks on “soft targets”, including Iraqis working for foreign organizations.

**Democrats say Bush abuses power in slamming critic**

**Washington, 25 March —** Democrats on Tuesday accused the White House of election-year “abuses of power” in trying to discredit former top US counter-terrorism official Richard Clarke, who has accused President George W. Bush of ignoring threats from al-Qaeda before the September 11 attacks.

Democrats took to the Senate floor to lambast the Bush White House, which had fiercely condemned Clarke on Monday.

“We are seeing abuses of power that cannot be tolerated. The President needs to put a stop to it right now. We need to get the truth and the President needs to help us do that,” Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota said.

Clarke specifically accused Bush of paying insufficient attention to the al-Qaeda threat before the September 11, 2001 attacks and there after focusing on Iraq at the expense of efforts to crush the Islamic militant group.

His attack coincided with efforts by Bush to make his leadership on security and terrorism the major theme of his campaign for re-election in November.

It also said Clarke was speaking out for political reasons and was acting out of pique for having been passed over for a top job under Bush.

Top Democrats tried to turn the political tables on Bush by accusing the Administration of attempting to squash dissent and bad news on a range of fronts.

They recalled moves to discredit former treasury secretary Paul O’Neill, who questioned Bush’s Iraq policy in a book in January, and the leaking of the identity of CIA operative Valerie Plame when her husband, former diplomat Joseph Wilson, accused Bush of lying over prewar intelligence on Iraq.

**Vietnam to invest big sum in HIV/“AIDS” prevention**

**Hanoi, 25 March —** Vietnam will have to invest 214.6-304.4 million US dollars in HIV/AIDS prevention between now and 2010, according to the Ministry of Health on Wednesday.

Under the National Strategy on HIV/AIDS Control Through 2010 and Vietnam 2020, recently approved by the Vietnamese Government, the country will lower the HIV/AIDS infection rate among its population to below 0.3 per cent in 2010.

**Democratic**
US military forces invaded Iraq on 20 March, 2003 and due to the resistance of Iraqi guerillas, the Americans have been suffering heavy toll of casualties. Up to 23 March, 2004, the death toll of American forces in Iraq has reached 582.

### US military fatalities in Iraq

Up to 23-3-2004

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Up to 23 March, 2004, the death toll of American forces in Iraq has reached 582.

- A car was attacked near Haswa, 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of Baghdad, on 21 Feb, 2004. Guerrillas fired on a US military convoy killing an Iraqi translator and wounding four American soldiers.
- An explosion tore apart a five-storey hotel catering to foreigners in the heart of Baghdad on 17 March. The attack killed 27 people.
- Two explosives-laden trucks were detonated outside a Polish military camp in Hillah, south of Baghdad on Feb, 18, 2004.
- Iraqis survey the scene of a suicide attack in front of the police station in the town of Kirkuk, north of Baghdad, on 23 February, 2004.
- Huge smoke billows at a base for Coalition forces and civilian personnel, after an explosion on 7 March, 2004 in Baghdad, Iraq.
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day:

Nation-building duties jointly discharged by the Tatmadaw and the people

Kholam-Kengtawng Road constructed by the Tatmadaw and the people

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Mongpan-Kengtawng Road constructed by the Tatmadaw and the people

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Mongnai-Kengtawng Road constructed by the Tatmadaw and the people

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Tatmadaw, which possesses strong morale & perseverance

Mongnai-Kengtawng Road constructed by the Tatmadaw and the people

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

Ensuring clean water supply is one of the five rural development tasks.

Byuha Maung

The following objectives of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day have been laid down for the national development:

— 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; and
— to build up a strong and efficient Tatmadaw to uphold “Our Three Main National Causes”.

For me, I was thinking that the 58th Anniversary Armed Forces Day had passed not long ago. But when I saw the objectives on TV and dailies, I knew that the Armed Forces Day was drawing near again. Time and tide waits for no man. Man needs to use time effectively. Time cannot be bought with money. There are many examples in which some persons have to pay much throughout their life for wasting the invaluable time. After seriously thinking about the objectives one by one to the best of my intellectual level, I have come to realize essence of laying down the Armed Forces Day objectives by the Head of State and the leaders of the Tatmadaw.

Concerning the first objective — to strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the State’s seven-point future policy programme — phase changes towards the multi-party democracy: that the materialization of the democracy must be based on history and the objective conditions of a nation; that it was true that the practice of democracy varied from one country to another. His words are true to the current global conditions. Whatever system a nation is practising, there must be an enduring Constitution that continuously serves the interest of the entire people of the Union. As the nation-building tasks will be implemented stage by stage, we are sure that the discipline-flourishing democratic nation, where political stability prevails, will emerge. The entire people of the nation will join hands with the Government and strive energetically with full Union Spirit for the emergence of a Constitution and practical realization of the seven-point future policy programme.

