Join hands with the people to repulse courageously whatever dangers that threaten the nation and its people

We Tatmadawmen are the offspring of the people. Therefore, I would like to remind you to participate wholeheartedly in the activities that promote the welfare of the public wherever you are assigned and to join hands with the people to repulse courageously whatever dangers that threaten the nation and its people, even at the risk to your own lives.

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 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day)
Towards industrial development

As the industrial sector plays a key role in national development the State is making arrangements for the nation to become an industrialized one.

Boosting export, reducing import by promoting industries that produce import-substitute items and striking a balance in foreign trade are today’s economic aims of the State.

New factories and workshops are being built and industrial zones established wherever possible for industrial development. At the same time, the Government is encouraging industries to promote exports of industrial and other sectors including the agriculture sector. Moreover, import-substitute industries are also being encouraged to boost their products.

In March, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Than Win inspected Monywa Industrial Zone in Monywa, Sagaing Division.

In meeting with industrialists there, the Secretary-1 gave instructions, saying that as Monywa Industrial Zone is the one having good prospects for development, the State is fulfilling requirements of it and that factories and workshops in the zone are to manufacture products with full capacity.

As foundry plant and mould factory will be built in Monywa Industrial Zone with the assistance provided by the State, arrangements are to be made for running the factory and the plant. On completion of these plants, import-substitute industries and industries that produce farm equipment will make more progress.

In Monywa Industrial Zone, light vehicles, propellers for watercrafts, speedboat, farm implement and foodstuff are being produced.

The Ministry of Industry-1 is endeavouring for producing consumer goods to meet the demand of the people and to boost the production of the 21st Century. In Kyaukse Township, Mandalay Division, the ministry has been establishing new factories and workshops. In Kyaukse Industrial Zone, cement plant, candy factory, vest factory, footwear factory, sewing machine factory, bicycle factory and plastic ware factory are in operation. Moreover, in Ingon of Kyaukse Township, Agricultural Mechanization Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is running farm equipment factories. The factory is producing power tillers, harvesters and other spare parts.

Industrialists and those who are engaged in the industrial sector are urged to establish more factories and workshops to produce consumer goods and import-substitute items with full capacity to promote the manufacturing sector.

Myanmar Trade Fair 2004 to be held

Yangon, 28 March — The Myanmar Trade Fair 2004 will be held from 2 to 5 April at the Yangon Trade Centre on Upper Pazundaung Road here by the Quartz International Organization for Women’s Affairs.

The Myanmar Federation of Women’s Affairs will be put on display. — MNA

Plenary meeting of State/Division Organizations for Women’s Affairs held

Yangon, 28 March — The plenary meeting of delegates of State/Division Organizations for Women’s Affairs of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation took place at Yangon Convention Centre in Yangon Township this morning.

Present were Chairperson of Leading Committee for Organizing the meeting President of MWAFF Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, Vice-Presidents Professor Dr Daw May May Yai, Daw Khin Lay Thet, Daw Than Nwe and Daw Khin Khin Win, Adviser Daw Khin Than Nwe, General Secretary Professor Dr Daw Khin Aye Win and members of the central executive Committee, officials and guests.

President of MWAFF Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, Vice-Presidents Professor Dr Daw May May Yai, Daw Khin Lay Thet, Daw Than Nwe and Daw Khin Khin Win acted as members of the Panel of Chairpersons at the meeting. President of MWAFF Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe spoke on the occasion.

General Secretary Professor Dr Daw Khin Aye Win reported on work done by MWAFF. The delegates of Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Chin State reported on work done from January to March 2004.

In the afternoon session, the delegates from Mon, Rakhine, Shan and Shan (North) Organizations for Women’s Affairs reported on work done. — MNA

Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State

* 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

People’s Desire

Vice Premier of the PRC Madame Wu Yi and delegation visit Myanansankyaw Golden Palace in Mandalay.

Chinese Vice Premier of State Council visits Bagan-NayungU, Mandalay

Yangon, 28 March — Visiting Vice Premier Madame Wu Yi of the People’s Republic of China, accompanied by Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha and officials, left here by air on 25 March and arrived at NayungU Airport in the afternoon.

They were welcomed there by Chairman of Magway Division Peace and Development Council Col Zaw Min and officials.

Accompanied by Col Zaw Min and officials, the Chinese guests arrived at Pyathadgyi Pagoda in Bagan archaeological zone where they were welcomed by, Director-General U Nyunt Han of Archaeology Department and officials. After viewing scenery of Bagan region, the guests together with Minister U Soe Tha and party posed for documentary photos.

On 26 March, they visited Ananda Pagoda and Shwezigon Pagoda. Next, they left for Mandalay by air and arrived at Mandalay International Airport where they were welcomed by Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Mayor Brig-Gen Yan Thein, Deputy Chief Justice U Khin Maung Latt, Chinese Ambassador Mr Li Jinjun, authorities at different levels, departmental officials and social organization members. Before their departure, Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint presented souvenirs to Madame Wu Yi. — MNA
Iraqi oil exports delayed from north and south

DUBAI, 28 March—Iraq is facing difficulties in exporting oil from both its northern and southern fields, the Middle East Economic Survey reports in its Monday edition.

Exports of Kirkuk crude through the Turkish port of Ceyhan will be delayed until mid-April, the industry specialists say. “Technical problems in Kirkuk, mainly rising water cut, have delayed pumping to Ceyhan for the time being,” MEES says.

Iraq auctioned six million barrels of Kirkuk crude in March (200,000 per day for the month) and was planning to have a back-to-back sale of a monthly average of 270,000 bpd in March and April, MEES notes.

And plans to export around 250,000-300,000 bpd of Buzrah Light from Khor al-Amaya are also in trouble.

“The major international firms are reluctant to send their vessels to the offshore facility in the northern Gulf, despite the fact that SOMO (State Oil Marketing Organization) has offered a 10 cents a barrel discount for crude loaded during March and April,” says the weekly newsletter.

“SOMO is considering asking a specialized firm to survey the route and the safety of the infrastructure of the old export facility to reassure the international oil companies.”

Only five vessels have loaded so far from the Khor al-Amaya facility which has been open for around a month. Exports in March have averaged only about 100,000 bpd, with the crude destined mainly for India, MEES says.

On Thursday, an explosion set ablaze a major oil well west of Kirkuk that feeds exports through Turkey.

Oil-rich Iraq has been struggling to reopen its export pipelines, which have been repeatedly attacked, particularly in the north, by insurgents fighting the continuing US-led occupation.

And on Wednesday officials said Iraq’s main oil export pipeline from the southern town of Basra to the Eaw Peninsula was on fire due to a technical fault.—Internet

China to consume 270 million tons of crude oil in 2004

B pinsing, 28 March—China, the world’s second largest oil consumer, is expected to consume 270 million tons of crude oil in 2004, according to a Ministry of Commerce report on production material on Friday.

The report expects China’s net oil imports to exceed 100 million tons in 2004. Official statistics show that in 2003, China’s net oil imports amounted to 97.39 million tons, including 82.99 million tons of crude oil, or 30 per cent or so over the previous-year level.

Last year the country’s oil product demand was shored up by 11.4 per cent mainly by the combination of a 9.1 per cent economic growth and oil-fired power generating caused by an acute electric power shortage in the eastern and southern parts of China and a significant increase in car population.

MNA/Reuters

Two killed in rocket attack in Iraq’s north; 21 people killed in last two days

BAGHDAD, 28 March—Rebels fired a rocket at a government building in northern Iraq on Saturday, killing two civilians and wounding 14 others, officials said. The attack brought the number of people killed in two days of explosions and shootings across the country to 21.

The rocket launcher was hidden inside a wooden cart that was wheeled up to a bomb-blast wall surrounding the three-storey main government building in the northern city of Mosul, police Sgt. Jassim Mohammed said.

