Success of projects for development of border areas and national races key to successful realization of the national work programme

Senior General Than Shwe addresses meeting No 1/2004 of Central Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races

YANGON, 29 March — Meeting No 1/2004 of the Central Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races was held this morning at the meeting hall of the office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army) with an opening address by Chairman of the Central Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe.

Also present at the meeting were Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Member of the Central Committee Secretary of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Tin Aung Myint, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Joint Secretary of the Central Committee Minister for the Progress of Border Areas and National Races Col Thein Nyunt, the ministers, the deputy ministers and departmental heads of the meeting, Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Office Lt Col Pe Nyien acted as master of ceremonies.

Chairman of the Central Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe made a speech. He said that in implementing projects for development of border areas, the government had to make peace with national race groups, ensure peace and prevalence of law and order and forge national consolidation first.

Priority has been given to implementing tasks for development of border areas for ensuring development of border areas and national races and for further strengthening the national unity.

A ministry was formed to be able to carry out tasks for development of border areas and national races as border areas and national races lagged far behind in development. Moreover, Central Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races was formed to enable other ministries to make integrated and well-coordinated efforts for development of border areas and national races.

To effectively carry out a host of tasks for development of border areas and national races on behalf of the Central Committee, Work Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races were formed.

Meanwhile, projects for eradication of narcotic drugs have been laid down and are being implemented to introduce poppy-substitute cultivation, livestock breeding and production activities and to enable local people to engage in proper livelihood after eliminating narcotic drugs in border areas.

Significant progress has been made in border areas with a sharp drop in poppy production since all-our efforts were made for development of border areas and national races during the period of ten years. As rapid development has been made in border areas works are to be reviewed at the current meeting to maintain the momentum of the development.

To ensure development of border areas measures for economic development in the region and better transport are being undertaken since better transport is of paramount importance for development of a region.

Although better transport has now been brought about in border areas there is still much to be done and continued efforts are to be made for the emergence of roads serviceable in all weather and tarred roads for better transport.

At a time when agriculture and livestock breeding is meeting with success and better transport is being brought about, the government has been able to make efforts for development of industrial and electric power sectors and at the same time to maintain the needs of education and health sectors to a certain extent. Hence, continued efforts are to be made to maintain the momentum of the success.

Moreover, continued efforts are to be made for improvement of socio-economic life of local people and for alleviating poverty in border areas. Accordingly, steps are to be taken for the emergence of human resources for ensuring continued development of border areas.

That is why emphasis is being placed on enhancing education and health sectors and for alleviating poverty in border areas.

To ensure development of border areas measures for economic development in the region and better transport are being undertaken since better transport is of paramount importance for development of a region.

Senior General Than Shwe addresses meeting No 1/2004 of the Central Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races. — MNA

Excerpts from Senior General’s address

* Respective development projects including border area development projects are meeting with success and this reflects the correct national policy and correct national work programme

* Continued efforts are to be made for improvement of socio-economic life of local people and for alleviating poverty in border areas

* Border areas development tasks will meet with success all the more as progress has been made in economic, transport, production, industrial and electric sectors

* Although better transport has now been brought about in border areas there is still much to be done and continued efforts are to be made for the emergence of roads serviceable in all weather and tarred roads

* To ensure development of border areas measures for economic development in the region and better transport are being undertaken since better transport is of paramount importance for development of a region.
Plenary meeting of delegates of State/Division Organizations for Women’s Affairs concludes

President of MWAF Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe addresses the meeting. — MNA

YANGON, 29 March — The plenary meeting of delegates of State/Division Organizations for Women’s Affairs of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation held in Yangon Convention Centre, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said that, in the time of the present government, encouragement was being given to the development of the Myanmar women sector which is flourishing in line with the historical and cultural traditions for its further progress.

In encouraging the development of the women sector, efforts are being made for the women to be able to enjoy women’s rights fully, to ensure that women are not deprived of their opportunities and to be able to enjoy more opportunities. With the aim of enabling Myanmar women to take part in the international women’s movement, a Myanmar delegation was sent to the Fourth International Women Conference held in Beijing. Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs was formed in 1996 to ensure that Myanmar women are fully enjoying their rights and that women’s rights are developing in all sectors in accord with the times.

It can be seen that the committee, after forming work committees and various groups, is able to make efforts for development of Myanmar women in all sectors such as education, health, economy and culture.

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. As Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs has been transformed into Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation to take effective care of women’s affairs on a wider national scale, we believe that the entire mass of Myanmar women, under the leadership of MWAF, unilaterally strive for the development of the women sector and of the nation.
Briton, Canadian killed in northern Iraq

Baghdad, 29 March—Gunmen killed a Briton and a Canadian guarding a power station near Mosul on Sunday, in the second straight day of violence in the northern Iraqi city that was home to large numbers of Saddam Hussein's military officers.

As US soldiers and Iraqi police sealed the area, witnesses reported two partly burned bodies, both clad in blue clothing and flak jackets, were seen beside a burning four-wheel drive vehicle. One victim had been shot in the head.

In London, the Foreign Office confirmed that one British national was killed. The Canadian Foreign Minister said from Ottawa a Canadian was also killed and officials were trying to contact his family.

The two men were assigned to protect foreign engineers working for General Electric Co, a spokesman for the US-led coalition said on condition of anonymity. He confirmed one was a Briton, and that the nationality of the second was unclear.

Earlier, an official at the power station in East Mosul said the slain men were protecting foreign experts working at the station. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the official said a second car carrying experts escaped the attack.

General Electric is involved in efforts to rebuild Iraq's decrepit, electrical infrastructure, which has suffered from bombing and years of sanctions. Power blackouts are frequent.

Guerrillas have targeted foreign civilians, possibly as a means of undermining reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Earlier this month, four American missionaries working on a water project were shot to death in Mosul. One missionary survived with injuries.

Also Sunday, assailants detonated a bomb in Baqouba, a city northeast of Baghdad, injuring five bystanders, including two children. It was unclear whether the blast targeted a policeman who lives near the site of the explosion, or the house of a carpenter who has received threats because he has worked for American forces.

The blast in Baqouba, where anti-US guerrillas are active, wounded an eight-year-old boy and his 10-year-old sister, police Capt. Mohammed Hadi said. The policeman and the carpenter were unharmed.

To the north, in Kirkuk, a bomb exploded at an intersection where police cars park daily. Three civilians were injured. Police Col Dashi Aziz said as bystanders gathered after the blast, gunmen opened fire from a passing car, but there were no casualties.

Police said the shootouts were later apprehended.

On Saturday, rebel rockets slammed into a government building in Mosul, killing two civilians and wounding 14 others.

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

In the country's south Saturday, a gunman shot and killed the Iraqi driver of a civilian truck carrying supplies to Japan's military.

Japan's News Agency said the attack was an apparent robbery attempt.

Iraqi minister escapes assassination

Baghdad, 29 March—Gunmen opened fire Sunday on a convoy carrying Iraq's minister of public works, killing a driver and a bodyguard and injuring two others, the US-led coalition said. The minister, Nisreen Berwari, was unharmed.