Now, I am going to discuss the second objective — to crush internal and external destructive elements hindering the stability and progress of the State through people’s militia able to strive for the national development, instead, they had to pay attention to restoration of peace and stability because of the multi-coloured insurgency that broke out soon after the regaining of independence, and the alien intrusion. An unrest external destructive elements as the Tatmadaw, which is discharging the State duties, can do the job dutifully only with the people’s support, and its duty included ensuring the national peace and stability. The people’s participation is required in

A large number of people attending a mass rally to show unanimous support for the seven-point policy programme of the State.
Annual General Meeting for 2003 as follows:

"When it comes to fostering the development, emphasis is also placed on the effort to see that there is no development gap between one region and another. Special plans have been laid down and are being implemented to develop the regions which lagged behind in development owing to various reasons in the past. Not only were central committee and a work committee formed to carry out development tasks for raising the living standard of national races residing in the border areas, a separate ministry had been set up to accelerate these measures continuously.

As concentrated efforts have been exerted to ensure development in all sectors, fruitful results are now in sight.

"In modernizing the State, steps are being taken to make sure that not a single region is left unattended. Plans have also been laid down to ensure equitable progress among regions. For the same reason, with the five rural development tasks laid down to fulfill the most fundamental needs in rural areas, the Government, the Tatmadaw and the people are working together for the development of rural areas — health promotion; and rural economic development. Now, the fourth objective — to build up a strong and efficient Tatmadaw to uphold “Our Three Main Nation Causes. Here, all must note the fact that the nation will be strong only if the Tatmadaw, strong. It is sure that we will face numerous wars. For example, the war in Kosovo in 1999, the war in Afghanistan in 2001 and the US-Iraq War in 2003. The break up of the national unity will lead to the disintegration of the Union and the loss of sovereignty. In this regard, “Our Three Main National Causes” must be accepted and followed by all the national races as the national policy.

It is the duty of the Tatmadaw to crush together with the people all the enemies trying to harm “Our Three Main National Causes”. The Tatmadaw is discharging duties in the interest of the nation and the people with true goodwill. It is striving to raise the socio-economic standard of the people, and at the same time, ensuring peace and stability, and public security in the nation.

The Tatmadaw, loyal to the State and the people, is striving in all sectors to lay down sound foundations for the future democratic nation. If we study the past and present situations, we can know that a modern and powerful Tatmadaw is needed to ward off all enemies from inside and outside the nation.

At the 56th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe said, ‘The Tatmadaw will have to strive together with the people for the successful implementation of the State’s 12 objectives, while keeping in the fore “Our Three Main National Causes”; to strive for dynamism and propagation of Union Spirit, while trying to foster national unity, to make efforts in cooperation with the people to implement the five rural development tasks; to strive in hand in hand with the people, to make efforts, to reduce wastage and to accelerate the production sector for the national development, to make efforts to build a brilliant Tatmadaw to protect and defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity. The four 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives which have been laid down to serve the long-term interest of the nation, the people and the Tatmadaw, will help lay sound foundations for the future democratic State with full essence and the present generation to hand down good heritage to the posterity.

*****

(Translation: TMT)
Secretary-1 meets industrial …

(From page 16)

Afterwards, the Secretary-1 and party inspected various kinds of small-scale vehicles, fan of watercraft and speed boats, agricultural equipment and foodstuffs displayed at Monywa industrial zone. They also viewed production of traditional medicines.

They attended the ceremony to open Shwepyiaye school building at Monywa BEHS-2. The Secretary-1 formally unveiled the signboard of the building. They also viewed round the multimedia teaching centre.

At the opening ceremony, an official reported on arrangements made for opening the new building. Principal Daw Htay Myint handed over the documents on arrangements made for greater success, he said. Progress is being made in carrying out tasks for ensuring all nationals to be literate, enrolment of cent per cent school-going-age children and high rate of the students pursuing education to middle and high schools.

He said that in this regard, achievement is to be made both in quantity and in quality. Teachers are to nurture and teach the students with goodwill through the most effective use of pedagogical aids to turn out highly-qualified new generations and reliable ones. Next, the Secretary-1 cordially greeted the teachers and members of the school board of trustees.