The rocket struck the top of the wall before falling into the building’s courtyard and exploding, he said. The assailants fled the area after the attack.

The dead and wounded were taken to Mosul General Hospital, doctor Ragheed Ghanim said.

In southern Iraq on Saturday, gunmen shot and killed the Iraqi driver of a civilian truck carrying supplies to Japan’s military, Japan’s Kyodo News agency said.

The attack was an apparent robbery attempt, it said.

Japan’s Defence Agency said a civilian truck hired to transport supplies to Japanese troops in Samawah was attacked, but had no other details. Tokyo has dispatched about 1,000 naval, air and ground forces to help with Iraq’s reconstruction.

In central Baghdad on Saturday, a bomb exploded on a street as a convoy of sport utility vehicles passed, wounding five Iraqis. US army 1st-Col Peter Jones said. It was not clear who was in the cars. US troops sealed off the area after the blast.

Fighting on Friday in the city of Fallujah, about 55 kilometres west of Baghdad, left one US marine dead and seven wounded, a US spokesman in Baghdad said. The marines and guerrillas fought for hours in the alleys of the city, which has resisted American efforts to pacify it since the ouster of Saddam Hussein a year ago.

The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force issued a statement saying it was “conducting offensive operations . . . to foster a secure and stable environment for the people.”

It went on to say that “some have chosen to fight. Having elected their fate, they are being engaged and destroyed.”

A freelance cameraman for the US network ABC television, Burhan Mohammed Mahhour, 34, was shot in the head and killed while filming the clashes. It was unclear who killed him.

Four other Iraqis were killed and six wounded in the fighting, said a doctor at Fallujah hospital, Diyaa al-Jumailie. Witnesses said the dead included a shop owner, a customer and two bystanders.

This week, US marines took over authority in Fallujah and surrounding areas from the US army. The city on the banks of the Euphrates River is in the so-called Sunni Triangle, where support for Saddam was strong and rebel attacks on American forces frequent.

Earlier Friday, four members of the US-trained Iraqi Civil Defence Corps, or ICDC, also were killed while raiding a hideout near Saddam’s hometown of Tikrit with US soldiers, the American military said. Three suspected rebels also died and 21 were captured in the raid.

In the town of Shwan, near the northern city of Kirkuk, four people en route to a wedding died when the vehicles they were riding in struck an anti-tank mine. The explosion injured other people, police said. Gunmen shot and killed an Iraqi police officer late Friday while he was walking home in Kirkuk, Hafida Rashid, an official at the city’s morgue, said Saturday.

Also Friday, Time magazine said Omar Hashim Kamal, an Iraqi translator who worked in its Baghdad bureau, died of wounds sustained Wednesday. Kamal was shot by unidentified assailants.

A UN electoral team, which will look at technical aspects of selecting Iraq’s interim government in the lead-up to the June 30 transfer of sovereignty, arrived in Baghdad on Friday. The team, which includes security personnel, is led by Carina Perelli, a UN expert, Iraqi spokesman Fred Eckhard said in New York. A second UN delegation, headed by top envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, is expected in early April.

The team was expected to hold informal meetings with members of the Governing Council on Saturday, council member Mahmoud Othman said.—Internet

Japanese govt to compensate Chinese WWII workers

TOKYO, 28 March — In a landmark ruling, a Japanese court ordered the government and a transport firm on Friday to pay 88-million-yen (830,300-US-dollar) compensation to a group of Chinese who were forced to work in Japan during World War II, Kyodo news agency said.

Ten Chinese former labourers and two relatives of a deceased worker had demanded that the government and regional transport firm Rinko Corp pay 275 million yen in redress. The ruling by the Niigata District Court in northern Japan was greeted by a roar of applause from the plaintiffs and their supporters, Kyodo said.

Court officials were not immediately available for comment.

But an official at Rinko said: “We do not think that the ruling by the Niigata District Court is appropriate. We will consider whether to appeal after studying the details of the ruling with our lawyers.”

The company is listed on the second section of the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

Dozens of wartime compensation suits have been filed against the government and companies related to Japan’s aggression in the first half of the 20th Century. Most have been rejected by Japanese courts, and Friday’s ruling is the first say the state should pay compensation.

The landmark ruling comes as and Beijing are engaged in a diplomatic feud over ownership of a cluster of tiny islands in the East China Sea.

According to the suit, the plaintiffs in the case were brought forcibly to Japan from China in 1944 and made to work in the coal transport business in Niigata, Kyodo said.

They were subjected to abuse and received no wages, it said.—MNA/Reuters

An Iraqi guerilla aims his rocket propelled grenade launcher at US forces in the town of Fallujah on 26 March, 2004. —Internet
Three US soldiers killed in ambushes in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 28 March—Two US soldiers were killed and four wounded in two separate attacks on convoys in Iraq on Thursday, the US military said.

In the morning, a roadside bomb exploded near the town of Baquba, 40 miles north of the capital, killing one US soldier and wounding two. In the afternoon, insurgents attacked another convoy east of the restive town of Fallujah, 32 miles west of the capital, killing one Marine and injuring two with a combination of a roadside bomb, rocket-propelled grenades and small arms.

A US Army spokesman also announced that on Wednesday insurgents had killed a soldier and wounded another in a gun battle just north of Baghdad. US soldiers returned fire and killed three attackers.

The clashes brought to 399 the number of US troops killed in action in Iraq since the start of the US-led war just over one year ago.

Iraqis protesting against US military rule killed at least 15 on Thursday, setting off a series of clashes across the country.

A year later, soldiers still live with effects of Iraq accident

Richmond, 28 March—The muscles in Sgt Kenneth Dixon's legs twitch sometimes, small spasms he can't control. They're the only flickers of life in the paralyzed legs that sit limp in his wheelchair. Still, he thinks he might walk again.

Pic. David Mahlke peers into his bathroom mirror in Winona, Minn, through his remaining good eye every morning to see a moon-shaped scar across his forehead, his daily reminder of the moment he nearly died.

He said this will be stimulating if the partners share a degree of trust and understanding, he said.

Surveys show jobs, deficit pose immediate threats to US economy

Washington, 28 March—The job market and a massive budget shortfall posed the biggest immediate threats to the US economy, showed a survey released Thursday by the National Association of Business Economists (NABE).

Both unemployment and the deficit topped the list of short-term risks, each picked by 25 per cent of a panel of NABE's 203 members.

Data released by the government showed that payroll employment increased only 21,000 in February, defying economists' expectations and meaning the country has gone through a record 44 months without a single month of job creation exceeding 250,000. The unemployment rate was stuck at 5.6 per cent in February. And the Labour Department in its economic report said on Thursday that new claims for unemployment benefits rose last week by a seasonably adjusted 1,000 to 339,000.

Further clouding the outlook, the US Administration is tipping an unprecedented budget shortfall of $512 billion dollars in fiscal 2004.

China, Kenya to enhance cooperation in media mass

Nairobi, 28 March—China and Kenya enjoy warm and cordial relations in the field of mass media, and such relations is bound to be further enhanced through joint efforts from both sides, a senior Chinese official said here Thursday.

"With the steady development of Sino-Kenyan relations, cooperation in the field of mass media between the two sides has been strengthened in recent years and has yielded fruitful results," Chinese Ambassador Guo Chongli said while addressing the embassy's gathering held for the Kenyan media community.

He cited that the headquarters of the African Bureau of Xinhua news agency, the official news agency of China, were set up in Kenyan capital Nairobi and China Radio International also has its resident journalists in Nairobi.

Meanwhile, Kenyan news media has increased their coverage of China, especially on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 2003, Guo said.

He expressed hope that media communications of both countries will further promote exchange of visits and communications.

