Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Win and officials.

Senior General Than Shwe and party visited the factory in time, while laying down systematic installation work and in- stallation sectors, bamboo, salt, limestone, power, oil and natural gas require- ments, raw material supply programmes, a 50-ton high- quality paper plant project (Pathaung), a 60-ton newsprint plant project (Pathaung), and a fuel oil tank project.

Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi and Minister for Electric Power Maj-Gen Tin Htut reported to the Senior General on supply of gas and electricity to the project; and Command Maj-Gen Soe Naing, on land and water transport for raw materi- als.

Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance, saying that efficiency is required in running the 200-ton pulp factory as it is a mammoth one.

Ways should be found to supply bamboo to the factory in time, while laying down systematic projects to set up bamboo and tree plantations for ensuring continuous supply of raw materials.

Based on the experiences of the project, places suitable for pulp and paper industries should be chosen and the required capacity of the machines should be calculated. Paper and pulp industry has high prospects.

Efforts should be made for durability of the bridge and earliest completion of the Ngawun River Bridge Project.
For parallel development of agriculture and industry

The government has been building health, education, economic and social infrastructures necessary for all-round development of the nation. Moreover, it has taken steps to enhance the development of the agriculture sector, the main pillar of the national economy, and given a constant attention to fulfilling the requirements for the development of private industries by establishing industrial zones.

The State Senior General Than Shwe and State-level officials, during their inspection tour of the Mandalay Industrial Zone, gave guidance on the introduction of automation and computerized machines to raise the quality of products and the extension of import-substitute industries.

Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, who is also the chairman of the Industrial Development Committee, visited the Mandalay Industrial Zone on the morning of 20 March.

In his meeting with responsible personnel and industrialists there, the Secretary-1 said that development of industries called for correct and systematic practice of the market economic system, initiatives, diligence, honesty, integrity, understanding and cooperation among the industrialists.

If the industrialists put their own interests in the fore, long-term development would be impossible. Noble spirit and high qualifications are required for raising the momentum of development.

The government is making every endeavour to accelerate the impetus of industrial development starting from the year 2004-2005. Coordination meetings between the government and the industrialists have been held to introduce modern machines, to turn out skilled workers and to make raw materials available. Moreover, top priority is being given to electrical power plans to be able to supply electricity to industries as well as to the public.

Only the parallel development of agriculture and industry would pave the way for the emergence of a modern and developed nation. Therefore, we would like to call upon all those in the agriculture and industrial sectors to work in concert for the development of these two sectors under the leadership of the government.

People’s Desire

- Oppose those seeking on external elements, acting as strawman, 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.

Myanmar citizens in Malaysia donate medicines to Sangha Hospital

YANGON, 1 April — The State Peace and Development Council has appointed Deputy Director-General of the Foreign Economic Relations Department under the Ministry of National Planning & Economic Development Daw Myo Ne as Director-General of the same department on probation from the date she assumes charges of her duties. — MNA

Chinese journalist delegation arrives

YANGON, 1 April — A 6-member Chinese journalist delegation led by Editor Mr Liu Zhanmian of the Farmer’s Daily of the People’s Republic of China arrived here by air this morning to visit Myanmar for one week to enhance mutual understanding and friendship and strengthen bilateral cooperation and exchange between China and Myanmar journalism fields.

They were welcomed at the airport by Director (News) U Hla Tun and officials of News and Periodicals Enterprise and officials of the Chinese Embassy. — MNA

Myanmar Ambassador to Malaysia U Hla Maung accepts medicines and medical equipment for Jivitdana Sangha Hospitals in Myanmar donated by Dr U Kan Myint and Dr Dan Khin Myat Thun in Malaysia. — MNA

Vietnamese broadcasting delegation visits Myanmar Gems Emporium, Hlinetha Industrial City

YANGON, 1 April — The Vietnamese broadcasting delegation led by Deputy Director Mr Nguyen Van Khoa, accompanied by officials of Myanmar Radio and Television, this morning visited Myanmar Gems Emporium on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road.

The Vietnamese delegation went to Hlinetha Industrial Zone where an official explained facts about the zone. The guests also visited Tokyo Pipe Factory and Ever November Garment Factory.

On 30 March, the guests paid homage to Maha Muni Image and Htauangnygy Pagoda on Mandalay Hill in Mandalay. They also visited Myanmar analytics Shanawndaw in Namyin. Yesterday, the guests visited pagodas in Bagan-NyaungU and viewed round Myanmar handicraft workshops there. — MNA

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Myanmar Gazette

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Myanmar citizens in Malaysia donate medicines to Sangha Hospital

YANGON, 1 April — Myanmar Ambassador to Malaysia U Hla Maung, Myanmar embassy staff and wellwishers donated medicines and medical equipment for Jivitdana Sangha Hospitals in Myanmar at the office of the ambassador in Kuala Lumpur on 25 March morning. Present on the occasion were Myanmar social association in Malaysia, Myanmar entrepreneurs and Myanmar surgeons. The wellwishers presented medicines and medical equipment to the ambassador who spoke words of thanks. — MNA
No regrets about keeping Canada out of US-led war on Iraq, former PM says

LONDON, 1 April — Former prime minister Jean Chrétien says he has no regrets about his decision to keep Canada’s military out of the Iraq war because it was important to maintain the United Nations’ influence on world affairs.

“If there had been a resolution at the UN, we would have been part of it,” he said Tuesday before he was scheduled to speak to the Commonwealth Foundation on the importance of multilateralism.

Chrétien said his decision not to join the US-led invasion of Iraq has been bolstered by the reaction of Canadians.

“The Canadian people are very pleased with the decision and feel very good about it and it was a good occasion, too, to prove our independence,” he told journalists at a breakfast meeting.

“A lot of people tend to look at us as a neighbour (of the United States) that is, you know, almost the 51st state for some people. We are not and we don’t want to be and it was a good occasion to establish that very clearly.”

In Toronto, Prime Minister Paul Martin said he’s proud of what the Liberal government has done in the last 10 years - much of it under Chrétien.

Martin mentioned the decision regarding the conflict in Iraq as an example. “If we as a government had gone into Iraq, we would have a situation as united as we are today as we look to our role outside of this country.”

In the aftermath of the war, US troops have become targets of attacks in Iraq as well.

Russia expels three Lithuanians in tit-for-tat

Moscow, 1 April — Russia on Tuesday expelled three Lithuanian diplomats out of the country, one month after the Baltic state expelled three Russians it said were spying.

A Foreign Ministry statement said the Lithuanian chargé d’affaires had been summoned and told the three diplomats had conducted “activities incompatible with their status,” a usual euphemism for spying.

The three were given two days to leave Russia.

It was Russia’s second expulsion order in a week directed at Baltic diplomats. Russian authorities last week threw out two Estonian diplomats in a similar tit-for-tat action.

Lithuania expelled three Russian diplomats in February after accusing them of spying and trying to gain access to NATO military alliance and European Union secrets. — MNA/Reuters

NATO air patrolling over Baltic states unnecessary

Moscow, 1 April — The Russian Foreign Ministry said Tuesday that the patrolling by NATO planes of the air space of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is totally unnecessary.

“From a security point of view, the region has been virtually demilitarized,” Alexander Yakovenko, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said at a briefing the day after seven countries — including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — formally joined NATO and four F-16 fighter jets began patrolling over the three Baltic states.

NATO has agreed to include the Baltic states, said to possess very limited air forces of their own, under its air defense shield.

In response to NATO’s expansion, Russia has warned that it will take steps to defend itself if NATO’s eastern push is perceived as a threat.

Yakovenko said the deployment of NATO warplanes, even if justifiable under NATO instructions, is an outdated approach used two or three decades ago.

He did not rule out the possibility that Russia would evaluate NATO’s move from a military point of view if it develops further.

But Russia will seek constructive dialogue and settle the issue in accordance with international law, said the spokesman.

