MCCWA has stood as an integrated social organization for more than 13 years
Prime Minister addresses opening of 14th Annual Conference of
Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association

YANGON, 24 April—The 14th Annual Conference of the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association was held at the association at the corner of Parami Road and Thanbhum Road in South Okkalapa Township here this morning, with an address by
Chairman of National Health Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were Vice-Chairmen of MCCWA Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win and Secretary-2 Li-Gen Thein Sein. Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Comm-

mender of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Yangon Mayor, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department, diplomats of foreign missions in Yangon, representatives of UN agencies, the Chairmen of social organizations at home and abroad and officials, honorary patrons of MCCWA, President of MCCWA Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, Vice President Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint and CEC members, patrons of State and Division Mater-

nal and Child Welfare Su-

persisory Committee, presi-
dents, secretaries and CEC members and guests.

First, Chairman of Na-
tional Health Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt made a speech. He said that the government is making all-out efforts for enabling the nation to keep pace with others. At the same time, it has been laying down social infra-
structures for enabling the people to enjoy the fruitful results of the national de-

velopment.

Today is the day on which the ceremony to open the 14th Annual Con-

ference of MCCWA was

held. It is an auspicious day not only for the State but also for the association.

The government is giv-

ing encouragement to the activities of MCCWA which is striving for devel-

opment of social life of the youth and enhancement of the health standard of the public.

The development of the nation and its people de-

pends mainly on efforts of own national forces. With this concept, the govern-

ment has acknowledged that efforts of social organi-

zations that are willing to serve the interest of the State and the People play a leading role in developing the nation.

Efforts of social organi-

zations that are striving for national development have been able to contribute to development of not only the sector concerned but also other sectors. Therefore, en-

couragement is given to develop to social or-

ganizations.

The caring of mothers and children, the major-

ity of the nation’s popula-

tion, indeed, contributes much towards promotion of the social sector, which plays the most indispensa-

ble and fundamental role in development of the nation, he said.

And, it practically yields benefits at present and means the shaping of the brighter future of the nation, the people and posterity. Thus, it can be said that it is full of national definition and essence, he said.

Therefore, the govern-

ment, after enacting a spe-
cific law, established the MCCWA, a social organi-

zation, which is participat-

ing with loving kindness, compassion and goodwill in social welfare tasks includ-

ing health care services for women and children, he said.

It is heartening to see that the MCCWA has stood as an integrated social or-

ganization for more than 13 years, effectively carrying out social welfare tasks in-

cluding health, education, social and economic sectors of mothers and children across the nation, he said.

The MCCWA is dis-

charging community wel-

fare services with a large membership of over 3.7 million — 61 members of central council, 15 CEC members, 324 township associations, 14,400 branches, over 864,000 permanent members and over 2.9 million ordinary members, he said.

In the early years, the MCCWA placed emphasis on welfare of mothers and children only. But, now it has extended the scope of its tasks with national essence, he said. In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, the associa-
tion is participating with might and main in the tasks for control and elimi-
nation of leprosy and TB, organizing traditional medi-
cine courses, and carrying out health care services for the aged, he said.

(See page 9)

Prime Minister addresses opening of 14th Annual Conference of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association— Page 8

Embergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
**Prime Minister attends ceremony to pay homage to title recipient Sayadaws**

**Yangon, 24 April**— A ceremony to mark birthday of Kaba Aye Tipitaka Maha Gandayon Monastery Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw Tipitakadhara Dhamma Bhandagakiri Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sumangalalankara (PhD), to pay homage to Abhijjha Maha Rattha Guru title recipient Sijjanabhivamsa Sayadaw of Saging Hill and Tipitakadhara examination successful monks was held at Thiri Mingalayandar five-storey building of Maha Gandayon Monastery this afternoon, attended by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were Secretary of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Abhijjha Maha Rattha Guru title recipients, Sijjanabhivamsa Sayadaw and Tipitakadhara examination successful monks was held at Thiri Mingalayandar five-storey building of Maha Gandayon Monastery this afternoon, attended by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

**Construction of overpass inspected**

**Yangon, 24 April**— Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, local authorities, departmental heads, lay persons, monks and wellwishers.

First, the Prime Minister and party received the Five Precepts from Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sijjanabhivamsa. Next, the Prime Minister donated provisions to Secretary Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sijjanabhivamsa and Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sumangalalankara.

Similarly, the commander, the ministers, the deputy ministers and departmental heads offered donations to the Sayadaws. Afterwards, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sumangalalankara supplanted on the ceremony to mark his birthday. Administrator Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kavindha of Tipitaka Maha Gandayon Monastery recited brief biographies of the Sayadaws. Later, the Secretary Sayadaw delivered a sermon, and the Prime Minister and party shared merits gained.

**Measures for ensuring secure and smooth transport coordinated**

**Yangon, 24 April**— The Yangon Division Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Secure and Smooth Transport held the coordination meeting at the hall of Yangon Command Headquarters yesterday evening, attended by Chairman of the Supervisory Committee Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Commander Col Wai Lwin, military region commanders, station commanders, local authorities, members of the Supervisory Committee, owners of bus lines and guests. First, the commander gave a speech. All-round discussions were then held. Later, the commander gave concluding remarks.

**Commander meets service personnel to discharge duties in Cokokyun**

**Yangon, 24 April**— Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe met with departmental personnel who will discharge duties in Cokokyun Town, at the hall of Thakayta Wharf of Myanma Five Star Line, in Thakayta Township, this noon. Also present were Deputy Commander of Yangon Command Col Wai Lwin, Managing Director U Khin Maung Kyi of MFSL, No 4 Military Region Commander Col Yan Naing Oo and authorities. Speaking on the occasion, the Commander said that the Government has provided assistance for development of Cokokyun Township. The departmental personnel are to make efforts for achieving more progress of the township. As the township level departmental personnel are the post at basic level of the government’s service, they are to serve interest of the people. Next, the departmental personnel were introduced to the commander who then presented gifts to them.
Number of US troops hurt in Iraq jumps

WASHINGTON, 24 April—The number of American troops wounded in Iraq soared in the past two weeks as the guerrilla flared in south-central Iraq and in the Sunni Triangle north and west of Baghdad.

The Pentagon announced Friday in its weekly casualty report that 3,864 troops have been wounded in action since the war began in March 2003, an increase of 595 from two weeks earlier.

The US military death toll as of Friday stood at 707, according to the Pentagon’s count. At least 100 have been killed this month, the highest total for any month since the US-led invasion began. Most deaths were in the early part of April, about 25 have died in the past two weeks.

The Pentagon on Friday announced the identity of the 100th service member to have died so far this month. He was Army Staff Sgt Edward W Carmen, 27, of McKeesport, Pa, who died 17 April in Baghdad when the driver of the tank he was in lost control and the tank rolled off a bridge. The Pentagon does not identify those who are wounded.

As the toll on US forces has mounted this month, most public attention has focused on the deaths. Less has been reported on the wounded, in part because the Pentagon has stopped providing daily updates and does not give details on the types or severity of wounds.

The only distinction the Pentagon makes in its public reports is between the number of wounded who are returned to duty within three days and those who are not. In the past two weeks, the number of wounded who returned to duty rose by 257 and the number who did not rise by 338.

The number of wounded since 1 April is approaching 900, far beyond the 200-300 wounded in most other months of the conflict. In March 291 were wounded in action. The highest monthly total before April was 413 in October 2003, according to the Pentagon’s Directorate for Information Operations and Reports.

The Pentagon’s figures do not include troops who are injured in accidents or felled by illness.

Defence Secretary Donald H Rumsfeld said Thursday that regardless of how well US troops may be trained, the kind of conflict they are fighting in Iraq is bound to take a heavy toll. He singled out the Marines, saying they consider themselves well-trained to fight in urban areas. Marines have been fighting recently in and around the city of Fallujah.