"His ability to engage with ordinary Iraqi citizens and military personnel enables CNN's viewers to gain a better understanding of how everyone involved in the future of Iraq is coping with the on-going altercations and state of uncertainty in the country," says Rena Golden.

\[Internet\]
CONTINUING IRAQI GUERILLA ATTACKS INFLECT RISING US CASUALTY

The scene where a roadside bomb exploded in central Baghdad early Saturday on 27 March, 2004, badly damaging the four-wheel drive vehicle, and smashing windows in nearby buildings. — Internet

Guerilla rockets slammed into a government building in the northern city of Mosul on 27 March, killing two civilians and wounding 14 others. An explosion rocked central Baghdad in a roadside bomb attack on a convoy, wounding five Iraqis.

An Iraqi security guard for Iraq’s electrical authority at a Baghdad hospital after being treated for his wounds. He was among 17 Iraqis injured when a roadside bomb exploded in central Baghdad recently. — Internet

A man walks through the debris outside Baghdad’s Mount Letana Hotel on 18 March, the morning after a powerful bomb detonated in front of the building. — Internet

Iraqi men search through the rubble of an old Iraqi army camp, which was bombed during the war, near Baghdad, on 26 March. — Internet

The remains of a wrecked vehicle in Fallujah. The car was destroyed by guerillas on 26 March. — Internet

The scene where a roadside bomb exploded in central Baghdad early Saturday on 27 March, 2004, badly damaging the four-wheel drive vehicle, and smashing windows in nearby buildings. — Internet

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Iraqi men search through the rubble of an old Iraqi army camp, which was bombed during the war, near Baghdad, on 26 March. — Internet
EU presses for UN role in Iraq, resolution

BRUSSELS, 28 March — The European Union called on Friday for the United Nations to be handed a "vital and growing" function in postwar Iraq’s political transition and a Security Council resolution endorsing that role.

A strong UN role in this political process is an element for its success,” leaders of the EU’s 25 current and future member states said in a statement after a two-day summit.

“The European Council (of leaders)...looks forward to the UN playing a vital and growing role endorsed by the UN Security Council in the run-up to transition and beyond.”

The 25-member Iraq Governing Council has sought UN help to form an interim government, and has asked the United Nations to pass a resolution legitimizing a planned handover of power from US-led authorities to Iraqis.

The United States has also urged a UN role to give credibility to the transfer of sovereignty, planned for June 30.

Spanish Socialist leader Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, whose shock election victory earlier this month was due in part to voters’ resentment at Madrid’s support for the US-led war in Iraq, has said Spain’s 1,300 troops will return home in June.

Zapatero has, however, left open the possibility that a new resolution passing control to the United Nations from the US-led coalition could change his mind.

Washington has responded that it is willing to consider a new resolution before the handover of sovereignty but has not said how much authority it would give the United Nations over foreign troops.

French President Jacques Chirac, one of Europe’s fiercest critics of the Iraq war, told a news conference on Friday that a UN resolution would help define the way ahead in Iraq.

“But to tell you in this respect that I am very optimistic would be an exaggeration,” he said. — MNA/Reuters

Migratory birds find China peaceful nest

HOMMOR, 28 March — With the arrival of spring, thousands of white swans, geese and other migratory birds are enjoying their sojourns at the Yellow River side in China on the way to their northern summer abode.

The birds, destined for China’s northermost province of Heilingjiang and Russia’s Siberia and Baikal, are expected to stay a month or two in the riverside area in the Tumen Left Banner of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China.

Local people and environmental officials said this year the area saw much more birds of passage than before thanks to the expansion of forests and grassland near the riverside area.

Environmental officials said local residents were asked to keep away from the birds on their way to and from work. — MNA/Xinhua

Mine kills woman and child at Iraq wedding party

KIRKUK, 28 March — A landmine killed a child and a woman during a Kurdish wedding party in scenic countryside near the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk on Friday, police said.

Kirkuk police chief Shirkir Shaker said 13 other guests were wounded when the mine exploded about six miles north of Kirkuk. He said the mine was probably left over from former wars and that the explosion was not a deliberate attack.

Kirkuk residents said the mountainous area was popular for weddings, with parties heading out of the city to dance and celebrate out of doors. — MNA/Reuters

China to help SOEs go public by injecting funds

BEIJING, 28 March — The supervisory agency of China’s state-owned assets will withdraw capital from certain sectors and inject the withdrawn assets into some state-owned enterprises (SOEs), in order to speed up their steps of going public.

Bai Yingyi, official in charge of SOE reform with the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC), made the remarks during an interview with Xinhua Friday.

Going public was proved an effective way for SOE reform, but capital shortage increasingly became an obstacle for the SOEs’ listing on the stock market, especially for those enterprises with a generally low history, Bai said. — MNA/Xinhua

China to develop diversified medical services

BEIJING, 28 March — China’s Executive Vice-Minister of Health Gao Qiang said here that China will diversify its medical services by relying both on the government and the market.

Gao said at the three-day UN High-Level International Conference on the Millennium Development Goals that China’s health and medical services have, for a long time, totally depended on government investment.

“But China’s fiscal revenue accounts for less than 20 per cent of its total GDP, which makes it impossible to maintain China’s huge medical care system,” he said.

According to statistics released by the Health Ministry, home to 22 per cent of the world’s population, China only enjoys 2 per cent of the world’s total medical resources, of which 80 per cent were concentrated in cities.

Gao said the primary goal of China’s reform in its health and medical care system is to promote public health especially the sector of disease control and prevention. “Government investment will be used to secure people’s basic demand for medical services and to set up a generally available medical care system for people in rural areas.”

For those who have high incomes and are not satisfied with basic medical services, China will look to the market to meet their demands, Gao said.

“We will try to attract financial resources from both home and abroad to develop high-quality medical services, and those who enjoy these kind of services can withdraw from the public medical care system and thus reduce the government’s burden,” Gao said.

Policies for the two types of medical services should also be different, Gao said, adding that agencies providing basic medical care for the public can be tax-free or enjoy subsidies and those targeting the high-income group should pay tax as other ordinary enterprises do. — MNA/Xinhua

US troops kill three-year-old boy in Iraq

TIKRIT, Iraq, 28 March — US forces fired on a civilian car in Tikrit, killing a three-year-old boy and wounding six women and children as well as their male driver, Iraqi police and relatives said on Saturday.

Police said US soldiers based in Saddam Hussein’s hometown, 110 miles north of Baghdad, shot at the family’s red car in the town on Friday night.

“There was a family; four children, three women and their driver,” an Iraqi police major said. “The US forces fired on them and all of them were injured. One child was killed.”

A Reuters reporter at Tikrit hospital saw a US officer visiting the wounded in hospital on Friday.

A US military spokesman in Tikrit said Saturday he had no information about a child being killed. Major Neal O’Brien said he knew of one incident in which four Iraqis were injured after their car ran a checkpoint.

“At about 7:15 (1615 GMT) last night a patrol engaged a civilian vehicle that refused to stop at a checkpoint,” he said. “Four Iraqi civilians were injured and evacuated by Iraqi ambulance.”

He said there were two cars involved in the incident. — Reuters/Reuters

A US marine monitors a luggage search by Iraqi border police (2nd L) at the Trebil border crossing into Jordan. — Internet

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The medal winners of the Ice Dancing competition at the World Figure Skating Championships in Dortmund, western Germany, on 26 March, 2004, present their medals after the Free Dancing. From left, silver medalists Albenia Denkova and Maxim Staviski, from Bulgaria, gold medalists Tatiana Navka and Roman Kostomarov, from Russia, and bronze medalists Kati Winkler and Rene Lohse, from Germany. — Internet
Tatmadawmen who are combating the menace of narcotic drugs

Soe Nyin San

(Continued from yesterday)

Owing to the launch of the Twelfth Phase of Operation Moe Hein, drug smugglers lost not only their opium refineries and paraphernalia but also their manpower, arms power and morale.