The three Baltic countries, which also joined the European Union on May 1, should abide by the principles of multilateralism, he said.

Controller to run home appliances with handssets developed in Japan

Tokyo, 1 April — NTT DoCoMo Inc of Japan said Tuesday it has developed a controller that enables home appliances to be operated with its third generation (3G) FOMA videophone handsets from virtually anywhere.

“The controller enables operations such as programming the recording of a TV programme and then viewing the playback on the phone, turning air conditioners and lights on and off, and viewing live video from the controller’s built-in camera, including automatically if the unit’s built-in motion sensor detects movement,” the company said in a Press release.

Using the controller, which is equipped for both infrared and cable connection to appliances, video can also be transmitted from a FOMA phone for live viewing on a screen connected to the controller, NTT DoCoMo said.

MNA/Xinhua

Nigeria, S Africa partner for tourism development

ABUA, 1 April — Nigeria and South Africa plan to collaborate on tourism development as a way of attracting foreign tourists to Nigeria, a senior Nigerian official said here recently.

“We are making efforts to partner with South Africa, which is one of the leading tourism destinations in Africa, in order to promote our tourism potential,” Omotayo Omotosho, director-general of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) said.

Omotosho told reporters at a news brief that the NTDC officials would soon travel to South Africa to undersudy that country’s tourism industry.

She said that the trip to South Africa would afford the NTDC the opportunity to dialogue with tourism operators, market Nigeria’s cultural and tourism potential and also attend the National Tourism Exhi-bition in Durban, a seaport city in the eastern part of South Africa.

MNA/Xinhua

Yemeni PM says his China tour “fruitful”

BEIJING, 1 April — Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Qader Bajammal said here Tuesday at a Press conference that China is a true friend of Yemen and that his visit here has been fruitful.

Bajammal arrived here Sunday on a four-day official visit to China.

The economic and trade relations between the two countries progressed significantly, with the bilateral trade volume reaching 1.9 billion US dollars in 2003, and the on- agenda cooperation projects worth 500 million US dollars, Bajammal said.

According to him, cooperation between Yemen and China improved greatly in fields of crude oil, natural gas, energy, industry, communication and other areas, and the two sides have signed 20 National Government agreements worth 300 million yuan (36 million US dollars).

Relations between Yemen and China are the most pure and practical in the current world. China is not only Yemen’s partner in economic development, but was also a friend during Yemen’s struggle for independence and unification, Bajammal said.

“The bilateral ties are deepening and broadening with every passing day,” he said.

This is Bajammal’s fourth visit to China, and he said he was deeply impressed by China’s “earth-shaking changes” every time he is here.

“China has scored great development during a short period of time,” he said.

“Which reflects that the Chinese leaders are vigorous and the Chinese people are able to keep pace with the rushing tides of modern world.” — MNA/Xinhua

Yemeni PMident for Africa urged to help continent in 2 talks

NAIROBI, 1 April — United Nations’ Special Envoy to the African Union MFAA spoke on Tuesday at a business conference in Nairobi on the continent’s economic development.

MFAA said that Africa had a great opportunity to work hard in improving its views to ensure that their countries’ real interests are reflected in the World Trade Organization (WTO)’s Doha Development Round.

“Umbrella stakeholders in the success of the Doha Round,” Kenyan Minister for Trade and Industry Muhisha Kitiyi told business representatives from 12 eastern and southern African countries attending a two-day gathering.

He said African countries engaged in multilateral trade talks had often failed to ensure that their negotiating positions had real “business content.”

MNA/Xinhua

Jobless protesters chant during a demonstration in front of the governor’s office in the Iraqi Holy city of Najaf on 30 March, 2004. — Internet

Five US soldiers killed in roadside bomb blast in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 1 April — Five US soldiers in Iraq were killed when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Al-Anbar province, west of Baghdad, a coalition spokesman said.

The five were killed when their convoy hit an improvised explosive device northwest of the US military base in Habbaniya, 90 kilometres (55 miles) west of Baghdad.

Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt told a press conference in Baghdad.

It is thought to be the worst single incident involving coalition troops since US military helicopter was downed on January 8 near the nearby flashpoint town of Fallujah, also in Al-Anbar, killing all nine aboard.

The latest deaths brought to 291 the number of US soldiers killed in action since US President George W Bush declared major hostilities over on May 1.
Iraq contracts give Halliburton headaches
WASHINGTON, 1 April—Halliburton Co has reaped as much as $6 billion in contracts from the US invasion of Iraq, but improprieties in those military contracts have also given Vice President Dick Cheney former company high-profile headaches.

Pentagon auditors have criticized Halliburton’s estimating, spending, and subcontracting, and they plan to begin withholding up to $300 million in payments next month. The Justice Department is investigating allegations of overcharges, bribes and kickbacks. Democrats have accused the company of war profiteering.

Even some Wall Street analysts are asking whether Halliburton would be better off jettisoning its Iraq contracts.

“The company’s defenders say Halliburton had to perform a lot of costly and dangerous work very quickly, with minimal government oversight at the beginning.” — Internet

China improves protection of biological resources in Bohai Sea
BEIJING, 1 April — The Ministry of Agriculture has released a regulation on the protection of biological resources in the Bohai Sea, the sole continental sea in China, to ensure sustainable development of the fishery industry, and to safeguard the charge of the fishery industry under the ministry, at a seminar held here Tuesday.

China issued a similar regulation in 1991. Li said that with the rapid economic development and deteriorating pollution of the sea in recent years, the old regulation has failed to suit the current situation and needed to be revised.

The new regulation covered a wide range of fields, such as fishing, cultivation, building artificial reefs and adoption of fishing bans, said Li. In the new regulation, 30 kinds of marine species were put under state protection, up from the former 23. In addition, the regulation adopted more rigid restrictions on net use. Trawl nets and other nets fatal to fishery resources are not allowed to be used in the Bohai Sea.

The country will adopt a unified fishing ban in the Bohai Sea and its adjacent Yellow Sea from June 16 to September 1. In the past, the two seas had different fishing ban time limits, which made management more difficult.

40 remain missing in Indonesian landslide
JAKARTA, 1 April — Around 40 people were reported missing in the Friday landslide in the Indonesian province of South Sulawesi and the rescue team remained unable to evacuate victims, a report said Monday.

Thousands of villagers left the Lengkese Village for a safer place as officials said the emergency where at least 15 people were killed.

The last devastating landslides in the country occurred at the end of January this year in Purworejo regency, Central Java re-gency where at least 15 people were killed.

Web links:— Internet

Garbage threatening beauty of paradise islands
.ascocaro (South Korea), 1 April — Garbage and untreated sewage threaten the beauty of small island nations that rely on tourism, environmental officials said Tuesday.

Rising sea levels, over-fishing and water shortages already trouble the Maldives, Bar-bados, Tuvalu and 42 other member states of the association of small island states.

“It has tremendous health and tremendous economic impact,” said the head of United Nations Environment Programme’s Global Programme of Action on the marine environment, Veerle Vandeweerd.

She told a news briefing that the small island nations face growing problems with solid and liquid waste as well as “waste from construction done to build tourist re-sorts as close as possible to the sea.”

Plastic waste and beer cans cover shores and beaches, she said.

“Many of these islands have no sewage system, while others lack any form of treatment.” — Internet

Italy to launch “Marco-Polo” project to boost trade with China
SHANGHAI, 1 April — Adolfo Urso, Italy’s productive activities Vice-Minister, announced a one-year project, named “Marco-Polo,” Tuesday in Shanghai to boost trade between the two nations.

Beginning Thursday, the project will stage more than 200 activities, including fashion shows, a film week, gourmet food exhibition, and the regatta of Venetian gondolas.

“Marco-Polo” is expected to attract more Chinese tourists after May 1, when China and the European Union will launch new tourism cooperation.