In another attack in the same city, Mosul, gunmen killed a Briton and a Canadian who were working as security guards for foreign electrical engineers at a power station. The ambush appeared to be part of a campaign to undermine US-led reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

The attacks highlighted the tenuous security situation in Iraq's third-largest city.

Berwari was returning to Mosul from a meeting in the city of Dohuk when her convoy was attacked, said Kristi Clemens, a coalition spokeswoman in Baghdad. Iraq police said the attack occurred around 11 am in the al-Karama neighbourhood of Mosul. They said the two men who were killed were both bodyguards, and that Berwari was in another car that was not hit by gunfire.

The attacks come at a time when US and Iraqi forces are intensifying efforts to root out insurgent activity, but the security situation remains fragile.

US soldiers and Iraqi police sealed off the area after the shooting. Witnesses saw two partly burned bodies, clad in flak jackets, beside the four-wheel drive vehicle that was on fire. One man had been shot in the head.

EU, Russia close to new trade deal ahead of 1 May

Brussels, 29 March—Russia and the European Union said on Friday they were close toagreeing trade rules for when new states join the bloc on 1 May.

Brussels wants the present Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) to apply to Russia's ties with the new EU states from the day they join. But Moscow fears that would cost it trade and other privileges it now enjoys with its closest neighbours, many of whom will join the EU.

If the PCA is not extended, there will be no formal framework in place covering EU-Russian relations. Eight of the states joining the EU on 1 May are former Soviet bloc countries.

But EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy and Russian Economy Minister German Gref were optimistic an agreement could be signed when Commission President Romano Prodi meets Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on April 22 and 23.

"We would reckon we have solved 90 per cent of the problems and the remaining 10 per cent, have been laid down as part of the basic political principles," Lamy told a news conference.

"We need to respect the autonomy of the countries, their independent foreign policy and in their latter years," Gref said.

The EU-Russia trade partnership, which would cover customs, tariffs, and other technical issues, would be valid for at least five years.

Both countries agreed in principle to a plan last year to gradually close the gap between EU and Russian economic standards and regulations over the next decade.

But Moscow fears that could cost it jobs and, indirectly, revenue, while European governments fear losing access to the Russian market.

President Putin has said he is determined to integrate Russia into the world's economic system and has called for talks with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

In Moscow, a spokesman for the Russian Foreign Ministry said from Moscow a Canadian was also killed and officials were trying to contact his family.
Iraq ‘friendly fire’ tragedy blamed on US Marine

WASHINGTON, 29 March — The worst US “friendly fire” incident of the Iraq war has been blamed on a Marine captain who called fighter jets to strike suspected Iraqi positions last March, unaware that dozens of Marines were fighting in the area, defence officials said on Sunday.

Ten Marines were killed and three wounded in the incident near the southern Iraqi city of Nassiriyah and a investigation report, to be released on Monday by the US Central Command, said the dead were so shot up by both Iraqis and A-10 Air Force jets that it was almost impossible to determine exactly how they died.

But the year-long probe by an 11-member US military team concluded that actions by the unidentified Marine captain, a ground-based air controller, directly resulted in the confused incident during the firefights on 23 March 2003.

It recommended that the officer receive some type of administrative discipline, but stipulated that “he didn’t act with any negligence or reckless disregard,” one of the defence officials, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters.

“It was a very ugly scene on the ground — just a terrible thing in the heat of battle,” said another defence official.

Marine Corps officials, who spent the weekend discussing the report with the families of Marines involved, declined to comment except to say that no action had been taken against the ground controller because the report had not yet been released.

Investigators found that the captain was in the city of Nassiriyah at the time, could not see the action in a barren area near a canal and should have consulted his battalion commander, who would have known that US troops were in the strike area.

The report said he had been cleared by his immediate commander to call in air power.

Eighteen Marines were killed and 17 wounded in the area as Charlie Company of the 1st Battalion 2nd Marines from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, was sent to seize bridges and a canal near Nassiriyah. But the investigation concluded that apparently only 13 Marines were involved in the friendly fire strikes.

The air controller was from Bravo Company of the 1st Battalion and was being used because Charlie Company had no air controller. —Internet

Arab Summit falls apart over US reforms

TUNIS, 29 March — Egypt offered Sunday to host a summit of Arab leaders, trying to resurrect a meeting that collapsed because of deep divisions over how to bring more democracy to the Middle East and tackle the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Arab League leaders had planned to use the summit, which was slated to start Monday, to submit proposals for political reforms in response to US calls for greater freedoms in the region. Many of the most powerful countries in the Middle East are led by absolute rulers or royal families.

But Israel’s 23 March assassination of Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yasinn provoked widespread outrage in the Arab world, making it politically risky for some states to pursue a peace initiative or take a stand on a reform plan championed by the Americans.

At the summit, the Arab leaders had also intended to relaunch a two-year-old Saudi-crafted peace initiative toward Israel. Syria blamed Israel for the collapse. “This decision is entirely inexplicable. It is inappropriate,” Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa said Sunday.

Several governments called for an urgent meeting of Arab foreign ministers to overcome differences so the summit of the 22-member Arab League could be held.

Prodi says Italy’s left would recall Iraq troops

Rome, 29 March — The main voice of Italy’s centre-left opposition, European Commission chief Romano Prodi, urged withdrawal of Italian troops from Iraq on Saturday in comments likely to win some voter sympathy ahead of local polls in June.

In a letter to the Corriere della Sera daily, former Prime Minister Prodi called the war “unjustified and illegitimate” and the “Olive Tree” centre-left coalition wanted a UN-led humanitarian operation in place of “occupation”.

“If the Olive Tree today found itself responsible for the government, for the problem of whether to continue or interrupt its participation in this war, I don’t hesitate to say that the choice would be to put an end to its intervention,” he said.

Prodi’s bid to spell out the centre-left’s position on Iraq comes as they gear up for European and local elections in June.

The opposition was buoyed by the recent electoral triumph of Spain’s socialists, who campaigned on a platform of withdrawing Spanish forces from Iraq. But it has so far failed to capitalize on broad Italian opposition to the war in Iraq and subsequent deployment of almost 3,000 Italian troops.

Though the Italian troop presence is not large, it has a great symbolic importance for the United States as it seeks international legitimacy for its role in Iraq after a planned full handover of sovereignty to Iraqis. A poll in early March showed that Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s coalition would get 45 per cent of the vote in a general election and the “Olive Tree” would win 40 per cent.

Prodi, the only man to have beaten Berlusconi at the polls, in a general election in 1996, appeared in his letter to be appealing to critics who saw the coalition’s opposition to the presence of Italian troops in Iraq as too lacking in conviction.

“An indispensable condition to make this intervention legitimate would obviously be that it was approved by and then put in action under the authority of the UN,” he said, adding that all countries, especially Muslim ones, should participate.