Indonesian Islamic Council warns against US intervention

JAKARTA, 24 April—The top state Islamic organization, Indonesian Ulemas Council (MUI), on Thursday warned the United States mission office in Jakarta of not to intervene in Indonesia’s legal sovereignty.

“I warn the US Embassy not to conduct an intervention in Indonesia’s legal sovereignty,” General Secretary of the MUI Dn Syamadun told reporters outside the prison after visiting detained Indonesian Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Ba’ashir.

Syamadun also warned the United States not to interfere in Indonesia’s affairs in other fields. “Currently, I see they (the US Embassy) have a political intervention,” he said.

He said such move was a bad diplomacy and would not contribute to the peaceful relationship between the two countries.

Last month, US Ambassador to Indonesia Ralph L. Boyce asked the Indonesian Government to extend the detention of Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Ba’ashir, who is due to be freed on 30 April, without legal procedure.

However, the US request was rejected by the Indonesian police and Foreign Affairs Ministry.

Danish Defence Minister resigns

COPENHAGEN, 24 April—Denmark’s defence minister has resigned amid criticism of government reports about alleged weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Days earlier, lawmakers questioned whether Denmark’s military intelligence agency gave accurate reports on Saddam Hussein’s possession of WMDs.

“I don’t want to burden the government and my family with the smear campaign,” Svend Aage Jensby said in a statement.

The Danish government backed the US-led war on Iraq.

It recently declassified intelligence reports compiled before the Iraq war which show officials thought Iraq had weapons of mass destruction.

The extracts appear to contradict claims leaked to the media which concluded that the coalition was unlikely to find weapons of mass destruction.

Mr Jensby is to be replaced by former army officer Soeren Gade from Denmark’s ruling Liberal Party.

Norway rejects US call to keep troops in Iraq

STOCKHOLM, 24 April—Norwegian Foreign Minister Jan Petersen said on Friday his country has rejected US call to stay on in Iraq after a planned pullout in June, Norwegian news agency reported.

Norwegian troops will be pulled out before the June 30 sovereignty transfer and would not continue to stay in Iraq thereafter, said the minister after holding talks in Washington with US Deputy Secretary of State Colin Powell who expressed hopes that Norway might reconsider its plan to pull out in June.

“We must follow our original plan, or a commitment, until the summer,” Petersen said, adding Norway would strengthen the troops in Afghanistan after withdrawing from Iraq.

“We must contribute so that NATO does not fail in Afghanistan,” Petersen said.

Norway, a NATO member, did not support the US-led war in Iraq, but sent 150 troops to help stabilize the south of Iraq after overthrowing of the former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

600 kilos of cocaine seized in US vessel

MEXICO CITY, 24 April — Some 600 kilos of cocaine were seized in a US vessel near an island off Mexico’s southeastern coast, Liliana Aguilar, spokeswoman of the General Attorney’s Office (PGR), said Thursday.

The raid was conducted by the Federal Agency of Investigations (AFI) on Wednesday near the Women Island of the Caribbean tourist resort of Cancun but no arrests were made, said the spokeswoman.

The vessel Wind Dancer, which arrived in Mexico on 29 November, 2003, from the Dominican Republic, has anchored at a yacht club. The vessel’s owner was John Hamer but his whereabouts remained unknown, port authorities said. Aguilar said the seized drug, valued at 10 million US dollars in the black market, was destined for the United States.

It is unknown whether this finding is linked to the arrest of Otto Herrera, a major Guatemalan drug trafficker, who was captured by Mexican police as he was leaving an airport in the capital of Mexico City on Wednesday afternoon.

600 kilos of cocaine were seized in a US vessel near an island off Mexico’s southeastern coast

Camps of young displaced Iraqis are seen in the outskirts of Fallujah

Camps for displaced Iraqis

UNICEF calls for reducing price of new anti-malaria drug

AMIN ARAIZ, 24 April — The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Thursday called on pharmaceutical firms and donor countries to reduce the price of a new anti-malaria drug, to get behind an initiative to introduce the life-saving drug to hundreds of millions of people.

According to a Press release issued by UNICEF, the powerful new drug called artesunate-containing combination therapy (ACT) can save the lives of 300 million people afflicted by malaria every year. But it is comparatively expensive and currently available only in limited quantities. “If the private and public sectors work together effectively, we can quickly reshape the marketplace for malaria drugs and give a great leap toward rolling back malaria,” said Executive Director of UNICEF Carol Bellamy before the Africa Malarial Day to be marked on 25 April.

An Iraqi family tries to get past a US Marine checkpoint to collect family belongings from their home in Fallujah, Iraq on 23 April, 2004.
Kerry criticizes Bush for using UN “back door” in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 24 April—Democratic presidential challenger John Kerry said Iraq was not close to true self-rule despite a June 30 deadline and criticized the White House for failing to bring Arab and European countries, and a complete withdrawal of foreign forces across Iraq, and destroy his Mehdi Army and militia, which has clashed with US forces over the past week. Sadr vowed to kill or capture Sadr City, Iraq on 23 April, 2004—INTERNET

Iraq’s Sadr warns of suicide bombs if US attacks

KUFA, 24 April—Rebel Iraqi cleric Moqtada al-Sadr said on Friday he could unleash suicide bombers if US forces attack the holy Shi'ite city of Najaf, and called on the whole nation to unite to expel Iraq's occupiers. "We will shed blood to keep our holy city," he said. "We will defend our cities and our religious authorities will be time bombs and will not stop before destroying enemies." There are fears a US attack on Najaf could spark a wider and bloodier uprising. Sadr likened Iraq's situation to that of the Palestinians, saying Iraqis faced the same enemies and must unite to defeat them. Kerry, who has called for a major UN role in Iraq, said the Republican White House was seeking a “third way” between continued fighting and a complete withdrawal from Iraq year after US-led forces toppled Saddam Hussein. “This administration is trying to go through the back door to get a government rather than launching an all-out assault and effort to bring (other) people to the table,” he said. The Democrat said Washington should be saying, “Look, you folks in the Arab world have a huge interest in not having a failed Iraq anymore. And you people in Europe have a huge interest in not having a failed Iraq at your doorstep.”

Notwithstanding those interests, none of them are at the table with this administration,” Kerry told the annual convention of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Kerry also doubted whether the administration, which spoke this week of plans to transfer “limited” sovereignty to the Iraqis by 30 June, was making progress toward establishing a fully functioning Iraqi government. “First, the administration would have you believe that we are about to turn over authority in Iraq to a new government, a handover that will signal the end of America’s occupation,” he said. “But in reality, we are no closer to a real Iraqi government capable of providing security for its people, making laws, ensuring freedoms. This is still America’s problem.” Brehimi said Friday that the handover of sovereignty was “doable” by 30 June if all sides cooperated, and told ABC television’s “This Week with George Stephanopoulos” programme that the transfer should not be postponed. Kerry, who has supported sending more US troops to Iraq if necessary, said Friday that a pullout from the battered country would have dire consequences. “I think it would be disastrous for the war on terror as well as our interests in the region as well as the stability,” he said. Kerry’s campaign asked for a poll of foreign policy experts that reflected their desires to maintain a degree of privacy... and also maintains the respect and the dignified treatment of those remains as they’re transferred,” he said. He denied the suggestion that restricting access to the photographs was an attempt at damage limitation by the Bush administration, which is under pressure over its policy of invading and occupying Iraq. “I don’t see that as our motivation. To be very frank with you, we don’t want the remains of our service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice to be the subject of any kind of attention that is unwarranted or undignified,” said Mr Molino. In a separate development, an American woman and her husband have been fired from their job with a US cargo contractor in Kuwait after a photograph of flag-covered coffins she took during the course of her work appeared in the Seattle Times newspaper.