In April, approximately 250 Italian tourism agencies and more than 500 Chinese counterparts will meet in Shanghai for cooperation discussion.

More than 100 Chinese companies have determined to attend a Sino-Italian investment seminar scheduled to be held in Rome in May.

“China is a world factory and she will also buy more,” Urso said.

“Italy is ready to take China and her big market as a chance rather than a challenge,” he said. Italian Ambassador to China Gabriele Menegatti told Xinhua that Marco-Polo is only the beginning of a series of activities to enhance cooperation between the two countries.

Italy is considering offering more direct flights linking the two countries, and increasing cooperation between the ports of the two countries, the ambassador said.

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40 remain missing in Indonesian landslide
JAKARTA, 1 April — Around 40 people were reported missing in the Friday landslide in the Indonesian province of South Sulawesi and the rescue team remained unable to evacuate victims, a report said Monday.

Thousands of villagers left the Lengkese Village for a safer place as officials said the village remains very prone to further landslides, reported Detikcom online news service.

Meanwhile, relatives of the missing people expressed submission and perform an Islamic prayer presuming that all the missing were dead.

The rescue team so far has evacuated only two dead bodies from the scene, which

Iraqis cheer as a vehicle burns after an attack in the restive town of Falluja on 31 March, 2004.— Internet

Angola discovers deep-water oil wells off northern coast
LUANDA, 1 April— Angola’s National Society of Combustible of Angola (SONANGOL) and British Petroleum have announced the discovery of two new deep-water oil wells in Block 18, located some 185 kilometres off Angola’s northern coast.

The new wells, drilled at a depth of 1,600 metres, bring to eight the number of wells in that Atlantic block, the companies said Monday in Luanda. They said, one well, dubbed Chumbo, had produced 1,080 barrels daily in Block 18, located some 185 kilometres off Angola’s northern coast.

The new wells, drilled at a depth of 1,600 metres, bring to eight the number of wells in that Atlantic block, the companies said Monday in Luanda. They said, one well, dubbed Chumbo, had produced 1,080 barrels daily in tests, without providing figures for the second well.

As sub-Saharan Africa’s second largest oil producer after Nigeria, Angola currently produces around 900,000 barrels of crude daily.

MNA/Xinhua

One dead, seven hurt in Iraq car bombing
BAGHDAD, 31 March— A suicide bomber blew up explosives in his car outside the house of a police chief south of Baghdad on Tuesday, killing himself and wounding seven others, officials said. The attack after the head of a UN team said better security is vital if Iraq wants to hold elections by a January 31 deadline.

In Ramadi, west of Baghdad, a U.S. Humvee was hit with a rocket-propelled grenade Tuesday, setting it on fire, witnesses said. Four soldiers who were in the vehicle were seen being rushed away in another Humvee. A U.S. spokesman in Baghdad could not confirm the attack.

In the southern city of Najaf, Iraqis protesting delays in food exhibitions and claiming to be the victim of a political smear campaign faced an attack.

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CONTINUING IRAQI GUERILLA ATTACKS INFlict RISING US CASUALTY

Five US soldiers in Iraq were killed when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Al-Anbar Province, west of Baghdad, a coalition spokesman said.

A British soldier peers from the top of a light armoured vehicle while on patrol along the streets of Basra, southern Iraq. A soldier from the US-led coalition forces was killed by a roadside bomb on 31 March. — INTERNET

Iraqis celebrate as a vehicle burns after an attack in the restive town of Falluja on 31 March, 2004, in which five US soldiers were killed. — INTERNET

Fijian security guards are seen in the streets of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Tuesday, 30 March, 2004. Estimates for the number of private soldiers and mercenaries in Iraq is over 10,000, as soldiers leave their country’s military for the high pay security firms offer. — INTERNET


A group of some 70 Spanish soldiers celebrate as they arrive in Valladolid, Spain, on Tuesday, 30 March, 2004, after serving four months in Iraq.

A British soldier peers from the top of a light armoured vehicle while on patrol along the streets of Basra, southern Iraq. A soldier from the US-led coalition forces was killed by a roadside bomb on 31 March. — INTERNET

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Soldier killed in western Iraq, jobless clash with Spanish troops

BAGHDAD, 1 April — A coalition soldier was killed by a roadside bomb in western Iraq as at least four people were hurt in clashes between jobless demonstrators and Spanish troops and police in the Shi’ite Muslim holy city of Najaf.

A coalition official said a second soldier was also wounded in the bombing near the western town of Ramadi.

He declined to specify the soldiers’ nationalities, although the region is patrolled by US troops.

The attack came a day after a coalition soldier was killed and another wounded when their vehicle ran off the road during an insurgent attack on their convoy in the same area.

In the flashpoint northern city of Mosul, scene of almost daily attacks against coalition forces, three unidentified security guards were wounded when their convoy came under rebel attack, coalition officials said.

Meanwhile in Najaf, hundreds of jobless protesters clashed with Spanish soldiers and Iraqi police.

Two policemen, a Spanish soldier and two demonstrators were hurt when the protesters attacked the governor’s office and police cars with rocks, Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Hassan Naser told AFP.

However, a defence ministry spokesman in Madrid denied any Spanish soldier had been wounded.

Police arrested 30 demonstrators who were armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles, said Najaf police chief General Ibrahim Mohammed.

A total of 1,300 Spanish troops are deployed in central Iraq, but incoming Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero has pledged to pull them out by June 30, unless a UN-mandated force is in place by then.

Najaf and several southern towns have already witnessed demonstrations by the unemployed, amid an estimated jobless rate of 50 percent nationwide.

A provincial police chief said he had not received any report of Spanish soldiers being injured.

In nearby Hilla, the provincial police chief survived a suicide bombing at his home but two people were wounded, a police official said. — Internet

US astronaut plays down Russian money troubles

STAR CITY (Russia), 1 April — US astronaut Michael Fincke dismissed Russia’s financial worries on Wednesday and said it was Moscow’s turn to pay for International Space Station missions after NASA had shelved out for many years.

Russia, which will launch the crew on its next mission in April, said on Tuesday it wanted to extend future expeditions to a year from six months to save money.

“IT has struggled with the financial burden of being the sole lifeline to the ISS for more than a year since the United States withdrew its shuttles,” Fincke said.

“The United States grounded its shuttles in February 2003 after the Columbia shuttle disintegrated on reentry, killing the seven astronauts on board.

Russia needs NASA’s approval to proceed with plans to extend the length of missions to one year, but the United States has said nothing about the proposal. Fincke was frosty towards the plan.

“We’re still trying to understand the details — I just know there’s a big difference in flying for six months and flying for a year,” he said. “A year is a long time on the human organism and also a long time away from one’s family.”

— MNA/Reuters

Tanzanian PM urges new irrigation methods

DAKAR-SALAM, 1 April — Tanzanian Prime Minister Frederick Sumaye has urged experts to find new irrigation technologies by using human efforts instead of electricity in order to enrich local farmers.

Speaking at a workshop on agricultural technology on water irrigation scheme, the Prime Minister stressed on Tuesday that the country needs a revolution to get rid of agriculture relying on rainy season.

He said drought and hunger in the country is a result of neglecting in using simple water irrigation system methods on agriculture.

He said the land of Tanzania is suitable for agriculture all year round, and if a large number of Tanzanians living in villages are made to use simple technology of irrigation, poverty would be reduced, and life would be much better.

He said that at present farmers need simple technology to increase employment, benefit, production and investment.

Tanzania in the last two years had faced water shortage due to the lack of rainfall in the rainy season from January to March.

The government said the country needs about 700,000 tons of food assistance to help the poor in 2004.

— MNA/Xinhua

Experts warn against rising obesity in Chinese children

BEIJING, 1 April — Experts have called for increased awareness of and concern about the rising numbers of obese children in China, and highlighted balanced diet, rational nutrition and physical exercises to help control the weight of kids.