With the aim of eliminating narcotic drugs, Tatmadaw launched operations — from Operation Moe Hein Phase One to Phase Twelve from April 1976 to April 1988. Moreover, the Tatmadaw also launched other military operations in addition to these Moe Hein Operations. They were Operation Ngayepan and Operation Taungyanshin.

Operation Ngayepan Phase One was carried out in 30 townships in Eastern Command area in Shan State for four months from 25 October in 1980 to 24 February 1981. A total of 6813.93 acres of poppy plantations were destroyed in the operation.

Operation Ngayepan Phase Two took place in 25 townships in the regions of North-East Command and Eastern Command. The operation lasted from 12 December 1981 to 25 February 1982. A total of 10,997.56 acres of poppy plantations had been destroyed.

Besides, 7,455.36 acres of opium poppy plantations were destroyed thanks to the Operation Ngayepan Phase Three in 26 townships in Eastern Command and North-East Command from 6 November 1982 to 15 March 1983.

Operation Ngayepan Phase Four was launched in 27 townships in Eastern Command and North-East Command areas. It lasted from 17 January to 20 March 1984, and 11,077.76 acres of poppy plantations were destroyed.

The Fifth Phase of Operation Ngayepan Phase Five was launched in 32 townships in Eastern Command and North-East Command areas from 5 December 1984 to 5 April 1985. A total of 21,048.44 acres of poppy plantations were destroyed. Operation Ngayepan Phase Six and Operation Taungyanshin Phase One were launched in 29 townships of North-East Command and Eastern Command areas from 26 December 1985 to 26 February 1986. In the operations, 24,246 acres of poppy plantations were destroyed by spraying from the airplane and 9.352.84 acres by other means. As a result of launching Operation Ngayepan Phase Six along with Operation Taungyanshin Phase One and Operation Taungyanshin Phase Two, a total of 33,598.84 acres of poppy plantations were destroyed.

Operation Ngayepan Phase Seven and Operation Taungyanshin Phase Three were also launched in 25 townships of Eastern Command and North-East Command areas. About 22,630 acres of poppy plantations were destroyed by aerial spraying and 17,595.20 acres by combined teams.

In 27 townships of Eastern Command and North-East Command areas, Tatmadaw launched Operation Ngayepan Phase Eight and Operation Taungyanshin Phase Four from 7 December 1987 to 22 February 1988. A total of 25,494 acres of poppy plantations were destroyed by aerial spraying and 15,661.42 acres by combined teams. Therefore, from Operation Ngayepan Phase One to Phase Eight, and from Operation Taungyanshin Phase One to Phase Four, altogether 72,370 acres of opium plantations were destroyed by aerial spraying and 100,002.07 acres by combined teams. The Tatmadaw, by launching localized operations besides Operations Moe Hein, was able to wipe out the cultivation and production of poppy and trafficking of opium. In launching military operations to eliminate narcotic drugs, 335 major fights broke out between the Tatmadaw and drug smuggler insurgents.

In the battles, together with the Tatmadaw members, 109 members of Myanmar Police Force sacrificed their lives while 542 MPP members were wounded. Owing to their sacrifices, production of 100,038.32 kg of heroin had been prevented. Tatmadaw fully participated in the drug elimination drive risking their lives, blood and sweat. They have carried out the tasks not only for their country and the people but also for entire humanity.

Since the assumption of duties by the Tatmadaw in 1988, continuous measures for elimination of narcotic drugs have been taken, and the figures of narcotics seized are shown in the following table.

Meanwhile, Myanmar is undertaking the drug elimination task by laying down projects. It is cooperating with its neighbours, regional countries and international organizations as well as UNDCP.
Mass of Myanmar women to strive for the emergence ...

(from page 1)

Need not to call for the women’s rights like in other countries, Myanmar women are enjoying their rights as the inborn right. With the aim of enabling Myanmar women to take part in international women’s movement, a Myanmar delegation was sent to the Fourth International Women Conference held in Beijing.

In 1996, Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs was formed to ensure that Myanmar women are fully enjoying their rights and that women’s rights are developed and advanced in accordance to the times.

It can be seen that the committee, after forming work committees and various groups, was able to make efforts for development of Myanmar women in all sectors such as education, health, economy and culture. As regards the women sector, tasks such as violence against women, trafficking in persons, environmental conservation, development of young women and education on reproductive health, on which the information and communication significance is placing emphasis but not a delicate problem for Myanmar, have been able to carry out the task.

Due to the encouragement of the government, the efforts of MNCWA and political, economic and social development of the State, Myanmar women sector has developed significantly.

Nowadays, women entrepreneurs, the ones who are taking a leading role in education, health, science and technology and information and communication technology sectors and those who are outstanding in sports, culture and social sectors have emerged continuously and thus it can be said that the women sector has entered its new era.

At such a time, MNCWA was transformed into MWAF with the aim of preserving the development momentum of the women sector, fulfilling the political, economic and social needs of the State in conformity with development in international community and carrying out the affairs of the mass of Myanmar women covering the whole country.

Therefore, MWAF is the one that will lead the Myanmar women to take part unitedly in efforts for development of Myanmar women sector and national development.

Myanmar women are to make united efforts for emergence of the federation which will cooperate with international women organizations and international social organizations which have a positive attitude on Myanmar representing the mass of Myanmar women.

For the emergence of MWAF according to rules and regulations, the basic principles, aims and objectives, policy and organizational setup of the federation have been discussed and laid down.

MWAF was formed with the following objectives:

— to promote the role of women sector in building a peaceful, modern and developed nation
— to safeguard women’s rights
— to raise economic, health and education sectors of women and to safeguard their social security
— to nurture women to cherish and value the traditional culture and customs of the national races,
— to systematically implement the tasks for prevention of violence and rehabilitation of victims
— to launch campaign, as a national duty, on elimination of trafficking in women and children, and
— to cooperate with international, regional, internal and external organizations in carrying out matters on women’s rights in accord with the traditional culture and customs of the national races.

In translating these objectives into action, the following principles are to be followed:

— the basic national principle—to serve only the national interest with the united strength of the entire nation based on Our Three Main National Causes
— the basic principle relating to national races—giving serious attention to love, friendship, respect and unity of the national races
— the basic social principle—contributing to the community peace, food, clothing and shelter needs, welfare tasks, education, health and culture development and
— the basic principle relating to women’s affairs—promoting the women sector’s and ensuring a secure live for the womenfolk.

MWAF was formed with Central Panel of Patrons comprising officials at State level, Central Women Committees comprising delegates of states and divisions organizations of women’s affairs and central executive committee comprising one president, four vice-presidents, one general secretary, one joint-secretary and secretariat members plus deputy ministers and departmental heads.

He said that in carrying out the tasks, the work groups at central level have their responsibilities, the tasks and divisions were included in the central executive committee, he said.

A significant point is that MWAF is not like the committee at different levels. It is a social organization and there is no limited number of membership and anyone can join the organization out of their own volition. It is an opportunity for every Myanmar woman with national spirit and patriotism who is interested not only in women’s affairs but also in national and social activities to join the organization as members, he added.

He said MWAF is a systematic organization formed with Myanmar women covering the country out State and women’s affairs in unity. Arrangements are to be made for the organization to carry out the tasks with correct, speedy and effective management and systematic implementation, he added.

He said the work groups at central level have their objectives on the respective sectors and are responsible for implementing the tasks and projects laid down by the central executive committee. Therefore leaders of the work groups and members themselves are to undertake the tasks.

In order to do so, advisers in the work groups are to put suggestions and to hold coordination.