Kuwaiti, Irish FMs stress cooperation between GCC, EU

KUWAIT CITY, 24 April—Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah and his Irish counterpart Brian Cowen on Thursday highlighted the need to strengthen relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and European countries, Kuwait News Agency reported. In a press conference held after meetings between the two ministers in Dublin, Sheikh Mohammad said he had discussed with Cowen the agenda of a mid-May meeting between foreign ministers of the GCC and EU countries in the Belgian capital of Brussels and the creation of a free trade zone, the report said. "Irani situation, the developments in Saudi Arabia and the Middle East were also among the topics discussed. Sheikh Mohammad was quoted as saying, adding that they both agreed on the illegality of Israeli settlements. As to transferring power to Iraqis, Sheikh Mohammad said Kuwait would extend all possible assistance to the international community to make the power transfer process successful. The top Kuwaiti diplomat also voiced concern over the terror attacks in Iraq saying the GCC and European Union will join hands to combat terrorism, especially those acts aiming to obstacle power transfer to the Iraqi people. Kuwait is currently presiding the GCC and Ireland is the rotating EU president. Sheikh Mohammad’s visit, the first ever visit of a senior Kuwaiti official to Ireland, is part of his European tour. After concluding visits to Brussels and London, the Kuwaiti minister arrived in Dublin earlier Thursday.

US concern over war dead photos

WASHINGTON, 24 April—Pentagon lawyers are examining the release of photographs of the coffins of dead American soldiers repatriated from Iraq. The images, taken by Department of Defense officials, appeared on the web after the US Air Force released them under the Freedom of Information Act. Pentagon rules dating back to 1991 ban the media from covering the return of the remains of soldiers killed abroad. Critics say the rule is designed to cover up the human cost of war. Defence officials insist it is in the interests of bereaved families. The official photographs of coffins draped in the US flag were released last week to activist Russ Kac, who had filed a Freedom of Information Act request to receive the images. He published them on his website The Memory Hole. Deputy Under Secretary of Defence John Molino said Pentagon lawyers were looking into whether banning the further release of such photographs would fall foul of the Freedom of Information Act. "The attorneys now are looking to see if the policy and the law are in conflict, or if the policy and the law are not in conflict and there was just some misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the situation that allowed that release," he told reporters. Mr Molino added that he fully supported what he considered a “reasonable” policy restricting such images that had spanned several different administrations. "We continually get feedback from families that this reflects their desires to maintain a degree of privacy... and also maintains the respect and the dignified treatment of those remains as they’re transferred,” he said. He denied the suggestion that restricting access to the photographs was an attempt at damage limitation by the Bush administration, which is under pressure over its policy of invading and occupying Iraq. “I don’t see that as our motivation. To be very frank with you, we don’t want the remains of our service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice to be the subject of any kind of attention that is unwarranted or undignified,” said Mr Molino. In a separate development, an American woman and her husband have been fired from their job with a US cargo contractor in Kuwait after a photograph of flag-covered coffins she took during the course of her work appeared in the Seattle Times newspaper.
Moussa sets conditions for sending Arab troops to Iraq

CAIRO, 24 April — The Arab world would send its troops to Iraq only when they are to be part of a UN force, Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa said here Thursday.

Moussa made the remarks at a joint Press conference with visiting Tunisian Foreign Minister Al-Habib bin Yahya in response to UN’s Iraq envoy Lakhdar Brahimi’s call for participation of Arab troops in Iraq.

The Arab League’s Council of Ministers had expressed the attitude towards any call in this respect.

The call hinges on the issuance of a clear resolution from the UN Security Council to form a force led by the international organization.

The resolution, its issuance from the Arab League accepting this and a request by a legitimate Iraqi Government, the AL chief further explained.

He stressed that “Arab troops could not by any means form part of an occupation force (in the US-led coalition). Nothing of the sort can be imposed on Iraq or on any other Arab country.”

Talking about the coming Arab summit, Moussa said that the key issues would be tackled in the summit and there is no need to amend their items.

The negative developments added to the proposed issues, whether regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict or the Iraqi issue, cannot be ignored.

The Arab League’s Council of Ministers had expressed its position as market leader in non-nuclear submarine construction,” a HDW industry is once again demonstrating its position as market leader in submarines in the world.

First advanced German-made submarine for Greece launched

BUXTEHUD, 24 April — The first German fuel cell submarine to be exported to Greece was launched in Kiel Thursday, the manufacturer HDW said.

The submarine is one of the four that the Kiel-based HDW has been building for Greece. The other three will be constructed at the HDW subsidiary Hellenic Shipyards in Greece.

The vessel, estimated to cost 250 million euros (295 million US dollars), is 65 metre long with a displacement of 1,700 tons. Equipped with an air-independent fuel cell propulsion system, it is considered one of the quietest types of submarines in the world.

Meanwhile, the German Submarine Consortium GSC, of which the HDW is a member, signed a contract Wednesday in Lisbon to provide two fuel cell submarines for the Portuguese Navy with an option for a third vessel.

“The new contract, the German shipbuilding industry is once again demonstrating its position as market leader in non-nuclear submarine construction,” a HDW statement said.

Los Angeles becomes major prostitutes trafficking centre

LOS ANGELES, 24 April — Los Angeles has become one of the largest prostitution-trafficking centres with an estimated 10,000 women brought here and forced into prostitution each year, a city councilman said Thursday.

Los Angeles city councilman Tony Cardenas proposed in a motion on forming a task force to address the problem in the second largest US city.

“I am targeting human trafficking involving forced prostitution,” Cardenas said, “because this is the most horrifying and scarring of human trafficking crimes.”

Two weeks ago, four people were indicted on charges that they smuggled a dozen undocumented Mexican females — including aged two 14 and 15 — and forced them to work as prostitutes at a south Los Angeles brothel.

On Tuesday, Los Angeles police officers found more than 100 undocumented Central American immigrants crammed into a run-down house in Watts. It was unclear whether that case involves sexual violations.

With Los Angeles International Airport, the ports and its large immigrant community, Los Angeles has become one of the largest points of transit for trafficked women in the world, officials said.

Councilman Cardenas instructs the city’s Commission on the Status of Women to create a task force to identify advocacy and counseling resources for victims regardless of citizenship.

He also calls for a partnership between the Los Angeles Police Department and the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking, which provides 24-hour assistance from advocates trained in prevention.

“The solution is to prevent the problem,” Cardenas said.

Strokes hit some 200,000 Italians annually

ROME, 24 April — Strokes, which hit some 200,000 Italians annually, are the country’s third-biggest killer, Italian health experts warned here Thursday.

According to the latest figures, one in five of those affected dies and one in three survivors are severely affected, they said.

Scientists and doctors gathered in Rome for Stroke Prevention Day stressed that the illness was “avoidable” with proper information. “Many don’t even know they are at risk and those who do, still don’t take proper care of themselves,” said Giuseppe d’Alessandro, president of the Italian Stroke Association.

“Two thirds of all stroke cases could be prevented if measures were taken in advance.” Experts said that high blood pressure and smoking were the main triggers for strokes and cautioned against the common misapprehension that the condition only affected older people. In fact, at least one out of every five people who suffer a stroke is under the age of 45, they said.

Russia names “important issues” UN should investigate in Iraq

MOSCOW, 24 April — Russia said Thursday that it respects a United Nations investigation into alleged corruption in the United Nations oil-for-food programme in Iraq, but that does not see it as a priority task for the world body as there are more pressing issues on the UN agenda.