Official statistics show that 10 per cent of the children in China suffer from obesity and the number is increasing by 8 per cent per year.

Some 40 per cent of children in primary schools in China are obese, and some 13.2 per cent of them are overweight, with the proportions for girls standing at 9 per cent and 11 per cent, respectively.

Some 13.2 per cent of children in northeast China are obese, the largest proportion in the country, followed by 12.2 per cent in east China and 10 per cent in central and south China.

In big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, there is an average of one obese child in every five.

Taking less outdoor exercise and indulging in watching TV and playing games at home are the main reasons behind the child obesity, said experts.

— MNA/Xinhua

2003 WHO Commemorative Tobacco or Health Award granted

BEIJING, 1 April — The World Health Organization (WHO) Wednesday granted its 2003 WHO Commemorative Tobacco or Health Award to China’s State Administration for Industry and Commerce.

The award also went to two local anti-smoking activists, Hu Jinhua, director of Shanghai Association for Tobacco and Health, and Wang Juntang, head of the Patriotic Health Campaign Committee of Poyang City in central China’s Henan Province.

The recipients have done remarkable jobs in promoting non-smoking advertisements and the anti-smoking campaign,” said Shigeru Omi, WHO’s regional director for the Western Pacific at the prize awarding ceremony.

Tobacco has become a global threat to public health and the number of people who smoke has been increasing continuously in the developing nations, Shigeru Omi said.

Shigeru Omi said China is the world’s largest tobacco producer and consumer. “Nearly 350 million Chinese are tobacco smokers and about one million people die of tobacco-related diseases each year in China.”

In May, 2003, to curb tobacco-related deaths and diseases, the 192 members of the WHO unanimously approved the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and the Chinese Government signed it in November.

— MNA/Xinhua

Egyptian Parliament adopts investment law

CAIRO, 1 April — Egyptian Parliament, the People’s Assembly, approved an investment law on Tuesday for attracting international companies, the official MENA news agency reported.

The law was adopted on the basis of a report by a joint parliamentary committee on the draft Law on investment guarantees and incentives, enacted by virtue of Law No 8 of the Year 1997.

The draft law provides tax reductions and exemptions for up to 20 years for investors in priority sectors such as infrastructure, oil field services, tourism, manufacturing and all export-oriented activities.

The approved law allows the government to give “renewed international companies additional incentives for them to base essential production and export-oriented operations in Egypt.” — MNA/Xinhua

Car bomb wounds 12 in Baquba

BAQUBA (Iraq), 1 April — A car bomb exploded in the town of Baquba, north of Baghdad, on Wednesday, wounding 12 people, police said.

They said five of the wounded were bodyguards of the local governor. The seven others were civilians. It was not immediately clear whether it was a suicide attack or a bomb planted in a parked car.

A Reuters cameraman on the scene said several cars were damaged in the blast, on a main road in Baquba, 40 miles north of the Iraqi capital. Guerrillas fighting the US-led occupation of Iraq have increasingly attacked “soft targets”, hitting civilians, Iraqi police and local politicians who are easier to target than US soldiers. — MNA/Reuters
Thingyan — the merriest festival all can enjoy

Min Kyaw Min

Thingyan, the first festival on the Myanmar calendar, comes but once a year and when it does it brings great cheer. The very name of the festival is joyous and as joyful as the Thingyan Water Festival which rings out the end of the old year and rings in the New Year. April, the fourth month on the Gregorian calendar straddles the Myanmar months of Tabaung, the last month and Tagu, the first month of the New Year. When the two months come side by side, the weather is usually dull. It is not always so, however, as the rains that fall in most parts of Myanmar, especially the plains of mid-country and the Ayeyawady and Tanintharyi regions. It brings much relief to people of all walks of life, even those of differing cultures and religions, who mingle to celebrate the occasion, soaked wet and drenched to the skin.

Everyone including Government employees gets a bonus, not in money, but extra holidays in a row. For instance, take the months Tagu and Thingyan which straddle the years 1365 and 1366 Myanmar, or 2004 and 2005 April. The Water Festival starts with the Akyo Nay or Day to Usher In, which is the 12th of April which is preceded by Saturday the 10th and Sunday the 11th. Youngsters and even grown-ups start throwing water on each other on Akyo In, which is the 12th of April which is preceded by Saturday the 10th and Sunday the 11th. Youngsters and even grown-ups start throwing water on each other on Akyo In, which is the 12th of April which is preceded by Saturday the 10th and Sunday the 11th.

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Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyang pay homage to Maha Atula Sakkyaramsi Hsedatgyi Pagoda in Hinthada — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe formally unveils the plaque of Hinthada District Sasana Beikmandawgyi — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe and party being welcomed by departmental officials and local people — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyang present donations for Maha Atula Sakkyaramsi Hsedatgyi Pagoda in Hinthada to an official — MNA

WHO official visits hospitals, MRD (Lower Myanmar)
YANGON, 1 April — WHO South-East Asian Regional Director Dr Samlee Plianbangchang, accompanied by officials of the Ministry of Health and WHO Resident Representative Dr Agostino Borra and officials, visited Shwedagon pagoda this morning.

The director signed in the visitors’ book and donated cash towards the funds of the pagoda.

At Yangon Institute of Medicine-1, Rector Dr Myo Myint, Deputy Director-General Dr Maung Maung Win and officials welcomed them and the rector explained history and academic matters of the institute.

On arrival at new Yangon General Hospital, Medical Superintendent Dr Aung Htut explained organizational set-up and health care service of the hospital.

At Medical Research Department (Lower Myanmar), Deputy Director-General Dr Soe Thein explained functions of its divisions. The WHO director and party viewed conducting of research works and divisions of the department.

MNA

Senior General Than Shwe...
Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing attend opening ceremony of Hinthada District Sasana Beikmandawgyi

Work Committee for All-round Upgrading of Environs of Kandawgyi Garden and Zoo (Yangon) meets

Yangon, 1 April— The Work Committee for All-round Upgrading of Environs of Kandawgyi Garden and Zoological Gardens (Yangon) held the meeting at the hall of construction of Water Plaza in Central Forest Zone at Kandawgyi Garden at 2 pm today, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe. Also present were Vice-Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa, departmental heads, military region commanders, officials and guests.

First, the commander gave a speech on the occasion. Next, Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa reported on progress in construction of the relaxation zone. Officials reported on completion of construction tasks. The commander attended to their needs.

Next, the commander and party inspected construction of fresh water fish garden, preparations for landscape, flower garden shops, growing of flowery plants and vegetables, barbecue garden, Myanmar handicraft shops.

On arrival at Paganlon Island, the commander and party saw over the bridges linking Paganlon Island and Khemadipa Island and upgrading of Khemadipa Island and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

Donate blood

General Thura Shwe Mann presents fruit basket to China Metallurgical Construction (Group) Corporation (MCC) Vice Chairman Mr Shuchen Li. — MNA
Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein attends ceremony to celebrate centenary of Ahlon Shipyard

YANGON, 1 April — The Inland Water Transport under the Ministry of Transport held a ceremony to celebrate the centenary of Ahlon Shipyard in the compound of the shipyard. Member of the State Peace and Development Council Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein attended the ceremony and planted Gantong tree to mark the occasion this morning.

Also present were Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, deputy ministers, senior military officers, responsible personnel of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads, officials concerned and staff of the Ministry of Transport and guests.

The first programme of the ceremony took place in front of the archway in the compound of the shipyard. Next Deputy Ministers for Transport U Pe Than and Col Nyan Tun Aung formally opened the archway of the centenary of Ahlon Shipyard.

