Work Coordination Meeting No 1/2004 on Myanmar Industrial Development continues

YANGON, 21 April — The Work Coordination Meeting No 1/2004 on Myanmar Industrial Development continued for the second day at the training hall of the Ministry of Industry-1 on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here this afternoon, attended by Chairman of Industrial Development Committee Secre-tary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win.

Also present were Chairman of Myanmar Industrial Development Committee Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung, Chairman of Myanmar Industrial Development Work Committee Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, Minister for Cooperatives Maj-Gen Htay Do and the deputy ministers, chairmen of sub-committees, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, chairman of District Peace and Development Councils, chairman of Industrial Zone Supervisory Committees and members, the President of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and officials, industrialists, guests.

Secretary of Myanmar Industrial Development Committee Deputy Minister for Industry-1 Brig-Gen Kyaw Win and Joint Secretary Deputy Minister for Industry-2 Lt-Col Khin Maung Kyaw reported on extended assembling of buses and trucks at the industrial zones. Members of Industrial Zone Supervisory Committees, the industrialists and chairmen of sub-committees reported on assembling of vehicles, production of farm implements including power tillers, experiences gained in production of quality products that are on high demand depending on regional and geographical conditions.

Chairman of Industrial Development Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win took part in the discussions. He said he wished the industrialists and delegates from the industrial zones discuss production of farm and industrial equipment, assembling of cars, import substitute industries and production of marketable machines and parts. The State would provide necessary assistance to them, he said.

Ministers U Aung Thaung and Maj-Gen Saw Lwin said it is true that the State and ministries concerned will provide assistance to them, he said. The industrialists of the zones are to discuss establishment of industries that will produce farm equipment, they said.

The meeting ended in the evening.—MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Chinese Ambassador

YANGON, 21 April — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China to the Union of Myanmar Mr Li Jinjun at Zeyarthi Beikman on Konmyntha at 4.30 pm today. Also present at the call were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung and Director-General of the Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet. — MNA

Myitkyina Open golf tourney from 6 to 9 May

YANGON, 21 April — Organized by the Myanmar Golf Federation and sponsored by Jade Land Myanmar Co Ltd, the second leg of Myitkyina Open Golf Tournament 2004 will be held on a grand scale at Northern Star Golf Club in Myitkyina, Kachin State, from 6 to 9 May.

The tournament will be categorized into professional golfers and amateur level. Only the golfers with 0 to 12 handicap will be eligible for the amateur level. Those under the age of 18 will not be considered.

Golfers are to enroll at Northern Star Golf Club or Han Event Management not later than 4 May. Detailed information about the competition will be available on request. — MNA

Perspectives

Strive for better healthcare services

Article

From a granary to an industrial zone

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**PERSPECTIVES**

**Thursday, 22 April, 2004**

**Strive for better healthcare services**

It is said that health is wealth. And in our endeavour for a peaceful and developed nation, it is important that the people of the nation are healthy. Only then will they be able to work for the development of the nation. Investment in the health sector is the most fundamental investment. Therefore, the Ministry of Health is building health infrastructures, spending more and more year after year.

The opening of a specialist hospital in Kyaukse in Mandalay division was held on 18 April and it was attended by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, also Vice-Chairman of the National Health Committee. In his speech on the occasion, the Secretary-1 stressed that the newly-opened 200-bed specialist hospital would contribute a lot not only to the healthcare services for the local people but also to the development of the region.

The government is trying to improve the health standard of the people by implementing national health plans. Before 1988, there were only four institutes under the Ministry of Health but now the number has increased to fourteen. The number of doctors stood at 12,268 in 1988 and it has increased to 16,570. The number of hospitals has also increased from 617 in 1988 to 766.

And a total of 140 hospitals has been upgraded. In the border areas, there were only eight hospitals and six dispensaries before 1988 but there are now 54 hospitals, 81 dispensaries, 32 rural health centres and 51 sub-rural health centres. Between the fiscal years 1999-2000 and 2002-2003, hospitals in Yangon, Mandalay and headquarters of other states and divisions were installed with modern equipment at a cost of US$ 21.7 million to improve diagnosis and treatment.

In accordance with the guidance of the Head of State and to bridge the gap between the health divide of Upper and Lower Myanmar, Mandalay People’s Hospital, like the one in Yangon, has been installed with modern equipment and staffed with specialists and other technicians. The 200-bed hospital in Kyaukse was built to meet the demand of the region. Therefore, we would like to urge all the health staff of the new hospital to discharge their duties enthusiastically and with good intentions so that they will be able to effectively raise the health standard of the local people.

**People’s Desire**

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

**Minister inspects roads, bridges in Rakhine State**

Yangon, 21 April — Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun and officials of Public Works inspected Taungup-Thandwe Road on 19 April.

Thanwwe District Superintending Engineer of Public Works U Nyan Tun reported on measures undertaken for better roads. The minister gave instructions on completion of the tasks before monsoon and maintenance of small bridges along the roads.

The minister and party inspected Taungup-Maei Road, a major section of Yangon-Pyay-Taungup-Maeikaukphyu Road. The minister and party inspected Huarpyn Village bypass on Yangon-Sittway Road (Taungup-Maei section), the site for Huarpyn Bridge and construction of Lamu Bridge. They inspected Yangon-Kyaukphyu Road (Maeikaukphyu section). Deputy Superintending Engineer U Than Nyein reported on construction of road with the use of geotextile process and measures undertaken for paving of the road. The minister gave instructions on close supervision for durability.

The minister and party inspected the sites for construction of Londawpauk and Thanthamayu Bridges.

**Myanmar delegation leaves for Malaysia**

Yangon, 21 April — Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint left here by air this morning for Penang, Malaysia to attend the 7th ASEAN Health Ministers’ Meeting and the First ASEAN+3 Health Ministers’ Meeting to be held on 22 and 23 April. The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Minister for Education U Than Aung, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo, Malaysian Ambassador to Myanmar Dato’ Cheah Sam Kip, directors-general and officials of the Ministry of Health and their families.

The minister was accompanied by Director-General of Health Planning Department Dr Kyi Soe and Director of Foreign Relations Division Dr Pe Thet Tun.

**Change of bus route announced**

Yangon, 21 April — Change of bus line routes of Nos 49 (Green and Yellow), 201, 219, 210, 36, 43 (Green), 173, 174, 176, 179, 180 and 182 due to the Parami Overpass Construction Project has been featured in the news item “Routes of bus lines to be changed temporarily” appeared in column one, page 9 of the New Light of Myanmar daily issued on 20 (Tuesday) April 2004. Further information from Myanma Railways officials has said that the No 43 (Green) will run on its original route through the junction of Waisyantya and Parami roads located under North Okayata Bridge.

**Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu and wife being welcomed by British Ambassador Ms Vicky Bosman at the reception to mark the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II — MNA**

**Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun inspects progress in building Londawpauk Bridge in Rakhine State — CONSTRUCTION**
At least 106 US troops killed in Iraq in April

WASHINGTON, 21 April—US troops are dying in higher numbers in Iraq this month than at any time during the war, with polls showing rising unease among Americans over the mounting death toll and doubts about the conflict’s merits.

At least 106 US troops have died in April amid fierce attacks by guerrillas in both Sunni Muslim and Shi’ite regions — far more than any month since the US-led invasion to oust President Saddam Hussein. The previous peak was 82 deaths in November during an earlier spike in attacks by insurgents.

In 13 months of military involvement in Iraq, 709 Americans have been killed in Iraq, the Pentagon said on Tuesday.

The death toll in the first three weeks of April has about matched the 109 killed in combat from the March 2003 start of Bush’s war, which was declared on March 20 to “major combat” operations six weeks later. Bush made that declaration aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln off the coast of California, en route to the opening of the invasion until President Bush declared an end to the war on May 1, 2003.

The previous peak was 82 deaths in November because of “unacceptable” number of US military casualties while 33 percent said the level was “acceptable.”

Analysts said the mounting US death toll illustrates the rising difficulty of the military task and threatens to undermine public support for Bush’s Iraq policies during a presidential election year.

“What it shows is that the breadth of the insurgency is increasing, that our troops are confronting firefights on multiple fronts, and the sophistication of the insurgents is growing,” said Cato Institute defense analyst Ted Carpenter.

“This doesn’t bode well for the fate of our mission, unfortunately.”

Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has expressed surprise at the recent level of US military deaths in Iraq.  

Iraqi guerrillas hit Marines in Fallujah

FALLUJAH, 21 April—About 35 Iraqi guerrillas attacked US Marines in northern Fallujah just after dark Wednesday, setting off a heavy gun battle, the military said. There were no immediate word on casualties.

The attack began with a massive barrage of rocket-propelled grenades and small arms fire. Explosions were heard throughout the city. Marine forces were put on alert.

The attack comes following Monday’s announcement of an agreement aimed at ending hostilities in the embattled city. US officials have warned that if guerrillas don’t comply with a call by city leaders to disarm, Marines may launch an all-out assault to take the city.