He said in discharging their duties, the tasks and projects laid down by the central level must reflect the policies and attitudes of the federation. After realizing this, it is necessary for the leaders of the work groups and members to discharge their duties with all their might, he said.

If there are any tasks in some sectors to be carried out, the work group will have to undertake the tasks after the permission of the central level, he said. The committee, after forming executive committees at different levels are to implement the tasks laid down by the federation in accord with the rules and regulations.

He said the federation has been formed with women from all walks of life—scholars, businesswomen, service personnel, peasants, staff national races, ordinary people and members of social organizations. He urged them to work together to realize the common objectives.

He said as MWAF is a social organization that can undertake the tasks for development of women sector in Myanmar, it is the responsibility of the officials and members to accept the fact that the federation has greater and wider functions.

He said the federation is to make efforts for development of women sector, to carry out work groups and job opportunities of women, progress of economic life, security and happiness of their life and raising of their living standard.

As the primary task of the federation is the duty of organizational matters and dissemination of knowledge that can bring about spiritual development of the entire Myanmar women. After realizing this, officials are to understand the importance of giving up the persuasion of unscrupulous persons and destructive elements.

Steps are to be taken for enabling Myanmar young women to be imbued with the spirit to cherish and safeguard their own culture and traditions and with patriotism and Union Spirit. Moreover, the federation is to lead Myanmar young women to stay away from foreign character that is contrary to Myanmar traditions and culture and to preserve and safeguard their mode of dress and life-style which is based on fear and shame.

Myanmar Women Affairs Federation is to strive for enabling Myanmar young women to have a sense of thinking highly of and respecting own nation and own people and for inculcating them with the habit of cherishing and safeguarding national prestige and integrity while making efforts for propagation of nationalistic spirit among them.

Arrangements are to be made for nurturing Myanmar young women to become outstanding women leaders, to become those who are outstanding in education of inter- national level and to become typical Myanmar women.

In striving for development of Myanmar women sector, systematic measures are to be taken to be in conformity with efforts for development of international women sector.

Myanmar Women Affairs Federation is an organization in which every patriotic Myanmar woman regardless of standard and strata can participate and tasks to be implemented by the federation are seen as the ones that benefit every Myanmar woman regardless of race and religion, rich and poor.

Being a social organization which will serve the interests of the State and the people, women leaders at different levels who are going to take different roles of the federation, are to try to become good leaders or models in terms of spirit, morale and capability.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister said that the seven-point future political programmes have been laid down and the IMF programme is to be implemented to be able to build a modern developed democratic nation, which is the goal of the entire national people, on self-reliant basis and called on the mass of women to participate in the tasks for successful implementation of the programmes.

Moreover, the Prime Minister also urged the mass of Myanmar women to strive for the emergence of a discipline-flourishing democratic nation and for enabling the nation to stand shoulder to shoulder with the world community, incorporating the might, the nationalism and the fine traditions of Myanmar women into a national force. — MNA
Prime Minister meets trainees of Regional Development Special Refresher Course No 3

YANGON, 28 March — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt met with trainees of Regional Development Special Refresher Course No 3 at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs on Pyay Road here at 4 pm today and gave instructions.

Also present on the occasion were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, and heads of department, social organizations, trainees of the course and guest.

In the Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt made a speech. He said that the meeting with officers who are going to discharge duties at border areas and far-flung areas is to enable them to implement the national objectives after realizing them and to discharge their duties with correct concepts.

In the past, border areas lagged behind in development in the absence of peace and tranquility. In the time of the State Peace and Development Council, peace and tranquility prevailed in the regions and the government has been able to forge the national consciousness. Meanwhile, the regions are meeting with success as projects for development of border areas and national races have been implemented.

At a time when equitable and harmonious development has been brought about across the nation, systematic measures are being taken for regional development in accord with the guidance of the Head of State, calling for enhancing the socio-economic life of local people while engaging in regional development tasks.

Special refresher courses on development, organization and social security are needed for officers who are going to discharge duties in the regions are being conducted and the present course was No 3.

For the Union of Myanmar, home to over 100 national races, it is required for the national races to be in oneness for national development and perpetuation of sovereignty while striving for fostering the national unity.

Armed conflicts broke out due to evil legacy of colonialists who had an obsession with division and division is a bridge among the national brethren after the independence was regained, making the local national races to have various life-styles and concepts.

He said the government rebuilt national solidarity among the national races of various forms and concepts and carried out the tasks for rapid development of border areas. Efforts are to be made for achieving the same social relations forms and outlooks and bringing about spiritual development.

He said the government made arrangements for improvement of socio-economic life of national people in the regions inside the country, harmonious development of border areas and the Union and spiritual development of the people.

He said the officials are responsible for preventing exploitation of the national races economically, illegal trade in some regions and smuggling of natural resources from the country.

The officials are responsible for development of the region where they are discharging duties and utilizing natural resources systematically. He spoke of the need to take preventive measures on and control.

The Prime Minister also spoke on working for uplift of dignity of the country and its people, trust on the government and all-round development of various sectors.

In order to realize these objectives, the officials are to build three national sects—social, development and spiritual. He urged them to make endeavours for regional development and raising of living standard of local people with goodwill and diligence in accord with the tasks assigned by the State. He called for cooperation with the Union, Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, Myanmar Mother and Child Welfare Association and Red Cross Society which are national forces on which the State relies for regional development.

In conclusion, he urged them to make efforts for the purposes of national development, social development of the respective regions, to lead the local people for flourishing of local people with goodwill and diligence in accord with the tasks assigned by the State, to cooperate for cooperation with the Union, and to safeguard sovereignty and national interests.

After the ceremony, the Prime Minister cordially greeted the trainees.

Myoma Bridge and Tein Bridge in ... (from page 16)

He continued to say that previously, if one travelled from Monywa to Kalaywa, one had to go along Monywa-Yeu-Taze-Thetkkyin-Kalaywa road through Maha Myaing forests, and transport is difficult in the rainy season.

This new road is about 115 miles long, and it is 45 miles shorter than the road in Yeu-Thetkkyin. Now, it will not take long to travel from Monywa to Kalaywa-Kalay-Tamu or Kalay-Haka-Tiddim.

There are 174 bridges, small and big, along Monywa-Yagi-Yagyi-Kalaywa road. Included in the two bridges opened today and four 180 feet and above ones. Of them 153 are made at the State-owned Steel Plant.

On completion of bridges on Monywa-Yagyi-Kalaywa road to Brig-Gen Myint Thein. At the auspicious time, Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Maj-Gen Tin Tun and Brig-Gen Myint Thein opened the Myoma Bridge. Also present, a local resident thanked the government for the inauguration of the Myoma bridge and Tein bridge.

Director of the Military Engineers Maj-Gen Tin Tun handed over the documents relating to the bridges and Monywa-Yagi-Yagyi-Kalaywa road to Brig-Gen Myint Thein.

The Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt delivers an address in meeting with trainees of the Regional Development Special Refresher Course. MNA
Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects construction of bridges, roads in Kalewa, Mawlaik

YANGON, 28 March—Honouring the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, Member of State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of State Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Deputy Minister for Construction Brig-Gen Myint Thein and Brig-Gen Khin Maung Aye of Kalay Station, inspected construction of Myittha Bridge (Kalewa) Project in Kalewa Township on 24 March morning.

Myittha Bridge (Kalewa) is being built on 115 miles long Monywa-Budalin-Yagyi-Kalewa Road. In the past, the road from Monywa to Kalewa was 160 miles long. On completion of the bridge, the road will be 45 miles shorter than the old road.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspected the axis road of Kalewa-Mawlaik road. At Yausu Village, Col Htay Win of Kyikon Station reported on construction of Kalewa-Mawlaik earth Road and upgrading of it into the gravel one. Lt-Gen Ye Myint next met with local people and explained the purpose of the construction tasks. They also saw over progress in construction tasks on the road. Kalewa-Mawlaik axis road, 36 miles long, have been constructed.