The 130’ x 24’ school building was constructed in three months at a cost of K 15.5 million including K 2.5 million donated by Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council; K 3 million each by Gomorra medical house and Honda-Meaner Co; K 1.5 million by Tin Win Tun Co; and K 1 million by U Kyaw Kyaw Sein, Daw Nan Yadana Win and brothers & sisters.

After the ceremony, the Secretary-1 and party viewed the Union Highway under construction in Monywa. Officials reported on work progress and the Secretary-1 gave necessary instructions.

In the afternoon, the Secretary-1 and party proceeded to construction site of a bridge across Yama Creek in Yamabin Township. Officials reported on construction of Monywa-Yagyi-Kalewa Road and the 15-mile road to link Monywa-Pale-Gangaw Road and Pakokku-Monywa Road, and progress in building the bridge. The commander reported on preparations to be made for timely completion of road and bridge construction tasks. The Secretary-1 and party inspected the construction site. On completion, the bridge will be 947 feet in length and it will link Aungchantha village in the township and Yondaw village in Salinjyi Township. — MNA

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspects construction tasks on Maei-Minkyaung road section

YANGON, 25 March—Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspected construction of road sections and bridges on Maei-Minkyaung road section on 21 March. Accompanied by Chairman of Rakhae State Peace and Development Council Commander of Western Command Maj-Gen Maung Oo, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, Col Myint Soe of Taungup Station and officials, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than arrived at Londawpauk Bridge Construction Project in AnTownship and gave necessary instructions.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than, Commander Maj-Gen Maung Oo and Minister Maj-Gen Saw Tun inspected construction of Maei-Londawpauk-Minkyaung road section with the use of geotextile process. They also saw over progress in building Thanthamagyi Bridge in Yanbye Township. On arrival at Thanthamagyi Bridge in Yanbye Township, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party heard reports on progress of construction tasks and gave necessary instructions.

They proceeded to Thazintanpaik Bridge in Yanbye Township and fulfilled the requirements.

In Lainggaung Island, they looked into construction of the road between Thazintanpaik Bridge and Wamphike Bridge in Yanbye Township. In the island, four fresh water ponds have been dug for the public use. Next, they inspected progress in construction of Minkyaung Bridge. Out of 14 bridges which will be 180 feet and above on Taungup-Maei-Kyaukpyu Road Section, eight bridges have been built and six are under construction.

In the evening, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party inspected An-Padekyaw-Maei Road construction project and gave necessary instructions. An-Padekyaw-Maei road section is under construction in progress. — MNA

Lectures, exams for BEd correspondence courses announced

YANGON, 25 March—The lectures and exams for the trainee teachers of BEd correspondence course for 2003-2004 academic year will be held at Yangon Institute of Education. Lectures will be given for the first year of course No 22 and the second year of course No 23 from 22 April to 13 May. Trainees are to report not later than 21 April and will not be allowed to report three days beyond the target date. The examinations for the courses will be held from 17 to 21 May. — MNA
Deedokpauk Bridge on Yangon-Kyaukpyu Highway in Rakhine State commissioned into service

YANGON, 25 March
Hailing the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, Deedokpauk Bridge on Maeki-Kyaukpyu section of Yangon-Kyaukpyu Highway in Yanbye Township, Rakhine State, was commissioned into service on 22 March.

Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than delivered an address at the opening of the bridge held on the eastern bank of Deedokpauk Creek.

He said infrastructures have been built in various sectors for development of all regions of the Union formed with 14 states and divisions. Development infrastructures have been built in all states including Rakhine State and border regions which lagged behind in develop in the past for certain reasons. Transport plays a key role in developing a region. Smooth and better transport helps promote trade and production, thereby leading to developing the regional economy. At the same time there will be a harmonious progress in health, education and social sectors. Moreover, increase in the relationship among the brethren will promote exchange of knowledge and widening the scope of visions among themselves leading to further strengthening national unity and Union Spirit. Thus, the Government has been giving priority to the transport development. In the past Rakhine State relied on air and water transport. Thus, the Government has been building many bridges in the state to help improve its road transport. Now the state has three highways — the Sitway-Mrauk-U-An; the Taungup-Padaung; and the Gwa-Ngathachingaung — linking a network of roads reaching all the directions of the nation. The section of the Yangon-Kyaukpyu Highway passing through marshlands was built with the use of geotextile method. Of the 14 over 180-foot bridges on Taungup-Maeki-Kyaukpyu Highway, eight bridges — the Kaingshe, the Tanlwe, the Huqin, the Lamoe, the Maeki, the Kyaukpyu; the Sanepauk; and the Deedokpauk — have already been opened.