Bremer says Iraqi forces unable to meet threat alone

BAGHDAD, 21 April — Iraqi forces alone will be unable to face the threat posed by guerrillas after the US coalition transfers power to Iraqis on 30 June, US Administrator Paul Bremer said in a statement on Sunday.

Bremer said the surge of violence and kidnappings in Iraq in the past two weeks illustrated the dangers.

“...it is clear that Iraqi forces will not be able, on their own, to deal with these threats by June 30 when an Iraqi Government assumes sovereignty,” he said.

“Instead, Iraq and troops from many countries, including the United States will be partners in providing the security Iraq needs.”

Ninety-nine US soldiers have been killed in action this month — more than the number of US combat deaths in the three-week war that toppled Saddam. Hundreds of Iraqis have also died, many of them civilians.

Up to 50 foreigners have been kidnapped since April 8 and while many have been released, those holding four Italians have killed one hostage and have threatened to kill the others unless Italy withdraws its troops from Iraq.

The United States has trained and fielded more than 200,000 Iraqi security forces serving in police, civil defence units, border patrol and a new national Army and site protection units. But the process of setting up the Armed Forces has been fraught with problems.

Most members of the first Iraqi battalion to be set up within weeks due to dissatisfaction over pay and conditions. Many of the soldiers sent to fight in Fallujah this month refused, saying they would not fight fellow Iraqis.

US forces detained about 200 Iraqi paramilitary troops who refused to take part in the Fallujah offensive, some Iraqi soldiers said.

US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Richard Myers said last week there were problems with the Iraqi troops’ reliability.

“I’d characterize it as their performance has been uneven. But there are instances where they performed very well, and other instances where they’ve been less than perfect,” he said.

In his statement Bremer noted incidents early in April when guerrillas overran Iraqi police stations and seized public buildings and Iraqi forces were unable to stop them.

“If former members of the Republican Guards, the mukhabar, the Fedayeen Saddam and the Moqtada’s militia are to be prevented from shooting their way into power, Iraq’s security forces must have help until they are fully equipped and trained. This is what the coalition intends to do,” Bremer said.

Hamas nominates new leader in Gaza

GAZA, 21 April—Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) nominated on Sunday a new leader in the Gaza Strip to replace Abdel Aziz Rantisi who was assassinated by Israel on Saturday, official Hamas sources reported.

They said the movement decided not to reveal his name for security reasons. The decision was made after two top Hamas leaders Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Rantisi were assassinated by Israel within one month.

“A new general leader for the movement was chosen. The name of the new leader would be a top secret in order to protect him from being targeted by the Zionists,” they said.

Rantisi was nominated as the new Hamas leader on March 24 and Yassin was assassinated on March 19. The new leader was a member of the movement’s political bureau.

Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, is the main militant group in the bloody Palestinian uprising against Israel. Rantisi was Hamas’ top military commander.

An Iraqi youth cries near the grave stone of Fallujah resident Abu Abdullah, at a makeshift cemetery in the besieged town, on 20 April, 2004. The script in Arabic reads, 'Abu Abdullah the martyr, martyred by Americans.' — Internet

Domestic Republic to pull out of Iraq

SANTO DOMINGO, (Dominican Republic ), 21 April—The Dominican Republic will pull its troops out of Iraq in a matter of weeks, in the next few weeks, following the lead of Spain and Honduras, General Jose Miguel Soto Jimenez said Tuesday.

The announcement came just two days after President Hipolito Mejia pledged to keep the country’s 302 troops in Iraq until their one-year commitment ended in August.

"The troops in Iraq will be coming back in the next couple weeks," the Dominican Armed Forces general said.

Soto Jimenez said the President changed course based on security concerns for Dominican soldiers after Honduras announced its troops would be pulled back early.

The Dominicans have been serving with the 370-Honduran troops under a Spanish-led brigade policing Iraq’s al-Qadisiya and Najaf provinces since August.

On Sunday, Spain said it would pull out its 1,300 soldiers early, prompting Honduras to follow Monday. The two countries’ troops were expected home in about six weeks.

The party of Spain’s new Prime Minister, Jose Luis Rodriguez, won March 14 elections three days after subway terrorist bombings in Madrid. Exit polls showed many Spanish voters believed outgoing Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar, by backing the US-led war in Iraq, had provoked the bombings, Spain’s worst terror attack.

Many Dominicans also have criticized Mejia’s support of the war, particularly over the past two weeks. Dominican troops have been attacked more than a dozen times, though non-official reports indicate that they have dertied Mejia’s participation in Iraq ahead of May 16 elections. The President is seeking re-election.

Colleagues say US forces kill two Iraqi TV staff

BAGHDAD, 21 April—US forces killed a reporter working for the US-funded Iraqiya Television along with his driver on Monday north of Baghdad, the victims’ colleagues said.

They said a cameraman was also injured in the attack in the city of Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad. The US military said it had no information on the deaths.

“Early information say US forces shot them while they were in their car,” said Ziad Tarir, an Iraqi journalist.

Dubai’s Al Arabiya television named the dead journalist as Asa’d Kathem. Local and international media organizations have criticized US conduct of US forces in Iraq, saying more care should be taken to protect journalists.

At least six other journalists have been killed by US forces in Iraq since the US-led war began. —MNA/Reuters
Former security adviser Berger says
Iraq at ‘boiling point’

BLOOMBERG, 21 April — US failure to plan the occupation of Iraq has left the nation near a “boiling point,” and no clear way to avoid disastrous consequences for the entire Middle East, former National Security Adviser Sandy Berger said.

“We could have an Iraq that is slipping into chaos, with a rise in radicalism, defining not only Iraq, but the region and our relationship with it,” Berger, who was Democratic President Bill Clinton’s top security adviser from 1995 to 2001, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in hearings today.

It is “unrealistic” to expect new Iraqi leaders to govern the country on July 1 after the US-led coalition transfers political power to the Iraqis, and greater use of US military force against guerrillas might create a “dangerous backlash,” Berger said.

More than 90 coalition soldiers have died this month in some of the deadliest fighting in Iraq since US-led forces ousted dictator Saddam Hussein a year ago. At least 22 Iraqi prisoners were killed and 92 others wounded when a US-run detention centre in Baghdad was hit by insurgents’ mortar fire yesterday, the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq said in a statement.

James Schlesinger, former US Secretary of Defence and Central Intelligence Agency Director under presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, also appeared before the committee and criticized US failure to prepare for the July 1 transfer of power or to allow enough time for proper training of Iraq’s security forces.

Schlesinger joined Senator Richard Lugar of Indiana, the Republican chairman of the committee, in citing US inability to communicate with the Iraqis.

“We have failed to convey to the Iraqis what our intentions are,” Schlesinger said. “It is time for us to remind Iraqis, if you want a decent life, you must not support the elements that are destroying your country.” The US doesn’t have enough troops in Iraq and “put a higher value on maintaining control than on sharing risk” by failing to properly train Iraqi police or soldiers to secure their country, Berger said.

Berger called for 40,000 more troops in Iraq and said it would take up to five years to build effective Iraqi police and military forces. He endorsed the suggestion of Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware, the ranking Democrat on the committee, for creation of an “international board of directors” of major world powers to oversee Iraq’s political transition.

He said the US government’s definition of “security” had slowed down the political transition.

And he warned that Iraq’s “boiling point” might be one way to restore trust, he said in a sermon delivered in Cambridge on Tuesday.

Downing Street said Dr Williams’ views on the war were well known and it had nothing further to add. The archbishop’s remarks were addressed to the congregation at St Benet’s Church in Cambridge.

He spoke on the theme of Christian obedience in the commemoration sermon. He warned Christians should not expect an “impossible” standard of corporate selflessness from government.

But, he said, part of the “continuing damage to the nation’s political health was to do with concern over what had really driven events on the international scene.”

Dr Williams said claims on the political loyalty of Christians had to do with a “demonstrable truth about the war.”

He said: “There were things government believed it knew and claimed to know on a privileged basis which, it emerged, were anything but certain — there were things which regional experts and others knew which seemed not to have received attention.”

He added: “The evidence suggests to many, perhaps, that the concept of the complex truth suffered from a sense of urgency that made attention harder.”

The archbishop said restoring trust lay in the government’s openness to accountability, the freedom to think again and willingness to admit error or miscalculation.

Support for Blair’s Iraq policy dwindles in Britain

LONDON, 21 April — Support for British Premier Tony Blair’s Iraq policy has dwindled sharply among British voters in the last two months, with almost half — 48 per cent — saying the war was not justified, according to a latest poll.

Two-thirds of British voters have little or no confidence in the Americans’ handling of the situation in Iraq, with 79 per cent saying it is too dangerous for civilians working for US companies to be in that country, said the Guardian/ICM survey conducted after the bloodiest month since the invasion of Iraq.

British voters believe Blair should follow the example of the new Spanish Government and bring the Army home within six months.