Prodi has said he would not run in the June elections, instead serving out his term as President of the commission which expires in October, but he has assumed the mantle of opposition leader as polls approach. — MNA/Reuters

Doctors question evidence for shaken-baby syndrome

LONDON, 29 March — Doctors called on Friday for a rethink of shaken-baby syndrome after researchers cast doubt on one of the symptoms used to identify it.

The syndrome results from violently shaking an infant and is recognized by brain damage. It made investigators first think of shaken-baby syndrome after researchers cast doubt on one of the symptoms used to identify it.

“Very little scientific evidence was required for China’s AIDS combat

BRUSSELS, 29 March — Guinean President Teodoro Obiang Nguema said on Friday Europe should not rush into enforcing targets to curb greenhouse emissions of Russia and Azerbaijan.

Obiang called this year’s Kyoto Protocol’s strict requirements to hamper Europe’s effort to boost its economic competitiveness.

The European Union has already set a 2015 start date for measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions to fight global warming. But the Kyoto Protocol’s strict requirements may hamper Europe’s efforts to boost its economic competitiveness.

EU leaders renewed their commitment to economic reforms to boost competitiveness as they gear up for the early entry into force of the Kyoto Treaty in a joint statement at a Brussels summit. — MNA/Reuters

Germany raises doubts over EU’s Kyoto policy

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Iraqis gather on the site of an explosion in central Baghdad. Seven Iraqis were injured when a roadside bomb exploded during the morning rush hour on Saturday. Another five Iraqis and a US soldier were injured in bomb blasts, Sunday, in bloodletting ahead of talks between UN experts and Iraqi officials on the upcoming transfer of power in Iraq. — Reuters

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Britain banking on private security firms in Iraq, report says

London, 29 March— Britain is spending millions of pounds hiring private bodyguards, armed escorts and security advisers to protect its civil servants in Iraq, a London newspaper said.

It comes as police in Iraq said two British civilians were killed in a drive-by shooting in Iraq’s main northern city of Mosul on Sunday.

The Foreign Office and Department for International Development has spent almost 25 million pounds on private security in Iraq following the war there last year. The cost is set to rocket once sovereignty is handed back to the Iraqis in June, The Independent on Sunday said.

David Claridge, director of security firm Janusian, estimated that British companies have earned up to 800 million pounds from their security contracts in Iraq, according to the paper.

The government’s largest contract was with British firm Control Risks, which has earned 23.5 million pounds, the paper said, adding that the company employed around 120 staff to protect some 150 officials and contractors.

The Foreign Office said it was unable to confirm the reports or news of the British civilians killed in Iraq Sunday.

Study says Army must do more to prevent suicides

Baghdad, 27 March—US soldiers have committed suicide at a higher-than-usual rate during the invasion and occupation of Iraq, and the Army must do more to try to prevent suicide and lessen combat-related stress, a new Army study says.

The study, the first of its kind undertaken in a war zone, was conducted from August through October to address the mental health of soldiers in Iraq. It was prompted by a spike of suicides in July, when five soldiers killed themselves, all with few warning signs.

Since the war in Iraq began in March 2003, 24 soldiers committed suicide, the study said. The suicide rate for Army soldiers in Iraq in 2003 was 15.8 per 100,000, an increase from the Army average of 12.2 for 2003 and 11.9 from 1995-2002. That rate was still below the national average of 21.5 suicides per 100,000 for males ages 20-34, which roughly matches the age range of the bulk of the soldiers in Iraq.

USA TODAY obtained a draft of the study, which will be released today at the Pentagon. The study, conducted by Army psychiatrists and other researchers, involved only Army soldiers and did not cover Marines, Air Force or Navy personnel in Iraq.

Among the findings:

• Friends and colleagues had little or no inkling that comrades who killed themselves were contemplating suicide.

• The Army plans to address the problem by adding “buddy team” training to spot warning signs and by changing Army culture to remove the stigma associated with seeking counseling.

• Almost all of the soldiers who committed suicide were young, white enlisted troops, the study showed. Most were having problems with relationships, money or legal difficulties, said a Pentagon official with knowledge of the report.

• About 15% of all Army soldiers surveyed in Iraq reported “low morale.” Army officials say the situation has improved because of better facilities in Iraq and a rotation plan that removes uncertainties about return dates.

The study found that almost all of the soldiers who committed suicide were young, white enlisted troops, the study showed. Most were having problems with relationships, money or legal difficulties, said a Pentagon official with knowledge of the report.

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West Virginia Senator on Iraq says ‘My vote was wrong’

CHARLESTON, 29 March—US Sen Senator Jay Rockefeller regrets his vote to authorize a war against Iraq.

“If I had known then what I know now, I would have voted against it,” Rockefeller, D-W Va., said Friday. “I have admitted that my vote was wrong.”

The Democratic-led Senate approved the war resolution 77-23 on 11 October, 2002, one day after the US House approved a similar resolution.

“The decision got made before there was a whole bunch of intelligence,” said Rockefeller, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee. “I think the intelligence was shaped. And I think the interpretation of the intelligence was shaped.

“We had this feeling we could be welcomed as liberators. Americans don’t know history, geography, ethnicity. The administration had no idea of what they were getting into in Iraq. We are not internationalists. We border on being isolationists. We don’t know anything about the Middle East.” Rockefeller also said he is distressed at the failure to involve the United Nations in creating a new government and finding peace in Iraq.

Many of the senator’s feelings were expressed last week during a working trip with four other Democratic senators to Iraq and four other Middle Eastern nations.

In Iraq, the senators visited a team of researchers investigating the presence of weapons of mass destruction.

“They have three million pieces of paper,” Rockefeller said. “But it is a sham. There is nothing to point to any weapons of any kind.”

Several wounded in series of blasts in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 29 March—At least six civilians were wounded, including a young child, in a series of blasts in the Iraqi capital on Friday, hospital officials said.

Doctors at Baghdad’s Yarmouk Hospital said three men, a woman, a teenage boy and a child were brought into the emergency room shortly after the explosions. Two were seriously wounded and moved to another hospital.

Quota set to save snow lotus from extinction in N-W China

URUMQI, 29 March — Northwest China’s Xinjiang Uygar Autonomous Region has introduced a quota system this year for snow lotus plucking and dealing to curb the over exploitation of the rare plant.

Zhang Xiaopeng, director of the regional supervision centre of grassland resources, said not more than 700,000 snow lotus can be plucked in 2004, dropping one-third from last year.

Listed an endangered species, snow lotuses, which mainly grow on mudflats near the snow line on Tianshan Mountains and Altay Mountains, are suffering a habitat shrinkage as a result of snow line rising in recent ten years.

To make it worse, Zhang said, the rising demand for the rare plant from pharmacy and invigoration industries has caused an over exploitation and a quantity decline of snow lotuses.

Currently only three million snow lotuses are fitting to be plucked. Calculated with the 1:4 ratio between pluckable snow lotuses and the total existing ones, a figure provided by the supervision centre, the region now should have some 12 million these rare plants. But the figure in 1988 was 28.3 million.