When all the bridges are completed, Ann-Maeki-Kyaukpyu and An-Maeki-Kyaukpyu highways linking the southern and northern Rakhine State will emerge. The Yangon-Kyaukpyu Highway will also emerge magnificently as the Yangon-Sittway Highway. Thus there will be three gateways — An, Taungup and Gwa — to the state and four highways in the state. Deedokpauk Bridge is an important facility on the Yangon-Kyaukpyu Highway. It is one of the 109 over 180-foot bridges built by the Public Works since 1988. The PW has built 28 over 180-foot bridges in Rakhine State alone. The 592-foot bridge is a reinforced concrete facility supporting a 24-foot motor way. Its maximum load bearing capacity is 60 tons. It will help develop the state. Rakhine State is rich in natural resources and an offshore natural gas deposit has been found in the region. Rakhine State saw a 36.1 per cent rise in the gross domestic product in fiscal 2002-2003 when compared to that of fiscal 2001-2002. Per capita income of the state in fiscal 2002-2003 was K 79,770, up K 29,027 from K 50,743 in fiscal 2001-2002.

The Government can provide all necessary assistance and create sound foundations, but the real force behind the region’s development lies in the local people. Thus, all will have to make harmonious efforts for the development of their region. The next political programme that will promise the emergence of a new, discipline-flourishing democracy and the perpetuation of the Union. Next, a representative, on behalf of the local national people, spoke words of thanks for the construction of Deedokpauk Bridge. Also present were Col Myint Soe of Taungup Station, local authorities, cultural dance troupe and local people totalling over 2,000.

Later, Minister Maj-Gen Saw Tun, Commander in Chief, Defence Services, Col Myint Soe formally opened the bridge. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than unveiled the stone inscription of the bridge. Afterwards, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party together with the locals inspected the bridge.
ARRIVAL/CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV “MANDALAY” VOY NO 122/N
Consignees of cargo carried on MV “MANDALAY” Voy No 122/N are hereby notified that the vessel has arrived at Yangon port on 25-03-2004 and will be berthing on about 26-03-2004 and cargoes will be discharged into the premises of Myanmar Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.30 am and 12 noon to 4 pm into Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.
CONTAINER FEEDER SERVICE
MYANNA FIVE STAR LINE
Phone : 293147, 296507, 295754
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV GEE HONG VOY NO (406)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV GEE HONG Voy No (406) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 26-3-2004 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.
Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm into Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.
No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Nigeria seeks visa clearance to fight drug trafficking

Lagos, 25 March — The Nigerian federal government is seeking to expand international cooperation on visa clearance of Nigerians travelling to drug source countries, in order to screen out potential drug traffickers, a senior Nigerian Government official said here Tuesday.
Abdul Danbata, commander of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), told reporters in Nigeria’s commercial capital Lagos that it was imperative for further emphasis in the country to submit visa applicants to drug source countries to the agency for screening before the visas are granted.
He said NDLEA visa clearance unit ensures that all intending travellers to drug source countries are screened before they are recommended to foreign embassies.

Chinese cultural relics spanning 5,000 years discovered

Chengdu, 25 March — Archaeologists claim that cultural relics they discovered in Yanyang County, southwestern China’s Chongqing municipality, cover each culture of a 5,000-year period with distinct cultural stratum. “We discovered human traces of each period from the Neolithic Age to the imperial Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, which covers 5,000 years,” said Professor Luo Erzh. with the archaeological department of prestigious Sichuan University. Nearly 1,000 articles were unearthed at the site. Luo acknowledged that “essential historical articles were discovered at each cultural stratum, especially those after the Shang (16th Century BC-11 Century BC) and the Zhou (11 Century BC-221 BC) dynasties, which are well preserved and uninterrupted in age.”

During the excavation which started on February 28, archaeologists unearthed four spiral trapeziform ash pits with a diameter of one metre of the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), the first of its kind ever spotted in the Three Gorges Reservoir region and seldom seen around the country.
“The function of those pits is still under investigation,” said Luo, “but it should be related to certain religions or customs.”

81% of Angolans drink non-treated water

Luanda, 25 March — At least 81 per cent of the Angolans survive on non-treated, the National Institute of Statistics (INE) was quoted by local media as saying on Tuesday.
The institute presented their findings of a Multiple Indicative Inquiry (MIIQ) on the World’s Water Day Mon.
It said 41 per cent of Angolan families live with poor sanitation, and more than 40 per cent get water from unsafe sources, Angolan news agency Angop reported.
The document stated that the diarrhoea is killing nearly two million children worldwide per year and causes other diseases.
The children who already suffer from these illnesses are the first to get sick and die of diseases related to drinking unclean water, such as diarrhoea, cholera and typhoid fever.