On completion, the road will be 41 miles shorter than the old road as well as 41 miles shorter than Kalewa-Thitkekyin-Tanan-Mawlaik Strategic Road.

In the evening, Lt-Gen Ye Myint met departmental officials, social organizations and local people at the meeting hall of Mawlaik District Peace and Development Council.

He heard reports on matters related to the district and townships in the district and gave necessary instructions.

MNA

Lt-Gen Maung Bo attends opening of Kadoe station hospital in Mawlamyine

YANGON, 28 March — Honouring the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, Member of State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of Ministry of Defence attended opening of Kadoe station hospital donated by wellwisher U Tin Hla Shwe, senior military officers, deputy ministers, the Director-General of Myanmar Police Force and departmental heads, officials, the Parade Commander, the Reserve Parade Commander, columns commanders, commanding officers, company commander and guests.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win said that 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade was successfully held.

The parade of the columns was better than the previous years. Similarly, all the committees were able to perform their duties. So, all the committees are to report strong and weak points of the respective sectors of the work for ensuring better observance of the Armed Forces Day Parade in the coming year.

Next, Joint-Secretary Lt-Col Than Soe of the Ministry of Defence reported on expenditure for observance of the Armed Forces Day and Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe on tasks of the management committee.

Similarly, officials of the respective sub-committees, the parade commander, officials of MPF, Fire Services Department and Myanmar Red Cross Society participated in the discussions. Later, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win attended to their needs.

MNA

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win delivers an address at the meeting to review works for observing the Armed Forces Day.

Book Fair concludes

YANGON, 28 March—Honouring the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, the Book Fair, organized by Sarpay Beikman of the Printing and Publishing Enterprise, was held at the PPE Building (former Head Office) on Bo Aung Kyaw Street from 19 to 28 March.

The closing ceremony of the Book Fair was held at the venue. PPE Managing Director U Myint Thein (Myint Thein Aung) spoke words of thanks. Next, Managing Director U Myint Thein and Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association Vice-Chairman U Tin Kha (Tekkathau Tin Kha) accepted books donated by book stalls. Over 6,000 people visited the fair and purchased books worth over K 1 million on the final day.

During the period of the Book Fair, various kinds of books worth K 8.1 million were sold. The book stalls and literary houses donated over 400 magazines and books to rural libraries.

MNA
Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspects the Manaung People's Hospital. — MNA

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than tours Rakhine State, Bago Division (West)

YANGON, 28 March—Ministry of Information in Bago Division, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspected the Manaung People’s Hospital in Manaung on 24 March. First, the Chairman of Kyaukpyu Township Peace and Development Council Col Myo Tint and members, Development Council Chairman of Kyaukpyu Township U Sai Ba Nyan as member left here by air this morning. Later, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party proceeded to Mannaung Township, weather condition, rainfall, land utilization, monsoon and winter crops, oil crops, pulses and beans, kitchen crops, cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy, self-sufficiency in rice, livestock breeding, education, health and regional development.

Later, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than made a speech, saying that the seven-point future political programme had been laid down and is being implemented for the emergence of a new modern and developed nation; that in the process, peace and tranquility, prevalence of law and order, sound national economy, human resources development are imperative. Moreover, projects for development of agriculture and livestock breeding have been laid down and are being implemented, he noted. Service personnel, on their part, are to engage in their tasks with goodwill and local people are to strive together with departmental officials for regional development, he stressed.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party inspected upgrading of Padaung-Taungup motorway and arrived at the project site of No 8 Special Taungup at 12.10 pm. Then, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party left Mannaung and arrived in Taungup at 12.30 pm. Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party inspected the perennial mixed crop plantation and the fish pond of the local battalion under the command.

Consolation prizes presented to winners of Armed Forces Day commemorative literary, art contests

YANGON, 28 March — The prize distribution ceremony for consolation prize winners of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative literary and art contest was held at Myanma Hall of No 2 Basic Education High School in Latha Township yesterday.

Present were Chairman of Management Committee for Observance of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Deputy Commander Col Wai Lwin, commanders of military regions, COS of regiments and departmental officials and units and chairman of district peace and development councils, guests and personnel.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than tours Rakhine State, Bago Division (West)
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P.O. Box 60, Yangon.
Dated: 29 March 2004

Bank Holiday

All Banks will be closed on 1st April (Thursday), being Bank Holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Yangon

Zimbabwe to repay debts to world financial institutions

HARARE — Governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Gideon Gono here on Thursday reiterated Zimbabwe's determination to repay its debts to multilateral financial institutions.

"Gold and silver we definitely have none at present but we have in abundance, unparalled determination to self-correc, to repay all debts in the fullness of time, to engage all our cooperating and financlng partners, and with your help, we are certain that we will re-cover, and recover soon we shall," said Gono while adressing an African Capacity Building Foundation meeting in Harare. Zimbabwe's debt to the International Monetary Fund stands at 273.9 million US dollars and the government says it has paid 4.5 million US dollars to the fund during the past three months, as efforts to honour its financial obligations gear up.

MNA/Xinhua

Nigerian govt seeks int'l standard for banks

LAGOS, 28 March — The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has called on banks in the country to shore up their capital base to enable them meet international standard, said a senior government official here Thursday.

Joseph Sanusi, CBN governor, told Press in the Nigerian commercial nerve centre that Nigerian banks have a big role to play in boosting foreign trade and investment in the country if they are well capitalized.

Revaluating the capital base of Nigerian banks to any of the world's major convertible currencies, he said, reveals how shallow or inadequate the capital base of the banks is for participation in the international competitive market.

MNA/Xinhua
Mekong’s low flows no link with Chinese dams

Pakse, 28 March — The Mekong’s low levels at present are related to the dry conditions of the localities, with no direct link with any Chinese dams, a statement of Mekong River Commission (MRC) said here on Friday.

According to a preliminary technical analysis released by MRC Secretariat, the Mekong’s low levels at present are related to the dry conditions that have persisted since last year.

The analysis, based on river height and rainfall data spanning several decades, shows that the current dry conditions are not directly linked with Manwan (in China’s Yunnan Province) or any other Chinese dams, the statement said.

“They flow low in the lower Mekong were caused by retention of water in dams in China, we would expect that the dry condition would be more extreme at the upstream sites near China. In fact, the data shows it has been dry at Pakse in southern Laos than at Chiang Saen in Thailand, which is closer to China,” said Ian Campbell, senior environment specialist at the MRC Secretariat.

However, some scientists at the MRC Secretariat maintain that the dams have caused water levels down-stream more variable at Chiang Saen, which “will have an impact on fish and other aquatic life in the river”.

China has had ongoing technical cooperation with MRC since April 2002 for sharing of information about the river during the flood season from June to October each year. And formal dialogue meetings between China and the MRC countries are held once a year — MNA/Xinhua

Chinese potatoes tap Southeast Asia market

Kunming, 28 March — Southeast Asia proves a promising market for Chinese potatoes and China should take further steps to profit more from its potato trade with the region, a Chinese agronomist said Friday at the ongoing Fifth World Potato Conference (WPC).

Professor Guo Huachun with the Yunnan Agriculture University, said China has become a major new potato provider after the Americas and Europe to Southeast Asian nations in recent years, and the region’s potato import from China can still rise if China can improve its packaging and shipping service and upgrade the breed of its potatoes.

China exported an average of approximately 75,000 tons of potatoes annually to Southeast Asia over recent years, with Yunnan, a neighboring Chinese province of the region, leading the nation in the export.