The detailed results show that support for the war has slumped from 53 per cent in January to 41 per cent in April. The percentage of people prepared to support the anti-war case and argue that the invasion was unjustified has grown from 41 per cent to 48 per cent.

Anti-war sentiments have not reached these levels since September, when the Hutton inquiry hearings appeared to place question marks against the likelihood of finding weapons of mass destruction.

Blair’s personal rating remains in the doldrums, with 70 per cent of Iraq weapons. — MNA/Reuters

Guerillas cripple Iraq roads, damage trade

BAGHDAD, 21 April — Iraq’s commercial transport network has practically come to a halt because of a deterioration in security and the closure of main roads by US forces, shippers and merchants said on Monday.

They said trade and economic activity had slowed down sharply. Iraq became more dependent on imports after postwar looting and 13 years of a crippling economic embargo all but wiped out its industrial base.

“Baghdad has been effectively isolated,” said Muzahim al-Azzawi, executive manager of Gezairi Transport.

He said truck movement had mostly stopped on the western roads to Jordan and Syria, and that a bridge on the only road left open to Baghdad from the south was now too weak to cross because of war damage and recent sabotage. The western route leading to Jordan, Syria and Lebanon accounts for an estimated 70 per cent of Iraq’s shipments. — MNA/Reuters

Blasts hit police stations in south Iraq’s Basra

BASRA, 21 April — Explosions ripped through three police stations in Iraq’s southern city of Basra on Wednesday, causing many casualties, police and witnesses said.

Police could not say how many people had been killed or wounded in the blasts, but one car carrying children to kindergarten had been caught in one explosion.

Two police stations in the central Ashar district were hit by mortar bombs, police said. The third police station targeted was in the Old City of Basra.

The explosions in the morning rush hour sowed panic across Basra, which had been relatively peaceful during this month’s surge of violence in other parts of central and southern Iraq.

Japanese bombing victims demand compensation

CHONGQING, 21 April — Ten victims of the five year war of bombing of Chongqing, provisional capital in the War of Resistance to Japan (1937-1945), recently formed a group to demand compensation from the Japanese Government.

The group is a non-governmental organization composed of 382 bombing victims.

Intruding Japanese troops bombed the city of Chongqing on 218 occasions, dropping 21,593 bombs, which killed 11,889 people and injuring 14,700 others in five years from February 1938 to August 1943.

The most intensive bombing occurred on May 3 and 4, 1939, which claimed 3,991 lives and made 200,000 people homeless in the two days, turning into one of the most tragic massacres in global air attack history.

MNA/Xinhua

An Iraqi family heads back home to the restive city of Fallujah on 20 April, 2004.

Hundreds of civilians began returning to the battle-scarred city, a day after the US army cautiously lifted a two-week siege, as the coalition in Iraq suffered a new blow with the decision of Honduras to pull out its troops. — MNA/Internet
**Canadian kidnapped in Iraq; Ottawa urges leaving**

**Ottawa, 21 April**—Canada said on Tuesday that another of its citizens had been kidnapped in Iraq, and strongly advised all Canadians remaining in the war-torn country to consider leaving.

A senior foreign ministry official said a 41-year-old Canadian man has been kidnapped in Iraq, the second such incident over the past few weeks.

"We are being advised by local officials that a Canadian man has been kidnapped," the official told reporters.

The official did not disclose the identity of the victim, but said that Canadian authorities believe the man is being held by guerrillas in the Fallujah area. The official said that the man was from the western province of British Columbia.

The official said that the man had been in Iraq for some time, and that he was being held by guerrillas in the city of Fallujah. The official said that the man was last seen on Monday, and that he had been taken to a remote area in the north of Iraq.

The official said that the man's family had been notified, and that Canadian officials were working to secure his release.

The official said that the man was the second Canadian to be kidnapped in Iraq in recent weeks. The first kidnapping occurred in late April, when a Canadian woman was taken hostage in the city of Kirkuk.

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Thai PM says troops to leave Iraq if attacked

BANGKOK, 21 April — Thailand will withdraw its 451 medical and engineering troops from Iraq if they are attacked, the Thai Prime Minister said on Tuesday after a wave of kidnappings and attacks on US allies in Iraq.

Thaksin Shinawatra’s government is facing growing calls to withdraw the troops, who were sent last year to do humanitarian work in the southern city of Kerbala, 60 miles south of Baghdad.

“If we get hurt or killed, I will not keep them there,” Thaksin told reporters a day after Honduras followed Spain in announcing they would pull their troops out of Iraq.

His comments come after Thailand’s Embassy in Sweden received a letter earlier this month threatening the Southeast Asian country with attacks similar to the bomb bombings in the Spanish capital Madrid in retaliation for sending troops to Iraq.

The Thai Senate debated a resolution on Tuesday calling for the troops to come home.

“We have simply sent our troops to jail, waiting to be killed. Isn’t it better just to pull back now before an incident takes place?” Senator Karan Saengam, who sponsored the resolution, asked the assembly.

The resolution later failed to win a majority of votes in the 200-seat Senate after a heated five-hour debate.

654 people killed in road accidents during Thailand’s New Year celebrations

BANGKOK, 21 April — Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has planned to further run the campaign on safe driving after Songkran holidays to reduce traffic accidents in the capital, Bangkok City Clerk Nathanon Thavisin said Tuesday.

Nathanon was quoted by The Thai News Agency as saying that BMA’s Traffic and Transportation Department would organize various activities to instill a new sense of discipline and safety among drivers to prevent or reduce the traffic accidents in the city.

The campaign would be carried on until the Buddhist Lent in October, she said, adding that booklets on traffic rules would be distributed as well as brochures, stickers and posters.

Training camps for kids and youths would be held as part of the campaign to raise their awareness on road safety, she added.

Six hundred and forty-five people were killed in road accidents during Thailand’s New Year celebrations last week.

Although this year’s death toll was lower than last year’s 840, it was still twice the average daily deaths due to traffic accidents, Deputy Prime Minister Chaturon Chaisang who chairs the Road Safety Centre said.

He said a total of 36,642 people were injured in the April 9-18 period covering the Thai New Year holiday, known as Songkran.

Thousands of road accidents involving reckless and drunken drivers particularly motorcycle riders without helmets — MNA/Reuters

Malaysia urges UN to play bigger role in Iraq

KUALA LUMPUR, 21 April — Efforts to rebuild the heavily bombarded Iraq should be left to the United Nations, Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak said on Tuesday.

“Malaysia wishes to call upon all concerned to exercise the utmost restraint and sensitivity. All hostilities should be brought to an end immediately in order to enable calmness and stability to return to all parts of Iraq,” he said.

Malaysia is expected to host an ICO Ministers’ Emergency Meeting on latest developments in Iraq and Palestine late this week.

Malaysia currently holds the chairmanship of the 57-member grouping which was set up in 1970. — MNA/Xinhua

China says UN should consider Iraqi people’s opinions

BEIJING, 21 April — China said Tuesday that the United Nations (UN) should take Iraqi people’s views into consideration when making decisions on the Iraq issue.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Kong Quan said at a regular Press conference that UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi is visiting Iraq and working to submit a report to the UN Security Council on the Iraqi situation.

Kong said as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China is greatly concerned about the Iraq issue and has actively and constructively participated in discussions.

“We believe that the United Nations should collect the views of different strata and different factions in Iraq on the transitional mechanism and election arrangements,” Kong said.

“The UN should consider the views before making decisions because they represent the opinions of the Iraqi people.”

Kong said China has always maintained the Iraq issue should be solved within the UN framework, a view shared by the vast majority of world nations. He believed as preconditions to the UN’s playing a major role in the Iraq peace process, security should be resumed in the country, the Iraqi people should govern Iraq and the reconstruction should be started as soon as possible.

— MNA/Xinhua

China identifies workers killed in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 21 April — Three of four bodies found after an attack on a supply convoy in Iraq on April 9 have been identified as workers for Halliburton, the Texas-based company said on Tuesday.

The identity of the fourth person has not been announced.

The company said the three were identified as Stephen Hulett, 48, of Manistee, Michigan; Jack Montague, 52, of Pittsburgh, Illinois; and Jeffrey Parker, 45, of Lake Charles, Louisiana.

The men were working in Iraq for Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown and Root, which has a major logistics contract with the US military as well as another deal building the country’s shattered oil infrastructure.

Civilian contractors in Iraq have come under increasing attacks in recent weeks and Halliburton has lost 33 staff and contractors while doing work in the Kuwait-Iraq region.

— MNA/Reuters

Beijing to host Asian Education Forum in August

BEIJING, 21 April — The Asian Education Forum is scheduled to be held in Beijing in August this year.

The forum was launched by former heads of some Asian countries in December 2003 and then confirmed through discussion by 95 representatives from 18 countries and regions.

High-ranking educational department officials in charge of international exchanges in Asian countries will be invited to the forum to discuss such matters as scholarship and mutual recognition of records of formal schooling and academic degrees, said Cao Guoxing, director of the International Cooperation Department under China’s Ministry of Education.