DON’T SMOKE
**Mars rover peers at edge of ancient seashore**

WASHINGTON, 25 March—NASA’s Mars rover Opportunity is sending data back to Earth from an ancient martian seashore, scientists reported on Tuesday.

“We think Opportunity is now parked on what was once the shoreline of a salty sea on Mars,” said Steve Squyres, principal investigator for the science payload on Opportunity and its twin Mars exploration rover, Spirit. Squyres and a team of researchers announced that the Red Planet was “drenched with water” at some point. Records indicated by these rocks represent the difference between “water you can draw from a well, and water you can swim in.”

“This was a habitable environment on Mars, a salt flat,” Squyres said. But when asked whether he expected to see microbial fossils and I certainly don’t expect to see dinosaur tracks.

Scientists do not yet know how big the body of water might have been, how deep, or when or how it formed. Even so, “It’s a sign that there may have been life on the Red Planet,” Squyres said.

Opportunity was launched six months ago, and has been exploring a region of the planet known as Meridiani Planum for more than a year. It has sent back images of craters and dunes, and analyzed the chemistry of rocks and soils.

**World champion “Snake Man” killed by cobra**

BANGKOK, 25 March—Thailand’s Boonreung Boorchuchan, holder of the Guinness Book of World Records title for the longest time penned up with snakes, was killed by a cobra which bit him during his daily show, a hospital doctor said Monday.

Boonreung, 34 and dubbed Snake Man, was rushed unconscious to a Bangkok hospital near his home town, 350 miles northeast of Bangkok. Dr Wita Pratunpi told Reuters.

“He was brought here with no signs of life. He wasn’t breathing and his heart didn’t beat,” she said.

Boonreung was listed by the Guinness Book of World Records in 1998 after living with snakes in a glass box for seven days.

An epileptic, he went into convulsions after being bitten, but no one took him to the hospital initially because they thought he was suffering an epileptic fit.

Boonreung’s father said he would give his son’s 30 snakes to a zoo because nobody in the family dared deal with them.—MNA/Reuters

**UN reports dietary deficiencies threaten billions**

UNITED NATIONS, 25 March— Dietary shortages of crucial vitamins and minerals like zinc and iron may be keeping as many as a third of the world’s people from reaching their full potential, researchers told a UN panel on Tuesday.

“Resources and technology to bring vitamin and mineral deficiencies and also certain infectious problems, said the studies presented to a meeting of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, an arm of the World Health Organization. A shortage of iron in the diets of young children’s development and intelligence, and a deficiency in Vitamin A compromises the immune system of about 40 per cent of children in five developing nations, the researchers said. They also described in iodine deficiency as causing as many as 20 million babies a year to be born mentally impaired.

Zinc deficiency may be the most under-reported global health problem, they said. As many as one-fifth of the world’s population lack enough zinc in their diets, putting children in particular at risk of diarrhoea and serious respiratory infections like pneumonia, the studies found.—MNA/Reuters

**Ethiopia to build hydroelectric power project over Nile**

ADDIS ABABA, 25 March—Ethiopia announced Tuesday its plan to construct a hydroelectric power project under the Nile Basin Initiative (NBI) while Egypt insists on its huge quota of Nile water with other countries sharing the river.

Tefera said the funds for carrying out most of the projects has already been secured from the international community.

According to him, part of the investment for the construction of the Baro-Akobo hydroelectric power project was obtained from the Norwegian Government.

“Other irrigation and water drainage development projects would also be under-taken around river Dodesa and lake Tana. Ethiopia and Egypt are working together for the mutual benefit of the peoples of the respective countries on the utilization of the resources of River Abay (Nile),” Tefera added.

A study enabling to launch Gaba hydroelectric power project Baro-Akobo river basin is also being carried out with a fund allocated by the government, said Tefera.—MNA/Xinhua

**Mexico smashes human trafficking ring, arrests 44**

MEXICO CITY, 25 March—Mexico’s Government said on Tuesday it had arrested 44 suspects in an operation to break up a trafficking ring taking migrants to the United States.

The government said the ring provided papers and assistance to 2,300 migrants from 22 South American countries and Central American migrants travelling across Mexico from the southeastern state of Quintana Roo to northern Chihuahua State, from where they were smuggled across the border into the United States.