More than 100 firms from 46 nations and regions worldwide are attending the Fifth World Potato Conference in Kunming, capital of southwest China’s Yunnan Province. — MNA/Xinhua

WTO speeds search for farm deal in trade talks

Geneva, 28 March — World Trade Organization (WTO) states agreed on Friday to work faster on a deal to reform world trade, the key to a wider accord on lowering barriers to global commerce.

Winding up five days of talks in Geneva, the first since a WTO ministerial meeting in Cancun, Mexico dramatically collapsed last year, diplomats from member countries said they hoped they could reach a framework accord on farm goods before the end of the summer.

They added that there was a consensus on the new deadline to do what ministers had failed to do — achieve the framework deal — because after that the United States, the biggest player in world trade, would be distracted by its presidential election.

Both trade officials and diplomats said the mood at the meeting had been conciliatory, in sharp contrast to the often bitter exchanges at Cancun. Deep differences divided developed and developing countries at Cancun, notably over farm subsidies for rich powers, and contributed to the meeting’s failure.

A Brazilian delegate who spoke for the G-20 group of developing countries told the final session: “The climate...was good. We sensed that there is a real commitment to the objective of arriving at a framework by the summer.” The delegate added that progress had been made “but we have a long road ahead of us”.

The WTO agriculture negotiating committee, which is handling the farm talks, agreed to meet every month and make informal contact in between. A final gathering is scheduled for mid-July, at which the committee hoped an accord could be concluded.

The negotiations are focused on three closely linked areas — domestic support and market access. Diplomats are seeking to balance concessions in one area with gains in another.

Diplomats said that there appeared to have been some progress on export subsidies. The European Union, the biggest user of them, is under heavy pressure to agree to discuss cutting these for eliminating them.

The EU gained assurances from the United States that its export credit and food aid policies, both of which can act as forms of subsidies, would be included in the negotiation.

The Cairns Group of farm goods exporters, which includes Australia, Canada, New Zealand and as many as G-20 countries, including Brazil, signalled its willingness to compromise by saying that the agreement would only have to commit to agreements on export subsidies, not specify the actual date.

China contributes to global anti-poverty efforts

Beijing, 28 March — China has made important contributions to the global cause of poverty reduction by cutting the number of desperately poor people from 250 million in 1978 to just 30 million in 2003, according to a United Nations report issued here Thursday.

The report on China’s progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) said China had already achieved the goal of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty ahead of the international deadline of 2015.

China’s success offers hope for poverty reduction efforts around the globe. The World Bank Vice-President Francine Leautier said after an on-the-spot inspection of poverty alleviation projects in southwest China earlier this month.

A total of 147 million people in the Asia Pacific region have been alleviated from extreme poverty over the past decade. UN Deputy Secretary-General Kim Hak-su said an international conference in Beijing Thursday.

The “Asia miracle” should be attributed to China’s exceptional economic growth and India’s significant progress, he said.

China, however, faces new challenges in the progress of poverty reduction as the disparity of incomes between urban and rural residents widened. In order to solve the problem of unbalanced development, the Chinese Government has adopted a new ideology of sustainable growth. Kim said future progress in global poverty reduction requires a new line of thinking that focuses on strategies to help the poor.

He said the Chinese Government had instituted tax cuts, greater rural investment and better medical care and schooling in rural areas. — MNA/Xinhua

Tom Cruise, Penelope Cruz call it quits

Los Angeles, 28 March — Hollywood power couple Tom Cruise and Penelope Cruz have ended their romance after nearly three years, though they remain “good friends” and are not dating anyone else, their publicity said on Friday.

“They broke up at the end of January,” Robert Garlock, a spokesman for the Spanish-born actress, told Reuters. “It’s amicable, they are good friends and talk often. There’s no other person involved.”

He added that neither star is dating anyone else at the moment.

Cruise’s sister and publicist, Lee Anne DeVette, confirmed they did “break up” but said the two stars are “very good friends” who talk frequently. “They’re just not boyfriend and girlfriend anymore.”

She added, “There’s nobody else involved.”

The couple met in 2001 while working together on the Cameron Crowe-directed film “Vanilla Sky” and began dating in 2002 after Cruise’s decade-long marriage to Oscar-winning actress Nicole Kidman fell apart.

A source said Cruise, 41, and Cruz, 29, ultimately split up because of the difficulty of maintaining a relationship while spending much of their time apart in distant locations making movies. — MNA/Reuters

80 kilos of heroin seized in Britain

London, 28 March — British Customs officers arrested six men and seized heroin worth an estimated 5.6 million pounds or 10.3 million US dollars during a raid on a London warehouse Saturday.

A Customs spokesman, Steve Coates, said around 80 kilos of the drug was found hidden in a lorry carrying charcoal at the warehouse in Walthamstow in the north-east of the capital.

All six arrested men include three Romanians, one Turkish Cypriot and two Britons, all of them are now under interrogation by the police, the spokesman said. — MNA/Xinhua
Manchester United announce 2005 Asia tour

LONDON, 28 March—English champions Manchester United will tour Asia in July and August 2005. The Premier League club said on Friday they would play four matches during the trip which takes place four years after their last visit to Asia. No venues or opponents were named.

The English club could play a cameo role as a soccer player in the film, which follows a detective solving the murder of a famous soccer coach and the theft of the Pink Panther diamond.

Talks for Beckham hinge on the resolution of a scheduling conflict, the report said.

If an agreement is reached, Beckham, now playing for Real Madrid, would appear on the big screen for the first time. He was featured only in an animated version of a football power comedy "Bend It Like Beckham".

Serbia soccer boss shot in Belgrade

BELGRADE, 28 March—An unknown gunman shot and gravely wounded the top soccer official of Serbia and Montenegro at the Football Association’s offices in central Belgrade on Friday, police said.

Branko Bulatovic, secretary-general of the association, was shot once in the back of the head in the hallway of his building, spokesman Dragana Kajnic told Reuters.

He was rushed to hospital where doctors operating but it was a very difficult wound, the official added.

"Branko Bulatovic was brought at 10:45 (0945 GMT) in a generally difficult state, with a head injury caused by a firearm," said Belgrade Emergency Room director Branislav Stepanovic.

"An operation is under way since this is a serious injury it is difficult to predict the result." Police said they were looking for a man in his 40s.

The 52-year-old Montenegrin lawyer has held the post for the past 13 years, beginning as acting chief in 1991 when former socialist leader Slobodan Milojevic was in power and the old Yugoslavia was still in exist-

Socceri seeks to win Euro 2004 football championship

LISBON, 28 March—The coach of the Portuguese national team, the Brazilian Luiz Felipe Scolari, said Friday the goal was "to get to the finals" and win the European 2004 Championship (Euro2004).

Scolari announced Friday the list of players comprising the team that will face Italy next March 31.

The team includes five coming from Porto, the leader of the league, and from Benfica as well as three of Lisbon’s Sporting.

The coach assured that he could not see even one team that did not aim at winning the Euro 2004 Championship but said the Portuguese had the conditions to be victorious, but it had to make an effort to achieve this aim.

Scolari voiced satisfaction over the environment of the Portuguese national team.

Wenger says Old Trafford bust-up turned Arsenal’s season

LONDON COUNTY (England), 28 March—Arsene Wenger is preparing Arsenal for Sunday’s league clash with Manchester United in the belief that last September’s ugly scenes at Old Trafford have been the key to his side’s success this season.

Four Arsenal players—defenders Lauren and Martin Keown, captain Patrick Vieira and fellow midfielder Ray Parlour—were fined and banned for their behaviour in a 0-0 draw with the champions that sparked widespread condemnation.

Wenger believes the forced Arsenal to improve their disciplinary record and concentrate on the kind of football which has earned them a nine-point lead in the table.

"If I feel it was the turning-point," Wenger told reporters on Friday. "With them missing the penalty in the last minute, us not losing and then having to deal with all the incidents.

