Model village set up in Kachin State

YANGON, 5 April — A model village has been set up in Myitkyina Township, Kachin State, as a means for rural development of the region.

Officials of Development Affairs Department and local authorities inspected the model village, Tonphe, on 1 April to facilitate its development undertakings. They also met with local people and members of social organizations of the model village, and sought ways to further develop it and raise the living standard of the villagers. — MNA

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

500,000 acres of oil palm grown in Taninthayi Division will yield surplus for export

Coordination meeting (2/2004) on development of oil palm industry in Taninthayi Division held

YANGON, 5 April — The coordination meeting (2/2004) on development of oil palm industry in Taninthayi Division was held at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konmyinttha here this morning with an address by member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann. Also present on the occasion were members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thita Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department, national entrepreneurs who are engaged in oil palm cultivation in Taninthayi Division and guests.

First, member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann made a speech. He said that they together with entrepreneurs inspected private oil palm plantations in Taninthayi Division and held a coordination meeting.

It is encouraging to note that entrepreneurs who are currently engaged in oil palm cultivation and new entrepreneurs are going to further engage in cultivation of oil palm.

The country has to import edible oil as there has been insufficiency in edible oil in the nation, and if 500,000 acres of oil palm are grown in Taninthayi Division, there will be not only self-sufficiency in oil but also prospects of export of the surplus. At the same time, Taninthayi Division will surely become the oil pot of the nation.

The government invited the national entrepreneurs who are to further engage in cultivation of 300,000 more acres of oil palm. Therefore, there will be over 500,000 acres of oil palm in the division.

The cost for 500,000 acres of oil palm will be some K300 billion as the capital volume of oil palm industry is huge.

Emphasis is being placed on development of oil palm industry as it is a direct investment and will surely fulfill the demand of edible oil in the nation. The national economy will develop only if there is rise in the production sector.

Therefore, those present at the meeting are to frankly present the requirements for development of oil palm industries.

Next, member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Minister U Aung Thaung, Minister U Soe Tha, deputy ministers and heads of department reported on matters related to land to be obtained for cultivation of oil palm, investment, loans and import of machinery.

After that, oil palm entrepreneurs reported on matters related to extension of sown acreage and future programmes.

In response to the reports, General Thura Shwe Mann gave instructions, warning departmental personnel against causing delays on their part. He also spoke of the need to carry out the work speedily in accord with rules and regulations to fully cultivate the permitted land meeting the target, to share the newly permitted land systematically among the entrepreneurs, to exchange views and experiences among them. After discussing the environmental issue, he urged entrepreneurs to make all-out efforts for the success of oil palm cultivation, adding that the government will provide necessary assistance to the most possible degree as oil palm cultivation is a national project. Further meetings will be held for development of the oil palm industry. — MNA

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Enjoy Thingyan Festival in peace and happiness

Thingyan, or the Water Festival, is just round the corner. It is also known as the Myanmar New Year Festival. The festival is the time for saying goodbye to the old year and welcoming the new one.

The objectives for holding Thingyan Festival for 1365 ME have been laid down. They are to observe the festival in accordance with Myanmar traditions and customs, for the people to be able to enjoy the festival with peace of mind, to refresh the mind of the people with Thingyan water so that they can perform duties of the State with renewed strength in the New Year and to preserve Myanmar traditional culture and national characteristics.

Thingyan is an age-old traditional festival Myanmar people eagerly looks forward to every year. During the festival, people, especially the young, throw water at one another.

Water-throwing is a symbol of cleansing the impurities of the old year. Elderly people keep Sabaath throughout the festival. Meritorious deeds such as setting animals free and donating blood are done.

It is important for the people to take part in the festival in accordance with Myanmar traditions and customs and to avoid behaviour and mode of dress alien to Myanmar culture. Rules and regulations have been made public to make sure that people can enjoy the festival peacefully and happily.

Thingyan is a traditional Myanmar festival handed down to us by our ancestors. Therefore, it is necessary for us to participate in the festival, keeping its essence and preserving our traditional culture.

We would like to urge all the national people to follow the rules and regulations for holding the festival so that they can enjoy it in peace and happiness.

UMFCCI delegation leaves for India

Yangon, 5 April — A Myanmar delegation comprising Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry President U Win Myint, CEC members U Tun Aung, U Myo Thant and U Hla Maung left here by air for Calcutta, India, this afternoon to attend the meeting on formation of India-Myanmar Economic Cooperation Work Committee to be held from 5 to 8 April 2004.

The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by UMFCCI General Secretary U Sein Win Hlaing, Joint-Secretary-2 Dr Maung Maung Lay and officials.

Minister inspects archaeological works in four divisions

Yangon, 5 April — Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung and party inspected excavation of Aungskhion Pagoda built by King Swasawke in the south of ancient Pindaya and gave instructions on restoration of the pagoda. The minister gave instructions on restoration after inspecting the Inwa Hsinkyon Fort.

The minister and party inspected Inwa Archaeological Museum, Thabyadan Fort built in the east of Sagaing Bridge in 1236 Myanmar Era, Sagaing Ayukhkan Fort built in 1237 ME and the war memorial of the British soldiers.

The minister and party inspected renovated Ariyavamsa Monastery of Inwa period on Sagaing Hill. They went to Mandalay and inspected Maha Minhtin wooden Kyaungdaw in north east of Maha Myatmuni Buddha Image, construction of sculpture hall, rehearsal theatre and paving of road in the compound of University of Culture(Mandalay) and construction of 61 pagodas in the precincts of Sandamuni Pagoda.

On 3 April, the minister and party inspected renovation of Yokesone Kyaung in Salin and Khaungkyaung where patriotic revolution-ary leader Bo Ottama camped, construction of retaining walls for prevention of erosion. Officials concerned reported on excavation of old Lekaing city.

They visited an ancient temple and Shwelethla Pagoda in the old city, entrance gate 15 and renovation of Shwe-inaung Pagoda in Taungbyuing.

The minister went to Pyay and inspected palace ring road in old Tharhekhtaya city.

Annual meeting to review Reproductive Health Project held

Vice-Chairperson of MMCWA Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint addresses the meeting. — MNA

Yangon, 5 April — An annual meeting to review Reproductive Health Project, jointly organized by Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, UNFPA and Japanese Organization for International Co-operation in Family Planning (JOICFP), which is a Japan-based social organization, was held at the building of the association at the corner of Parami Street and Thanthuma Roads, South Okkalapa this morning.

Present on the occasion were Vice-Chairperson of MMCWA Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint and members, patrons of supervisory committee, resident representative of UNFPA Mr Najib M Assi and officials, officials of the JOICFP, Chairperson of Yangon Division MMCWA and members, officials of Health Planning Department and Health Depart-ment, course instructors, trainees of Kachin State, Shan State (East) and (North), Mon State, Rakhine State, Sagaing Division, Mandalay Division, Magway Division, Ayeyawady Division and Bago Division.

First, Vice-Chairperson of MMCWA Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint made a speech on the occasion.

Next, resident representative of UNFPA Mr Najib M Assi explained the purpose of the meeting and the meeting ended. The meeting continues tomorrow. — MNA
Ten US troops killed in Iraqi attacks

Najaf, 5 April—Supporters of an anti-American cleric rioted in four Iraqi cities Sunday, battling coalition troops in the west as fighting surrounded and sparked immediately after the fall of Saddam Hussein. At least 22 Iraqis, eight US troops and one Salvadoran soldier died.

Sunday’s attacks—along with the unrelated killings of two Marines in Anbar province—pushed the US death toll to at least 610. Hundreds were wounded as fighting raged in Najaf, Najaf, Nasiriyah and Amarah. Tanks rolled in the streets of its eastern Sadr City neighbourhood.

Protesters, some dressed all in black or waving green banners, raced toward the fighting in Najaf as heavy gunfire echoed through the city. One man stood on a bridge, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher at the ready.

The riots were ignited by the arrest on Saturday of an aide to anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, known to his reverent followers as ‘al-Sayyed,’ or master.

“I am happy to die for al-Sayyed,” 21-year-old Ali Hosein said after being shot in the arm during fighting with troops in Najaf. “Take me to see my mother first then let me die.”

The unrest appeared to be a show of force by Al-Sadr, a 30-year-old Shiite cleric backed by an illegal militia and hundreds of young Iraqis. They are devoted to him because of his anti-US stance and the memory of his father, a Shiite religious leader gunned down by suspected Saddam agents in 1999.

Al-Sadr issued a statement later Sunday calling off street protests and saying he would stage a sit-in.

The explosion of violence will likely place Al-Sadr back under the scrutiny of the U.S. military, whose leaders threatened to arrest him six months ago after his militia fought gunbattles with U.S. troops and moderate Shiites, who support the coalition.