The second programme of the ceremony then ensued. Managing Director of the Inland Water Transport U Soe Tint explained the purpose of the centenary for the shipyard and presented reports. In his reports, he said IWT provides water transport services for a total of 67,000 passengers and 12,000 tons of cargoes with the use of 530 watercraft on a daily basis, traveling a total of 9,219 miles in Ayeyawady river, Chinwin river, Kissapandani river in Rakhine State, Laymyo river, Mayu river, and Thanlwin river, Gyaing river and Attyan river in Kayin State. Safe and convenient services are provided for about 25 million passengers, nearly half of the entire population of Myanmar, and some 4.2 million tons of cargoes annually.

He continued that the shipyard has the capacity to dock 15 vessels at a time, Ahlon Shipyard is the second largest shipyard owned by IWT. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe said Ahlon Shipyard is one of six shipyards owned by the Inland Water Transport. Ahlon Shipyard was set up by Ayeyawady Flotilla Co Ltd in 1904, and it was first called Yangon Foundry. Later, it started the docking of 100-ton watercraft, with the construction of four docks. From that time on, Ahlon Shipyard started life. It was on 1 June 1948 that the shipyard was nationalized and its name changed from Yangon Foundry to Ahlon Shipyard.

The minister continued that the shipyard has now entered 100, with its long history of constructing new watercraft, maintaining old ones, and providing engineering assistance. From 1962 till now, it has built 40 new watercraft. Annually, an average of 58 watercraft undergo major repairs while that of 182 undergo minor repairs. Later, the minister expressed his high regards for retired employees and present employees working in the shipyard.

He also said that significant success has been achieved in transport sector as the Government places emphasis on the speedy, safe and smooth transport infrastructure by constructing roads and bridges. Everywhere in the delta region can now be reached by car easily as there have appeared new bridges all over the region. As long as the water transport that can carry heavily-loaded cargoes at affordable prices remain vital, the shipyards need to accelerate their momentum in their tasks of repairing watercraft. He went on that Inland Water Transport is one of the biggest state-run water transport services. It provides services for the passengers and cargoes with use of 331 motorized vessels, 158 non-motorized vessels and 40 others totaling 529. Therefore, the shipyards hold responsible for the safety and fitness of these vessels.

In conclusion, he urged all the staff of the shipyards to work hard for that purpose and to serve the interest of the country and the people while maintaining the fine tradition of the shipyard.

Next, IWT Managing Director U Soe Tint presented a gift to Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein in commemoration of the centenary of Ahlon Shipyard.

After the ceremony, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party viewed round the Ahlon Shipyard Centenary Exhibition.

Later, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, accompanied by Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Tun Aung Lin and officials, went to Dalla Shipyard of IWT. On arrival at the shipyard at 6 pm, the Secretary-2 and party were welcomed by Deputy Minister for Transport Col Nyan Tun Aung and officials. The Secretary-2 and party inspected the production of machine parts, the repair of a 500-ton cargo vessel and construction of watercraft at the shipyard. After giving instructions, the Secretary-2 left the shipyard.

Situated in Dalla on the other bank of Yangon, Dalla Shipyard is the largest shipyard. It has a drydock and 14 docks with a capacity to dock a 1400-ton vessel. It can also dock 18 watercraft simultaneously.

Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspects liquid supply project in Dalla

YANGON, 1 April — Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe said Ahlon Shipyard is one of six shipyards owned by the Inland Water Transport. Ahlon Shipyard was set up by Ayeyawady Flotilla Co Ltd in 1904, and it was first called Yangon Foundry. Later, it started the docking of 100-ton watercraft, with the construction of four docks. From that time on, Ahlon Shipyard started life. It was on 1 June 1948 that the shipyard was nationalized and its name changed from Yangon Foundry to Ahlon Shipyard.

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Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspects Dalla Dockyard of Inland Water Transport in Dalla.

The commander gave a supplementary report.

In response to the reports, the Secretary-2 fulfilled the requirements, giving instructions on continued efforts to be made for ensuring supply of water to all the wards, assistance to be rendered by related departments and fire prevention measures.

The Secretary-2 and party viewed the five tube-wells in Yangonpauk village. Officials reported on facts about the facilities.

Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspected water tanks, water pumping stations and tube-wells and left instructions on ensuring systematization in carrying out water supply tasks.

Beijing’s estate market still has great potential

Beijing, 1 April — The rapidly growing economy in the next five to 10 years will bring about further growth in Beijing’s real estate market, said Song Yu, director of the municipal development and reform commission’s investment section.

Per capita GDP amounted to 3,800 US dollars in Beijing, which would undoubtedly grow in future years, Song said, and there still remained a relatively large requirement for housing in Beijing, so citizens would spend more on real estate, pushing the market’s development.

According to the commission, an average of 200,000 apartments will be sold each year before 2010, and the majority prefer a floor space measuring 80 to 100 square metres at a price of 2,000 to 5,000 yuan (about 242 to 605 US dollars) per square metre.

Song said the municipal government would standardize Beijing’s estate market, cracking down any form of fraud. The government also encouraged citizens to buy new apartments and sell their old ones, because the price of secondhand housing would possibly decline along with the large scale reconstruction in Beijing for the 2008 Olympics, he said.
New radar to further improve HK’s air safety

HONG KONG, 1 April — The surveillance capability of Hong Kong’s air traffic control system will be enhanced and airspace capacity maximized to ensure flight safety, thanks to a new Route Surveillance Radar at Mount Parker, which has just gone into service.

Incorporating the latest technology and design, the new radar is superior in stability, reliability, signal processing, accuracy and target detection capability during inclement weather.

Hong Kong’s Director-General of Civil Aviation Albert Lam said on Tuesday that the replacement project comprised demolition of the old radar in September, and installation and commissioning of the new radar in four months.

During the radar replacement process, the station was also renovated installing a standby generator, fuel tank, and power-supply and fire-fighting systems to ensure the refurnished facilities can support the radar’s operation for another 20 to 25 years.

With the new radar antenna encased within a radome, the system can work continuously in all weather conditions, even typhoons. The antenna is 9.7 metres high and 13.7 metres wide, and the radome has a diameter of 15 metres.

Before acceptance of the new radar, a flight inspection team of the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China conducted the commissioning flight checks to certify the system works properly.

The radar, which replaces the one installed in 1978 for the former airport at Kai Tak, is for more than 25 years, the old system served as a primary surveillance radar with coverage of 200 nautical miles for en-route air traffic surveillance.

— MNA/Xinhua

Nursery Market Festival continues

YANGON, 1 April — The Nursery Market Festival continued at Myay Padetha Park in Bahan Township here today with the aim of providing necessary assistance to growers and attracting the public to be interested in agriculture, horticulture, livestock breeding and vegetable farming.

Kitchen crops, fruits and saplings of herbal plants are being shown at the festival. Poultry farming and fish breeding are also exhibited there.

Booklets and pamphlets on utilization of natural and chemical fertilizers, modern scientific cultivation methods, pest control, application of insecticides, etc are available at the Nursery Market Festival.

Educative books on landscaping, floral arrangements, nurturing of shady trees and flowering plants can also be bought there.

— MNA

Egypt presses case for early Arab summit

SHARM EL-SHEIKH (Egypt), 1 April — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met with three Arab leaders on Wednesday to push for convening an Arab summit instead of a meeting that Tunisia unilaterally postponed last week.

Mubarak received the kings of Jordan and Bahrain and Saudi Arabia’s de facto ruler Crown Prince Abdullah in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

An Egyptian Minister said Egypt wanted to make sure that preparations were in place to hold the new summit as soon as possible.

Tunisian President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali called off the Tunis summit at short notice on Saturday night, about 36 hours before Arab leaders were due to start meeting.

Tunisia said Arab Foreign Ministers had failed to make an adequate commitment to democratic reforms. Delegates from other countries disputed the Tunisian explanation.

Egypt has offered to host another summit to dispel the impression that Arab governments were divided over the main agenda subjects — Iraq, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and a common response to the US campaign for political, social and economic reforms in the Arab world.