“We respect the decision (of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan) to set up a commission for an independent investigation” into the alleged corruption in the programme, the Interfax news agency quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov as saying.

“However, we do not think that such historical inquiries are a key priority of the UN Security Council,” Fedotov said.

Russia this week backed the UN Security Council resolution approving the independent inquiry of the UN-run oil-for-food programme, which US lawmakers had claimed allowing Saddam Hussein to acquire more than 10 billion US dollars in oil revenues.

Fedotov named a number of “important issues” that the Council should investigate, including the Iraq weapons of mass destruction and tracking down people who went missing during the 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

“In general, we think the UN Security Council’s work on Iraq must be aimed into the future and help build a model of fair and lasting Iraq settlement with broad international participation,” he said in a statement. The top Russian diplomat expressed the hope that the investigation “will make an unbiased and meticulous probe, without becoming politically engaged.”

Reports said Russian companies got preferential contracts under the oil-for-food programme to supply various products to Iraq.

But Russia’s Foreign Ministry has dismissed allegations that Russian companies received bribes from Saddam Hussein’s government as groundless, saying that they could be aimed at thwarting Russian companies’ efforts to return to the Iraqi market.

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A British soldier on patrol in the southern Iraqi city of Basra on 22 April, 2004. --- INTERNET

An Iraqi woman carries household goods from her home on her way out of Fallujah, Iraq on 23 April, 2004. --- INTERVIEW

A British soldier on patrol in the southern Iraqi city of Basra on 22 April, 2004. --- INTERNET
An Iraqi man views the devastation from his home on 22 April, 2004, at the site of one of three attacks the previous day in the southern Iraq city of Basra.

An Iraqi man views the scene of destruction after one of three car bomb explosions in the southern Iraq city of Basra on 21 April, 2004.

Iraqi girl Wiam Mohammed, 4, shows her injuries in Baghdad, Iraq on 17 April, 2004, after she was hit with a bullet in her left shoulder fleeing Fallujah in a car with her parents, six brothers and sisters and a cousin. Her parents, two sisters and brother were killed when US Marines opened fire on the car that was carrying them.

Iraqi Umm Ali, right, sits next to the bed of her 10 month-old son Ali Sabah, at Fallujah’s public clinic, 60 kilometres west of Baghdad, Iraq on 18, April 2004. Ali was wounded during fighting in Fallujah on Friday.

Iraqi children, refugees from Fallujah, comfort each other after arriving to a makeshift refugee camp in the Khadra district of Baghdad, Iraq on 23 April, 2004. Workers from the Iraqi Red Crescent relief agency prepared a camp for displaced persons from the violence-wracked city of Fallujah.

Images of Iraq

One of the school children wounded in an explosion targeting police stations in the southern Iraqi city of Basra receives treatment at a local hospital on 22 April 2004.
New and fast developments throughout Myanmar

The Government Technological College in Mandalay. — MNA

The factory of Myanmar Asia Optical International Co Ltd seen in Mingaladon Industrial Zone. — MNA

Deedokpauk Bridge seen on Maeri-Kyaukpyu road section of Yangon-Kyaukpyu Highway in Yanbye Township. — MNA
Together with the great changes and developments in the political, economic and social fields, Myanmar at present is practically building a new democratic Union of Myanmar, laying down the seven-point future policy programme, and as the first stage, it has announced the resumption of the National Convention, which has been temporarily adjourned, on 17 May 2004.

Myanmar expatriates and fugitives from outside the nation, and global neo-colonialists and destructive elements under the guise of politicians from inside the nation, ignoring the changing and developing political, economic and social sectors, are slandering the nation as if it has achieved no progress at all. They are demanding imposition of economic sanctions on Myanmar. But they have no other aim but to grab the State power through short cut.

However much they are trying to cover the objective conditions, they are unable to deny the truth. There is a Myanmar saying which goes “The good becomes famous, while the bad becomes infamous”. The unprecedented economic development in Myanmar is seen as tangible results in the nation. In the political sector, the nation has been able to make peace with 17 armed groups, and held the National Convention to draw a State constitution, and in the economic sector, it has adopted the market-oriented economic system. Moreover, it has built a number of irrigation facilities and reclaimed large stretches of vacant, virgin and wetlands for crop cultivation; roads and bridges including river-crossing bridges, that help further strengthen the national unity and facilitate transport sector; extended schools, institutions of higher learning and vocational schools subject-wise, and built hospitals and dispensaries from districts down to the villages in providing public health care. As such, ASEAN countries and regional countries seeing and understanding Myanmar’s objective conditions from the positive point of view are extending bilateral cooperation with the nation and some European countries are also making constructive approach towards Myanmar. In addition, Myanmar scholars living abroad and their foreign counterparts are also studying Myanmar from the constructive point of view and holding paper-reading sessions to present their findings. Scholars held talks to review the US-Myanmar relations in Washington on 25 March 2004. Now, I would like to present only the brief account of the presentation of the experts including Dr. John Badley, former American professor with 30 to 40 years experience in his study of Myanmar, Professor David Steinberg of Georgetown University, a former British professor Dr. Robert Taylor, Assistant Professor U Kyaw Yin Hlaing of Political Department of Singapore University and senior critic Mr. Morton Petersen of International Crisis Group. During the talks, Dr. John Badley presented his view on the Myanmar military government, saying that, he thought the government was changing its attitude; that instead of imposing sanctions on Myanmar, the US should concentrate on serving its own interest; that as the American strategy gave priority to serving its own interest, the US and its citizens did not wish to see unnecessary rise in the number of enemies; that the US should worry about the economic gains in Myanmar of the neighbouring and regional countries, as it had no economic investment in the country.

Next, U Kyaw Yin Hlaing said that sanctions did not work, instead, they worsened the situation in Myanmar; that it was not that sanctions did not hurt the government, but they hurt the people more; that the elements who support the sanctions would not continue to do so if they heard or had the opportunity to hear about the sufferings of the people hit directly or indirectly by the sanctions.

Similarly, Mr. David Steinberg said that the US government had never acknowledged the good points of the Myanmar government, while failing to make an official statement on the infrastructural development, the truce with insurgents, and reduction in the cultivation of poppy for opium. He also said that Senator McConnell had said that sanctions were meant for the Myanmar military junta to make changes; that he didn’t believe that sanctions would change the military government; that instead of paving the way for the military government to extend further relations with the world nations, the US was trying to isolate it; that as the successive US administrations were trying to extend better relations with North Korea, they should also deal with Myanmar in the same way; that in his view sanctions hurt the US interest also.

(To be continued) (Translation: TMT) Myanma Alin, Kyemon: 24-4-2004

UMFCCI opens Japanese language course

YANGON, 24 April — With the assistance provided by Koeki Shoji Co Ltd of Japan, the first year course on Japanese language was opened with ceremony by the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry at its Training Centre on Bo Sun Pat Street here this morning.

Chairman of Education Work Committee of the UMFCCI U Sein Win Hlaing first delivered an address. Next, Mr. Masanaru Tsuchim of Koeki Shoji Co Ltd of Japan spoke on the occasion. The one-month course is being attended by 55 trainees. — AYA
MCCWA has stood as an integrated…

(from page 1)

The diagnosis centre of the MCCWA (Headquarters) is giving medical check-up on cancer, a common disease to women, and heart diseases to women, he said. It is also encouraging to note that since 2001, in cooperation with specialists from the Health Ministry, the association has given free medical treatments to over 3,500 cleft lip and palate patients in states and divisions, he said.