Over 100 firms in Xinjiang are engaged in the business of snow lotus purchase and processing.

The supervision centre has ordered for strict management over the snow lotus business.

The licensing work will be strictly controlled and no firm can do the business without the authorization of the supervision centre, the order said. The supervision centre will set each authorized firm a quota according to their business scales, Zhang said.

China to set up more offshore helicopter rescue teams

BEIJING, 29 March — China plans to set up three more offshore helicopter rescue teams this year to guarantee safety in sea areas, said sources with the Ministry of Communications.

The North Sea No. 1 helicopter rescue team was scheduled to be launched this April and the rescuers with two helicopters would be stationed in Dalian, northeast China’s Liaoning Province, said an official with the ministry who asked to be anonymous.

Another two helicopter rescue teams, the East Sea No. 2 and the South Sea No. 1, helicopter rescue teams, were expected to be set up within the year, said the official.

Currently, China has only one helicopter rescue team, namely the Shanghai Offshore Helicopter Rescue Team stationed in Shanghai, which will be renamed as the East Sea No. 1 helicopter rescue team.

With the new expansion, the four rescue teams will be stationed in the Bohai Sea, Shanghai, Taiwan Strait and Qiongzhou Strait for emergency help on the sea.

China’s offshore rescue work was still in its early stages and could only operate in daytime within a distance of 80 sea miles, said the official.

To better develop China’s maritime rescue system, the Ministry of Communications purchased four helicopters this year for offshore rescue, which will be put into use in 2006, according to China News Service on Thursday.

Clinton, Carter, Gore show unity for Kerry

WASHINGTON, 29 March—Former presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter joined a who’s who of Democrats in celebrating the party’s next presidential nominee John Kerry on Thursday at a unity dinner peppered with tributes to party heroes and harsh criticism of President George W Bush.

The gathering of the brightnest Democratic stars, including seven of Kerry’s nine former campaign rivals, raised about 11 million US dollars for the party and featured strong denunciations of Bush’s leadership and Republican campaign tactics from both Carter and Clinton.

The rare gathering of the two former presidents, along with former vice-president Al Gore, the Democratic nominee in 2000, highlighted an unusually high level of unity this year in a party where infighting and post-primary grudges have been a tradition.

“Never has the Democratic Party been more united than it is today, never have we been more poised to win a victory in November,” said Kerry, who kicks off a 20-city fund-raising tour this weekend in California with a goal of raising 80 million US dollars before the Democratic convention in July.

The speeches by Clinton and Carter featured strong attacks on Bush for alienating traditional allies, declaring war on the environment, eroding basic liberties, ratcheting up partisan political tensions and undermining the US role as a global leader.

“I am deeply concerned that our leadership today has been eroded by global doubts about our government’s commitment to the basic principles of truth, peace and human rights,” Carter said.

“We see trust and friendship toward the United States at its lowest point in history,” Carter said.

“Respected human rights leaders no longer see our country as a noble example to be emulated, but as a focus of their almost universal condemnation.”

Sasha Cohen, of the United States, performs in the ladies’ short programme at the World Figure Skating Championships in Dortmund, western Germany, on 26 March, 2004. — Internet

Seven killed during raid near Tikrit

BAGHDAD, 28 March — Four Iraqi paramilitaries and three armed suspects were killed on Friday during a raid near Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit, the US military said.

A military spokeswoman said four other members of the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps (ICDC) were wounded in the incident at around 4 am (0100 GMT).

She said 21 individuals were captured in the raid. She gave no other details about the incident.

US troops and Iraqi security forces regularly raid homes and villages from their base in Tikrit. It is 110 miles north of Baghdad, looking for insurgents fighting the US occupation.

US soldiers block the main entrance to the restive town of Fallujah, recently between guerrillas and US troops west of the Iraqi capital. — Internet
Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation dutifully preserving traditional cultural heritage

In our country, Myanmar, own cultural heritage has been preserved since years countable by the thousand. The people of Myanmar are the ones who have been able to relay the culture of a sovereign nation from one generation to another since the times of Thareikitaya, Bagay, Paya, Iwma and Konguang to this date lasting about 2000 years. As Myanmar people are endowed with physical and mental ability, buildings with great architectual designs have flourished in the country. Cultural includes traditions, literature, language, religion, cultural heritage, music and mode of dress. From the times of Pyu City State and Bagan City State and throughout the period of independence struggle to this date, outstanding Myanmar women have emerged in education, economic and social sectors.

In Myanmar, people residing in rural areas constitute 70 per cent of the population which stands at over 53 million. Schools, monasteries and training courses are the places where education disseminated. From the time of disillusionism to this date, Myanmar women have been nurtured to be polite in words and deeds through the teachings of Buddha, literature created by monks and lay person scholars.

In building a new nation, uplifting of the women sector in line with own culture based on currently published literature and ancient teachings becomes a vital responsibility for Myanmar womenfolk.

Preserving own cultural traditions is the national duty. In striving for the community service, one cannot carry out a certain task individually but the united strength of a group can. Today, Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation that will serve the interests of the mass of Myanmar women has been constituted to be 3 per cent of the country’s population has been formed.

With the aim of using the strength of Myanmar women in endeavours for national development, the government formed Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs in 1996. In 1995, a delegation of Myanmar women attended the Fourth International Women’s Conference held in Beijing. The conference issued Beijing Declaration consisting of process for development of the women sector. In line with the political, economic, social and historical traditions, the future plan for development of Myanmar women sector has been implemented. Moreover, systematic measures have been taken in nation-building tasks.

As the women sector is very wide, there exist limitations in carrying out the women’s affairs to cover the entire nation and thus MNCWA was transformed into Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation as a non-governmental organization on 20 December 2003.

MWF was formed with seven lofty aims, they are:

- to enhance 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 so that they will cherish and value the traditional culture and customs of the national races
- to systematically carry out the tasks for prevention of violence against women and rehabilitation
- to launch campaigns, as a national duty, on elimination of trafficking in women and children, and to cooperate with 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.

To realize the objectives, the following bodies have been formed:

(a) Central Organization for Women’s Affairs
(b) State/Division Organization for Women’s Affairs as well as分支机构 in the respective states and divisions
(c) District Organization for Women’s Affairs
(d) Township Organization for Women’s Affairs

(e) Ward and village Organization for Women’s Affairs

MWF, a social organization, was formed to serve the interests of the State and the people and to promote the life of women.

In conformity with one of the four social objectives “uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character”, the MWF Cultural Work Group is conducting field tours of all parts of the nation.

Thanks to the encouragement of the State, like Myanmar women in the successive eras, present mass of Myanmar women have fully enjoyed women’s rights. Those who have been assigned duties are found to carry out the tasks efficiently. Therefore, embracing social ethics, national culture and lineage, Myanmar women have been brilliantly participating in the national development tasks.