China proposed to set up the Asian Scholarship and decided to be the first to offer 20 full scholarships, Cao said.

China has sent 700,000 students to study in more than 100 countries in recent years, 120,000 students a year left China for further study abroad. Meanwhile, some 300 universities in various parts of China enrolled 400,000 students from 170 countries.

— MNA/Xinhua

Fallujah residents pass through a checkpoint to return to their homes in Fallujah, Iraq, on 20 April, 2004. — ISTRESST

An Iraqi Shi’ite militiaman, aligned with radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, joins other militia members brandishing their weapons in the southern city of Dhiwaniya on 19 April, 2004. — ISTRESST
From a granary to an industrial zone

Myanmar Farm Machinery Factory in Inmon Village, Kyaukse.

(Continued from yesterday)
I would like to mention the opening of Plastic Factory, one of the projects being implemented in Kyaukse industrial zone. The Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council arrived by private jet on 14-4-2004 arrived in Kyaukse by helicopter to attend the opening of Plastic Factory (Kyaukse) of Myanmar Pharmaceutical Industries under the Ministry of Industry.

The opening was attended by heads of department under the Ministry of Industry and officials, departmental officials of Kyaukse District and Township, members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association and social organizations, band troops, dance troupes and others.

Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence, Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint and Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung formally opened the factory.

After that, at the briefing hall, Managing Director U Myint Oo of Myanmar Pharmaceutical Industries reported on the location of the factory and purpose of construction of the factory, progress in installation of machinery, investment and production of cement bags.

Minister U Aung Thaung gave a supplementary report. In response to the report, the Secretary-1 gave necessary instructions to officials.

Plastic Factory (Kyaukse) will be able to produce 9 million cement bags per year. It was learnt that the factory will also produce onion bags in future.

In the afternoon, the Secretary-1 and party arrived at the Government Technological College (Kyaukse), where they were welcomed by Director-General U Kyaw Soe of Technical and Vocational Education Department and officials. At the briefing hall, the Secretary-1 and party heard a report presented by Pro-Rector of Yangon Technological University, measures being taken for electric power supply with biogas for Kyaukse and TadaU.

Natural fertilizer obtained from biogas tank and its ability to digest biogas through pieces of woods and paddy husk and production of biofertilizer.

Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint reported on measures taken for utilization of the biogas tanks in the villages and use of the biogas tank by the villagers.

In response to the reports, the Secretary-1 gave instructions, saying that efforts are to be made for construction of biogas tanks that can produce natural fertilizer and generate electricity in the villages.

The Secretary-1 and party inspected biogas research work, biofertilizer research work and plant tissue culture research work being displayed there.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win met the people of the villages where natural fertilizer and electricity is being used after constructing biogas tanks. Later, the villagers reported on the benefits for utilization of the biogas tanks.

Biogas tanks with 17.2 inches in diameter, 10 feet in height and 50 cubic metres in thickness were constructed in nine villages of Kayuks Township and in three villages of TadaU Township.

In biogas tanks, droppings of animals such as cattle, sheep and horses, agricultural byproducts, forest byproducts such as branches of trees, grass, water hyacinth and fallen leaves, byproducts of mills and municipal are being used for producing biogas. Electricity and natural fertilizer are being produced with the use of the biogas.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party inspected CNC Machine Shop at the Government Technological College. They also looked into research work on cultivation of orange and foreign orchid varieties by means of tissue culture.

The Secretary-1 and party inspected research work on preparation for biofertilizer and production of biogas with bits of wood and gave instructions to officials concerned.

Chemical Engineering Department and Biotechnological Department of Yangon Technological University are conducting research on production of electricity and natural fertilizer with droppings and pieces of wood.

The Government Technological College in Kyaukse is a practical field for Kyause Industrial Zone. It was encouraging to see Pro-Rector of Yangon Technological University Head of Chemical Engineering and Biotechnological Department Daw Mya Mya Oo and faculty members studying their thesis for Doctorate Degree at the technocolial college. They are worthy of honour because although they are educated women they devoted their life in conducting research on biogas tanks in the interest of villagers there. They also made field trips right down to villages in Kyaukse and TadaU Townships where they heartily replied to queries raised by the villagers.

Chairman of Industrial Development Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win himself made field trips to the villages and met with villagers. At the meeting, the villagers explained how biogas tanks benefit them. Kyaukse has been the granary of the country in successive eras. With significant development, it will soon become a modern industrial zone.

Efficient use of fuel

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

There are about 500,000 households using electricity in Yangon. Thus, saving a four-foot fluorescent lamp everyday by each household amounts to saving power that is equal to the capacity a 20-megawatt power station can supply.
Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than tours Ponnagyun, Kyauktaw, MraukU townships

YANGON, 21 April—Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than of the Ministry of Defence, after inspecting Sittway-Ponnagyun road section and bridges on it on Yangon-Sittway Highway, accompanied by Chairman of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Commandor of Western Command Maj-Gen Maung Oo and Col Than Tun Aung of Sittway Station, arrived in Ponnagyun on 18 April morning. At the hall of the Township Peace and Development Council, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than met with departmental officials, social organization members and local people.

Chairman of Ponnagyun Township Peace and Development Council U Wai Myo Khaing reported on the agriculture sector, breeding of fish and prawn, growing of pepper, carrying out health, education and social affairs, condition of roads and bridges and township development tasks, township net production and services. Officials gave supplementary reports.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than gave instructions on extended cultivation of cow pea and other crops in addition to 10 major crops designated by the State, growing of pulses and beans and other crops in the areas where summer paddy cannot be cultivated, efforts to be made for thriving pepper and cooperation of departments concerned for development of the township.

After the meeting, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than cordially conversed with those present. Accompanied by Commandor Maj-Gen Maung Oo, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than arrived at the local battalion and met with officers, other ranks and family members. After giving instructions, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than cordially greeted the Tatmadawmen.

On arrival at the Model Pepper Farm of Myanmar Agriculture Service in Ponnagyun, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than gave instructions on growing of pepper to become Rakhine State where the largest number of pepper acres exist. Next, he inspected pepper nursery, propagation and thriving of pepper. The Model Farm is 10.64 acres of land and 400,000 saplings are being nurtured there.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than proceeded to the 1,000 acres farmland reclamation project at the foot of Bengaya Hill in the township. Col Than Tun Aung of Sittway Station reported on land reclamation tasks in 11 fields and future tasks. The commander gave a supplementary report.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than gave necessary instructions and inspected land reclamation works. The project will be implemented within two years. So far, 168 acres of land have been reclaimed. At present, 1,500 acres of land are being reclaimed.

On arrival at Maha Muni Buddha Image in Kyauktaw, they were welcomed by Deputy Commander Col Tin Hlaing and officials. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party paid homage to the pagoda and released fish at the lake in the precinct of the pagoda.

Next, they went to Vesali Htutangpyay Pagoda in MraukU Ancient Cultural Region. First, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than paid obeisance to the pagoda. Deputy Director U Kyaw Oo Lwin of Archaeology Department (MraukU) reported on history of the pagoda. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than gave instructions on all-round renovation of the pagoda.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party met with departmental personnel and local people. He heard reports on matters related to the townships by officials. Next, he gave necessary instructions.

They arrived at the local battalion at MraukU in the evening. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than met with officers, other ranks and family members at the meeting of the local battalion and gave necessary instructions.

Educational Management Course to be broadcast live

YANGON, 21 April—With the aim of ensuring promotion of efficiency of educational service personnel at different levels and efficient implementation of educational functions, Ministry of Education is making arrangements to broadcast educational management course at e-Education Learning Centres.

Programme of lessons covered by Myanmar Education Research Bureau will be broadcast through Electronic Data Broadcasting Centre of Yangon University of Distance Education. Lectures of the course will be broadcast from 9 am to 11 am and from 1 pm to 3 pm twice a day from 26 to 30 April at the designated e-Education Learning Centres across the country. Moreover, salient points of the course will be broadcast in advance at 7 pm on 24 and 25 April. The opening ceremony of the course will be held at Myanmar Education Research Bureau on 26 April morning. The programme of the opening ceremony will also be broadcast live.

UMFCCI official meets guests

YANGON, 21 April—A 7-member delegation led by Korea-Myanmar Friendship Association Chairman Mr Kim Jung-Ho called on UMFCCI General Secretary U Sein Win Hlaing at the latter’s office here yesterday. They discussed matters on investment and trade cooperation.

Work Committee for Implementation of Agreements on ASEAN Economic Affairs meets

YANGON, 21 April — The Work Committee for Implementation of Agreements on ASEAN Economic Affairs held its third coordination meeting at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Commerce on Strand Road this afternoon, attended by Chairman of the Work Committee for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone. Delegations of each country were members of the Work Committee for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun and deputy ministers, the Deputy Attorney-General, the Vice-Chairman of e-National Task Force, departmental heads, the Vice-President of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and departmental officials.