Furthermore, the association has been joining the UN agencies and international social organizations including UNAIDS in the tasks for prevention and control of HIV and AIDS on a wider scale. And it is also cooperating with UNFPA and UNHCR in tasks for behaviour change with regard to reproduction and other cooperation services, he said. Now, the association is taking measures to organize men to participate in these tasks, he noted.

Starting from 2000, the association has given educational talks on reproductive health to teenagers and opened youth rehabilitation centres. In 2003, based in hand with UNFPA, Intentional Planned Parenthood Federation and Marie Stopes International, the association organized and nurtured some 4,000 youths at 10 Youth Centres in five townships, he said. With respect to education sector, the association provided cash assistance for over 1 million needy students to ensure completion of their education from 1996 to 2003. In carrying out these tasks, the association has won the participation of such international organizations as Asia Maternal and Child Welfare Association, 2050 Organization, U.L.A.W, and Korean Embassy Women Organization, he said.

From 1996 to 2003, the association conducted three Rr courses for around 54,000 adults, and opened over 19,000 reading sessions and nearly 10,000 libraries. In addition, it has opened over 1,800 community learning centres in the entire nation in cooperation with Education Ministry, he said.

With a view to ensuring all-round development of children under-five and better income of mothers, it has opened pre-primary schools and early childhood development centres. And it has been conducting vocational training schools and providing necessary equipment as well as job opportunities and small loans for enabling women and girls to earn better income, he said.

He said Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association is a key sector and to discharge national duties.

MNA

Lt-Gen Ye Myint supervises supply of water in Meiktila District

YANTON, 24 April—Member of the State Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Mandalay Mayor Brig-Gen Yan Thein and officials.

Accompanied by Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint and Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Lt-Gen Ye Myint arrived in Mandalay at 9 am and discussed water supply and development tasks with members of Agricultural Coordination Committees of Mandalay Division, Meiktila, Kyaukse and Yameneth Districts at the meeting hall of Central Command Headquarters.

Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint reported on greening tasks in Meiktila District and water supply tasks. Lt-Gen Ye Myint gave instructions on searching for water resources for availability of drinking and greening tasks in Meiktila District, Meiktila, Thazi and Wundwin townships and water supply system. Later, officials reported on arrangements for water supply tasks.

MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt views documentary photos of MCCWA (Central) and State and Division associations. — MNA

Ngwetha Dam opened in…

(from page 16)

It is incumbent upon local people to make efforts for regional development and self-sufficiency in food with the dam’s irrigation projects and reservoirs built for assisting the living standard of local people and national development. At the same time, earnest efforts are to be made for extended production of paddy in Yinmabin and extending the cultivable acreage.

He urged the members to make efforts to achieve the lofty aims of social services after realizing the fact that MCCWA brings about the all-round social development of the entire Myanmar society including health and fitness of mothers and children, security of family life, increase of job opportunities and income in women sector and development of economic and social life.

All-round social development leads to spiritual development of the entire women including mothers. He believed that the entire mass of Myanmar women would become a national force with efficiency capable of discharging State and national duties.

Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation employing noble historical traditions of the entire Myanmar women and efficient capabilities is envisaging for emergence of a united national force that can serve the interest of the nation. He said he also believed that members of MCCWA at different levels would participate in the tasks in unity under the leadership of MCCWA, a leading organization in the women sector and to discharge their respective duties for successful implementation of the seven-point future programme of the State that can guarantee the stable future of the nation and its people, national prestige and perpetuation of the Union forever.

Next, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party and guests observed documentary photos of activities of MCCWA (Central), State and Division MCCWA Supervisory Committees, published by MCCWA, video tapes and magazines. Next, MCCWA President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe formally opened the market festival to mark the 14th anniversary of the association. The Prime Minister and party and guests inspected youth education activity booths, shops opened by MCCWA (Central) and State and Division MCCWA Supervisory Committees, traditional medicine booths and shops of private entrepreneurs. — MNA

Country under the irrigation projects with the guidance of the head of State. In a short time, they can supply water to over 2.1 million acres of cultivable lands and drinking water. He said agriculture is the most fundamental for food sufficiency of the people and the biggest productive force for national economy. This is why the government is laying emphasis on boosting agricultural production year after year, cultivating crops fully, increasing per acre yield and extending the cultivable acreage.

There are a lot of irrigated farms in Sagaing Division in upper Myanmar and the division has become a granary of upper Myanmar. Peasants engage in agriculture for their living and the enterprise contributes to half of the State’s economy. He said construction of the dam started in 2002-2003 and it completed in two years. He spoke at length on importance of maintenance of the dam, conservation of forests which prevents erosion and depletion of fertile soil, boosting production of crops, conservation of trees in catchment areas and observing irrigation rules and regulations.

Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye also spoke at the occasion.

U Aung Zaw Oo of Salingyi Township thanked the government for construction of the dam.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint, the commander, the minister and party inspected the dam. Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint formally unveiled the stone inscription of the dam. The commander and the minister formally opened the dam.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint, the commander and the minister had photo taken with local people. The earth dam is 5,280 feet long and 58 feet high and its capacity is 15,250 acre feet. It can supply 3,000 acres of farmlands in Salingyi Township. The dam is very beneficial to the neighbouring villages to be self-sufficient in clean water as well as keeping the region green and pleasant. — MNA

Lt-Gen Ye Myint formally unveiled stone inscription of Ngwetha Dam in Salingyi Township. — MNA

Relentless efforts are to be made for ensuring further strengthening of national economy through extended production of paddy and other crops in Sagaing Division where there is favourable weather condition. In conclusion, he urged local people and local authorities to strive for maintaining the irrigation facilities for long term use; for keeping the region green and pleasant; and for boosting the agricultural production as much as possible.

Next, Minister for Agriculture & Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin delivered a speech. He said Ngwetha Dam was built with the aim of developing agriculture and reservoirs for assisting the living standard of local people and national development. At the same time, earnest efforts are to be made for extended production of paddy in Yinmabin and extending the cultivable acreage.

He believed that the entire mass of Myanmar women would become a national force with efficiency capable of discharging State and national duties.

commander and the minister formally opened the dam. — MNA

MNA
Li-Gen Ye Myint attends ceremony to hand over school building in Monywa BEHS No 3

YANGON, 24 April—Member of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Sagon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, attended a ceremony to hand over Nawarat Hall of Monywa Basic Education High School No 3 in Monywa on 23 April afternoon.

Also present were local authorities, departmental officials, the school head, teachers and students. Officially opened the school building. Li-Gen Ye Myint formally unveiled the signboard of the Nawarat Hall and inspected the hall.

Li-Gen Ye Myint gave a speech on the occasion. After the ceremony, Li-Gen Ye Myint met with local authorities, departmental officials and local people at the Town Hall in Monywa. Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye reported on progress of Sagon Division. Similarly, officials reported on their respective sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, Li-Gen Ye Myint said that the government is building the country to become a peaceful, modern and developed nation. In this regard, tasks of district and township are to be reviewed. For gaining development in district- and division-wise, assistance is to be provided to the townships which lagged behind in development compared with other townships.

The people are to be organized for cooperation in regional development tasks. Under the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe, it can be seen that a lot of regional development tasks are being carried out in Sagon Division.

In the road and bridge sector, Chindwin River Bridge (Hlaingyi) and Chindwin River Bridge (Monywa) have been opened. Myittha River Bridge are under construction. Similarly, there are many major bridges which are over 180 feet long. Likewise, Monywa-Yagyi-Kalaywa Road, Shwebo-Yay NU-Kyay Village Road, Paung-Kalay Road and Gangaw-Kalay Road have been constructed. Kalaywa-Mawlaik Road is being repaired. Similarly, dams and river water pumping projects including Thapansai Dam are being implemented. For development of the region in the long-run, all the local people are to harmoniously participate in efforts for the regional development.