In the southern city of Basra, a military officer was wounded in the leg. Protesters also clashed with British troops in Amarah, the British Ministry of Defence said. It was unclear whether there were casualties. internet

GCC countries become biggest consumers of desalinated water

Abu Dhabi, 5 April—The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Industrial Bank has rated the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as the biggest consumers of desalinated water in the world over the past two decades, the official WAM news agency reported Saturday.

The bank said in its latest newsletter that the GCC, which includes the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain, collectively consume 672 billion gallons of water per year at present.

The GCC countries had spent a total of 40 billion US dollars in building desalination plants. The amount includes operation and maintenance costs.

They have become increasingly reliant on desalinated water to meet their growing demands as a result of a rise in population and accelerating economic growth, one of the fastest in the world. This constitutes almost 50 per cent of the total capacity of desalinated water in the world.

MNA/Xinhua

UAE’s tourism demand expected to grow in 2004

Abu Dhabi, 5 April—Total demand in the United Arab Emirates (UAE)’s travel and tourism sector is expected to generate economic activity worth 17.20 billion US dollars in 2004, a report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) said Saturday.

Travel and tourism demand in the country is expected to grow by 2.5 per cent in real terms, between 2004 and 2014, according to the report, published by the newspaper Khaleej Times.

The 2004 report was prepared by Oxford Economic Forecasting for the WTTC. “The message from 2004’s research is generally positive on a global basis for a healthy return to growth,” Jean-Claude Baumgarten, WTTC president, said while releasing the report.

“On a more specific basis, the UAE’s travel and tourism industry is expected to generate 1.1 per cent of GDP and 23,779 jobs, while the broader travel and tourism economy is expected to total 10 per cent of GDP and 151,549 jobs,” he said.

MNA/Xinhua

Saudi Arabia signs WTO deal with China

Riyadh, 5 April—Saudi Arabia and China inked a final bilateral agreement on commodity price and service lists. Saturday as part of its effort to join the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The deal was signed by Deputy Minister of Saudi Trade and Industry Fawaz al-Alamy and Chinese Assistant Minister of Commerce Yi Xiaohun.

Both agreed that Saudi Arabia’s WTO membership will be beneficial to both countries as well as other WTO members.

Addressing the signing ceremony, the Chinese official said the deal is a major event in Chinese-Saudi economic and trade relations, emphasizing that it will greatly contribute to pushing forward bilateral economic and trade cooperation.

In 2003, trade exchange between the two nations hit 7.34 billion US dollars, he said, adding that China’s crude imports from Saudi Arabia reached 15.18 million tons.

For his part, the Saudi official said his country appreciates China’s support for its bid to join the WTO, stressing that the significant deal would help reinforce economic and trade relations between the two nations.

MNA/Xinhua

American military death toll in Iraq rose to at least 610 Sunday

Baghdad, 5 April—The American military death toll in Iraq rose to at least 610 Sunday, following the announcement of several deaths over the weekend.

As of Friday morning, the Department of Defence said 596 US service members had died since the beginning of a military operations in Iraq last year. Of those, 406 died as a result of hostile action and 190 died of non-hostile causes. The department did not provide an update over the weekend. The British military has reported 58 deaths.

Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Bulgaria, five; Ukraine, three; Thailand, two; Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia and Poland have reported one each.

Since May 1, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 485 US soldiers have died — 297 as a result of hostile action and 161 of non-hostile causes, according to the Department of Defence.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

-One US soldier was killed Sunday in a battle at the Spanish garrison in Najaf.

—Seven US soldiers were killed Sunday while fighting Shiite militiamen in the Baghdad neighbourhood of Sadr City.

—Two Marines assigned to the 1st Marine Division were killed after attacks in Anbar province.

internet

Spanish forces kill 3 Iraqi protesters

Najaf, 5 April—Spanish soldiers killed three Iraqi protesters supporting a Shiite leader and injured several others Sunday in the Iraqi southern holy city of Najaf.

Eyewitnesses said the Spanish troops, part of the US-led coalition in Iraq, opened fire with automatic weapons as protesters surrounded the Coalition Provisional Authority building.

The protesters, supporters of a Shiite leader, Mushtada al-Sadr, were demanding the freedom of al-Sadr’s top aide, Sheik Mustafa al-Yacoubi, believed to have been detained by the Spanish forces.

The protesters also demanded the lifting of a ban on al-Sadr’s newspaper, al-Hawza al-Nateqah, which US officials shut down on charges it was instigating violence against the coalition.

The demonstrators chanted slogans against the United States, Israel and the interim Iraqi Governing Council.

Similar demonstrations were held Baghdad and in the southern city of Basra.

internet

A US soldier checks the scene of an explosion in Baghdad’s al-Dora District on 4 April, 2004.—internet
Cracks in ruined vault of Iraq’s ancient Ctesiphon palace

Izun, 5 April — Long deserted by tourists, the ruined vault of Iraq’s ancient Ctesiphon palace, which boasts the highest single-span brick arch in the world, is developing worrisome cracks although experts say it is unlikely to collapse.

He points to rain water infiltrations under the elliptical vault. “These cracks are recent. They appear as a result of the war,” he added. Muhy Thamer, a postcard vendor, shows the few visitors present craters left by bombs near the site. “There were Iraqi soldiers in the area. The Americans bombed it,” he said. Then pointing to the right wing of the palace, now rebuilt after it was swept away by flood waters from the Tigris River, he insisted that a large crack was caused by the explosions. A rocket even hit the wall, damaging some bricks.

Kherdeb fumed at the prospect that the vault might collapse. “This is sad. This site embodies the history of our country,” he said. Giovanni Curatola, a professor of archaeology and Islamic art at Italy’s Udine university who is working with the US-led coalition occupying Iraq, confirmed that the site needs to be shored up. “The cracks must be repaired and a thorough archeological study is necessary,” he said. But he played down the risk of seeing the vault collapse. “The cracks are under control and have hardly changed over the past 20 years,” he said.

Iran grants Nigeria $1.5m development assistance

ABUJA, 5 April — Iran and Nigeria on Friday signed a memorandum of understanding, under which Iran grants Nigeria 1.5 million US dollars in development assistance aimed at promoting bilateral relations between the two countries.

The memo for the grant was signed at the end of a two-day official visit of Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi to Nigeria. Kharrazi signed the grant on behalf of his country while his Nigerian counterpart Olu Adenun signed for Nigeria.

According to the Nigerian Foreign Minister, the two ministers also signed a formal agreement on the creation of a Joint Economic Commission and the Agreed Minutes of the two-day session of the commission. “With the three documents signed, we are set on the road to economic cooperation, in keeping with the determination of our two countries that the level is as high as our political cooperation,” he said.

Responding, Kharrazi said there was political will at the level of “our two presidents to promote bilateral relations between our two countries”. He noted that when Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo visited Iran in 2001, the two presidents agreed to set up a joint commission, saying that the documents signed in Abuja had paved the way for expansion of existing cooperation between the two countries.

During their talks, the two ministers identified possible areas for cooperation to include education, health, industries, pharmaceuticals and construction. Kharrazi led a 90-member delegation made up of four deputy ministers as well as businessmen and representatives of different ministries to the two-day talks that began on Thursday.

Two US Marines killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 5 April — Two Marines have been killed in Iraq’s western Anbar province “as a result of enemy action,” the US military said in a statement Sunday.

The two, both assigned to the 1st Marine Division, were injured in separate incidents Saturday. One died the same day; the other died Sunday, the statement said. It provided no other details.

The most populous city in Anbar province, which stretches from Baghdad to the Jordanian border is Fallujah, where four American civilians were killed and their bodies mutilated Wednesday.

In the city of Baqouba, 30 miles northeast of Baghdad, a bomb exploded Sunday in the al-Rasool al-Adham Shiite mosque, damaging part of the building, but causing no casualties, said the mosque’s caretaker Haidar Yassin.

It was not clear who detained him. US officials could not confirm the arrest and Spanish forces based in the city denied taking action against him.

About 5,000 members of al-Sadr’s self-styled militia, the al-Mahdi Army, paraded in Sadr City, a mainly Shiite district in eastern Baghdad, on Saturday. The cleric has been an outspoken critic of the US-led occupation, but has not called for attacks on the occupying forces.

Al-Sadr’s weekly newspaper was shut by US officials on March 28, provoking an enormous anti-American outpouring.

On Saturday, gunmen shot and killed the police chief of Mahmudiya town, 20 miles south of Baghdad, and his driver while they were driving home from the capital.