After the meeting, the chairman gave a speech. Next, Joint-Secretary-2 Director of Directorate of Trade U Tun Thwin reported on approval of the minutes of the previous meeting and implementation of the resolutions.

Secretary Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu gave a supplementary report on implementation of the decisions of the meeting. Next, chairmen and officials of sub-committees submitted reports on their respective sectors. Later, the chairman gave concluding remarks.
**Study Says lack of females may have wiped out dinosaurs**

WASHINGTON, 21 April — An asteroid may have wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago not simply by changing the world’s climate and causing years of dark skies, but also by causing too many of them to be born male, US and British researchers said on Tuesday.

If dinosaurs were like modern-day reptiles such as crocodiles, they change sex based on temperature. David Miller of the University of Leeds in Britain and colleagues noted. And even a small skewing of populations toward males would have led to eventual extinction.

Most experts agree that one or more asteroid impacts probably triggered a series of global changes that killed off the dinosaurs and many other species of life on Earth. The impacts would have kicked up dust that cooled the air and also triggered volcanic activity that would have created even more dust and ash.

No one really knows if dinosaurs were more like reptiles, or something closer to mammals. Reptiles have very different metabolisms than mammals and also have various ways of determining the sex of offspring.

In mammals, if a baby gets an X and a Y chromosome, it will be male and if it gets two X chromosomes it will be female, with a few very rare exceptions. Similar mechanisms work for birds, snakes and some reptiles such as lizards.

But in crocodilians, turtles and some fish, the temperature at which eggs are incubated can affect the sex of the developing babies.

Miller’s team ran an analysis that showed a temperature shift could theoretically have led to a preponderance of males. Other studies have shown that when there are too few females, eventually the population dies out.

“The Earth did not become so toxic that life died out 65 million years ago; the temperature just changed, and these great beasts had not evolved a genetic mechanism (like our Y chromosome) to cope with that,” said Dr. Sherman Silber, an infertility expert in St. Louis who worked on the study. But crocodiles and turtles had already evolved at the time of the great extinction 65 million years ago. How did they survive?

“These animals live at the intersection of aquatic and terrestrial environments, in estuarine waters and river beds, which might have afforded some protection against the more extreme effects of environmental change, hence giving them more time to adapt,” the researchers wrote.

**Norway, Nigeria sign oil development aid deal**

Lagos, 21 April — The Norwegian Petroleum Directorate (NPD) has signed an agreement for institutional cooperation with Nigeria’s Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), local newspaper The Guardian reported Tuesday.

“The main objective of the agreement is to assist in petroleum administration in Nigeria,” said NPD project manager Steinar Nja, adding: “Such an institutional cooperation can also make a positive contribution to the presence of the Norwegian oil and gas industry in Nigeria.”

**Turkey, Bulgaria to open new border gate**

ANKARA, 21 April — Turkish Transportation Minister Binali Yildirim said here on Tuesday that there were ongoing efforts in both Bulgaria and Turkey to open a new border gate between the two countries.

Yildirim made the remarks while meeting with his Bulgarian counterpart Nikolai Vasiliev, who came to Turkey to attend the 20th session of Turkey-Bulgaria Joint Transportation Commission. Yildirim said that the two sides would work to update agreements involving navigation and aviation during negotiations and the agreements would be signed on Wednesday. Even though there is no serious problem in highway, railway and airline transportation, there is some congestion at border gates, said Yildirim, adding that Turkey and Bulgaria have taken steps to eliminate the problems. — MNA/Xinhua

**Wellwishers invited for sinking tube-wells**

YANGON, 21 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 700,000.

Those wishing to donate cash for the tube-well sinking projects for rural areas may contact the Director-General (Tel: 01-245420 & 253088), the Deputy Director-General (Tel: 01-240118), the Director (Engineering) (Tel: 01-291967), the Directors (Sagaying Division Development Affairs Committee) (Tel: 071-21012), the Director (Magway Division Development Affairs Committee) (Tel: 093-33164) and the Director (Mandalay Division Development Affairs Committee ) (Tel: 02-54657).

**International geothermal meeting opens in Kenya**

Nairobi, 21 April — The Third International Geothermal Conference opened in Kenya on Tuesday to discuss ways on how to harness geothermal energy for economic gains.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Kenyan Assistant Minister for Energy Mwangi Kiunjuri said that the world is now focusing on geothermy as a resource that can be developed to accelerate industrialization and economic growth which is especially a tool of poverty reduction on the African continent.

“This is the first time where a strategy for project development and finance of geothermal energy is the primary focus of discussions (in Africa),” said Tom Hamlin, project officer with the United Nations Environment Programme’s Division of Technology, Industry and Economics.

The two-day meeting has brought over 200 scientists, experts, decisionmakers, financiers and investors from geothermal producing countries from all over the world.

**Donate blood**

MNA/Xinhua
Nigeria aims to develop indigenous shipping industry

LAGOS, 21 April — Nigeria will make greater efforts to develop indigenous shipping industry, a senior Nigerian official said recently.

Ferdinand Agu, director general of the National Maritime Authority (NMA), told reporters that the Federal Ministry of Transport, the NMA and other government agencies were committed to developing national capacity to assist indigenous shipping companies to grow.

With the country’s Cabinet moving into effect on May 1, the Nigerian Government would be happy to see the development of local shipyards, he said. “We are going to heed financial capacity, human resource capacity developments and committed seafarers,” he added.

The NMA head, however, stressed that the government was not saying that come May 1 people would watch an “armada” of vessels owned by indigenous operators.

He described the cabotage policy as a “Bill of Rights” for the domestic shipping community and that it was his hope that “one day we will look back and say at how far indigenous shipping in Nigeria has come and how far we shall go.”

The director-general was optimistic that in the next 10 to 15 years, the stakeholders would be called upon to develop vast capacity and “it will be wonderful if we can celebrate how far we have gone.”

Assessing the human resources capacity of the shipping industry, Abuagha said the most populous African country had a lot of experienced human resources from the old Nigerian National Shipping Line. Given the appropriate environment, they could groom the young ones.

However, he expressed regret that the Maritime transport industry, though rich in experience, was small in resources and huge in potential.

He noted that if stakeholders were to look at how many vessels were on the Nigerian flag and ocean-going, they could come up with a pessimistic view of the Maritime industry, as the maximum tonnage of cargo for the country, the nation’s register of ships and the number of the nation’s seafarers in line with the national potentials fell short of expectations.

Turkish chile agree on military cooperation

ANKARA, 21 April — Turkey and Chile here Tuesday reached an agreement of technical and scientific cooperation in military training and defense industry.

Turkish Deputy Chief of General Staff Ilker Basbug and visiting Chile’s Defense Minister Michelle Bachelet signed the agreement at General Staff Headquarters here.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Basbug said that the agreement would contribute to further improvement of military relations between the two countries.

“Our countries will participate more effectively in protection of global and regional peace thanks to those relations in military field,” he noted.

For his part, Bachelet said that the agreement of cooperation was the peak of rapprochement in defense institutions between the two countries and it is the beginning of a new period.

Bachelet pointed out that Turkey and Chile shared common values and principles in foreign politics and defense area, adding the agreement included basic factors for starting of broader cooperation possibilities in the field of defense.

Russian parliament ratifies 4-nation single economic zone accord

MOSCOW, 21 April — Russia’s State Duma (Lower House of Parliament) ratified on Tuesday an agreement on cooperation between Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan on forming a single economic space.

The goal of the Commonwealth Economic Space (CES) treaty, which was signed by the presidents of the four former Soviet republics in Yalta, Ukraine, in September 2003, is to stabilize and speed up economic development and raise living standards in the countries. The Duma also ratified two Russian-Ukrainian treaties on the state border and cooperation in using the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait.

The treaty on the Russian-Ukrainian border, signed in Kiev in January 2003, marks the land border between the two countries and approves principles for dealing with issues of sovereignty over the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov, and the Kerch Strait, which links the two seas. The treaty on the joint use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait, signed in Kerch city, Ukraine, in December 2003, declares the sea and strait the two states’ internal waters.

Earlier on Tuesday, Ukraine’s Parliament ratified the three treaties, too.

The parliaments of Belarus and Kazakhstan have yet to ratify the CES treaty.

Shell’s chief financial officer resigns

LONDON, 21 April — The Royal Dutch Shell Group confirmed on Monday its chief financial officer, Judith Boynton, has resigned, the second executive who stepped down due to a controversy over the energy giant’s oil and gas reserves estimates.

The company said it has reviewed 90 per cent of its reserves and a total of 4.85 billion barrels were lighthiero downgraded. This was the third time that Shell, the world’s third-largest public oil company in terms of market capitalization, had downgraded its reserves since January.

Reserves constitute an oil company’s most valuable asset, and any reclassification of reserves into less certain categories is a major concern for investors.

The company said it also planned to restate its earnings in 2002 as it noticed that the reserve errors has brought nearly 100 million US dollars more to its earnings.