“Under the direction of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a civil servants helped to take the migrants to the border region in the north of the country, where they illeg-ally provided them with official documents and helped hundreds to enter the United States,” Interior Minister Santiago Creel told a news conference.—MNA/Reuters

**HK resumes chilled chicken imports from Mainland**

HONG KONG, 25 March—Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Monday resumed the importation of chilled chickens from the Chinese Mainland.

The RIAA has reached out to the 443 people who use commercial Internet access networks are accused by the RIAA. The other 443 people accused are those who use commercial Internet access providers in California, Colorado, Missouri, Texas and Virginia.

If the defendants face possible civil penalties or settlements that could cost them thousands of dollars. Settlements have averaged 3,000 US dollars each.

We are sending a clear message that downloading or sharing digital music that a sign that foreign trade all-owances will be reduced by the RIAA. The other 443 people accused are those who use commercial Internet access networks are accused by the RIAA.

The RIAA has reached out to the 443 people who use commercial Internet access providers in California, Colorado, Missouri, Texas and Virginia.

If the defendants face possible civil penalties or settlements that could cost them thousands of dollars. Settlements have averaged 3,000 US dollars each.

We are sending a clear message that downloading or sharing digital music piracy is illegal, it can have consequences and it undermines the creative fun-ction of music itself,” RIAA president Cary Sherman said in a statement.

So far 1,977 people have been accused by the RIAA since it launched the offen-sive last year. Illegal online music piracy last year. The RIAA has reached out of-court settlements in about 400 cases.—MNA/Xinhua

**Recording industry sues 532 people for online music piracy**

LOS ANGELES, 25 March—The Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) filed lawsuits against 532 people Tuesday, for alleged illegal online sharing of digital music.

This is the latest in a se-ries of aggressive moves that the RIAA has taken in its battle to stop online music piracy, which costs the recording industry dearly.


This is the first time that users of university computer networks are accused by the RIAA. The other 443 people accused are those who use commercial Internet access providers in California, Colorado, Missouri, Texas and Virginia.

If the defendants face po-tential civil penalties or settle-ments that could cost them thousands of dollars. Settlements have averaged 3,000 US dollars each.

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**Archaeological find reveals centuries-old trade in north China**

TANZANIA, 25 March—Chinese archaeologists have recently unearthed Chinese coins and a diadem of ivory in the northwestern city of Tacheng of the end of the Qing Dynasty in the early 1900s. “We’ve also found coins ingrated with Japanese characters, a sign that foreign trade al-ready boomed in the ancient town several centuries ago.” He did not say how old the coins exactly were or what they looked like.

MNA/Xinhua

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PRC State Council Vice Premier and party leave for Bagan-NyaungU

YANGON, 25 March—Vice Premier Madam Wu Yi of the State Council and party of the People’s Republic of China who arrived here at the invitation of Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win, accompanied by Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha and Chinese Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun, left here by special aircraft for Bagan-NyaungU at 2 pm today.

They were seen off at Yangon International Airport by Secretary-1 Li-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Li-Gen Thein Sein, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department and officials and embassy officials of the Chinese Embassy.

Before their departure by air, Secretary-1 Li-Gen Soe Win presented goodwill delegation video tapes and documentary photo album as gifts to Vice Premier Madam Wu Yi.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint meets Mandalay Division Agricultural Supervisory Committee

YANGON, 25 March—Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint met with members of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council and officials at Central Command in Mandalay on 22 March.

Also present were Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Nay Win, Secretary of Division PDC Lt-Col Kyi Thein and officials.

The division manager of Myanma Agriculture Service reported to the meeting on cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy, long-staple cotton, sugarcane and kitchen crops in the division, cultivation projects and accomplishments.

Officials of Irrigation Department and Water Resources Utilization Department explained water inflow at dams, maintenance of main canal and tributary canals, water supply, targeted acres of land to be irrigated by water pumping stations and planned acreage and actual sown acreage. Officials of the respective departments also presented reports on rain fall, plans and accomplishments sector wise.

Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint gave a supplementary report.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint said that efforts should be made to ensure regional rice sufficiency, extend paddy cultivation, raise per acre yield, reduce cultivation cost, and keep records systematically. Means should be sought to raise per acre yield. Field tours should be made down to the grassroots to extend sown acreage. The committee members and officials of the related departments will have to find means to remedy the weaknesses for cent per cent realization of the projects.

Regional development measures inspected in Mandalay Division

YANGON, 25 March—Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint and departmental officials, arrived at the work site of Myitnge bridge construction project on 23 morning.