Arab officials have said the summit could take place later in the second half of April or in May. Egyptian Information Minister Safwat el-Sherif told reporters in Sharm el-Sheikh that the date depended on the outcome of consultations between Arab leaders.

"There is an eagerness to take part in this summit," he added.

Mubarak first saw Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, then King Abdullah of Jordan.

— MNA/Reuters

Spring Art Show 3-7 April

YANGON, 1 April — The Spring Art Show will be held at the National Museum here from 3 to 7 April. Over 200 works of artists Sayagi U Ngwe Gaing, ASEAN Award winner Sculptor U Htun Tin, Sayagi U Ba Tun, U Thein Nyunt, U Khin Hlaing, U Shwe Way Their, U Ba Tin, U Lu Din, U Tu Nyunt, U Soe Win, U Aung Myint, U Aung Htwe and others will be displayed at the show. Admission is free.

— MNA

East China city to hold tea culture festival

NANCHANG, 1 April — The city of Jingdezhen, in China’s Jiangxi Province, will hold a tea culture festival this April to popularize Chinese tea culture.

Co-sponsored by the local government and the provincial bureau of tourism, the festival will open on April 20 and run till the end of May.

Fu Guilong, official with the municipal government of Jingdezhen, said experts in tea culture would be invited to lecture and discuss the history and development of tea culture and to display in the past, present and in future.

Precious tea sets together with many sorts of well-known tea will be displayed and auctioned during the festival.

A world famous porcelain producer, Jingdezhen was also known for its flourishing tea culture in ancient China.

— MNA/Xinhua

Filling stations to be kept open during Thingyan

The Myanmar Petroleum Products Enterprise under the Ministry of Energy will keep its filling stations in Yangon Division open during the Thingyan holidays.

Nicolas Sarkozy named French Finance Minister

PARIS, 1 April — French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy took over the key position of Finance Minister in a new Cabinet announced Wednesday by Philippe Bas, secretary general of French Presidential Office.

He replaced Francis Mer and was replaced by Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin. Michel Barner, the European Union commissioner responsible for regional policy, took the post of Foreign Minister.

French President Jacques Chirac decided on Tuesday to keep unpopular Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin and reshuffle the government following the crushing defeat of the right in Sunday’s second-round election to regional councils, where the left coalition of Socialists and its Green and Communist allies gained 50.15 per cent of vote and took control of 24 of 26 regions.

Sarkozy, who had been budget minister in the early 1990s, is widely considered one of the few competent politicians to head the Finance Ministry.

Wellwishers invited for sinking tube-wells

YANGON, 1 April — The Development Affairs Committees under the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs are making concerted efforts in sinking tube-wells in order to get sufficient fresh water in rural areas in States and Divisions where water is scarce.

One 200 feet deep two-inch diameter tube-well costs K 250,000; one 400 feet deep two-inch diameter tube-well costs K 500,000; and one 200 feet deep four-inch diameter tube-well costs K 500,000.

Those wishing to donate cash for the tube-well sinking projects for rural areas may contact the Director-General (Tel: 01-245420 & 235888), the Deputy Director-General (Tel: 01-240118) or the Director (Engineering)(Tel: 01-291967), the Directors (Sagyaung Division Development Affairs Committee)(Tel: 071-21012), the Director (Magway Division Development Affairs Committee)(Tel: 063-21364) and the Director (Mandalay Development Affairs Committee)(Tel: 02-54657).

— MNA

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**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**Vietnam eyes insurance for farmers after bird flu**

Hanoi, 1 April — Vietnam plans to extend insurance cover to farmers who suffered losses of 82.9 million US dollars from a bird flu epidemic that killed 16 people, the Agriculture Ministry said.

After declaring the bird flu over in Vietnam, Minister Le Huy Ngoc told Reuters late on Tuesday the crisis had prompted his ministry to seek protection for farmers.

"After this major flu epidemic, (we feel) the need for farmers to be insured has become more pressing," Ngo said.

"We have proposed the Finance Ministry study the insurance to cover diseases, and natural disasters in the next step."

He gave no timeframe.

Ngo told reporters on Tuesday the bird flu epidemic that hit Vietnam between December and February 25 inflicted losses of 1.3 trillion dong (82.9 million US dollars), one trillion dong of which stemmed from the 43.2 million poultry culled or killed.

He said early this month it would take two to three months for restocking preparations and three more for the poultry flocks to be restored to the pre-flu level of 250 million.

While 80 per cent of Vietnam’s 81 million people live in rural areas, most insurance firms have little business there because of low incomes and scant awareness of risks.

Only one wholly owned foreign insurance firm sells policies to shrimp businesses in the southern Mekong Delta. About two dozen insurance firms, both local and foreign, operate in Vietnam.

Ngo said among the risks that needed to be covered were damage from diseases, pests and natural disasters.

"We will be coordinat- ing with them (the Finance Ministry) to clarify the differ- ence of the insurance policy for each area," he said.

"(The policy) will definitely be in place."

According to a government Press release, Commis- sioner of Customs and Ex- port, Timothy Tong led a delegation to attend the 10th World Customs Organiza- tion (WCO) Asia Pacific Heads of Customs Administr- ation Conference in Auck- land, New Zealand, between March 29 and April 2.

During the Conference, Commissioner Tong under- scored the importance of co- operation to combat cigarette smuggling which has won strong support in the Asia Pacific Region.

"Strongly endorsed," and "warmly received," according to the Press release, were the proposals to fight against cigarette smuggling, which aims to explore how best to ensure that member administrations should act in concert.

An anti-illicit contact point meeting should be held to map out enforcement measures to clamp down on transnational smuggling syndicates. The meetings will also explore how best to utilise and share confi- dential intelligence to iden- tify common targets for joint investigations, and to discuss ways and means to help pro- secute syndicate members hiding in other jurisdictions.

The proposal received warm response from other delegations. Australia, the Philippines, Malaysia, New Zealand, Chile, the United Arab Emirates, the Philippines and the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Vietnam all expressed their support.

The conference led to the signing of environmental culture and spread- ing environmental protection agreements in March last year to allow their flag carri- ers to service the Manila-Dubai route nine times a week.

A special arrangement allows the increase in fre- quency during periods of increased traffic.

Some 80,000 Filipinos work in Dubai.

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**E China village discovers 20-million-year-old fish fossil**

Jinan, 1 April — Villagers have discovered a batch of fossilized fish aged over 20 million years at Bozi Vil- lage in Shandong Province, east China, when digging a well at the field about five kilometres away from the seaside.

The fossilized fish, six to eight centimetres long and 1.5 centimetres wide, were mixed with carbonized all-gae and embedded in layers about 40 to 60 metres underground, said archaeolo- gists from the Pengcai City of the province.

The fossilized fish, brown or black, look fleshy and lifelike and it is easy to tell the fish's head, ribs, spine and tailfin.

Archaeologists judged that the fish fossils were formed in the Tertiary Pe- riod of the Cenozoic Era, dating back 18 to 23 million years.

The discovery of the fossil- ized fish had provided valuable materials for study- ing the changes of landforms, relief and climate in the Shandong Peninsula.

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**China to hold int’l seminar on sea water desalination tech**

Tianjin, 1 April — China will hold an international seminar on sea water desalination technologies, extending wide cooperation with foreign counterparts in this field.

Sponsored by Interna- tional Desalination Associa- tion, the seminar will be held on April 11, in north China’s Tianjin Municipality, accord- ing to the organizing com- mittee.

Over 20 experts from home and abroad are invited to give speeches on the semi- nar, while around 200 scholars, entrepreneurs and gov- ernment officials will discuss topics including the develop- ment trend of sea water desalination and its economic value and management.

Professor Wang Shi- chang, an expert from Tianjin University, said that sea water resources, which could be sustainably harnessed, were of great importance to China today.