Boynton will remain an employee of the company at least till the annual general meetings in June. Tim Morrison has been appointed as acting chief financial officer, the group added.

UN official warns of problems with urbanization in APR

SHANZA, 21 April — All countries in the Asian-Pacific Region should attach importance to solving problems brought by urbanization, said officials attending a meeting of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) here Tuesday.

As a side event of the UNESCAP 60th session, the eighth session of the Special Body (UNESCAP) here Tuesday.

Participants of the meeting said urbanization has become an inevitable trend in the Asian-Pacific Region. However, the infrastructure construction and management of the Asian-Pacific cities did not match the fast increasing of urban population, and therefore a series of social and environmental problems emerged.

The UNESCAP 60th session is scheduled to be held in Shanghai from April 22 to 28.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now.
China to raise grain output by popularizing “super rice”

HANOI, 21 April — China is hoping to raise grain output by adding more sown acreage of hybrid rice, or “super rice” as it is often referred to in the country, to halt or offset the per-hectare yield of cropland in the country and eventually hike it up notably.

China’s total rice output has been falling since 1999, along with a drop in the per-hectare yield of rice paddies, said Cheng Shihua, head of the China Rice Research Institute.

“Therefore, growing rice output will be of vital significance to safeguarding the grain security of China and the world at large,” said Cheng at a recent symposium on super rice cultivating technology held in Qionghai, a city in southern Hainan Island province.

Rice has remained a staple food for over 60 per cent of the country’s 1.3 billion population and accounts for 40 per cent of the country’s total cereals consumption. The concept of hybrid rice, or “super rice” was first set forth by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) based in the Philippines. Since IRRI proposed hybrid rice with the per hectare yield of 12 tons to be reaped by 2000, various rice producing nations the world over have been vying with each other in announcing their respective super rice research plans. China has been the most successful with its super rice research scheme, noted Cheng.

The Chinese Ministries of Agriculture, and Science and Technology launched a two-phase rice research programme with the participation of Chinese research workers from more than 20 agricultural organizations in 1996. In line with the scheme, super rice strains with a per hectare yield of 10.5 tons should have been developed by 2000, while hybrid rice strains with a 12-ton yield would be developed by 2005.

By now, Chinese rice specialists have acquired the hereditable trait of higher yield of hybrid rice strain. The far developed nine new super rice strains, plus a dozen hybrid rice varieties with super high yields.

And the aggregated sown acreage of new hybrid rice strains totalled some 7.47 million hectares in China over the past five years, and the experiments have proved that there is an average 10 per cent rise in yield by using hybrid rice seed than the ordinary ones, noted Cheng.

China, Cambodia to promote bilateral ties

BEIJING, 21 April — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao put forward a four-point proposal to enhance the relationship between China and Cambodia when he held talks with Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen today.

The proposal includes strengthening the political foundation through high-level contacts; exploring new areas for economic and trade cooperation on infrastructure, telecommunications, agriculture and resources; promoting contacts in culture, education, sports and tourism; and promoting cooperation and coordination in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and sub-regional cooperation such as the Mekong River exploration.

Wen said China and Cambodia are reliable neighbours and partners, and the two countries have trusted each other politically and cooperated economically, and have been committed to the political stability and development in dealing with international affairs. He noted that the Chinese Government follows the principle of building friendship and partnership with neighbours, and the guideline of building a friendly, peaceful and prosperous neighbourhood.

China will enhance cooperation with Cambodia according to the above principles, he said. Wen expressed gratitude for the adherence of the Cambodian Government to the one-China policy, and its support for China’s reunification cause.

He voiced his hope that Cambodia would maintain political stability and economic development, and said the Chinese Government would support Cambodia in the Government’s efforts to safeguard the country’s stability, unity and economic development. Hun Sen said China’s development conforms to the interest of its people, and benefits the surrounding areas and the countries around the Mekong River. As well, Cambodia takes China as its strategic friend, and furthering relations with China is Cambodia’s priority in foreign policy. He expressed gratitude for the assistance offered by China. Wen also reaffirmed that Cambodia’s adherence to the one-China policy has been established by its King Norodom Sihanouk, and the Cambodian Government will continue to be a strong supporter of this policy and stand with China unconditionally.

VD cases decline for the first time in 10 years in Guangdong

GUANGZHOU, 21 April — South China’s Guangdong Province, one of the country’s leading economic powerhouses, reported 85,405 new cases of venereal diseases in 2003, a fall in per-hectare yield of 10.5 sows from a year before, the first year-on-year decrease recorded in the past 10 years. Venereal diseases infected in entertainment places declined from 23.1 per cent of the total in 2002 to 19.96 per cent in 2003, which is the major factor behind the improved situation, according to the provincial skin and venereal diseases prevention and control centre.

Female patients accounted for 43.8 per cent of the total in 2003, or 37,903, a slight rise from a year ago, and unmarried women made up 31 per cent of the total, said the centre. Some 90.21 per cent of the new infections in 2003 were caused by extramarital contact. 19.26 per cent of which occurred between spouses, followed by 6.81 per cent through intravenous drug use, blood donation and other indirect channels, and 0.33 per cent transmitted from mother to babies, said the centre.

Some 72 per cent of the patients had received only middle-school education, followed by 14 per cent with higher education in colleges and universities, and 13 per cent having only attended primary school.

Beijing expects to host 4.4 million overseas tourists in 2008

BEIJING, 21 April — The national capital Beijing expects to host more than 4.4 million overseas tourists in the Year 2008, a result of the city’s holding the 29th Olympic Games, a local tourism official predicted.

Beijing expects to harvest a tourism income of 4.5 billion US dollars in foreign exchange, said Yu Changjiang, director of the city tourism administration at a news conference on business opportunities associated with the 2008 Olympic Games. The 2008 Olympic Games was sure to bring great opportunities for the local tourism industry, Yu said.

The number of overseas tourists to Beijing was expected to increase by 7.8 per cent annually in the three years before 2008 and by 13 per cent in the Year 2008. Yu said.

Beijing expects to welcome 152 million tourists in 2008, bringing an increase of 14.6 billion US dollars, according to Yu.

With a huge tourism market, Beijing expects to receive 3.1 million overseas tourists and 124.2 million domestic tourists in 2004, Yu said.
AIDS is a national concern.
World Bank sees strong developing economies growth

WASHINGTON, 21 April — Developing countries should post their strongest growth in two decades in 2004 as the global recovery firms, but a sudden rise in interest rates could hamper the outlook, a World Bank report said on Monday.

In its 2004 Global Development Finance report, the Bank warned that governments should prepare themselves for a possible rise in international borrowing rates and avoid overexposure to short-term foreign debt.

It said a rate rise could come quickly if current account imbalances, in particular the US trade and budget gaps, were unwound in a way that disrupted financial markets.

Canada seeks easier AIDS drugs sales to Africa

OTTAWA, 21 April — The Canadian government introduced legislative amendments on Tuesday to make it easier for makers of generic drugs to sell low-cost AIDS drugs and other medicines to poor countries.

The changes would be made to pioneering legislation, not yet passed, which is designed to get drugs to people in the least-developed countries, while not undermining the market for patented drugs.

The government has been asked to prepare for a possible rise in interest rates instead of suddenly being surprised," he told a news conference. The report forecasts a gross domestic product growth of 5.4 per cent in 2004, up from 4.8 per cent in 2003.

This, it said, could slow to about 3.5 per cent over 2005 and 2006 as the boom economies of East Asia cooled.

Timmer said there were several signs of economic overheating in China, including a 30 per cent increase in investment, import growth of over 30 per cent and money supply growth of more than 20 per cent — twice as much as nominal GDP growth.

We are not that concerned because the Chinese authorities are very well aware of this fact and have shown they are able in guiding the growth rate and clearly understand there are limits," he said.

A rebound in global capital flows to all regions except the Middle East and North Africa is helping to propel growth, driven mainly by more liquidity in industrialized countries and stronger economic policies from emerging market governments.

Net private flows heading official flows, increased in 2003, reaching 228 billion US dollars — their highest level since 1998 and up from 191 billion US dollars in 2002.

World Bank chief economist Francois Bourguignon said the flows would continue to the few large developing countries like China, Russia, Mexico, India and Brazil.

China subsidizes soybeans, wheat, corn, rice growers

BEIJING, 21 April — The Chinese Ministry of Agriculture recently announced the country will subsidize grain farmers who plant high-quality soybeans, wheat, corn and rice. According to the ministry, farmers growing high-quality soybeans, wheat and corn will get 150 yuan per hectare, and those planting rice will be subsidized 150 to 225 yuan per hectare.

The subsidy programme this year covers a total of 13 provinces and autonomous regions including Hebei, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan and Sichuan provinces and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the ministry noted. — MNA/Xinhua

Philips signs MoU with People’s University of China

BEIJING, 21 April — Philips Electronics China Group signed a memorandum of understanding here Monday with the People’s University of China in the national capital to fund its education and research on intellectual property.