Next, Li-Gen Ye Myint, the commander and party inspected construction of the Strand Road in Monywa. Commanding Officer of the local battalion Lt-Col Aung Htun reported on progress of construction tasks. The commander gave a supplementary report.

They also saw over construction of the road near Oboataung Village and completion of the 120 feet long Oboataung Bridge. Next, they looked into construction of Strand Road section between Oboataung and Mindantua. The present Strand Road is 5.58 miles long and 30 feet wide from Kyauk-Isaung Jetty to Mindantua Bridge. Construction tasks started on 10 February 2004 and has completed 49.9 per cent. —MNA

MMCWA holds first-day session of 14th Annual Meeting

YANGON, 24 April—The Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association held the first-day session of the 14th Annual Meeting at the hall of the association in South Okkalapa Township this morning.

Also present were President of the association Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, Vice-President Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint, CEC members, patrons of State/Division Supervisory Committee for MMCWA and officials. President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe presided over the meeting and gave a speech. The work report for 2003, the audit report for 2003-2004, the financial statement for 2003-2004 and the budget report for 2004-2005 were submitted to the meeting.

Next, secretaries of State/Division Supervisory Committees for MMCWA submitted their annual reports to the meeting. Later, Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe gave necessary instructions. The meeting will last up to 26 April.—MNA

Commander inspects completion of upgrading tasks at Zoo

YANGON, 24 April—Chairman of the Work Committee for Upgrading the Environments of Yangon City Kandawgyi Gardens and Zoo (Yangon) Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe inspected progress of upgrading tasks at the Zoo (Yangon) this evening.

The commander and party were welcomed there by Deputy Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, No 4 Military Region Commander Col Yan Naing Oo and officials of the Forest Department.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein reported on completion of upgrading tasks. The commander, the deputy minister and party saw over completion of landscaping, repair of animal cages, upgrading of booths at the Natural History Museum, construction of the car park. Officials conducted them round the work site. Later, the commander gave necessary instructions. —MNA

Myanmar delegation arrives back

YANGON, 24 April—The Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Economic Cooperation U Tin Win arrived back here by air on 22 April morning after attending the ASEAN Economic Ministers’ Informal Meeting from 20 to 22 April in Singapore. The Minister and party were welcomed back at the airport by Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office U Than Shwe, Deputy Minister for Labour Brig-Gen Win Sein, Members of the delegation Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Maung Maung Yi and Deputy Director of the Prime Minister’s Office U Khin Maung Nyo also arrived back on the same flight.

The Myanmar delegation left for Chiang Mai from Singapore on 22 April afternoon to attend the meeting.—MNA

Sanitation tasks carried out in Yangon City

YANGON, 24 April—Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin this morning inspected sanitation tasks and proper flow of water at drains in the municipal area of Yangon City being carried out by Tatmadawmen, members of Myanmar Police Force and workers of YCDC.

The commander and the mayor saw over sanitation tasks and dredging of drains along U Wisara Road in Dagon Township and wards in Sanyangyi and Hline Townships.

The commander and the mayor gave necessary instructions and attended to their needs. They also looked into carrying out of sanitation tasks in Thanganyin, South Okkalapa, Yankin, Ahlon, Kyimyindine, Mayangon, Bahan, Pabedan and Lammadaw townships. —MNA

Industry-2 Minister inspects Indagaw Industrial Zone

YANGON, 24 April — Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lin, accompanied by officials, this morning arrived at Indagaw Industrial Zone of the Ministry in Bago Division and inspected the site chosen for construction of the motor factory and electronic goods factory for motor vehicles. Managing Director of Myanmar Industrial Construction Services U Ye Tin and project Director U Kyaw Nyunt reported on construction works with the aid of charts. Next, the minister gave necessary instructions.

The minister then looked into the aluminium wire factory of Myaun Machine Tool and Electrical Industries where Managing Director U Kyaw Win, Director (Project) U Win Tint and factory General Manager U Pe Than Hlaing reported on running of the factory and production of aluminium wires.

Later, the minister gave necessary instructions to them. —MNA

Education High School No 3 in Monywa. —MNA

MMCWA President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe speaking at 14th Annual General Meeting of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association. —MNA

Don’t smoke
Argentine to lose $500m due to energy crisis

BUENOS AIRES, 24 April — The current energy crisis will cost Argentina some $500 million US dollars, the Argentine Central Bank estimated in a quarterly report Thursday. The cost was mainly used for emergency imports of Venezuelan fuel oil and Bolivian gas.

The cost for importing foreign gas “will have a direct impact on the country’s balance, and will deepen the downward tendency observed last quarter in the current account’s surpluses,” the report warned.

It also stated the situation could worsen if the winter is colder than expected.

The payments for Venezuelan oil were estimated at 348 million US dollars at the current exchange rate.

Under an accord signed Wednesday with Bolivia, Argentina will buy Bolivia’s natural gas in the next six months to ease its energy crisis.

MNA/Reuters

Los Angeles officials urge precautions against West Nile

LOS ANGELES, 24 April — Los Angeles health officials on Thursday warned people to take precautions against mosquitoes after crows in the county tested positive for the virus.

“The findings are a clear warning that the virus is continuing to circulate and amplifying in the environment,” said Steve West of the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District.

The virus is carried by birds and transmitted to people by mosquitoes which first bite infected birds and then humans.

The first likely case of human West Nile infection in the United States this year was reported in Ohio last week. Last year, almost 10,000 people nationwide were infected and some 260 people died from the virus.

Health experts say the best protection is to avoid mosquito bites by staying indoors from dusk to dawn and wearing long sleeves and trousers when outside.

MNA/Reuters

Czech willing to enhance exchanges with Chinese universities

BRNO, 24 April — The Czech Republic is willing to see further exchanges between the two countries’ colleges and universities and visiting Czech President Vaclav Klaus here Thursday.

President Klaus held wide-ranging discussions with more than 10 professors and scholars from prestigious Beijing University on Sino-Czech relations, two countries’ domestic reform and future cooperation.

Klaus said the Czech Republic has very friendly relations with China and that the two sides support each other in many international affairs and have no visible disputes. The Czech Republic admires China’s rapid economic growth, and hopes to learn from the country’s experience in the balanced development of economy, media, and other sectors, he said.

He hoped his current visit would help increase mutual understanding of the two sides and enhance the bilateral trade and economic exchanges. He also compared notes with the professors of Beijing University on meeting the challenges between the economic development and environmental protection. The Czech Republic had witnessed success in environmental protection in the past 10-odd years, he said, adding that the three major ways to achieve this are to alter the economic system, adjust the financial structure and formulate policies for environmental protection.

MNA/Reuters

Official says Portugal welcomes Chinese tourists

BRNO, 24 April — Portugal is eager to greet thousands of Chinese visitors, which will not only demonstrate China’s increasing national strength in the world’s tourism industry, but also indicate an exciting change in relations between the West-East relations 4, said visiting Luis Correia da Silva, secretary of state of tourism of Portugal.

He said Portugal has 11 World Cultural Heritage sites, which are attractive for Chinese people who also enjoy long history. Portugal also has tasty Porto wine, delicious food, an abundant number of beaches and beautiful golf courses. Portugal had some 12 million inbound tourists last year, but Chinese people only occupied a small portion. He hoped after Chinese travel agencies are allowed to organize group tours, the number of Chinese visitors can grow rapidly. He said the Euro 2004 will be held in Portugal. China Central Television will broadcast every match after showing half an hour of Portuguese scenery.

He said the Chinese audience was more familiar with the nation.