Not long afterward, six attackers shot at a four-man police patrol in Mahmudiya, killing one and wounding three, police officer Khuloon al-Gurtari said. A 60-year-old bystander was also killed.

Guerillas often target police because they view them as collaborators with the US-led occupation. Also they make easier targets because they are less armed and protected than the US troops.

September 11 panel head says findings will surprise public

WASHINGTON, 5 April — The chairman of the commission probing the September 11 attacks said in a television interview Sunday that some of the panel’s findings has surprised him and will surprise the public as well.

“I’ve been surprised by some of what we’ve found, and so, I think, (the public) will, yes,” Thomas H. Kean said on NBC’s “Meet the Press.” — MNA/Xinhua

WFP says Angola food crisis worsens as ship halted

JOHANNESBURG, 5 April — The UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) will be forced to stop all cereal food aid to 1.9 million Angolans by June if international donors do not give more money, the agency said on Friday.

A WFP spokesman said the assessment was made after it was forced to cancel a shipment of 19,000 tons of US corn following Angola’s decision to ban the importation of genetically modified food.

On Monday the UN body said it would have to cut rations by 30 per cent in April and May, and 50 per cent thereafter, but a WFP spokesman said the ship’s cancellation had put an even greater strain on resources.

International donors have so far only provided 24 per cent of the 143 million US dollars needed to feed 1.9 million Angolans, 1.5 million of them refugees and internally displaced people after nearly three decades of civil war. — MNA/Reuters

Cracks in ruined vault of Iraq’s ancient Ctesiphon palace

Mountain fire still ravaging Western Cape

JOHANNESBURG, 5 April — A fire ignited by unseasonal lightning fires across the Western Cape Province on Thursday morning was still burning fiercely along the Stellenbosch mountain range on Friday.

Danie Wilds, Boland District municipality’s fire chief, said about 100 firefighters were battling to put a lid on the fires.

“The situation is better but the fire is still not under control,” he said Friday.

WFP says Angola food crisis worsens as ship halted

September 11 panel head says findings will surprise public

Two US Marines killed in Iraq

Iran grants Nigeria $1.5m development assistance
American, Salvadoran killed in Iraq clash

MADINAH, 5 April — One American and one Salvadoran soldier died in clashes near Iraq’s holy Shiite city of Najaf on Sunday, Spain’s Defence Ministry said, and not four Salvadoran soldiers as it had reported earlier.

The ministry said there had been confusion in its earlier Press statement which had reported four Salvadoran soldiers killed and nine wounded when their “Al-Andalus” base in Najaf was attacked on Sunday morning.

The correct casualty figures were one US and one Salvadoran soldier killed and 19 Salvadorans wounded, a spokesman said.

Dr Falah al-Numhna, Najaf’s director general for health, said 20 Iraqis were also killed and at least 200 wounded in the battle. He said at least two Iraqi police were among the dead.

Forces from Spain and El Salvador returned fire when their “Al-Andalus” base in Najaf was attacked, “apparently by supporters of Mohamed Al Yacub”, the statement said in an apparent reference to Mustapha Yacoubi, an armed aide to radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

Spain leads a brigade that includes troops from Central America in a large swath of Shiite territory south of Baghdad. Until now the brigade has not suffered the kind of attacks that US troops have experienced in the Sunni triangle around Baghdad.

“The coalition forces… which include Salvadoreans and some Spaniards returned fire in legitimate self-defence and according to the rule of engagement, dispersing the attackers,” the Spanish statement said. “No Spanish soldier has been wounded.”

A building of the Coalition Provisional Authority, guarded by the Salvadoreans, also came under attack in Najaf, the statement said. Coalition forces responded by calling in Apache attack helicopters and other aircraft, the statement said.

Incoming Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, elected three days after the March 11 train bombings in Madrid that killed 191 people, has vowed to bring home the 1,300 Spanish troops in Iraq by June 30 unless the United Nations is granted a much larger role in Iraq.—MENA/Reuters

half in Hawaii say Bush misled public about Iraq

Honolulu, 5 April — A Honolulu Advertiser poll shows half of Hawaii residents believe the Bush administration misled the American people about the rationale for war in Iraq.

Some 49 percent of poll respondents said they felt misled while 40 percent said they thought they were provided with correct information about the reasons for war. Eleven percent said they didn’t know.

Big Island resident Karreen Sayre says he didn’t believe the Bush administration from the start of the war and nothing she’s seen since then has changed her mind.

Lily Kim, of Maunaloa, says she doesn’t know what soldiers are dying for. The poll found 56 percent of Hawaii residents — including 66 percent of all women — said they didn’t believe the war has made the world safer.

The statewide survey of 605 residents was conducted March 24 to 27 by Ward Research. It has a margin of error of four percent. —Internet

AMF urges Iraq to focus on investment, cutting debt

ABU DHABI, 5 April — The Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) urged Iraq to focus on attracting capital and tackling its massive debt in its drive to rebuild its war-wrecked economy, the official WAM news agency reported on Friday.

Iraq is passing through a crucial stage of resurrecting its economy that has been shattered by three major wars and the disruption of its oil exports due to a long UN embargo, said Jassim Al Mani, chairman of the AMF, while addressing Iraqi officials at the end of a 10-day training course in a headquarters of AMF in Abu Dhabi on Thursday.

Estimates by the IMF-style Arab fund showed Iraq’s foreign debt totalled around 120 billion US dollars at the end of 2003. This included nearly 42 billion US dollars owed to the 19-nation Paris Club, 60 billion US dollars for Arab countries, Russia and East European nations, and nearly 18 billion US dollars for multi-national organizations and credit institutions, including the AMF.

Manai said Iraq needs sound plans to repair economic damage caused by major conflicts, disruption of its vital oil earnings, and the 1990-2003 UN sanctions.

“There is no doubt that Iraq is in a pressing need now for sound and effective planning,” Manai told the Iraqi officials from the Central Bank, and Finance and Economy ministries, who took part in the training course.

“These plans should focus on controlling inflation, stimulating economic growth, tackling the debt and encouraging local and foreign investment,” he added.

Zimbabwe’s associated newspapers lay off 167 workers

HARARE, 5 April — A total of 167 workers from the Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe (ANZ) have received letters of retrenchment from their company due to financial constraints, the Herald newspaper reported on Saturday.

ANZ human resources director Henry Mushiune was quoted as saying that the issue had been presented to the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare through the Department of Labour.

“We have forwarded a list of 167 retrenches,” he said.

“The matter has been directed to the ministry and until the government issues a statement, the employees still belong to ANZ.”

The retrenchment, he said, was necessitated by the fact that the company had not been generating income following its failure to publish its newspapers.

It was reported that the company has not been publishing for the past six months.

Morocco seeks international help against locusts

RAK, 5 April — Morocco appealed on Friday for international help against the threat of locusts ravaging its cereal crops.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said last month the problem of locusts in North Africa was developing into a full-blown plague. Algeria and Morocco were among the countries most at risk.

“The situation calls for more vigilance. In a few days, eggs laid after recent rains in northern Mauritania will hatch and the little insects will need to eat,” said Abdelaziz Arifi, an engineer at the Ministry of Agriculture Ministry.

Asked if the locusts had reached cereal-plantated areas, Arifi said: “Thank God they have not. Locusts are still confined to the extreme southern and eastern part of the country.” But he warned that they were preparing a campaign to stop the newly hatched locusts, he said, adding that the insects were mainly coming from Algeria and Mauritania.

“The Moroccan authorities have so far treated 532,000 hectares and spent nearly 14 million US dollars to kill the winged insects, need mainly pesticides, sprayers and communication equipment, Arifi said.

“Can we do our best to eradicate locusts. But we need international help to do that,” he added. Moroccan farmers are otherwise expecting a second straight bumper harvests this year thanks to generous rainfall.

Foreign investment rises in Zambia

LUSAKA, 5 April — Zambia has recorded an upsurge in foreign investment, with the agriculture sector recording the highest. Zambia Investment Centre (ZIC) said here on Friday.

According to ZIC, investment inflows during the first quarter of 2004 have started on a good note with a combined total of 27.9 million US dollars in investment commitments and corresponding total employment commitments of 1,678.

ZIC executive director Richard Chavula said the total pledged investment last year exceeded 121 million US dollars while the total corresponding employment pledges was 11,383.

By comparison, he said investment performance during 2003 was much better compared to the year 2002, which recorded a total investment of 83 million US dollars.