At the briefing hall, Project Chief Engineer U Soe Min reported to Lt-Gen Ye Myint on the erecting of piles, laying of concrete, construction of approach bridges on the bank of Singing and on that of Myitnje, progress of making concrete frames, and tasks left to be done.

After hearing the reports, Lt-Gen Ye Myint gave instructions on efforts to finish the construction in time and inspected the work site.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party went to Thittegon Diversion Weir near Ledwingon villages, where he inspected the digging of a main ditch for the diversion weir and heard reports on tasks being carried out there and supply of water to irrigated farmland.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party proceeded to the construction project of the 25-story modern Zegyo market and a condominium.

At the briefing hall, he heard reports on tasks being carried out at the construction project and gave instructions on works to be carried out.

He also fulfilled the requirements.

In the afternoon, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party arrived at Sagaing Bridge on the border of Mandalay Division and Sagaing Division, where they were welcomed by Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Chairman South-West Command Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye and officials.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye and officials arrived Monywa in Sagaing Division in the evening.

Myanmar delegation leaves for PRC

YANGON, 25 March—Myanmar delegation led by Auditor General Maj-Gen Lun Maung this morning left here for Beijing, the People’s Republic of China, to attend the ceremony to sign MoU between the two countries.

The delegation was seen off at the Yangon International Airport by Chief-Justice U Aung Toe, Attorney-General U Aye Maung and Deputy Auditor-General Daw Thin Thin, Acting Director-General of the Auditor-General’s Office U Myo Myint and officials.

Members of the delegation were Deputy Director-General of the Auditor-General’s Office U Khin Maung Lin, Director U Thein Myint and Assistant Director Daw Myint Myint.
PRC goodwill delegation visits Shwedagon Pagoda

YANGON, 25 March — The visiting Chinese goodwill delegation led by Vice Premier Madam Wu Yi visits Shwedagon Pagoda. — MNA

Lt-Gen Aung Htwe inspects development tasks in Tangyan Township

YANGON, 25 March— Member of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Brig-Gen Soe Oo of Hsenwi Station and officials, inspected thriving of Hsinshweli paddy strain at 40 acres of land in Soe Oo of Hsenwi Station and officials, inspected thriving of Hsinshweli paddy strain in Hsenwi Station and mixed cropping of maize and pigeon pea. Li-Gen Aung Htwe inspected preliminary preparations for cultivation tasks.

Next, they went to Tangyan Station Livestock Development Farm and inspected pig breeding farm, fish breeding farm and photos of Hsenwi Station. He also met with local people at the station. He also met with local people at the town hall in Tangyan.

At Lwepanglon Hall in Tangyan Station, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe met with officers, other ranks and family members of the station. He also met with local people at the town hall in Tangyan.

They proceeded to Tangyan Agricultural Farm of Hong Pang Agricultural Development Co Ltd in Hwekyein Village-tract, Tangyan Township. At Lwepanglon Hall in Tangyan Station, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe inspected preparations for cultivation tasks.

Next, they went to Tangyan Station Livestock Breeding Farm and inspected pig breeding farm, fish breeding farm, poultry farm and raising of layers and attended to their needs. — MNA

POEM:
Honouring the “The Fragrance of the Tatmadaw’s honour”

* The Tatmadaw is for Myanmar
With firm morale held to bosom
Noble heart, sweat and blood
Stands guard against all enemies.

* The Tatmadaw is united
National, throughout the land
Assembled together in unity
Repulsed, not to be ever enslaved.

* The Tatmadaw, throughout history
For Myanmar nation, regarded life
As if it were a leaf, undeterred
Traditionally, steadfastly, gives of itself.

* The Tatmadaw, to build new nation
Hands held unitedly, with wisdom and tenacity
With full strength and industry
A foundation is built again.

* The Tatmadaw works for Motherland’s
Modernity, development and economic wellbeing
Giving priority to national well
With full cognizance, it strives.

* All those traditions, many and varied
To the brimful, Tatmadaw’s honour
In the fragrance of Tabaung summer’s mist
Old and new leaves changing, poetically
We embelish and take pride
And in unison, salute.

Yan Naing Oo (Trs)

Military parade columns finalize practice of parade drills for Armed Forces Day

YANGON, 25 March — Chairman of the Leading Committee for Observation of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, member of the State Peace and Development Council, Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspected the military parade columns practising final drills marching from Myaung Myo Grounds to the Resistance Park this morning. Vice-Chiefs of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint, Maj-Gen Aung Kyi and Brig-Gen Nyan Win, Vice-Adjutant-General Brig-Gen Hla Shwe, and senior military officers watched and inspected the final parade drills.