Regarding the cultural sector, under the correct leadership of the State, the body is taking organizational measures to help Myanmar young women to be pious ones, to adorn themselves traditional costumes, to love and cherish traditional culture and customs and to strongly resist the penetration of alien decadent culture.

The government with genuine goodwill has been taking systematic measures in elevating the role of Myanmar women. So, Myanmar women have been able to organize a network of women development activities across the nation including rural areas, where Myanmar traditions and culture originated.

In a bid to forge nationalistic spirit and Union Spirit among Myanmar women, the government designated the third of July as Myanmar Women’s Day as a gesture of honouring Myanmar women mass. Besides, the government has acknowledged all the endeavours for development of the Myanmar women sector. At the Myanmar traditional food and delicacies’ fair, recently held with the sponsorship of the Yangon Division Organization for Women’s Affairs, the Myanmar costumes show could draw the attention of the audience.

In its drive to build a peaceful, modern and developed nation, the State Peace and Development Council has been implementing the twelve objectives. It has also adopted the three tactics as part of the four social objectives. These three tactics — to uplift the moral and morality of the entire nation, to preserve and safeguard the cultural heritage and, to safeguard the cultural heritage and national character — are fine ones, which play a main role in preserving traditions and national character. Geologists found out about 40 million years old anthropoid primates in Pountang Powna region. It has indicated that the human beings originated in Myanmar.

The State Peace and Development Council formed the Committee for Preservation of National Heritage on 10 September 1998 to effectively preserve and safeguard the cultural heritage.

Now national traitors are manufacturing fabrications that AIDS has widely spread in Myanmar with the intention of tarnishing the dignity of the mass of Myanmar women who are sharing equal rights with men. However, one can witness vividly that Myanmar women are taking part in the nation-building tasks under the leadership of the State. The seminar on development of Myanmar women, the first Myanmar women conference and the second conference have been successfully held and systematic measures are being taken for development of Myanmar women in accord with the guidelines.

While making efforts for development of Myanmar women and perpetual existence of the Union, Myanmar women are preserving and safeguarding the cultural heritage of the nation under the leadership of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation in accordance with the motto “Strive collectively for development of the women’s sector”.

(Translation: BG + MS)

Myanmar Alin: 29-3-2004
Senior General Than Shwe …

(See page 1)

Yangon and Mandalay to enable the youths of border areas who had completed matriculation, to continue to pursue higher learning.

Border areas development tasks will meet with success all the more as progress has been made in economic, transport, production, industrial and electric sectors. Therefore, efforts are to be made for all-round development of border areas that lagged behind in development in the past.

Since its assumption of State duties the government has laid down Our Three Main National Causes—non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty as a national policy and work is well under way in accord with the 12 political, economic and social objectives which are the national work programmes for successful realization of the national policy.
Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee...
(from page 16)

independent and sovereign state with the strength of national solidarity, national development and strong national economic life.

He said rapid and incomparable development and changes of international science and technology influence on education, health, social, economic, defence and security sectors.

Therefore, building highly qualified human resources of international standard with the strength of national development and strong national economic life is essential. Systematic arrangements are to be made for dissemination of modern science and technology in all development sectors and producing well-versed human resources in all sectors, he said. He said it is a prime national requirement to produce highly-qualified technicians, engineers, architects and scientists in accord with the changes of science and technology in various sectors in efforts to emerge a modern developed nation.

Therefore, the government established specialized universities and made arrangements for teaching of specialized subjects in universities and colleges and for conferring post diplomas and MA and PhD degrees on graduates.

Emergence of such universities as Myanmar Aerospace Engineering University and Myanmar Maritime University is a significant development in the country. Head of State Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance on laying down firm objectives on various sectors and implementation of the future plans in conformity with advanced science and technology and on establishment of respective universities to produce intellectuals and intelligentsia, construction engineers who are able to build aircraft and ships. This is why these two universities have emerged, he said.

He said maritime transport plays a vital role in world trade and freight and oil and natural gas transport and making holiday trips on ocean-liners and luxury-liners is in vogue. Moreover, maritime power also plays a vital role in State security and defence.

He said producing and training maritime officers and engineers, shipbuilding engineers and architects in the country contributes towards national development, strong national economic life and safeguarding State security.

Moreover, Myanmar is teeming with many rivers and creeks with long coastal region and the nation is also blessed with invaluable natural resources. With maintenance and management of river and creeks and building and managing of deep sea port will contribute much towards not only national development but also efforts for wining the sea.

The government has been making systematic arrangements to establish Myanmar Maritime University complete with the characteristics of international universities and thus a grand university that will bring about development of maritime technologies that meet the international standard has now emerged.

The leading committee and sub-committees were formed to ensure that curricula of the university will meet the standard of international universities, the university to possess enough teaching aids and reference books, various subjects that flourish in maritime field to be conducted at the university and assigning skilled teachers.

At present, courses for B.E (Naval Architecture), B.E (Marine Engineering), B.E (Marine Electrical System and Electronics), B.E (River and Ocean Engineering), B.E (Port and Harbour Engineering) have been conducted at MMU. Moreover, B.Sc and B.Sc (Hons) (Nautical Science) courses have also been conducted, he said.

With cooperation of international maritime universities and experts, efforts are being made to ensure that curricula and courses are meeting the international standard. Visiting professors have been invited to lecture the students. Teachers from the university have been sent abroad for further studies.

As modern teaching aids have been installed at the university, ship handling simulator and engine room simulator and engineering application software are now being applied in conducting courses.

With grand buildings of the university, MMU equipped with the characteristics of international maritime universities in form and essence has emerged.

The Prime Minister urged the students to become outstanding maritime experts through learning hard at the university.

The teachers are also required to nurture their students to become well-rounded individuals who are willing to serve the interest of the country and the people.

Teachers and students are to strive in harmony to ensure the continuous emergence of experts, architects and engineers from the Myanmar Maritime University through the creation of human resources much needed for the establishment of a modern and developed nation.

Lastly, the Prime Minister urged all students to establish themselves into intellectuals, intelligentsia and engineers capable of playing a leading role in advanced education while pursuing required education with peace of mind. He also called for the cooperation of teachers, parents and students to make efforts to enable the university to stand proud and tall as an institution of international standard.

Next, U Thein Tun, rector of the university, explained the purpose of the opening of the university.

Afterward, on behalf of the students Maung Thet Naing of second year outstanding (Naval Architecture) spoke words of thanks for building of Myanmar Maritime University.

(See page 11)
Senior General Than Shwe ...

... (from page 8) have been opened in Yangon and Mandalay. In the academic year, a total of 1,749 national youths — 337 at primary school level, 923 at middle school level and 449 at high school level — are pursuing education at 19 national youth development training schools. Arrange- ments are also under way to open eight more schools of such kind in Lashio, Panglong, Hpa-an, Pakokku, Falam, Tonzong, Kale and Thantlang regions.

Moreover, race and clothes are also provided for 579 students in vocational schools in Bututhaung, Maungdaw, Kyauktaw, Paletwa, Mongnht, Leshi, Lahe, Mongyin, Falam, Mindat and orphanage school in Matups, funded by the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs.