A US Army soldier from the Fort Lewis, Washington Stryker Brigade keeps watch during a marketplace patrol in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on 4 April, 2004. —INTERNET

Iraqis boys run past a burning US Army Humvee following clashes with Iraqis in Baghdad’s al-Sadr City district. —INTERNET

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By comparison, he said investment performance during 2003 was much better compared to the year 2002, which recorded a total investment of 83 million US dollars.
**Kerry camp hits Bush for “drunken sailor” spending**

**Boston, 5 April —** Democrat John Kerry, back in full campaign mode after shoulder surgery and a vacation, opened a new front on Sunday in his election-year battle with President George W Bush over the US economy and soaring federal budget deficits.

"When it comes to the economy, Bush has sold Americans a classic tax-and-spend liberal, the Massachusetts senator’s campaign team turned the tables with a report — to be released on Monday— accusing Bush of “empty promises” and calling the economy a “risky business.”

"Bush and his Republican allies have told Americans in television ads and speeches that Kerry would raise their taxes and cut Social Security benefits.

"Basic, Linlai taxpayers cannot afford another four years of George W Bush,” Alman said. “The families managed their household budget like this, they’d lose their house, their car, and any hope of building a brighter future for their family.”

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Bahrain, Jordan call for earlier Arab summit

**Cairo, 5 April**—Bahrain and Jordan called on Saturday that the postponed Arab summit should be held as soon as possible with well-preparation, reports reaching here from Manama said.

Bahrain’s King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa and his Jordanian counterpart Abdullah II, who is in Manama on a two-day visit, made the call during their talks on efforts to reconvene the postponed Arab summit, the reports said.

King Abdullah was quoted as saying that Arab countries should reach common ground to ensure the success of the summit, which was called off by host Tunisia last Saturday indefinitely.

Meanwhile, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Shara phoned Saturday his Bahraini and Qatari counterparts Sheikh Mohammed bin Khalifa and Sheikh Hamad bin Jabr Al Thani to exchange views on consultations on holding the postponed Arab summit.

Last week Egypt offered to host an Arab summit at the earliest possible time after Tunisia had postponed a scheduled conference indefinitely. —MENA/Xinhua

**Wreckage of missing “Jaguar” aircraft found**

**New Delhi, 5 April**—The wreckage of the two missing Jaguar fighter aircraft was located by IAF helicopters on Saturday, four kilometres north of Somnagar in India-controlled Kashmir, Defence Ministry sources said.

The two missing jets were part of a group of four Jaguars that had taken off on a “routine Kashmir Valley flying mission” on Friday afternoon from the airbase in Kashmir’s summer capital Srinagar.

A massive search and rescue mission was mounted in the Sonamarg region by the IAF and Indian Army units from Friday to Saturday morning. Helicopters were used over the snow-covered mountains to trace the missing jets.

The IAF has lost six Jag- uar jets in accidents since 2001. The most recent crash occurred in February when a Jaguar crashed in the Pokhran Range in Rajasthan State.—MENA/Xinhua

**Nepal’s tourist arrivals surge in March**

**Kathmandu, 5 April**—The total number of tourists visiting Nepal last month increased significantly by 60 per cent over the same period of last year, the Nepal Tourism Board said Sunday.

Altogether 31,198 visitors from different parts of the world came to Nepal by air in March this year, against the arrival of 19,549 tourists into this country in March 2003, according to a Press release issued by the government bureau.

The number of Indian tourists arriving in Nepal grew by 80 per cent to 7,928 visitors, while tourists from other countries recorded an overall increase of 54 per cent to 23,270 visitors.

Tourist arrivals from Nepal’s tourist industry’s traditional markets, namely the United States, Britain, Germany and Japan recorded increases of 54 per cent, 53 per cent, 33 per cent and 3 per cent respectively. —MENA/Xinhua

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**24 dead in Iraq shoot-out**

**Baghdad, 5 April**—Supporters of an anti-American Shiite Muslim cleric opened fire on the Spanish embassy near the holy city of Najaf on Sunday, during a large street protest.

Four Salvadoran soldiers died and at least 20 Iraqis died, and about 210 people were wounded.

In Baghdad, witnesses said US forces moved into the poor Sadr City neighborhood and fired to disperse followers of the charismatic, young cleric, Muqtada al-Sadr. Military gunships flew overhead. The US military had no immediate comment.

Earlier, the cleric’s supporters took over several police stations in Sadr City, a stronghold of the cleric, and television footage showed gunmen driving through the area in police cars they had seized.

Protesters also clashed with Italian and British forces in other cities in a broad, violent challenge to the US-led coalition, raising questions about its ability to stabilize Iraq ahead of a scheduled June 30 handover of power to Iraqis.

Late Sunday, US envoy Lakhdar Brahimi and a team that will assist Iraqis in the political transition to an interim Iraqi government arrived in Baghdad, the United Nations announced.

North of the capital, a bomb killed three members of the Iraqi security forces. And in Kirkuk, also in the north, a car bomb exploded, killing three civilians and wounding two others, police said.

Five kilometres east of Najaf, the shooting broke out after thousands of supporters of a Sadr gathered outside the Spanish embassy.

A spokesman for the Spanish head-quarterer in nearby Diwaniyah, Commander Carlos Herradon, said attackers opened fire at about noon.

The Spanish and Salvadoran soldiers fired back, and assailants later regrouped in three clusters outside the base. Shooting continued for several hours.

Along with the four soldiers killed, nine Salvadoran soldiers were wounded, the Spanish defence ministry said in Madrid.

The Salvadorans, who number about 360, are under Spanish command as part of an international brigade that includes troops from Central America. No Spaniards were injured. —Internet

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**China praised for cleaning up bank blood**

**Beijing, 5 April**—China, roundly vilified for allowing blood-selling schemes to spread HIV/AIDS, won praise on Sunday for cleaning up its transfusion blood banks.

China is one of the three countries most at risk from AIDS outside Africa and health agencies say it could have 10 million victims by 2010 if it fails to take the scourge seriously. The other two are Russia and India.

But the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, organizer of a blood-donor conference which opened in Beijing on Sunday, said China had realized its responsibilities and made “great progress” in recent years. Police have acting on its national bureau.

Many activists estimate the extent of the disease to be far larger than official figures show, with more than one million people infected in central Henan Province alone in recent years by blood-selling schemes.

The clinics paid farmers to extract their blood plasma, then pumped the unrefrigerated components back into the donor from a pool tainted with blood from other people.

Activists say the novel infections of people in six neighbouring provinces.

The Beijing conference brings together more than 180 specialists on voluntary blood transfusion.

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**Iraqi protesters rush for cover as a grenade explodes during clashes outside the Iraqi Shiite holy city of Najaf, on 5 April. 2004. —INTERNET**
Preventive measures for road accidents have been taken in Myanmar since 1983, initiated through first national seminar on accident prevention by Ministry of Health and later with the collaboration and cooperation of many other departments. Though different responsibilities were undertaken for preventive measures, it seems focusing mainly on two biggest cities—Yangon and Mandalay, where general population as well as vehicles are abundant. All the government agencies have been implementing all road safety measures. Traffic rules enforcement Supervisory Committee was formed with many agencies—Government, NGOs and private sectors, in 1989. The actions have been carried out for road safety measures with cooperation and coordination of many agencies supervised by TRESIC.

It is quite clear that the Road Safety problem is concerning with health, socioeconomic issue for any country and measures should be taken by multisectional approach. Road Safety Action Draft was drawn during 15-19 March 2004 National Action Plan workshop with multisectional agencies involvement.

“Role of Ministry of Health”

1. Initiated the road accident prevention activities for other departments—1st National Seminar 1983
2. Collaborative project—MOH + WHO 1990
3. Training doctors, health personnel, Non-Gos for awareness, preparation, practice
4. Expansion of new trauma care centres and upgrading of the existing ones.
5. Providing modern equipments for emergency services.
6. Disability prevention through community base rehabilitation project. (MOH + WHO)
7. Collaboration and cooperation of road safety activities with other departments.

Success Stories

With that effective effort and preventive measures in Yangon City, the incidence of RTA decreased from 393/10,000 vehicles in 1982 to 48/10,000 in the year 2000. The number of injuries dropped from 27 deaths/10,000 vehicles in 1982 to 6.4 deaths/10,000 vehicles in 2000. During the National seminar in 1983 the project revealed the magnitude of Rear-end — injuries (having crushed injuries to one or both hitting from the car behind while victim standing on the bar at the rear end of the buses). After the seminar, a local order came out to remove all the bars at the near end of the buses and no more rear-end injury happened since then.

In 1989 July many motorcycles accidents came to trauma department of Yangon General Hospital and all the victims were found to be adolescents. Enquiry revealed that it was due to a new business of hiring motorcycles (15 kyats per one hour) for riding as amusement. The boy rode motorcycles for fun without license and get injuries. One of the member staff wrote an article as “15 kyats Disease” in one of the famous newspapers. A day after the local authority closed down all the hiring shops and adolescents with motorcycle accidents stopped coming to hospital.