Air Portugal was also here for dialogue with China’s Aviation Authority and three major airline groups, in the hope of opening new flights to China. He said the airline’s vice-president Jose Guedes Dias. Quite a few Chinese tourists were preparing for an eight-day tour including France, Italy, Spain and Portugal. The first group is expected to set out at the end of May. Da Silva said the Portuguese language can be seen everywhere in Macao and maybe one day the Chinese language would also be found widely in Portugal.

MNA/Reuters

Senior Chinese military officer meets Russian DM

BRNO, 24 April — Guo Boxiong, vice-chairman of the Chinese Central Military Commission, met with Russian Minister of Defence Sergei Ivanov here Thursday.

Guo said China and Russia are friendly neighbouring countries. As an important part of the strategic partnership of cooperation between the two countries, military relations between the two sides have been strengthened in recent years, he noted.

He said the development of bilateral relations between the two Armed Forces plays an important role in safeguarding the stability of this region and the world at large. He stressed that the Chinese side is willing to strengthen cooperation with the Russian side for further development of bilateral relations between the two countries and their Armed Forces. Ivanov said Russia highly values its friendly cooperation with China.

“Facts have proved the development of the strategic partnership of cooperation with China is conducive to the prosperity of the country,” he said. He said Russia is ready to make joint efforts with China to enhance bilateral relations between the two countries and their Armed Forces. Guo appreciated Russia’s adherence to the one-China principle, and Ivanov said Russia will continue to adhere to this principled stance on the Taiwan issue.

MNA/News

Rampant rhino gets amorous with car at British park

LODZ, 24 April — A rampant rhinoceros gave a group of visitors a glimpse of nature in the raw. It was photographed in a British safari park when he tried to have sex with their car. Sharka, a two-ton white rhino, got amorous with Dave Alspow’s car when he stopped with three friends to take pictures of the unusual mating with his partner Trixie at the West Midlands Safari Park.

The 12-year-old rhino tried to mount the Renault Laguna from the side, denting the doors and ripping off the wing mirrors before Dave drove away with a puffing Sharka in pursuit. “He was a big boy and obviously aroused,” Alspow told the Sun newspaper on Thursday.

A spokesman for the park, which says “rhinos are not particularly intelligent animals” on its web site, said Sharka was a hit with the female rhinos and had fathered two calves in the last five years.

“He’s got a bit of a reputation this lad and he was obviously at it again,” she added.

MNA/Reuters
Donors agree to channel aid through Afghan government

**KABUL,** April 24—Donor nations and international institutions have agreed to channelize their aid pledged at the recently concluded Berlin conference through the Afghan transitional government, Afghan Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani said here Thursday.

Talking to journalists at the conclusion of a three-day conference entitled “Afghanistan Development Forum,” Ghani said that all the donors had reiterated their commitment to help postwar Afghanistan rebuild itself.

“Most of the donor nations have accepted to channel their aid pledged at Berlin conference through the Afghan national budget,” he said.

The aim of the three-day forum held with the participation of over 40 nations and organizations in the wake of Berlin conference was to review Afghanistan’s situation and the implementation of assistance pledged at the conference.

More than 60 countries and international organizations present at the Berlin conference which concluded in early April had committed $8.2 billion US dollars over the next six weeks and possibly for six months and will go back to Earth.

**WASHINGTON, 24 April—**The Australian Government on Thursday welcomed Southeast Asia’s economic ministers’ support on a free trade agreement with Australia and New Zealand.

Economic ministers of the 10-member Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) announced in Singapore on Wednesday that they will urge their leaders to sign a free trade agreement with Australia and New Zealand.

The ministers also agreed to invite Australia and New Zealand to attend a summit of ASEAN in Laos later this year to set up a schedule for regional trade negotiations.

Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and Trade Minister Mark Vaile, in a joint statement released on Thursday, described ASEAN economic ministers’ announce as “a step forward for Australia-ASEAN economic relations.

“ASEAN’s decision to look at ways to further deepen our economic partnership, including through examining a free trade agreement, reflects Australia’s already close economic, commercial and financial relations between Australia and ASEAN,” they said.

A trade agreement could complement the two bilateral free trade agreements Australia has recently negotiated with ASEAN members, with one with Singapore which has now entered into force, and the other with Thailand which will come into force next year, according to the statement.

Australia’s first dialogue partner, has been pursuing a Free Trade Agreement between ASEAN and the Australian-New Zealand Closer Economic Relations (Trade Agreement) economic ties since 2000.

**US 30-year mortgage rates up to highest level this year**

**WASHINGTON,** April 24 — The interest rates on benchmark 30-year mortgages in the United States increased for the fifth week in a row this week and climbed to the highest level of the year.

US mortgage giant Freddie Mac reported on Thursday in its weekly nationwide survey that the average rate on a 30-year, fixed rate mortgage increased to 5.94 per cent this week, up from 5.89 per cent last week.

The rate was the highest since the 30-year mortgages averaged 6.02 per cent the week ending on 5 December, 2003. Average rate for 15-year, fixed-rate mortgages, a popular option for refinancing, also rose this week to 5.25 per cent, up from 5.23 per cent last week. For one-year, adjustable mortgages, rates were 3.69 per cent this week, unchanged from the previous week.

The two-person spacewalks will not take place while both the old and new crews are aboard the station for an 11-day overlap, he said.

A spacewalk could add eight to 10 days to that overlap period, changing an expected landing date of the Soyuz spacecraft to a night landing, making recovery more difficult.

The new crew arrived at the station on Wednesday aboard a Russian Soyuz spacecraft, and the spacewalk was scheduled to occur hours later, Suffredini said.

**Space Station gyroscope fails; spacewalk needed**

**WASHINGTON, 24 April—**Hours after a new two-man crew arrived at the International Space Station, one of the gyroscopes that keeps the orbiting outpost steady failed, and NASA said on Thursday a spacewalk would be needed to fix it.

The gyroscope problem stemmed from an underlying failure in a circuit breaker in the external gear train on the station, said space station manager Mike Suffredini.

In the meantime, the box that holds that particular circuit breaker "is outside (the station) and that implies we’ll have to do an EVA," Suffredini said in a telephone news conference, using the acronym for extra-vehicular activity, or spacewalk.

He stressed, however, "we’re not dealing with a safety issue," and added it would take several weeks to determine when to schedule the spacewalk.

There are two gyroscopes still functioning, and that is enough to stabilize the station, Suffredini said. If one of the remaining gyroscopes fails, the station will rely on thrusters to keep it steady.

That would use up a bit more propellant, but Suffredini estimated there was enough to keep the thrusters going for at least six months and possibly for a year.

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The new crew arrived at the station on Wednesday aboard a Russian Soyuz spacecraft, and the spacewalk was scheduled to occur hours later, Suffredini said.

**Russian commander Gennady Padalka and US flight engineer Michael Fincke will spend six months in space. Dutchman Andre Kuipers, from the European Space Agency, is accompanying them to conduct experiments.**

**Astronaut Col. Alex Kaleri and NASA’s Michael Foale have been aboard the station for six months, and will go back to Earth.**—*MNA/Reuters*
Singapore, Japan move to curb trade in WMD parts

SINGAPORE, 24 April—Singapore and Japan signed an agreement on Thursday to step up the enforcement of export controls on the illegal trade in materials for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in a bid to improve anti-proliferation efforts.

Both nations said they hope the agreement will encourage other Asian countries to introduce more effective export control systems to stamp out the illegal trade of WMD related materials.

Japan’s Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and Singapore’s said in a joint statement the agreement comes as those seeking materials for WMD become more cunning and creative in circumventing the existing controls.

Under the agreement, both countries will exchange information and increase cooperation to ensure export licence conditions are better adhered to. They also will conduct educational programmes for the private sector and improve the flow of information on export control laws, regulations and policies.