Nationalities Youth Resource Development Degree Colleges were opened in Yangon and Mandalay to enable trainee students with high caliber of education from those schools and university education. As a result, a total of 141 national youths have been nurtured to become graduates or degree holders. They are now serving at different ministries at border areas. Also in this academic year, a total of 388 national youths are pursuing education in art and science and are attending AGIT courses.

Furthermore, vocational schools for girls who have openly cultivated areas with the aim of preventing young women from going to foreign countries for work at risk to their morality and social rights. A total of 16 schools of such kind have produced 12,717 young women with knowl- edge in vocational education.

Knitting, a course suitable to such a cold region as Chin State, is also taught as an additional specialization.

Given the border area development and anti-drug tasks, the government has been implemented with five objectives with 'To end up an end to poppy cultivation through the establish- ment of business transactions in border areas' as one of them. In taking measures for development of border areas, priority is given to the emergence of socio-economic infra- structure in poppy-growing areas where transportation is difficult. According to statistics, it will be found that 79.5% out of the total funds earmarked for development of border areas is spent in growing regions. In consequence of it, a considerable decline in poppy growing has become apparent as there emerged business opportunities for poppy growers. This phenomenon a year after year can also be seen in the survey collected by Myanmar as well as in other poppy yield survey conducted by Myanmar and the United States of America. As said in a statement of the Interna- tional Narcotics Control Board (INCB), the poppy cultiva- tion in Myanmar for the year 2003 stood at 47,130 hec- tares, a two-thirds drop when compared with 163,000 hec- tares in 1996. In spite of differences in the statements is, such kind have produced 12,717 young women with knowl- edge in vocational education.
**Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee…**

(from page 9)

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt accepted K 30 million donated by Chairman of Show Marla Company U Aung Hwe to the trust funds of the university. Then, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt handed over K 30 million to the Rector of the Myanmar Maritime University.

At the same time, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presented ‘2003 RINA Myanmar Shipyards Award’ to outstanding student of second year (Senior) Maung Thet Naing (Naval Architecture). Later, Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe, Deputy Ministers U Pe Than and Col Nyan Tint Aung and Rector U Then Tun accepted cash donation K 17.714 million donated by wellwishers. They presented certificates of honour to wellwishers.

After the ceremony, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party viewed round the computer booths displayed by Suntac Technologies, Silver Wave Co Ltd and Bagan Cybertech and gave encouragement to the students learning advanced maritime subjects at Engine Room Simulator Lab and Ship Handling Simulator Lab. — MNA

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**Armed Forces Day**

**Literary and Arts Exhibition continues**

**YANGON, 29 March —** The 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative Literary and Arts Exhibition continued today at the Tatmadaw Convention Centre on U Wisara Road here.

Cultural artifacts of Stone Age, Bronze Age and Pyu Era.

**CULTURE**

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**Minister views artefacts excavated in Tagaung and nearby areas**

**YANGON, 29 March —** A research team led by U Aye Maung, Deputy Director of the Archaeological Department of the Ministry of Culture in Mandalay, and another research team led by U Kyaw Kyaw, Assistant Director, made field trips to the regions concerned from February to the second week of March 2004 to study the once-flourished cultures that had connected among old Tagaung city, old Hanlin city and Pyinsalangamyo. Their findings were displayed at the hall of the Ministry of Culture this morning. The ancient artefacts excavated by the two research teams during their field trips were viewed by Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung. Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, directors-general of departments under the ministry, and the rector of the Yangon University of Culture.

Among the artefacts were New Stone Age stone rings, stone weapons, bronze bracelets, Pyu-era roof tiles, earth pots, earthen bowls, strings of beads made of earth, earthen smoking pipes, shells, strings of beads made of bones and multicoloured stones, one human lower jaw with a complete set of teeth, and bones of deer. It is estimated that those artefacts date back to the New Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Pys Era. According to the close examination at the drawing designs on broken earthen pots, conclusion can be drawn that the cultures of those periods were of high standard.

The evidences from the signs and designs of those artefacts show that the standard of the cultures that had thrived during those three periods were in general not much different from each other and that there flourished Pys culture in all the old cities. — MNA

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**Workshop on Health Mapper for Malaria Control Programme held**

**YANGON, 29 March —** A course on Intercountry Workshop on ‘Health Mapper for Malaria Control Programme in the Countries of South East Asia Region’, jointly organized by the Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), was opened today at the Grand Palaza Park Royal Hotel here this morning, with an address delivered by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint.

It was attended by Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo, directors-general of departments under the ministry, deputy directors-general, rectors, directors, representatives from Geneva-based WHO and the Office of the Director of South East Asian Region, WHO Resident Representative Dr Agostino Borra, Mr Takahiro Sasaki from JICA, malaria experts from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal and India, and guests.

After the speech given by Minister Dr Kyaw Myint, Dr Agostino Borra and Mr Takahiro Sasaki also made speeches.

The workshop continues till 1 April. — MNA

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**Coord meeting for International Trade Delegation to the East Asia Region 2004 held**

**YANGON, 29 March —** A coordination meeting for International Trade Delegation to the East Asia Region 2004 which was organized by KOTRA of Korean Embassies in Myanmar was held at Traders Hotel on Sule Pagoda Road this morning.

Present on the occasion were Korean Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Lee Kyong Woo, Commercial Attaché Mr Choi Yong Tae and officials, group leader Mr Jung Hyeon Tae of seven companies of Kyonggi Trade Mission in Republic of Korea and delegates, delegates to 48 Co Ltd in Myanmar.

Next, seven companies of Kyonggi Trade Mission in Republic of Korea introduced packing materials, different kinds of aluminium doors, hair dryer and materials for hairdressing, various kinds of springs for industry and automobile, computer and accessories and electrical gadget. Moreover they discussed trade functions with Myanmar’s companies. — MNA
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DON’T SMOKE
Malaysian Premier names new Cabinet

KUALA LUMPUR, 29 March — Fresh from a landslide election victory, Malaysia’s Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi named a new Cabinet on Saturday, with familiar faces keeping all the top positions.

With the exception of the former prime minister Abdullah Razak, who was named Deputy Prime Minister, and the defence portfolio, Abdullah, who took over the premiership after veteran leader Mahathir Mohamad’s planned retirement in October, led the ruling coalition to a huge victory in polls last Sunday, according to the most recent official vote count.

After Abdullah read the list, the first question in a subsequent news conference was whether the Cabinet was clean.

“Of course, there’s no need for them not to be approved,” Abdullah responded. He added, “Being a minister doesn’t give them immunity from the due process of law.”

Abdullah was also expected to avoid taking any action that could cause infuriating the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the party that leads the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition.

Najib’s cousin, Hishammudin Hussein, regarded as a leading light in the younger generation Abdullah is seeking to promote, was elevated from the Sports Ministry to a key job as Education Minister.

Syed Hamid Albar was retained as for- eign minister, a job he has held since 1999.