Conclusion

Myanmar is now aware that the problem of road safety is a major public health problem and it is high time to establish National Road Safety Committees with participation of the many agencies. National Road Safety Committee will lead the role for activities towards the Road Safety with the adequate supply of funds in the near future.
Yangon, 5 April — Arts of Spring Gallery continues

Yangon, 5 April — Arts of Spring Gallery, exhibited by Dawei painters as a brand-new taste for arts enthusiasts, continued for the third day today at National Theatre on Pyay Road here from 9 am to 4 pm. The works of celebrated painters and sculptors can be viewed at the exhibition, which will be kept open to all till 7 April. MNA

Drug trafficker gets jail sentence

Yangon, 5 April — Tachilek District Court on 17 February sentenced 17 years’ imprisonment to Kyaphi, son of U Law Ta, of No 3/78, Sansai Ward-B, Tachilek, under section 19 (A) of Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances Law.

Acting on a tip-off, a combined team comprising members of local intelligence unit and Tachilek special anti-drug squad on 8 December searched his house and seized 300 grams of heroin. In connection with the case, action was taken against him by Tachilek Police Station under the law. MNA

Yangon, 5 April — Drug refinery raided in Waingmaw

Yangon, 5 April — Acting on information that stimulant tablets were manufacturing at Tabuhban valley in Sadon region, Waingmaw Township, near Myanmar-China border at an estimated map reference D-789457, a combined team comprising members of the Tatmadaw in the region, the military intelligence unit, the special anti-drug squad and Kachin State Special Regions 1 and 2, raided the place at 8.20 am on 24 March. The authorities seized one machine used for production of stimulant tablets, 15 kilos of ethyl-vanillin, 2,400 kilos of Phenyl acetic acid (white powder), 8,118 litres of spirit, three refrigerators, four motorcars, two pumps, 30 gas containers, four air containers, 165 empty plastic containers, 52 iron barrels, two 20-KVA generators, machinery used in production of narcotic drugs, and 11 kinds of other paraphernalia. Arrangements are under way to take action against those involved in the case by the police station concerned under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. MNA

Yangon, 5 April — Arts of Spring Gallery continues

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Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Than Htay inspects Aphyauk gas field in Taikkyi Township.

President Thein Sein and Yangon Mayor Song Aung in the Middle Ground of the Yangon River in the Yangon Delta. — MNA
Myanmar delegation arrives back from India

YANGON, 5 April — Myanmar goodwill delegation led by Chairman of the Civil Service Selection and Training Board Dr Than Nyun arrived back here by air this afternoon from India after concluding the visit from 30 March to 5 April.

Auditor-General Maj-Gen Luu Maung, Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, CSSTB members, Charge d’Affaires ai of Indian Embassy Mr Rahul Kuldreship and officials welcomed back the delegation at the Yangon International Airport.

The delegation members U Aung Myint of the CSSTB, Director-General of the Civil Service Selection and Training Department U Hla Kyi and Rector of the Central Institute of Civil Service (Upper Myanmar) Col Aung Hla Win also arrived back on the same flight. — MNA

Deputy Minister inspects Satsan dry dock

YANGON, 5 April — Deputy Minister for Transport U Pe Than this morning arrived at Satsan dry dock of the Myanmar Port Authority here and inspected Thamada ship which is being docked there.

At the briefing hall, Managing Director of the MPA and officials reported to the deputy minister on condition of Thamada ship which is in dock. Afterwards, the deputy minister attended to the needs and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

UDE courses to be given, examination centres announced

YANGON, 5 April — Intensive lecture courses for 2003-2004 academic year of Yangon University of Distance Education will be given from 21 through 30 April. And final examinations will be held from 4 to 10 May 2004 at Dagon University, Yangon Eastern University, Mawlamyine University, Pathein University, Sitway University, Pyay University, Taungoo University, Dawei University, Myitkyina University, Hpa-an University, Myek University and Bago Degree College.

The students majoring in third-year Arts, Eco and Law and fourth-year Law who have registered at Dagon branch (Dagon University) of Yangon University of Distance Education are to attend the courses at Dagon University. Those majoring in third-year Eco are to sit for their exam at BHES-1, North Oakkakapla, BHES-2, North Oakkakapla, BHES-3, North Oakkakapla, BHES-4, North Oakkakapla, BHES-5, North Oakkakapla, BHES-1 Dagon Myothit (North), BHES-3 Dagon Myothit (North), and BHES-4 Dagon Myothit (North), and other third- and fourth-year majors are to appear in the exam at Dagon University.

The students majoring in third-year Arts, Eco and Law and fourth-year Law who have registered at Eastern Branch (University Eastern University) of Yangon Distance Education are to attend the courses at University Eastern University. Third-year students majoring in Myanmar are to sit for exam at BEHS-1, Thanlyin; third-year English majors at BEHS-1, Thanlyin; and third-year Law majors at BEHS-2, Thanlyin. Other third-year majors and fourth-year Law majors are to sit for exam at Yangon Eastern University.

Those majoring in third-year Arts, Eco and Law and fourth-year Law who have registered at respective local branches of Yangon University of Distance Education are to attend the courses and to appear in exam at their universities and degree colleges concerned.

Detailed information will be announced at respective branches of University of Education and BEHSs. — MNA

Myanmar Wushu sport team that will undergo training in China. — NLM

Myanmar Wushu team leaves for PRC

YANGON, 5 April — A 22-member Myanmar Wushu sports team comprising Wushu Sanshou selected by U Khun Ja Aung, coach of the Myanmar Wushu Federation, left here for Guandong Province, People’s Republic of China, this evening to undergo joint wushu training with Chinese wushu athletes for World Wushu Championship. — MNA

Narcotic drugs seized in Mandalay

YANGON, 5 April — A combined team comprising members of Local Intelligence Unit and Mandalay Special Anti-Drug Squad, acting on information, on 25 February, 2004, searched the house of Phon Zu Wai of 28th Street between 80th and 81st Streets, Chanayetathan, Mandalay and arrested him together with drug user Kyar Phu and seized 3.5 grams of heroin and 9666 stimulant tablets bearing “WY” letters in the bedroom.

In connection with the case, action was taken against Phon Zu Wai, son of U Phu Wa, AL No.28th Street, 80x81 Street, Chanay Thazan, Mandalay and Kyar Phu, son of U Luu Yu Shin, Moyma Road, Hopin under Section of 15/19 (a)/20(a)/ 21 of Narcotic Drug and Psychotropic Substances Law by No 8 Mandalay Police Station. — MNA

CSSTB Chairman Dr Than Nyun being welcome back at the airport. — MNA

Deputy Minister for Transport U Pe Than arrives back on 5 April. — MNA

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Detailed information will be announced at respective branches of University of Education and BEHSs. — MNA

Myanmar Trade Fair-2004 concludes

YANGON, 5 April — Quartz International Co Ltd displayed Myanmar Trade Fair-2004 with the permission of the Ministry of Commerce at Yangon Trade Centre on Upper Parandawng Street today for the last day.

At the trade fair, Great Summit Int’l Co Ltd, Winner Plastic Manufacturing Co Ltd, Lion Lady Enterprises and other companies put on sale a variety of their goods. Managing Director Daw Myat Thet Aye presented the best decoration and flower basket to Daw Ni Ni Myint of Great Summit Int’l Co Ltd. — MNA

Poem

Padauk Showers

* Like a guest, it comes in time
To usher in waterfest the shower comes
Fretting if it’ll come or not
Looking forward with anguish
With much in mind, Virgin Padauk
Comes to my heart.

* As if one step is worth a million
There’s a harbinger to come the clouds roll in
As if it’d come instantly, there’s a threat
That rogue shower, dares to frighten
Felt as if crying, because of anguish
My heart beats faster, Virgin Padauk.

* There’s roll of thunder, that precedes rain
Fragrance of earth, in the soft breeze
With sign to pour, it brings joy
No to spill out, it has to be contained
Can’t be withheld, the heart flutters
My pride is hurt, Virgin Padauk.

* If she coaxes, I’ll bend over
Even if I’m firm, I’d have to give in
Even before coaxed, was ready to surrender
Even if I’m firm, I’d have to give in
My heart beats faster, Virgin Padauk.

* If the rain showers coax
Fragrance of earth, in the soft breeze
With sign to pour, it brings joy
No to spill out, it has to be contained
Can’t be withheld, the heart flutters
My pride is hurt, Virgin Padauk.
Spokesman says Iran has no secret nuclear sites

TEHRAN, 5 April — Iran reiterated on Sunday that it was not hiding any of its nuclear facilities from UN inspectors and its resumption of work on a key part of the nuclear fuel cycle was not a violation of its commitment to suspend uranium enrichment activities.