The Netherlands-based electronics giant will fund a European intellectual property expert to teach postgraduates in the People’s University of China for two semesters from September this year and will send Chinese experts to European colleges, said Raud J. Peters, CEO of Intellectual Properties and Standards of Royal Philips Electronics.

Philips will establish a scholarship to fund local research programmes on intellectual property as well.

The company is also talking with Qinghua University about similar cooperation, including funding a senior intellectual property management. Peters added.

Education and research will raise the general level of intellectual property knowledge in Chinese society, which is also in our interests, he acknowledged.

Chinais of vital importance for Philips. We have done more and more research and technology development in China," the company said.

The company has 13 research and development centres on the Chinese mainland with more than 700 technicians. Among the 100,000 patents it has obtained now, some 200 were developed and patented in China. Experience and know-how

A Boeing Delta II rocket lifts off the launch pad on 20 April, 2004 from Vandenberg Air Force Base, in California. The rocket successfully deployed NASA’s Gravity Probe B satellite, to test two predictions of Albert Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity of 1916. — INTERNET

Castro blasts US’ Guantanamo “concentration camp”

HAVANA, 21 April — Cuban President Fidel Castro lashed out at the United States on Monday for building a “concentration camp” at Guantanamo Bay for prisoners suspected of ties to terrorist organizations.

Without naming the United States, Castro said the US naval base had been “converted into a concentration camp where absolutely no rights are respected.”

The 77-year-old Castro, wearing a military uniform, spoke during a television talk show marking the anniversary of the botched 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion by CIA-trained Cuban exiles seeking to end his fledgling socialist revolution.

On April 15, the US rights commission narrowly approved a US-backed Honduran-sponsored resolution condemning Cuba’s one-party Communist-run state for violating basic freedoms and urging Cuba to allow the visit of a UN envoy designated a year ago.

Havana’s defense was to attack the United States for holding hundreds of suspected al-Qaeda and Taleban militants in Guantanamo without due process.

Cuban diplomats tabled a resolution the same very day on arbitrary detentions at the US base. It called for a UN investigation at Guantanamo Bay.

The resolution is due to be debated in Geneva by Thursday. If approved, it would give UN special rapporteurs on torture and judicial independence and a working group on arbitrary detention a mandate to consider conditions in Guantanamo Bay.

The United States maintains prisoners held at its naval base on Cuban territory acquired a century ago after the Spanish-American war are beyond the jurisdiction of the US legal system.

Havana accused its arch-enemy Washington of drafting the annual resolution and pressuring Honduras to sponsor the text in Geneva. It passed by 22-21 votes, with 10 abstentions. — MNA/Reuters

Australians Pat Skinner, 69, poses with her pelvic x-ray in Sydney on 20 April, 2004. Skinner was given a clean bill of health after she underwent surgery at St George Hospital to have part of her colon removed in 2002. When she complained of severe abdominal pain over the next 18 months, she was told it was part of the recovery process. It was only after insisting on having an X-ray that she discovered a pair of 6.7 inch (17cm) surgical scissors had been left inside her. — Reuters

Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, regions including Hebei, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan and Sichuan provinces and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the ministry noted. — MNA/Xinhua

China seeks easier AIDS drugs sales to Africa

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This, it said, could slow to about 3.5 per cent over 2005 and 2006 as the boom economies of East Asia cooled.

Timmer said there were several signs of economic overheating in China, including a 30 per cent increase in investment, import growth of over 30 per cent and money supply growth of more than 20 per cent — twice as much as nominal GDP growth.

We are not that concerned because the Chinese authorities are very well aware of this fact and have shown they are able in guiding the growth rate and clearly understand there are limits," he said.

A rebound in global capital flows to all regions except the Middle East and North Africa is helping to propel growth, driven mainly by more liquidity in industrialized countries and stronger economic policies from emerging market governments.

Net private flows heading official flows, increased in 2003, reaching 228 billion US dollars — their highest level since 1998 and up from 191 billion US dollars in 2002.

World Bank chief economist Francois Bourguignon said the flows would continue to the few large developing countries like China, Russia, Mexico, India and Brazil.

China subsidizes soybeans, wheat, corn, rice growers

BEIJING, 21 April — The Chinese Ministry of Agriculture recently announced the country will subsidize grain farmers who plant high-quality soybeans, wheat, corn and rice. According to the ministry, farmers growing high-quality soybeans, wheat and corn will get 150 yuan per hectare, and those planting rice will be subsidized 150 to 225 yuan per hectare.

The subsidy programme this year covers a total of 13 provinces and autonomous regions including Hebei, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Jiangsu, Anhui, Jiangxi, Shandong, Henan, Hubei, Hunan and Sichuan provinces and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the ministry noted. — MNA/Xinhua

Philips signs MoU with People’s University of China

BEIJING, 21 April — Philips Electronics China Group signed a memorandum of understanding here Monday with the People’s University of China in the national capital to fund its education and research on intellectual property.

The Netherlands-based electronics giant will fund a European intellectual property expert to teach postgraduates in the People’s University of China for two semesters from September this year and will send Chinese experts to European colleges, said Raud J. Peters, CEO of Intellectual Properties and Standards of Royal Philips Electronics.

Philips will establish a scholarship to fund local research programmes on intellectual property as well.

The company is also talking with Qinghua University about similar cooperation, including funding a senior intellectual property management. Peters added.

Education and research will raise the general level of intellectual property knowledge in Chinese society, which is also in our interests, he acknowledged.

Chinais of vital importance for Philips. We have done more and more research and technology development in China," the company said.

The company has 13 research and development centres on the Chinese mainland with more than 700 technicians. Among the 100,000 patents it has obtained now, some 200 were developed and patented in China. Experience and know-how
**Wales take Euro 2004 plea to Court of Arbitration**

**LONDON, 21 April** — Wales have appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) to be awarded Russia’s place at Euro 2004 in the wake of midfielder Yegor Titov’s failed drugs test.

The Football Association of Wales (FAW) said on its official web site on Monday that it had filed an appeal to the court in Lausanne, Switzerland after UEFA rejected their original appeal in March.

UEFA banned Titov after he tested positive for a banned stimulant following Russia’s first-leg playoff against Wales in November in Moscow, which was won 0-0. Titov did not play in that match but featured in the second leg that Russia won 1-0 to qualify for the tournament in Portugal.

"Throughout this matter, the FAW has always maintained that it would pursue all available remedies in an effort to obtain a just outcome," said FAW secretary-general David Collins.

"The FAW feels that the UEFA Appeals Body did not give sufficient weight to the powerful arguments which the FAW submitted at the hearing and erred in not letting the nominated expert scientific witnesses give evidence in person.

"The FAW has therefore lodged an appeal with CAS which has been acknowledged. UEFA’s response to the appeal...is awaited."

UEFA issued a statement in March, after Wales’ appeal to European soccer’s governing body was turned down, which said:

"The Appeals Body based its decision in particular on the failure by the Welsh FA to present evidence of any implication of the Football Union of Russia in the alleged doping infringement."

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**Man United’s Scholes banned for three matches**

**LONDON, 21 April** — Manchester United midfielder Paul Scholes was banned for three matches on Monday after pleading guilty to a charge of violent conduct.

The 24-year-old was dismissed by referee Martin Atkinson after being sent off against Chelsea on Saturday for head-butting John Terry.

Scholes was not sent off against Chelsea on Wednesday and United said they would not appeal, so Scholes’ suspension starts immediately.

Monaco’s team captain Ludovic Giuly (L) heads the ball away from Chelsea’s Claude Makelele, during their Champions League semi-final first leg soccer match at the Louis II Stadium, in Monaco, on 20 April, 2004. UPI/Mona/Russell

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**Kenyans dominate Boston marathon**

**WASHINGTON, 21 April** — Timothy Cherigat and Catherine Ndereba, both of Kenya, beat the scorching heats to win the men’s and women’s titles at the 108th Boston Marathon on Monday.

Cherigat continued Kenya’s dominance in the world’s oldest annual marathon, winning in 2 hours 10 minutes and 37 seconds to make it his 13 Kenyan victories in the last 14 men’s races, and six Kenyans finished in the first seven places as compatriots Robert Cherobor came second in 2:11:49, ahead of Martin Lel (2:13:38).

In the women’s race, Ndereba crossed the finish line in 2:24:27 after beating Elfeneshe Alemu of Ethiopia in the final mile. Alemu finished 16 seconds behind, Olivera Jevic of Serbia and Montenegro was third in 2:27:43.

Ndereba, who nearly collapsed after her win, complained of severe leg cramping which she attributed to the unseasonable heat. "It’s much tougher this year because of the weather," said Ndereba, 31, who also won in 2000 and 2001. "It was more on fire today. I was struggling with the last few kilometres."

The temperature measured 29.4 Celsius at the finish line and several elite runners, including Mohamed Ouaddi of France and Gregorz Gajdus of Poland, dropped out.