There was still a long way to go to do the improvement and industrialization of Chi- na’s sea water desalination, Wang said. If a complete in- dustrial chain could be formed in China’s coastal cities, the cost of desalination would be reduced to a large extent, and this would be of significance to economic and social development of these cities.

Coastal cities had in- vested in related research and construction in recent years, said the expert, and had built over 10 sea water desalination stations.

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**HK’s counter-cigarette smuggling proposal wins support**

Hong Kong, 1 April — The Hong Kong Customs’ proposal to fight against cross-border cigarette smuggling has won strong support in the Asia Pacific Region.

According to a govern- ment Press release, Commis- sioner of Customs and Ex- port, Timothy Tong led a delegation to attend the 10th World Customs Organiza- tion (WCO) Asia Pacific Heads of Customs Administr- ation Conference in Auck- land, New Zealand, between March 29 and April 2.

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**Survey finds HK women lack health awareness**

Kowloon, 1 April — A research conducted by the University of Hong Kong reveals most Hong Kong women overlook the impor- tance of their health.

The university recently surveyed 503 perimeno-pausal and menopausal women in Hong Kong. At a Press conference held on Tuesday, the university said the results show most women seriously lack knowledge of Hong Kong’s three most common diseases, breast cancer, cervical cancer and osteoporosis, found in women.

The research also reveals that over half of the surveyed women have not performed regular health check and a survey shows that care of gynaecology is not necessary. From this, it is estimated that over half of the whole women population in Hong Kong have not performed health checks.

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**Emirates sends more weekly flights to Manila**

MANILA, 1 April — Emirates Airlines has added two weekly flights to Manila, bringing the number of services from Dubai to the Philippines to 10 a week as it continued to take advantage of the gradual recovery of the aviation industry.

The expansion indicated the importance of the Philip- pines to the top-flight airlines, the Philippine Daily Inquirer on-line news Wednesday quoted Richard Vaughan, the airlines’ senior vice-president for commercial operations, as saying.

"As Asia Pacific is an im- portant region for Emirates," Vaughan said. "We are in- creasing capacity on several routes to meet the demand for our services in the re- gion."

The company has also started flying daily to Okaha, Japan, from four times a week previously. The Phil- ippines and the United Arab Emirates signed a trade serv- ices agreement in March last year to allow their flag carri- ers to service the Manila-Dubai route nine times a week.

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**Claims Day notice**

**MV YANGON STAR VOY NO (349)**

Claims Day Notice

Consignees of cargo carried on MV YANGON STAR VOY No (349) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 2-4-2004 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

**Shipping Agency Department**

**Myanmar Port Authority**

**Agent for: MS Eagle Corporation**

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797
**Rat genome helps separate mice from men**

**WASHINGTON, 1 April** — The genetic code of the rat joined the growing list of creatures whose DNA has been decoded on Wednesday and experts said it will make the laboratory rat, already beloved by scientists, an even better tool for fighting human disease.

The rat is only the third species to be sequenced to such a degree, after the completed human genome sequence in April 2003 and the draft mouse genome in December 2002. It confirms that the laboratory rat is in fact a good species to be sequenced to such a degree, after the completion of the Hu- 

“...this is an investment that is destined to yield major payoffs in the fight against human disease,” Dr. Elias Zerhouni, head of the National Institutes of Health that funded most of the research, said in a statement.

“For nearly 200 years, the laboratory rat has played a valuable role in efforts to understand human biology and to develop new and better drugs,” he added.

“Now, armed with this sequencing data, a generation of researchers will be able to greatly improve the utility of rat models and thereby improve human health.”

The researchers, led by a team at Baylor College of Medicine’s Genome Sequencing Center in Houston, chose the Brown Norway strain of laboratory rat, known scientifically as Rat- tus norvegicus.

This species was best known in the past for infecting ships and is distinct from the more common black rat, Rattus rattus, notorious for spreading plague.

“As we build upon the foundation laid by the Human Genome Project, it’s become clear that comparing the human genome to those of other organisms is the most powerful tool available to understand the complex genomic components involved in human health and disease,” said Dr. Francis Collins, head of the National Human Genome Research Institute.

Having the rat genome along with the mouse and the human allows scientists to triangulate, just as mariners triangulate to navigate using the stars and the sun, said Baylor’s Richard Gibbs, who led the study.

**Doctors suggest monitoring high-risk people for Hepatitis C Virus**

**BEIJING, 1 April** — The first guideline for doctors and nurses to diagnose and treat Hepatitis C virus (HCV) carriers was published here Tuesday while doctors are calling for a rigid monitoring of the population at high risk for contracting HCV.

The Chinese Medical Association (CMA) published such a guideline for the first time to help medical workers detect, diagnose and treat HCV carriers as soon as possible by elaborating on the symptoms, infection and treatment of the epidemic and people who are at high risk of the virus.

China has approximately 40 million HCV carriers, according to a national survey conducted in 1992 to 1995, the group said.

It is considered one of the three carriers of the Hepatitis B virus. However, less than one-third of the HCV carriers have been to hospital, said Zhuang Zonglou, head of the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE) at Beijing University.

“Those carriers will be a hidden hazard to the public health if they do not receive medical treatment in time,” he said.

China has carried out HCV detection during blood donation since 1992, which considerably reduces the transmission through blood donation and blood products.

In some regions in China, 60 to 90 per cent of HCV infections resulted from sharing syringes among drug users, according to the CMA — MNA/Xinhua

**Green groups seek protections for Alaskan loon**

**ANCHORAGE (Alaska), 1 April** — A coalition of US and Russian environmental groups petitioned the US Federal Government on Tuesday for new protections for a species of loon that breeds in an area of Alaska targeted for oil development.

The groups, led by the Centre for Biological Diversity, want an Endangered Species Act listing for the yellow- 

Experts suggest more potatoes be used to feed Chinese population

**KUNMING, 1 April** — China should turn more to potatoes to feed its huge population and maintain food security, according to experts at the on-going Fifth International Potato Conference in this capital city of southwest China’s Yunnan Province. The conference was held in Kunming, capital of Yunnan Province. The experts said China should turn more to potatoes to feed its huge population and maintain food security.

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**Study shows half of Belgian population overweight**

**BRUSSELS, 1 April** — Nearly half of the Belgian population is overweight, says a new study published here Wednesday.

The survey, carried out by the European organization for Belgium’s Obesity Forum, found that 43 per cent of Belgians have a weight problem and one in five in the country were clinically obese with a Body Mass In 

**Australia seeks to speed China free trade talks**

**CANNES, 1 April** — Australia’s trade minister hopes to meet Chinese President Hu Jintao next month to accelerate a study into a possible free trade agreement, following signs of increased enthusiasm from China.

Trade Minister Mark Vaile said Australia and China were likely to complete a feasibility study into free trade between the two nations before the October 2005 target date.

Officials from both sides are due to meet in Beijing and Cannes early in April and Vaile will travel to Beijing on April 21 to meet his Chinese counterpart.

He also hoped to meet with Hu on April 24 or 25 at the G8 summit in France, an annual economic cooperation meeting between Asia and the rest of the world. “This year we have noticed a bit of an increase in the tempo. The Chinese are becoming more engaged on this,” Vaile said.

“If the Chinese Government is willing to move along a little bit faster than so are we,” he said. “It’s an issue I will raise with President Hu Jintao.” — MNA/Reuters

**Experts suggest more potatoes be used to feed Chinese population**

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**Over 900 executions carried out in US since 1976**

**WASHINGTON, 1 April** — A total of 904 executions have been carried out in the United States since 1976, when the death penalty was reinstated after the Supreme Court banned it four years before, a news report said Monday.

In addition, 10 states also practice electrocution, five others hanging to execute the capital punishment.