There is no need to open a site that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is not aware of and that we have hidden from IAEA inspectors,” Foreign Ministry Spokesman Hamid-Reza Asefi told a Press briefing.

“We have a transparent and constructive cooperation with IAEA, and this will continue. We are committed to our engagements, and up to now have not violated any of them,” Asefi stressed.

Meanwhile, Asefi denied a Western news agency report claiming that traces of enriched uranium have been found in one of Iran’s nuclear sites, terming such report as “baseless and false”.

“The IAEA experts have not reported any case to this effect at the end of their recent visit to Tehran,” Asefi stressed. He also described IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano and EllBaradei’s upcoming one-day visit to Iran on Tuesday as “important”.

In a deal with the IAEA late last year, Tehran agreed to suspend uranium enrichment and related activities while UN inspectors delved into its programme.

But Asefi claimed the resumption of work at a uranium conversion facility near the central city of Isfahan, which was announced last week, was not a violation of the deal.

“The resumption of activities at Isfahan does not violate any of our commitments. It is for the production of UF4 in an experimental fashion, which has nothing to do with our commitment to voluntarily suspend uranium enrichment,” Asefi said.

Asefi also confirmed that a new visit by IAEA inspectors would take place later this month, with the latest probe focusing on “the suspension of enrichment and the G-2 centrifuge”.

Ugandan President urges Africans to unite on trade with West

KAMPALA, 5 April — Uganda President Yoweri Museveni has urged Africans to unite on trade with the West, according to a news release issued by the Ugandan State House here Sunday. He made the call in his closing speech at the three-day Africa food security conference, which started here Thursday.

He told the more than 400 participants that since the first African country won independence nearly 50 years ago, no African country has been transferred from the world’s first to the world’s third.

At the closing of the meeting, Ugandan Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Minister Kibamba Mugera said the conference resolved that food and nutrition for Africa must be achieved.

He said that Africa must raise agricultural productivity, foster pro-poor economic growth through improved markets, build better infrastructure, harness better trade competitiveness, establish institutional and human capacity, improve nutrition and health service, and strengthen and good governance.

Nigerian police kill 9 fleeing robbery suspects

LAGOS, 5 April — Nine armed robbery suspects were fatally shot by police in central Nigeria, local newspaper Weekend Vanguard reported Saturday.

The suspects were killed by officers in Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Lafia, Nigeria’s central state of Nasarawa. Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) in charge of CID Musa Kwankwani said a robbery was killed at the scene, while the remaining five died on the way to the hospital, he said.

Crime level has been risen in Nigeria, the most populous African country of over 130 million, as economic worsens in recent years.

To stem rampant armed robberies, the Nigerian police have launched a campaign called “Operation Fire-for-Fire” since 2002 across the nation. So far hundreds of armed robbers were killed and thousands were arrested.

Ugandan Army kills 7 rebels

KAMPALA, 5 April — Ugandan Government forces killed seven rebels in the northern part of the country on Friday, Sunday Monitor newspaper reported Saturday.

A media and public relations officer of the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) said the battles took place in Kitgum District.

“The Army killed seven rebels, rescued 12, captured three and while three surrendered including a second lieutenant,” Paddy Ankunda was quoted as saying.

In the operations the Army also recovered four guns, two grenades, and 342 rounds of ammunition.

The UPDF is gaining ground on the rebel Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), Ankunda said.

Led by the elusive Joseph Kony, the LRA rebels have been fighting an 18-year war to topple the Ugandan Government dominated by southerners, and give power to the northern Acholi tribe.

Say No To Drugs
UN eminent persons panel speaks highly of 1st regional meeting

HANGZHOU, 5 April — Members of the panel of eminent persons on UN reform and the UN’s role spoke highly Sunday of its first regional meeting sponsored by China, the “Asia High-Level Symposium on Threats, Challenge and Change”. The meeting, which began on April 2, invited 11 members of the panel of eminent persons and 33 former senior officials and experts from nearly 20 countries to hold discussions on the threats and challenges brought by globalization and collective actions to deal with the threats and challenges, as well as the operation of the UN and reform of the UN.

According to the spokesperson of the meeting, participants, after three days of discussions, all claimed the meeting proceeded in a frank and earnest atmosphere and reached good results and outstanding consensus, including strengthening multilateralism and the UN’s role, increasing investment in terms of development, and solving international issues through peaceful means. The spokesperson said participants believed the meeting, attended by representatives from nearly 20 Asian countries, was more positive, open and specific to the point than expected. The meeting showed that face-to-face communication is still important and necessary despite advanced communication means.

Quite a few members with the UN eminent persons panel also said they felt the results of the meeting were conducive to their work and determination and collective efforts to strengthen the UN’s role, the spokesperson said. When talking about the war in Iraq, all delegates not only raised inquiries about the war, but also expressed criticism over the unilateralism. They were worried about the negative impact brought by the war to the UN’s role, and the possible results caused by unilateralism, the spokesperson said.

Delegates agreed the reform of the UN Security Council is one of the most important issues concerning all parties, which demands the political will, patience, all parties’ efforts to determine and coordinated actions of all parties. They also held that the UN Security Council should highly represent the interests of the developing countries, and enhance its own working efficiency, the spokesperson said. They also expressed satisfaction over the arrangement of the symposium and appreciation for the warm reception by Hangzhou people, the spokesperson said.

Tanzania hopes to eradicate polio next year

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 5 April — Tanzania hopes to eradicate polio by the year 2005, a senior official with the Tanzanian Government has distributed about four billion shillings (about five million US dollars) to the Health Ministry said in Iringa, southern Tanzania, on Saturday.

Ali Mziga, director of the disease prevention services of the ministry, explained that the country’s last polio patient under the age of five was reported seven years ago. At present, he said, less than 4 per cent of children under the age of five are suffering from measles, while the figure was as high as 25 per cent during the 1980s.

The spokesman said there were 300,000 children younger than five years old in the country, and nearly 60 per cent of those children are in rural areas. The successful campaigns against polio, measles and lung disease, in the country till now.

It is estimated that in the 2002/2003 financial year, the Tanzanian Government has distributed about four billion shillings (about four million US dollars) to the Health Ministry and in the 2003/2004 financial year, the budget has increased about five billion or six billion shillings (about five million or six million dollars). — MNA/Xinhua

Who says polio situation in Nigeria still alarming

LAGOS, 5 April — The wild polio situation in Nigeria is still very alarming, although remarkable achievements have been made in polio eradication programme, a local newspaper This Day reported recently.

Patrick Akande, surveillance officer of the World Health Organiza-

(Continued on Page 4)

Venezuela sets record saving river turtles

SANTA MARIA DEL ORINOCO (Venezuela), 5 April — The Venezuelan government has established what it believes is a record for releasing an endangered species back into the wild by setting free tens of thousands of protected Arrau turtles into the Orinoco River.

Scrambling over each other to reach the Orinoco waters, thousands of palm-sized, green turtles were released over the weekend from a sandy island on the huge river in the latest part of a 10-year programme to preserve the species.

“We’ve been doing this for 10 years now and with this part we have released a total of 65,000 turtles,” Arrau officials say. “It’s a historic release of a protected species.” Environment Minister Ana Elias Osoiro told Reuters as turtles bobbed in the brownish waters.

The programme takes tiny, new-born Arraus from the river banks to raise them in a refuge for a year before releasing them back into the wild.

Officials hope by protecting the hatching grounds, their most vulnerable months they can increase the survival rate of South America’s largest fresh water turtle, which has a long list of predators including fish, birds and crocodiles.

Poor five villages in the region near the Colombian border, part of Venezuela’s sweltering southern flatlands, also have a tradition of eating the turtle eggs and meat.

Officials say environment education programmes have reduced turtle hunting.

MNA/Reuters

Efficient use of electricity

* Use daylight as the main source of light
* Use the least possible amount of electricity only if there is not enough natural light
* Use the least possible amount of electricity required in production and service enterprises
* Preventing waste of electricity benefits the user and others

There are about 500,000 households using electricity in Yangon. Thus, saving a four-foot fluorescent lamp, each household amounts to saving power that is equal to the capacity a 20-megawatt power station can supply.