"We dealt well with the situation. We came out and we said we were sorry and it’s not how we want to behave. And since that, we’ve been focusing on football.

The Frenchman believes his players are provoked by opponents, but added: "Where we have improved a lot is that we deal much better with provocation than before. You have to choose if you are focused on fighting or on football...this is a good opportunity to show we have improved not only with our behaviour but also with our football."

Nine points clear of Chelsea, Wenger is also hoping to increase a 12-point lead over third-placed United, who pipped Arsenal to the title by three points in 2000. Londoners said an eight-point lead "is a good opportunity to extend the difference with United," said Wenger. "And I’ve been in England long enough to know that the difference is never big enough.

Manchester United are not out of the championship. We can keep on top of our game and highpressure style we know it is vital for us to keep our season's success.

"I’m convinced that Manchester player’s feel exactly the same, that it is a massive game."

Looking at the bigger picture between the two clubs who dominated English football in recent years, Wenger believes the battle between them is better for Arsenal.

"All the European and US tours. His Sanctuary Cove, Queensland, club is in good form and easy for me to keep an eye on."

Kennedy’s 62 completes long-distance Australian double

MARCHING (Madeira), 28 March—Australia’s Brad Kennedy returned to the Santo da Serra course early on Friday morning to play three more birdies and fashion a four-stroke lead in the weather-affected Madeira Island Open first round.

Kennedy’s 10-under-par 62, one shot off the course record, put him well clear of second-placed Jamie Spence of Britain.

It also provided a Sanctuary Cove “double” on the European and US tours. His Sanctuary Cove, Queensland, club is Adam Scott led The Players Championship first round at Sawgrass on Thursday.

After completing the seven holes left unfinished the day before because of 20 hours 20 minutes suspension for rain and low cloud, Kennedy was unaware of Scott’s trail-blazing in Florida, having had an early night.

But the 29-year-old enjoyed the moment when told after signing for an eagle and eight birdies. Despite finishing second in the Malaysian Open last month, his second successive runner-up spot in the event, Kennedy is not getting too far ahead of.

He is playing on the Challenge Tour but can make the transition straight to the main tour, said Spence.

Kennedy is a 23-year-old par four eagle chip and parred his way home for the 63.—MNA/Xinhua

BANGKOK—A birdie chip and parred his way home for the 63.—MNA/Xinhua

Kennedy’s 62 completes long-distance Australian double

MARCHING (Madeira), 28 March—Australia’s Brad Kennedy returned to the Santo da Serra course early on Friday morning to play three more birdies and fashion a four-stroke lead in the weather-affected Madeira Island Open first round.

Kennedy’s 10-under-par 62, one shot off the course record, put him well clear of second-placed Jamie Spence of Britain.

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WEATHER

Sunday, 28 March, 2004

During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in the whole country. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Shan, Chin and Kayin States, (5°C) to (6°C) above normal in Kayin State; Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions and above normal in the remaining areas. Significant day temperatures were (43°C) each in Monywa and Myitkyina.

Maximum temperature on 27-3-2004 was 36.8°C (98°F). Minimum temperature on 28-3-2004 was 21.0°C (70°F). Relative humidity at 9.00 hrs MST on 28-3-2004 was 77%. Total sun shine hours on 27-3-2004 was 0.6 hours approx. Rainfall on 28-3-2004 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 10 mph from Southwest at (18.30) hour on 27 March. 

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid for 29-3-2004: Possible cloudy with scattered rain or thundershowers in Kayin State, upper Sagon division and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (44%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar water. Outlook for submarine traffic. Slight increase of day temperatures in central Myanmar areas.


Earthquake report (Issued at 09.00 hours M.S.T on today):

An earthquake of moderate intensity (5.9 Richter scale with epicentre of 39 miles) occurred in north-west of Kaba-Aye seismological observatory was recorded at 01:12 (215) 23:00 sec M.S.T on 28th March 2004.
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects extension of Yangon International Airport Building. — MNA

YANGON, 28 March — Chairman of City Housing Project Supervisory Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, accompanied by officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, arrived at the site of Yangon International Airport Extended Construction Project at 10 am today. The Prime Minister and party were welcomed there by ministers, the Yangon Mayor, deputy ministers, departmental heads and officials.

At the briefing hall, Asia World Co Ltd Managing Director U Tun Myint Naing reported on the architectural design of the extended main airport building which will be 832 feet long and 300 feet wide one under construction, progress of construction, water and power supply, arrangements for installation of machinery at the airport to meet international airport standard and construction of 600 feet long and 600 feet wide apron. Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe gave a supplementary report.

The Prime Minister gave instructions on construction of the annexe of the airport building and timely installation of machinery at the airport for giving service of international level. Next, the Prime Minister inspected construction of the apron and foundation of the annexe of the airport building.

Afterwards, the General and party went to Pyay Garden Condominium between Pyay Road and U Wisara Road in Kamutaw Township where Chairman of Zay Gabar Construction Co Ltd U Khin Shwe conducted them round the sites of driving piles, constructing pile caps and laying concrete on the first floor of the 25-storey condominium.

At the briefing hall, U Khin Shwe reported on architectural design of the condominium, cooperation in construction with foreign experts, seeking of advice on measures for endurance of climate and earthquake and quality control for the high-rise buildings, facilities of rooms, car parking and others.

Pyay Garden Condominium Project Manager Mr Barry Meese of Singapore recounted his experience in construction of the high-rise buildings.

On arrival at the construction site of Pyay Tower on Pyay Road in Kamutaw Township, Managing Director U Tin Hsan of National Development Company Group reported on construction of two 18-storey buildings.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister and party saw over greening tasks on the embankment of Inya Lake near Pyay Road and cultivation of landscaping flowery plants. Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin conducted them round the sites.

Later, the Prime Minister looked into construction of Kyauktan Township Association building in Myitkyina Ward, Tamway Township. — MNA

Prime Minister inspects Yangon Airport Building extension, high-rise building projects

Myoma Bridge and Tein Bridge in Mingin Township, Sagaing Division, opened

YANGON, 28 March — In hailing of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, Myoma Bridge and Tein Bridge on Monywa-Yagyi-Kalaywa road in Mingin Township, Sagaing Division, built by Directorate of Military Engineers under the supervision of the Quartermaster-General’s Office, were opened on 24 March morning. Present on the occasion were members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence, and Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thih Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo. Sagaing Division PDC Chairman North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Director of Military Engineers Maj-Gen Tin Tun, Deputy Minister for Construction Brig-Gen Myint Thein, Brig-Gen Khin Maung Aye of Kalay Station, senior military officers of North West Command, local authorities, departmental officials, members of social organizations, drum trope, band trope, and pom pom trope, teachers and students, and local people totalling over 7000.

First, Myoma Bridge opening ceremony was held at the pandal near the bridge at 9 am, with an address by Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thih Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo. He said from time immemorial, all national races have been living in unity and in weal and woe in the Union of Myanmar. Under the colonial rule, although the colonialists exploited the State’s invaluable natural resources at their disposal, they ignored the development of the regions that did not benefit for them. Therefore, since the Tatmadaw’s assumptions of the State duties, priority has been given to the development of the country by upholding the Three Main National Causes — non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty.

In order to ensure balanced development across the country, the border areas and national races developement project, 24 special region development project and rural development project are being implemented. These efforts reveal the interests of over 100 national races who are residing together in the nation.

In implementing the development network, measures have to be taken with accelerated momentum for constructing economic infrastructures and promoting health and education sectors to be able to emerge high quality human resources in every region. A newwork roads and railroads are being built for better the transport of the country.

In Sagaing Division, the Chindwin River poses a natural barrier between the eastern bank and the western bank, having difficulty in communications and thus lagged the western bank behind in development.

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