"The weather was not all that good. It really slowed us down a lot. I had to take on a lot of water and pour it over my head," said Cherigat whose time was just over a minute slower than his personal best and well short of the course record of 2:07.15 set by Cosmas Ndeti, also of Kenya, in 1994.

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**South Korea coach steps down**

**SEOUL, 21 April** — South Korea coach Humberto Coelho said on Monday he had reached an agreement with the Korea Football Association (KFA) to step down from his position.

Under pressure since a recent humiliating scoreless draw against the Maldives in a World Cup qualifier, a tired-looking Coelho said that he would leave South Korea on Tuesday.

"I am very sorry that I could not finish my term," the former Portugal coach told a news conference.

"I hope the KFA will support the next coach of the Korean national soccer team," he added.

Coelho, who stressed that he had not resigned, said his departure several months before the end of his contract had been mutually agreed.

He declined to elaborate on the exact reasons for going, citing a confidentiality agreement, but hinted that there had not been given enough time to build the team and that he had not had sufficient time to train.

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**Maradona better, but still in critical stage**

**BUENOS AIRES, 21 April** — Argentina’s Diego Maradona, one of the most gifted players in soccer history, showed a slight improvement in his condition by Monday night, 24 hours after he was put in intensive care with heart and breathing problems.

Family doctor Alfredo Cahe told reporters outside a hospital Monday that the great soccer star, who was under such a disproportionate ban.

A statement released by the CAS after Monday’s hearing said: "The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has decided to reduce Cisse’s suspension to four matches of UEFA competition."

"Cisse appealed to the CAS and that this suspension be reduced to no more than two UEFA matches."

"After deliberation, the judges decided to settle the suspension of Dhirel Cisse at the official matches."

"They decided that the player...was guilty of insulting the referee."

"On the other hand, contrary to UEFA, the CAS did not recognize an act of un-sporting behaviour on the part of the player, who, according to UEFA, may have been slow to reach the technical zone after receiving his red card."

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**SOUTH KOREA**

**Cisse ban reduced to four matches by Court of Arbitration**

**LUZANNE (Switzerland), 21 April** — France striker Djibril Cisse will miss Euro 2004 after his five-match international ban was reduced by only one game by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Monday.

But French coach Jacques Santini said that even with the reduction, the suspension made it highly unlikely that he would make the Euro-2004 squad.

"Five or four games does not make any difference as far as Euro 2004 is concerned," Santini said through spokesman Philippe Touron on Monday. "It is still very difficult to select a player who is under such a disproportionate ban."

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**Two players fail dope tests in Libertadores**

**AUSCUN, 21 April** — Nacional striker Sebastian Eguren and Chilean defender Adan Vergara were both banned for six months on Monday for failing doping tests in the Libertadores Cup, the South American Football Confederation (CSF) said.

CSF general secretary Eduardo de Luca told reporters that Eguren failed his test after the Uruguay club’s Group Five match away to El Nacional de Ecuador on February 12.

Nacional said Eguren tested positive for cocaine but club officials blamed coca tea, widely drunk in the Andean countries to alleviate the effects of altitude, for the result.

The game was played at 2,800 metres above sea level in Quito.

Vergara tested positive for a banned substance after the Chilean players played away to Sao Paulo in Brazil in Group Four on February 26. Sao Paulo won 3-1.

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**Vanenburg named to coach crisis-hit TSV 1860 Munich**

**BERLIN, 21 April** — Gerald Vanenburg was named as the new coach of Bundesliga strugglers TSV 1860 Munich on Monday.

The club, who sacked Falko Goetz on Saturday after a 2-1 defeat by Hamburg SV sent them fourth from bottom, denied on Sunday that Dutchman Vanenburg had already signed a contract but said a deal was imminent.

Vanenburg, 40, played for TSV from 1998 to 2000 and was an assistant coach at the club for a brief spell two years ago.

Goetz, formerly with Hertha Berlin, was appointed by TSV in March 2003.

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**Monaco’s French midfielder Jerome Rothen (R) is tackled by Chelsea’s Dutch defender Mario Melchiot during their Champions League semi-final first leg football match in Monaco, on 20 April, 2004.** — INTERNET

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**Venezuela**

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**Monaco’s French midfielder Jerome Rothen (R) is tackled by Chelsea’s Dutch defender Mario Melchiot during their Champions League semi-final first leg football match in Monaco, on 20 April, 2004.** — INTERNET
Thursday, April 22

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  - Dance variety

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  - Extravagant Evidences of Myanmar Culture

- **8:30 am**
  - Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Minlaung”

- **8:45 am**
  - Myanmar News
  - Myanmar World News

- **9:10 am**
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**WEATHER**

**Wednesday, 21 April, 2004**

Summary of observations recorded at 9:30 hours MST. During the past 24 hours, 20 rain or thunderstorms have been isolated in Shan State and Thanbyuzayat Division and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (45°C) above normal in Rakhine and Kayin States, Yangon and Thanbyuzayat Divisions, (3°C) to (6°C) below normal in Shan and Chin States, Mandalay and Magway Divisions, (5°C) below normal in Sagaing Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant day temperatures were (4°C) at each in Amãlap and Hpa-an.

Maximum temperature on 20-4-2004 was 40.5°F (105°F). Minimum temperature on 21-4-2004 was 22.5°C (72°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 21-4-2004 was 49%. Total sunshine hours on 20-4-2004 was (10.5) hours. Rainfall on 21-4-2004 in a Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 5 mm (0.20 inch) at Yangon Airport and 12 mm (0.47 inch) at Kaba-Aye and 3 mm (0.12 inch) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 12 mph from Northwest at (21:30) hours.

**Bay influence:** Weather is cloudy in the South Bay and partly cloudy in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 22-4-2004. Rain or thunderstorms are likely to be isolated in Kachin, Chin, Rakhine States, Sagaing, Mandalay, Ayeyawady and Tanintharyi Divisions and about normal in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%). State of the sea: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

**Outlook for subsequent two days:** Possibility of isolated rain or thunderstorms in the upper Myanmar areas.

**Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring areas for 22-4-2004:** Partly cloudy. Forecast for Mandalay and neighbour- ing area for 22-4-2004: Possibility of isolated rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is (40%).
Regional development undertakings inspected in Rakhine State

YANGON, 21 April — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than discussed with officials, the deputy commander, Col Myat Swe and respective departmental officials the progress of An, Rakhine State Peace and Development Council, on 17 April morning.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than gave instructions on uplift of education, health and social sectors of the region, cultivation of kitchen crops and livestock breeding on a small scale for higher income of their families and cooperation with the people in regional development tasks.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and Maj-Gen Maung Oo inspected the region's development undertakings.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than also met with departmental officials, members of social organizations and local senior citizens. It was also attended by the commander, the deputy commander, Col Myat Swe of An Station, local authorities, departmental personnel, members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association and social organizations. On the occasion, the chairman of Township PDC reported on economic and social sectors of the region, cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy and crops, hill reclamation, breeding of sea and fresh water prawn, education and health sectors of the region, and implementation of the five rural development tasks. Departmental personnel gave supplementary reports.

Responding to the report, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than said that in respect of the agricultural sector of An township, the region grows over 35,000 acres of monsoon paddy a year, but still needs to extend further multi-cropping system. Thus, the scope of cultivating summer paddy, beans and pulses and other arable crops is to be expanded by utilizing the vacant land and cooperation with respective departmental personnel after laying down plans, he urged. He called for extended cultivation of all suitable crops including edible crops, cashew and Thitsaint (Belticr myrobalan) and pepper. He gave instructions on extension of sea prawn breeding without damaging paddy fields and breeding of local species of chicken on a commercial scale. In conclusion, he called on the departmental officials and respective committees to make field trips right down to the grassroots level to cooperate with local people in a bid to effectively accomplish regional development tasks.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party viewed the An bypass. They arrived back here in the evening.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspects all-round renovation of ancient pagodas in MraukU

YANGON, 21 April — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than of the Ministry of Defence held a meeting with officers and other ranks of An Station and their family members in An, Rakhine State, on 17 April morning.

Also present at the meeting were Chairman of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and Maj-Gen Maung Oo and Deputy Commander Col Tin Hlaing.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than gave instructions on uplift of education, health and social sectors of the Tatmadaw members, cultivation of kitchen crops and livestock breeding on a small scale for higher income of their families and cooperation with the people in regional development tasks.

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Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than inspects all-round renovation of ancient pagodas in MraukU

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than meets departmental personnel at the hall in An Township. — mna

A large pagoda at the centre of the edifice is circled by 1,241 small pagodas.

At Shitthaung Pagoda, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than paid homage to Buddha images at the pagoda.

The pagoda was built in 1553 during the reign of Minhtika (Miniteikka) son of Minbagyi. It included one of the ancient edifices of the MraukU era. A large pagoda at the centre of the edifice is circled by 1,241 small pagodas.

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