Efficient use of fuel

* Saving one gallon of fuel per car per month will save the nation one US dollar
* Thus, a total of 455,822 cars in Myanmar can save US$ 5.5 million in a year
* The amount, US $ 5.5 million, can build a major bridge across Ayeyawady River

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appealed

Chile says Bolivia’s sea access depends on Peru

SANTIAGO, 5 April — Chilean President Ricardo Lagos said Saturday that Bolivia’s sea access depends on Peru and ruled out that Chile might be divided by a Bolivian strip. “We concluded our borders with Bolivia a long time ago,” Lagos told the local Bio Bio radio, adding his country proposed a plan on a Bolivian corridor in 1950 and 1975 but Peru refused to accept.

Bolivia became landlocked after losing the Pacific War (1879-1883) to Chile while Bolivia’s ally lost the states of Arica and Tarapaca.

Lagos noted that the Chilean Peruvian treaty signed in 1929 did not allow Chile to dispose Arica and Tarapaca without Peru’s permission.

MNA/Xinhua

More Canadian forests controlled by companies

OTTAWA, 5 April — Canada’s public forests are increasingly falling under the control of large corporations, local Press reported Sunday.

In a national survey of forest tenure, Global Forest Watch Canada found the amount of public forest controlled by companies increased by 9 per cent between 2000 and 2003.

Global Forest Watch Canada is a non-profit organization conducting research into development activities in Canada’s forests and their environmental impacts. — MNA/Xinhua
French police arrest senior ETA suspect

MAJORCA, 5 April — French police have arrested a man suspected of being a leader of the armed Basque separatist group ETA and responsible for a number of killings in the 1980s, a Spanish security source said on Friday. The man, identified as Felix Ignacio Esparza Luri, was detained close to Dax in southwest France.

French police said he had been under surveillance for some time and a broader operation was still going on.

MNA/Reuters

Spain warns embassies after receiving letter of threat

MAJORCA, 5 April — The Spanish Government urged all its embassies in northern Africa and the Middle East to be “more careful” and step up security measures after its representative in El Cairo, Egypt, received a letter of threat.

This was informed on Friday by Spanish State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ramon Gil Casares when confirming that El Cairo Embassy received on March 28 a letter signed by the organization of Jatib Abu Hafis El Masti (the battalion of the Egyptian Abu Hafis), a fundamentalist Islamic group tied to al-Qaeda.

The letter threatened to use bomb-vehicles against Spanish interests in northern Africa and the Mediterranean.

MNA/Xinhua

Italy wants Red Brigades included on EU terrorist list

ROME, 5 April — Italy is pushing to get the Red Brigades included on the European Union’s list of terrorist organizations, the Italian foreign and interior ministers said on Friday.

The ministers said the Italian centre-right government was preparing a request that would be put to the European Union later this month.

They said pressure to include Italy’s leftist terrorist organization on the European list confirmed the government’s commitment to fighting terrorism.

Resurgent Red Brigades have claimed responsibility for the assassinations of two labour ministry consultants — Massimo D’Antona in May 1999 and Marco Biagi in March 2002. Police have since arrested the suspected leader and several members of the group, which calls itself the Red Brigades-Party of Communist Combatants (BR-PCC).

MNA/Xinhua

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Spain warns embassies after receiving letter of threat

MAJORCA, 5 April — The Spanish Government urged all its embassies in northern Africa and the Middle East to be “more careful” and step up security measures after its representative in El Cairo, Egypt, received a letter of threat.

This was informed on Friday by Spanish State Secretary of Foreign Affairs Ramon Gil Casares when confirming that El Cairo Embassy received on March 28 a letter signed by the organization of Jatib Abu Hafis El Masti (the battalion of the Egyptian Abu Hafis), a fundamentalist Islamic group tied to al-Qaeda.

The letter threatened to use bomb-vehicles against Spanish interests in northern Africa and the Mediterranean.

MNA/Xinhua

Italy wants Red Brigades included on EU terrorist list

ROME, 5 April — Italy is pushing to get the Red Brigades included on the European Union’s list of terrorist organizations, the Italian foreign and interior ministers said on Friday.

The ministers said the Italian centre-right government was preparing a request that would be put to the European Union later this month.

They said pressure to include Italy’s leftist terrorist organization on the European list confirmed the government’s commitment to fighting terrorism.

Resurgent Red Brigades have claimed responsibility for the assassinations of two labour ministry consultants — Massimo D’Antona in May 1999 and Marco Biagi in March 2002. Police have since arrested the suspected leader and several members of the group, which calls itself the Red Brigades-Party of Communist Combatants (BR-PCC).

MNA/Xinhua

AIDS is a national concern.
Bad diets, lack of exercise, smoking main killers in NZ

Wellington, 5 April—Bad diet, smoking and sitting around are the top three killers in New Zealand, as the Health Ministry in a report released here on Saturday. The Looking Upstream report, published by The Dominion Post, listed the top 20 causes of death in New Zealand, taking into account conditions and risk factors.

The ministry claimed that the report was the country's first comprehensive mortality analysis.

Using mortality figures from 1997, the study divides deaths into biological, behavioural, environmental and social categories. Diet and insufficient physical activity, combined, were believed to have killed about 11,000 people, accounting for almost 40 per cent of the total deaths in that year, said the report.

About 30 per cent of deaths were attributed to the joint effect of dietary factors, including 6 per cent to poor vegetable and fruit consumption. Insufficient physical activity accounted for almost 10 per cent.

Kelly Osbourne enters rehabilitation for drug use

Washington, 4 April—Heavy metal rocker Ozzy Osbourne and his wife Sharon said their 19-year-old daughter Kelly entered a California drug rehabilitation clinic earlier in the day to grapple with her abuse of painkillers.

Sharon Osbourne told CNN’s “Larry King Live” the couple confronted their daughter early on Friday after the family was contacted by an English tabloid seeking comment on a picture in which Kelly appeared to be buying drugs.

“She admitted it after a lot of twisting,” she told CNN. “Literally, a couple of hours ago, she was admitted to rehab.” She said their son, Jack Osbourne, who underwent substance abuse treatment last year, took Kelly to Promises Drug & Alcohol Rehab.

Smoking was responsible for 18 per cent of all deaths, including passive smoking, while poverty and high blood cholesterol were close behind at 17 per cent.

Elevated cholesterol levels were the top biological cause, causing some 4,700 deaths. The report noted that New Zealand had a larger proportion of suffers than other Western societies, probably due to their high consumption of saturated fats such as meat and dairy products. Cholesterol surpassed high blood pressure (13 per cent or 3,700 deaths) and obesity (11.5 per cent or 2,300 deaths).

“The air that the people breathe can also be a killer,” Microbes accounted for 6.5 per cent of deaths, with air pollution causing 3.5 per cent.

The platform, built in 1276 in the early Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), was located in a temple courtyard in Guangzhou. 12 kilometres to the southeast of Dengfeng City.

The platform measures 31.997 metres long, 5.171 metres wide and 0.247 metres high, the stone building has two parts, the platform and the stone Chinese sundial, which was covered by 36 slates.

According to historical records, a total of 27 observations were built in the Yuan Dynasty but only the one in Dengfeng is known to have survived. Using these objects, astronomers Guo Shoujing and others had compiled the world’s earliest calendar in the 13th century.

The platform is an entry and exit with only one symmetrical entrance and exit fenced with brick walls and stone, the building has two parts, the platform and the stone Chinese sundial built up by 36 slates.

Policeman, three suspects dead in Madrid blast

Leganes (Spain), 5 April—Three men for the Madrid train bombings and a police officer were killed when the suspects set off an explosion when cornered on Saturday, the government said.

“Right now I can tell you that there are three bodies of suspected terrorists who may have killed themselves,” Interior Minister Angel Acebes told a news conference.

A police officer was killed and 11 others injured during the operation in the southwestern Madrid suburb of Leganes, Acebes said.

Police units arrived at the seven flat on Saturday evening in search of suspects in the March 11 bombings that killed 191 people.

When the suspect of the flat spotted the police, “they began firing and shouting and chanting in Arabic,” he said.

The police were about to raid the flat when the suspects set off a powerful explosion, he said. Acebes said it was possible one of the suspects may have escaped before the police cordoned off the area but he was unable to confirm it.

Spain is holding 15 people, many of them Moroccans, over the March 11 car bombs.

Witnesses said the explosions were blown out of the windows of the three floors of the block of flats where the suspects had been holed up.

Acebes said earlier on Saturday that a bomb found on a high-speed rail track in Friday contained the same explosive.

Bad food, lack of exercise, smoking main killers in NZ

On the 9.46-metre-high platform, there are two small cottages on each side. To the north of the platform is an entry and exit which are symmetrically arranged. Linking the entry and exit to the platform are stairs and pathways.

Between the two pathways is another entrance to the Chinese sundial, which was covered by 36 slates.