And veteran Trade Minister Rafidah Aziz kept her job too.

The Prime Minister, keep the finance portfolio for himself, and retained Nor Mohamad Yacob, an ex-central banker who had been Mahathir’s economic adviser, as Second Finance Minister.

Abdullah appointed Mustapa Mohamed, an economist with prior experience at the Finance Ministry, as one of eight ministers in the Prime Minister’s department.

HK media says Basic Law interpretation vital for stability

HONG KONG, 29 March — Hong Kong media said Saturday the plan of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPCSC) to interpret the Basic Law provisions is timely and significant to fostering consensus on the need of transporting coal out of Jungar. The plan of the NPCSC to interpret the Basic Law provisions is timely and significant to fostering consensus on the need of transporting coal out of Jungar.

“After the NPCSC’s announcement, the people have been more aware of the Basic Law’s significance,” said a commentator in the South China Morning Post.

Kuwait grants loans to build railway in Inner Mongolia

BRUSSELS, 29 March — The Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) signed an agreement Friday with China’s Ministry of Finance to loan 35 million US dollars for building a railway in Inner Mongolia.

The project will need a total investment of 1.217 billion yuan (147 million US dollars) to build a 116-kilometer railway from the Inner Mongolia town of Jungar to Inner Mongolia.

The cooperation is to be carried out in the framework of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which offers support to developing countries.

Chinese students work in NGOs for environmental protection

BEIJING, 29 March — One hundred thousand Chinese students took part in various activities Saturday as a move to promote environmental protection and ecological conservation throughout the country.

They gathered, mostly in environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in 22 cities, including Beijing and Shanghai, and 19 provinces and autonomous regions from southeastern Fujian to northwestern Xinjiang Uygar Autonomous Region, according to the organizer, China’s Environmental Culture Protection Society, a non-profit organization sponsored by the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA).

The students planted trees, collected trash in the sea, called for action to save water and protect wetlands.

German health reform medicine begins to work

BERLIN, 29 March — Reforms making Germans pay more for medicine and visits to the doctor are starting to ease pressure on the country’s creaking health care system, medical insurers and experts said here.

The Health Ministry says the reforms, which cut traditional benefits like tax-free fares for hospital and spa visits, have unburdened health insurance funds and will allow them to cut contributions rates for 55 per cent of patients by next month.

“We have reached a turning point. Up to now contribution rates were constantly rising, but now they are gradually coming down,” said Florian Lanz, spokesman for the National Association of Public Health Insurers.

In an attempt to streamline one of the world’s most expensive and inefficient medical systems, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder’s centre-left government agreed the health reforms with the opposition conservatives last July.

“Patients now have to pay for non-prescription drugs and they pay a bigger share for other drugs,” said Lanz. Those changes would save Germany’s 285 public insurers around four billion euros ($4.9 bil-lion US dollars) this year, said Lanz.

When the reforms came into effect on 1 January, insurers reduced rates for almost a fifth of those covered by the country’s statutory health insurance system. The Association of Public Service Doctors says visits to doctors dropped by up to 8 per cent in January.

But economists and health care experts warned against overestimating the impact from the first wave of reforms.

“The reform was certainly a success so far, but we won’t see how much it will help save until at least the second quarter. We need to see lower insurance rates in the long-term,” said Stefan Bielmeier, euro zone economist at Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt.

However, most politicians and health care groups agree that the reforms, which also make patients pay 10 euros every quarter for seeing a doctor, are only a stop-gap measure and deeper structural changes are needed.

Powerful sandstorm hits Inner Mongolia

HONG KONG, 29 March — An unusual strong sandstorm began sweeping Inner Mongolia Saturday afternoon, adding difficulty to the disaster relief efforts at earth-quake-hit areas in the northern autonomous region.

The wind lashed almost the whole region with a force of force 12 on the Beaufort scale, and a dust storm is expected to hit part of the pastoral area later Sunday, according to the regional meteorological bureau.

Liu Jungao, chief engineer of the bureau, said tempera- ture in eastern and central Inner Mongolia fell below zero degree Celsius Saturday night. It is expected to further drop to 6-8 degrees Sunday and Monday.

Nearly 80 per cent of the tents at Wengensu Town in Dong Ujimqin Banner were not usable during the sandstorms, said the official Sunday, because the area’s workmen had tend to have travel to the town to hand over the materials in person, said an offi- cial with the court.

In the past, it used to go to the court several times to pro- vide all necessary materials when lodging lawsuits as many of the courts suffered a lack of knowl- edge in this field, he said.

The court would look into the materials and place suit- able cases on line in legal standards.

Guangdong Province introduces online lawsuits

GUANGZHOU, 29 March — The intermediate people’s court of Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province, launched a web site for par- ties involved in lawsuits to submit materials, in a bid to simplify lawsuit procedures.

The new website, earlier this week, would save litigants much time because they can file lawsuits online and the court can handle materials in person, said an offi- cial with the court.

In the past, it used to go to the court several times to pro- vide all necessary materials when lodging lawsuits as many of the courts suffered a lack of knowl- edge in this field, he said.
related”. —

"I love the pressure of each match. We know everyone is aiming for us. It is also important for us to use each match to work on refining our game. If we make a mistake, we must correct it immediately," said Emanuel when asked about being the top team with a streak of match wins and tournament titles. — MNA//Sinhu

Yugoslav soccer boss dies of gunshot wounds

BELGRADE, 29 March — The top soccer official of Serbia and Montenegro died of gunshot wounds late on Friday, hours after an unknown assailant shot him in the head at his Belgrade office, the soccer association said on Saturday.

Branko Balatovic, 52, had been secretary-general of the association since the early 1990s, when then-Yugoslavia was ruled by socialist autocrat Slobodan Milosevic. Balatovic's body was found late on Friday, including a 21-17 and 21-16 win over Robert Nowotny and Peter Gartmayer of Austria in the second semifinals.

Bayern crush Moenchengladbach 5-2

BERLIN, 29 March — Bayern Munich held off a second-half challenge from Borussia Moenchengladbach to win 5-2 at home on Saturday with late goals from Owen Hargreaves and Michael Ballack.

The win lifted Bayern to 53 points in second place in the league, eight behind Werder Bremen with eight league matches left to play.

Runaway leaders Bremen play at third-placed Stuttgart on Sunday, however, and Bayern win may not be enough to ease pressure on coach Ottmar Hitzfeld.

Bayern began brightly, with defender Sammy Kuffour heading the ball home in the 20th minute to be followed by a sumptuous goal from Paraguayan internationa l Roque Santa Cruz after a brilliant run from the half way line.

A penalty from Dutch striker Roy Makaay just after the break for Ze Roberto was brought down in the penalty area seemed to put the match beyond Moenchengladbach but the visitors struck back with two goals in 11 minutes from Vaclav Sverkos to bring the game alive.

Strikes from Hargreaves in the 88th minute and Ballack in the dying seconds provided the perfect response.