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**China allocates fund in subsidies for rice growers**

**BEIJING, 1 April** — The Chinese Government has allocated 94.94 billion yuan (114 million US dollars) in subsidies for rice growers in seven provinces, the Minis 

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In addition, 10 states also practice electrocution, five states have gas chamber, three states have firing squad and two have hanging to execute the capital punishment.

There are no death penalty in the remaining 12 states, plus Washington, DC, the nation’s capital — MNA/Xinhua
Ibrahimovic strikes as Sweden beat England again

**GOETHEBURG, Sweden, 1 April—** Sweden extended their remarkable run of dominance over England when a clever second-half goal by Zlatan Ibrahimovic secured a 1-0 win over their fellow Euro 2004 hopefuls in a friendly on Wednesday.

It was the perfect way to celebrate the Swedish football federation’s 100th anniversary as the victory stretched their unbeaten record to 11 games, their last defeat coming in 1968 when England were world champions.

England, playing without captain David Beckham and striker Michael Owen, were clearly the better team in the first half and hit the woodwork twice through Wayne Rooney and Owen Hargreaves.

Sweden keeper Anders Isaksson then saved with his feet to deny Rooney as the visitors continued to press.

However, Sweden took the lead with their first dangerous attack when substitute Kim Kallstrom curled in a low cross and Ajax Amsterdam striker Ibrahimovic reacted quickly to flick the ball beyond David James with his heel in the 54th minute.

The goal lifted the Swedes and Kallstrom’s adrift of lead Christian Wilhelmsson both missed good chances to extend the lead as England lost their shape amid multiple substitutions.

Substitute Joe Cole had a good chance to equalise in the final minute when Jame Carragher set him up with a pass inside the box, but the midfielder sliced horribly wide.

Erskinson, whose side drew with Portugal and lost to Denmark in their previous two friendlies, said he was not too concerned about the defeat -- his first away from home since taking over from Sven-Goran Eriksson in late 2000 -- discounting the World Cup quarterfinal loss to Brazil in neutral Japan.

One positive for England was the performance of Tottenham Hotspur’s Jermain Defoe, who came on for his debut as a substiute early in the first half.

He immediately linked with Rooney and was confident enough to test Isaksson with a couple of stinging shots.

England are grouped with France, Croatia and Switzerland in Portugal where Sweden face Italy, Denmark and Bulgaria. — MNA/Reuters

United profits soar, Glazer says no bid plan

**LONDON, 1 April —** Manchester United’s first half pre-tax profits have soared despite their recent problems on and off the pitch.

United reported on Tuesday pre-tax profits up 26.8 million pounds (48.71 million US dollars) in the six months to January 31, following improved television deals and lower wage costs after the exit of top players such as David Beckham and Patrick Vieira.

But the visitors paid the price for their failure to convert a host of clear chances and it was Spain who took control when coach Inaki Saiz brought on most of his first-choice players after the break.

Despite the absence of several injured key players it was Denmark who made the better start with winger Jesper Gronkjaer causing problems for the Spanish defence as he swung in several dangerous crosses from the right in the opening minutes.

The visitors should have taken the lead in the 13th minute when defender Brian Priske chipped over a neat cross from the byline to the unmarked Peter Madsen but the striker headed straight into the hands of Spain keeper Santiago Canizares. Just as Denmark appeared to have Spain on the ropes the home side scored a goal out of the blue.

Defender Joan Capdevila swung in a well judged cross from the left and Morsientes outjumped his marker to send a powerful header past David James with his heel in the 54th minute.

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England are grouped with France, Croatia and Switzerland in Portugal where Sweden face Italy, Denmark and Bulgaria. — MNA/Reuters

Chief executive David Gill told reporters no shareholder had requested a seat on the board.

United, third in the league and 12 points adrift of leaders Arsenal, have had an unsettling season.

Constant takeover speculation has surrounded the club as both Magnier and McManus, majority shareholders with almost 29 per cent, and Glazer have upheld their stakes. Meanwhile, manager Alex Ferguson has been involved in a high-profile legal dispute with Magnier over the breeding rights for champion racehorse Rock of Gibraltar.

The dispute has been resolved but the team has also suffered on the field after defender Rio Ferdinand was banned for eight months for a drugs test.

"The recent period has presented a number of challenges for the management team and yet we have remained focused on the business and produced a strong set of results," said Gill.

United could also be heading for a third-place finish in the league, which would mean a smaller share of the Champions League funds allocated to English teams and less domestic TV money.

"It does have an impact on profits," Gill said. "But for our long term planning it is not significant because we are prudent."

United are undertaking an internal review of recent transfer deals following pressure from Magnier and McManus. The freshers also opposed a long extension to the 62-year-old Ferguson’s contract.

United, who have 23.5 million pounds in cash, declared a net profit of 92.4 million pounds from 43 per cent last year.

"We will sit down with the manager at the end of the season and discuss it," Gill said. United’s turnover was slightly lower at 92.4 million pounds, a slight increase or decrease on profits," Gill said. "But we have remained focused on the business and produced a strong set of results," said Gill.

**MUD soccer infects Australian players**

**WASHINGTON, 1 April** — A game of “mud football” lubricated with stagnant water landed several Australian players in the doctor’s office after bacteria infected cuts in their legs, doctors reported on Tuesday.

The soccer players suffered from infections by Aeromonas hydrophila, a bacterium common in water and soil.

The mud for the soccer game had been prepared by blowing up a field and pumping water onto it from the nearby Collie River, which was stagnant after a bout of dry weather, the doctors said.

The players had not played in the mud, but most also took baths in the river afterwards, Dr. Hassan Vally of the University of Western Australia reported in the latest issue of the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases. — MNA/Reuters

Confident Germany sweep Belgium aside with 3-0 win

**COLDENGE, Germany, 1 April —** Germany boosted their morale in the build-up to the Euro 2004 finals with a convincing 3-0 victory over Belgium in their first home game of the year on Wednesday.

The 2002 World Cup finalists dominated a one-sided friendly international from the kickoff and wasted several chances before striker Kevin Kuranyi put them ahead just before halftime, scoring with his thigh from a corner. Germany maintained the pressure after the break and doubled their lead with a free kick from Liverpool midfielder Dietmar Hamann 10 minutes into the second half. — MNA/Reuters

Australia’s Justin Norris wins his heat in the men’s 200 metres butterfly at the Australian Olympic Swimming Trials in Sydney on 29 March, 2004.

Norris clocked a time of one minute 59.53 seconds to qualify for the semifinal and a bid to make his second Olympic games. — Internet
talk about the latest events, the weather, the news, and the entertainment schedule. The page seems to be part of a local newspaper or a broadcast schedule. The text is rich with information about the day's events, including musical performances, news segments, and weather updates. It also includes advertisements for local businesses and scenic views. The layout is typical of a broadcast schedule, with times and titles clearly listed.
### Four political objectives
* Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
* National reconsolidation
* Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
* Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

### Four economic objectives
* Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
* Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
* Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
* The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

### Four social objectives
* Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
* Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
* Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
* Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

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**Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing attend opening ceremony of Hinthada District Sasana Beikmandawgyi**

**YANGON, 1 April**—A ceremony to open Hinthada District Sasana Beikmandawgyi was held at the Beikman in Hinthada, Ayeyawady Division, at 10.30 am yesterday, attended by Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing. Senior General Than Shwe pressed the button to open the plaque of the Beikmandaw.


(See page 8)

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**Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt to pay goodwill visit to Bangladesh**

**YANGON, 2 April**—At the invitation of Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar will pay a goodwill visit to the People’s Republic of Bangladesh in the near future.

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**Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives WHO official**

**YANGON, 1 April**—Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt received WHO South-East Asia Regional Director Dr Samlee Plianbangchang at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmyintha at 5 pm today.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo, Director-General U Soe Tin of Government Office and Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of Protocol Department.

The WHO Regional Director was accompanied by WHO Resident Representative Dr Agostino Borra.