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Nicotine-hooked financier ministers and central bank governors were believed to have killed 191 people, including passive smokers—about 11,000 people, accounting for almost 40 per cent of the total deaths in that year, said the report.

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Smoking was responsible for 18 per cent of all deaths, with air pollution causing 3.5 per cent. Links were of which were thought to be caused by vehicle fumes.

Lower risk factors included alcohol consumption (3 per cent), illicit drug use (10.5 per cent) and unsafe sex (10.5 per cent).

The platform’s author, Dr. Martin Tobias, from the ministry’s Public Health Intelligence Unit, said the aim of the report was to help improve disease prevention and health promotion.

“Much of the information here is already available, but the report brings it together and also provides a more complete way to classify causes of death at risk factor level,” Tobias said.---MNA/Ninhau
Sevilla claim 1-0 win over struggling Espanyol

MADRID, 4 April — Sevilla put an end to a three-match losing streak when a well-taken volley from striker Antonio gave them a 1-0 win at home to relegation-threatened Espanyol in the Primera Liga on Saturday. Defeat for Espanyol dealt a severe blow to their hopes of retaining their top-flight status and left them two points behind Real Mallorca, who sit just above the relegation places and face Real Sociedad on Sunday.

Antonio grabbed the winner when he smashed the ball home from seven metres after fellow striker Dario Silva headed back across the goal six minutes into the second half and the Andalucians withstood some late pressure to hold on for the win.

Late goals salvage Celtic's unbeaten home record

GLASGOW, 4 April — Celtic scored twice in the last three minutes on Saturday to salvage a 2-2 draw with Hearts and extend their long unbeaten home record to 76 games.

The run of Scottish Premier League leaders struggled for fluency against a well-drilled Hearts and were staring defeat in the face after Kevin McKenna's 21st minute opener and a second from substitute Mark de Vries on 72.

But Chris Sutton threw Celtic a lifeline in the 87th minute before Didier Agathe wallapped high into the net in injury time.

Bayern beat 10-man Kaiserslautern to close gap

BERLIN, 4 April — Champions Bayern Munich closed the gap on leaders Werder Bremen to six points with a 2-0 away victory over 10-man Kaiserslautern on Saturday.

Bayern striker Roy Makaay opened the scoring from aMassimo Maccarone ball clear but put it into his own net. Jonathan Greening got the second in the 51st from a Massimo Maccarone pass.

Newcastle United 4 — Everton 2

Craig Bellamy put Newcasle in front from six metres in the fifth minute dribbling round diving keeper Nigel Martyn after a header from Alan Shearer. Thomas Gravesen Equalized eight minutes later with a right-foot shot drilled home from a Tomas Radzinski pass.

Chelsea close gap on Arsenal with win at Spurs

LONDON, 4 April — Chelsea closed the gap on leaders Arsenal to four points on Saturday with a pulsating 1-0 win at Tottenham Hotspur in the English Premier League.

Chelsea's Dutch striker Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink followed his hat-trick against Wolverhampton Wanderers last week with the goal of a lifetime for a Damien Duff pass in the 38th minute.

The win put pressure on Arsenal who lost their FA Cup semi-final 1-0 to third-placed Manchester United earlier on Saturday and who face Chelsea in the second leg of their Champions League quarterfinal.

It also extended Chelsea's unbeaten league run against Spurs to 28 games, the longest run between two clubs in the top flight.

Spurs had several good chances to break the hoodoo, particularly in the first half when Jermain Defoe sent an easy header wide with only the keeper Marco Ambrosio to beat. Robbie Keane had a shot cleared off the line by Ambrosio and in the second half he tipped an effort from Jermaine Defoe over the bar.

Chelsea, tight at the back and dangerous on the break, got the upper hand in the second half, however, and Duff looked a constant danger down the left wing.

"We had chances to finish the match. We made three great counter-attacks to kill it off," Chelsea coach Claudio Ranieri said, mindful of his side's contrasting 17-match failure to beat Arsenal despite often scoring first. The following are the Brief match reports of Saturday's English Premier League games:

Fullham 0 — Birmingham City 0

Fullham and Birmingham, both in the hunt for a European place next season, failed to find the net. In Birmingham, Kieron Dyer made it 2-1 for the side with a flukish header from 14 metres which bounced down and over Martyn. Shearer added the third in the 52nd after Everton failed to clear. Everton pulled it back to 2-2 through Joseph Yobo but Shearer found the net again in the final minute.

The win leap-frogged Newcastle into the coveted Champions League qualifying fourth place over Liverpool who play on Sunday.

Wolverhampton Wanderers 1 — Southampt on 4

Southampton pushed both sides Wolves further into the mine. The first goal came from James Beattie in the 25th minute from 15 metres out. Southampton made it two in the 58th when David Prutton's free kick was converted by Claus Lundekvam. Wolves got one back through Henri Camara in the 72nd but Kevin Phillips scored twice in the last two minutes to end the home side's hopes.

Real Madrid's Brazilian Roberto Carlos (R) and Sevilla's Francisco Casquero fight for the ball during their Spanish League soccer match at Santiago Bernabeu stadium March 28, 2004. — Reuters

Chelsea Captain John Terry — Internet

Marseille's Meriem injects shock defeat on Lyon

PARIS, 4 April — A second-half goal by Camel Meriem handed Olympique Marseille a 2-1 victory at Olympique Lyon on Saturday and denied the defending champions the chance to return to the top of Ligue 1.

Marseille have 63 points from 31 matches and trail leaders Monaco by a point with seven games left after the principality side took 3-0 down at halftime against struggling AC Ajaccio on Friday to salvage a point in a 3-3 draw.

Marseille, still chasing a UEFA Cup spot, stand in the standings with 50 points behind AJ Auxerre — who travel to lowly Toulouse on Sunday — on goal difference. Paris St Germain are third with 60 points they revered their title hopes with a 3-2 win at home to Nantes.

Marseille made a dream start when Drogba opened the scoring after only five minutes at Lyon. The Ivory Coast striker was set up by midfielders Sylvain Diaye and outmuscled the Lyon defence to volley home from close range.

Drogba was just as invaluable at the other end five minutes later when he helped out goalkeeper Fabien Barthez by stopping a Peguy Luyindula header on the goal line.

Lyon levelled in the 17th minute courtesy of a goal by France striker Luyindula, who took advantage of a Ibrahim Hemdani blunder in the box to score from five metres.

They lost another French international, Sidney Govou, to a muscle strain in the first half and the forward is very doubtful for Wednesday's Champions League quarterfinal against Porto. Lyon trail 2-0 from the first leg in Portugal.

MNA/Reuters

LIGA ON SATURDAY. — INTERNET

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Measures for modernization of Yangon City inspected

YANGON, 5 April — Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman and Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe viewed round the progress made in the tasks of upgrading and beautifying Yangon City along Yangon port this evening and gave instructions.

The commander arrived at the briefing hall at Botataung jetty here at 4.30 pm. The commander was welcomed there by Deputy Minister for Transport U Pe Than, Vice-Mayor Col Maung Fa, Managing Director of Yangon Port Authority U Thein Huy, No 4 Military Region Commander Col Yan Naing Do, and local authorities.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister U Pe Than reported to Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe on tasks being carried out at the jetty, measures for making the jetty not only the loading and unloading place but also for the public recreation centre, and sanitation work.

Vice-Mayor Col Maung Fa also reported on progress of extending Strand Road into a six-lane highway and future tasks.

In response to the reports, Maj-Gen Myint Swe said it is apparent that the modernization of Yangon City has now taken shape and urged officials to launch educational campaigns to increase the public awareness of the importance of cleanliness.

Next, the commander also looked into the upgrading tasks being carried out at the place from Sin Oo than jetty to Wadan wharf and gave instructions. He also inspected the measures for beautifying Bagaya wharf and gave instructions on speedily implementation of the tasks.

New oil wells drilled in Pantanaw, Nyaungdon

YANGON, 5 April — Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi yesterday afternoon inspected drilling of oil test well No 1 in Pantanaw Township in Ayeyawady Division.

At the work site, officials concerned reported to the minister on progress of the drilling and prospects for oil and gas production. Next, the minister gave instructions on timely completion of oil well which will extend ten thousand feet in depth, more oil exploration in the rainy season and attended to the needs and laid down the future plans.

Afterwards, the minister inspected the new oil test well which is being drilled near Nyaungdon in the division. The minister gave instructions on increased production of oil and natural gas in the region and work site safety.

During his tour, the minister also saw over the work site for laying of new gas pipeline and distribution of natural gas. New pipelines are being laid for distribution of natural gas produced from Nyaungdon region.

Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi inspects laying of a new gas pipeline between Yangon and Nyaungdon. — MNA

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