"It was a crazy game," Hitzfeld said after the match. "We were very concentrated and deserved to go 3-0 up but then we allowed ourselves unnecessary individual mistakes and had to tremble a bit."

"But the important thing was that the team reacted to the 3-2 and picked up again. Hitzfeld, Bayern's most successful coach, has been under pressure in recent weeks after his side were knocked out of both the domestic cup and Champions League and Bremen have pulled clear in the Bundesliga title race.

At the other end of the table, Hertha Berlin's chance to take part in this year's race to Athens Olympic Games.

In the women's event, with the absence of China's national team and Ham Pang Sil from North Korea split the silver and bronze medals in 2:28:17 and 2:28:32 respectively.

Deportivo snatch last-gasp win against Sociedad

MAZDA, 29 March — A last-minute own goal gifted Deportivo Coruna a 2-1 win over Real Sociedad on Saturday.

Both teams have now have 63 points at the top of the table.

Brazil's Eliber scored the winner in the 17th minute for champions Lyon, inflicting on Nice only their second home defeat of the season.

Monaco, who have conceded 10 points in the title race to their arch-rivals since crashing them 3-0 in the principality in January, scored through Dado Prso.

The Croat struck in the 50th minute against the Ligue 1 bottom-placed team, who sank to their sixth home defeat of the season and seem headed back towards Ligue 2. The principality team once again lost defender Sebastien Squillaci to injury and he was replaced by Edouard Cisse shortly before halftime.

The France international was joined by another key defender, Patrice Evra, on the injury list.

Coach Didier Deschamps also took Playmaker Jerome Rothen off early to give him some rest.

"That's obviously the dark side of this game," said Monaco defender Julien Rodriguez.

"I love matches like we played today," said Emanuel after the win. "I love the pressure of each match. We know everyone is aiming for us. It is also important for us to use each match to work on refining our game. If we make a mistake, we must correct it immediately," said Emanuel when asked about being the top team with a streak of match wins and tournament titles. — MNA/Reuters

Kenyan Moiben wins Xiamen International Marathon

XIAMEN (South China), 29 March — James Moiben won the Xiamen International Marathon Saturday after his compatriot Joseph Kiprono was less competitiv e for a leg injury.

Moiben, 26, was invited to take part in this year's race in Xiamen, China, with other 15 foreign runners from seven countries and regions.

During the race, he kept his pace very well and held a position firmly in the leading group, crossed the finish line first in 2 hours 10 minutes and 54 seconds for the top prize of 25,000 US dollars.

Josephat Kiprono, runner-up of the Rotterdam Marathon last year and with a personal best of 2:06:44, was the favourite to win in Xiamen but finished eighth in 2:14:57 after injuring his right leg midway.

Kiprono said, "My leg is hurt, so I cannot run now. I was not feeling well physically. I am satisfied with my performance today as I held on to finish the whole race."

Both the Kenyans said their aim was to want that they can compete in Xiamen next year. "I am happy to win here, and hope I can come back," Moiben said.

Chinese Li Hongzhu became the runner-up with 2:11:43, and Terefe Yemhiel the third place with 2:11:45. Antoni Pena, the second best marathon runner in Spain, caught the sixth spot with a time of 2:13:17.

The 33-year-old Spanish will participate in the marathon's sister event, the Xiamen International Half Marathon on Sunday.

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Deportivo snatch last-gasp win against Sociedad

MAZDA, 29 March — A last-minute own goal gifted Deportivo Coruna a 2-1 win over Real Sociedad on Saturday.

Deportivo's victory moved them a point ahead of fourth-placed Barcelona, who visit Real Betis on Sunday.

League leaders Real Madrid will host mid-table Sevilla defending a one-point lead over Valencia, who travel to Racing Santander.

Deportivo went ahead in the 11th minute with a shot from Uruguayan striker Walter Pandiani but the home side equalized just before halftime when Turkey's Nihat Kahveci shrugged off two challenges and drilled the ball into the corner.

Neither team was able to break the deadlock in a tight second half until the second minute of injury time.

Sociedad defender Aitor Lopez Rekarte tried to clear the ball over the bar under pressure from Deportivo striker Diego Tristán in the penalty area but drove it high into his own net.

Pandiani, who scored Deportivo's only goal in the mid-week clash against Milan, looked dangerous from the outset and had a brace of opportunities in the first half.

His goal came from an incisive pass by Spanish midfielder Sergio that left Sociedad's defence standing while Pandiani crashed the ball past the keeper into the far side of the net.

Controversy surrounded Nihat's 43rd-minute equalizer as the Deportivo players accused him of tripping defender Cesar Martin before running clear on to a deep pass from Lopez Rekarte and driving it home.

Sociedad, already out of this season's Champions League and languishing in 14th place, will feel unlucky not to have taken at least a point after having the best of the second half, with midfielder Valery Karpin missing a close-range chance. — MNA/Reuters

Arsenal's Robert Pires battles with Paul Scholes as both teams search for an opening goal. — INTERNET

Lyon, Monaco neck and neck at top of Ligue 1

PARIS, 29 March — Olympique Lyon and Monaco kept the French title race finely balanced on Saturday with 1-0 away wins over Nice and Le Mans.

Both teams have now 63 points at the top of the table.

MNA/Reuters
Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attends opening of main hall of MMU

YANGON, 29 March — The opening ceremony of the main hall of Myanmar Maritime University was held at Thilawa, Thanlwin township, Yangon South District this morning, attended by Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Present on the occasion were Ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, Deputy Ministers, officials of State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental heads, the Rector of the Myanmar Maritime University, the Pro-Rector and Professors, lecturers, national construction entrepreneurs, officials of social organizations, students, dance troupe and guests.

First, Maung Nyan Lin, Maung Han Zaw Oo and Maung Kaung Myat Thu, first-year outstanding students of Myanmar Maritime University formally opened the archway of the university.

Next, Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt together with the Rector of the Myanmar Maritime University, the Pro-Rector and Professors, lecturers and students posed for a documentary photo.

Next, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt made a speech on the occasion. He said Myanmar Maritime University lies on green and pleasant campus. The State and students can be proud of the university for it can teach and train the students in the lecture halls of the modern and magnificent main building with the use of modern teaching aids in accordance with the status of international universities.

He said he was delighted at the opening of the main building of the university. He said the students can learn advanced education at the university with the use of modern teaching aids and the government believes that it would be able to produce outstanding maritime intellectuals and intellectuals in the near future.

He said now the government on self-reliance basis is building human resources of international standard for enabling the nation to keep pace with the development of the nations of the world and to stand tall among them as an (See page 9)

Minister inspects oil and gas fields in Shwedaung

YANGON, 29 March — Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi, accompanied by officials, inspected Pyay Toungtan oil and gas field, Shwedaung Township in Bago Division yesterday afternoon.

At the briefing hall, an official concerned reported on production of oil and gas in cooperation with Chinery Assets Company of the People’s Republic of China. Officials also presented supplementary reports. The minister laid down future tasks for main-