Anawrahta, Kyansittha, Bayintnaung, Nawadaw, Aungzeya, Hsinbyushin, Bandoola, Myawady and Aung San columns under the command of Parade Commander Brig-Gen Min Thein and Reserve Parade Commander Col Nyi Tun practised the final parade drills in line with the parade procedures.

After giving necessary instructions, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win left Myaung Myo Grounds at 10 am. — MNA

WEATHER

Thursday, 25 March, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours

MST: During the past 24 hours, except for isolated light rain in Mon State, weather has been generally fair in the whole country. Day temperatures were (5°C) to (6°C) above normal in lower Sagaing and Magway Divisions, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin, Chin and Shan States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Yangon Divisions and about normal in the remaining areas. Significant day temperatures were (42°C) each in Monywa, Minbu and Magway.

Maximum temperature on 24-3-2004 was 37.0°C (99°F). Minimum temperature on 25-3-2004 was 19.7°C (68°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 25-3-2004 was 77%. Total sun shine hours on 24-3-2004 was (9.6) hours approx. Rainfall on 25-3-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 3 mm (0.12 inch) at Yangon Airport and nil at Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 12 mph from Northwest at (12:33) hours MST on 24-3-2004.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 26-3-2004: Weather will be generally fair in the whole country.

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Generally fair weather in the whole country.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 26-3-2004: Fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 26-3-2004: Fair weather.

Deputy Minister receives guest

YANGON, 25 March — Deputy Minister for Immigration and Population U Maung Aung received Ambassador of Bangladesh Mr A B Manjoor Rahim at 2 pm today at the deputy minister’s office here.

Also present at the call were Immigration and National Registration Department Director-General U Maung Htay and officials. — MNA

Rural roads opened to hail 59th Anniversray Armed Forces Day

YANGON, 25 March — Director-General of the Development Affairs Department Col Myo Myint of the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs attended the opening of Thayet-U-Mayan rural gravel road and Chaunggyal Kyonpadaw gravel road in Pantanaw Township recently. The Thayet-U-Mayan Road is 1 mile and 2 furlongs long and 8 feet wide.

The Chaunggyal-Kyonpadaw road is 3.850 feet long and 8 feet wide. The director-general also inspected progress in construction of Pyintongyi-Tuchaung-Gonnin rural earthen road. — MNA
Senior General Than Shwe receives
Vice Premier of State Council of PRC

YANGON, 25 March—Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe received Vice Premier Madam Wu Yi of the State Council and party of the People’s Republic of China at the Credentials Hall of Pyithu Hluttaw Building, here, at 10 am today.

Also present at the call were Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, Director-General Li-Col Pe Nyen of the State Peace and Development Council Office and Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department.

The Chinese Vice Premier and party were accompanied by Chinese Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe sends message of felicitations to Bangladeshi President

YANGON, 26 March—On the occasion of the Anniversary of the Independence Day of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh which falls on 26 March 2004, Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, has sent message of felicitations to His Excellency Prof Dr Iajuddin Ahmed, President of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh. — MNA

Secretary-1 meets industrial entrepreneurs in Monywa Industrial Zone

YANGON, 25 March—Chairman of Industrial Development Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, ministers, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council at the meeting.

Also present on the occasion were Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, ministers, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council.

At the meeting, Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe reported on allotment of plots for industrial entrepreneurs at the industrial zone, measures being taken for better transport and electricity supply and production of small vehicles.

Next, the commander reported on security measures, power supply, installation of auto-telephones, fire prevention, arrangements being made for construction of the foundry plant, the machine tool factory and the mould factory and improvement for industrial technology.

Chairman of Monywa Industrial Zone U Maw Zaw reported on requirements of electricity at the zone. Developmental Engineer of Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise U Thein Sein Win gave a supplementary report.

Speaking on the occasion, the Secretary-1 said that the Monywa Industrial Zone is one having good prospects for development in future, the State is fulfilling requirements of it. Factories and workshops in the zone are to be made with full capacity. With the assistance provided by the State, the foundry plant and the mould factory are to be established as soon as possible, and arrangements are to be made for running the factories and the plant. On completion, the private industrial sector will achieve more progress. So, it is necessary to have more successes in production of import-substitute and agricultural farming industries. Furthermore, preparations are now to be made for conducting the research and development works. Later, he urged the entrepreneurs to harmoniously, correctly and fairly perform upgrading of the industrial zone.

Next, he cordially greeted the industrial entrepreneurs. (See page 10)