The potential trade in materials for WMD in Asia was highlighted last year when Western authorities intercepted a Libyan-bound container ship carrying nuclear clear centrifuge parts made in Malaysia.

The United States has since stationed its own Customs officers at Malaysia’s main port of Klang to check US-bound container cargo.

“Preventing the proliferation of WMD and related items and technology is becoming increasingly important for the sustainable development of the Asian region,” said Atsuo Shibota, director-general of the Japan’s Trade Control Department.

The United States is also leading a drive for all shipping companies to comply with a tough United Nations maritime anti-terror law that comes into force on 1 July. Failure to comply risks cargoes being turned away at major ports. The United Nations law, known as the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code, is mandatory for all merchant ships and ports engaged in global trade.

Britain warns citizens against travel to Philippines

MANILA, 24 April—Britain cautioned on Thursday its citizens against travel to the Philippines citing a “high general threat” of terrorism and kidnapping throughout the country.

“The travel warning was issued amid the latest spate of terrorist attacks in the Philippines,” it added. —MNA/Xinhua

Experts say Indian Govt needs to review FDI policy

NEW DELHI, 24 April—Indian Government needs to review its policy allowing foreign direct investment up to 24 per cent in the small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) while ensuring better credit facility and technology financing to make them globally competitive, industry experts said on recently.

“Direct benefits of FDI have not permeated down to the SMEs,” Prabir Sengupta, Director of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, said at a workshop on Technology Financing for SMEs here.

Sengupta said small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) while ensuring better credit facility and technology financing to make them globally competitive, making them globally competitive, making them.

Rising oil prices will not have any impact on Thai economy

BANGKOK, 24 April—A senior official of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) has said that rising oil prices in the world market would unlikely have any impact on the Thai economy unless the prices are to exceed 30 US dollars a barrel, the Thai News Agency reported Friday.

Rising Thai exports to the US will help offset any impact on the Thai economy caused by higher oil prices, NESDB Secretary-General Chakramon Phasukavanchi said on Thursday.

But he said that the oil price hike could affect Thailand’s economic expansion if the prices exceeded 30 US dollars a barrel.

“If the oil prices in the world market stand no more than 26 US dollars a barrel, they won’t affect the Thai economy, and Thailand’s economic growth is still projected to grow as at 7.8 per cent this year. But if the oil prices exceed 30 US dollars a barrel, they could affect the country’s projected economic growth inevitably,” he stated. —MNA/Xinhua

Philippines ready to face, thwart terrorist attacks

MANILA, 24 April—The Philippine Government Friday assured that it would foil attack attempts of terrorist group while keeping its humanitarian contingent in Iraq.

President spokesman Ignacio Bunye said in a statement that the government had taken effective measures to assure the public security.

“We are ready to face and thwart terrorist attacks in the country, particularly in Metro Manila and other key urban areas,” he said.

The intelligence community is monitoring all threats and is not discounting any reports from allies, he added.

The United States earlier warned in a statement that crowded sea lanes and financial centres in Asia would be potential targets of terrorist attacks.

Earlier report said that embassies of South Korea and Pakistan in Bangkok, Thailand, both received letters from a so-called “Yellow-Red Overseas Organization” threatening to attack Asia and Pacific countries which have backed the anti-terror war launched by the United States after the September 11 attacks in 2001, including Australia, Japan, Kuwait, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea and Thailand, between April 20 and 30.

Defence Secretary Eduardo Ermita Friday said confirmed in a radio interview that the military had held an intelligence meeting to discuss the new threat but had not found any new sign of terror attack.

He also noted that the Philippines would continue the humanitarian mission in Iraq despite worsening security situation in the war-torn country where 49 Filipino soldiers and policemen were assigned to the US-led coalition forces.

Head of the Middle East Preparedness Team of the Philippines Roy Cimatu told a Press conference Thursday that about 3,500 Filipinos in Iraq were safe and accounted for amid the latest spate of terrorist attacks in the region.

“They are safe from direct fire from terrorists. They are safer inside the compounds of their employers where they have Internet access and television. They are well out of harm’s way,” he said.

Cimatu also said the Philippine peacekeeping force was well-received by the Iraqi people. He quoted Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Sibari as saying that the Philippine forces in Iraq were badly needed.

专家表示，印度政府需要审查其允许外国直接投资（FDI）政策，但同时要确保中小企业（SMEs）有更好、更有竞争力的信贷设施和技术融资，以使其在全球市场上具有竞争力。
Chinese savant, FIFA Football Hall of Fame inductee and 1999 World Player of the Year, an award he won for his achievements with France and the European Cup with Real Madrid in 1998, was voted Europe's No 1 in a poll conducted by UEFA, the governing body UEFA to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of UEFA in 1954.

Players whose careers really worked out that way for the ninth time in Glasgow in 2002. There were four West Germans and four Italians in the top 20, three from the Netherlands, two from England and two from France. Zidane, who will turn 32 during this year's European Championship in Portugal starting in June, is already the FIFA World Player of the Year, an award he won for the third time in December. Like Beckenbauer, he has won the World Cup and the European Championship with France and the European Cup with Real Madrid.

He scored twice in the 1998 World Cup final when France beat Brazil 3-0 in Paris and volleyed one of the most spectacular goals ever seen in a major final when his real estate agency was battered and the winner put the best place in the Fed Cup semi-final first leg soccer match at Villarreal's El Madrigal stadium, on 22 April, 2004.

The match ended in 0-0 draw. —INTERNET

S P O R T S

**Shanghai edge Jubilo in Asian Champions League**

Shanghai, 24 April — Honduras striker Saul Martinez scored an 81st-minute winner as China's Shanghai Shenhua beat Japanese leaders Jubilo Iwata 3-2 at home in the Asian Champions League on Thursday.

Victory for Shenhua, coached by former Leeds United manager Howard Wilkinson, ended Jubilo's 15-match winning streak in all competitions and threw Group E wide open.

South Korean club Chunibuk Motors now lead the group on goal difference from Jubilo, with both teams on nine points from four matches.

The South Korean Cup holders thrashed Thai side B.E.C. Tero 4-0 this week, a result that cost B.E.C. manager Atiphol Purpakom his job.

Shanghai, led by forward Shi Zhenhua at home on May 12. Only the top team in each of the seven first-round groups will advance to the quarterfinals, to be played over two legs in September.

United Arab Emirates side Al Ain qualified for the last eight automatically by winning last year's inaugural Asian Champions League. — MNA/Reuters

**Crossword Puzzle**

**ACROSS**

1. Unfitted
2. Lariat
3. Allowance to divorced wife
4. French naval base
5. Rascal
6. Excel
7. Symbolic diagram
8. Fabric for overalls
9. Make merry
10. Designation
11. outer covering of flower
12. Snapshot
13. Repeat
14. Look after
15. Soothe
16. Drastically cut down
17. Bivalves
18. Marcus
19. Scandal
20. Balves
21. Climb
22. Exculde
23. Scatter
24. Scatter
25. Expert
26. Important
27. Wooden shoe
28. Later

**DOWN**

1. Lariat
2. Rascal
3. Allowance to divorced wife
4. French naval base
5. Excel
6. Symbolic diagram
7. Fabric for overalls
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25. Expert
26. Important
27. Wooden shoe
28. Later

**Park sets pace in Canaries Spanish Open**

FUERTEVENTURA (Spain), 24 April — David Park continued his rich vein of form with a six-under-par 66 in the Canaries Spanish Open first round to earn a one-stroke lead over fellow Briton Jamie Donaldson on Thursday.

Park, who closed with a 65 in last week's Seville Open, collected six birdies, one with a 30-yard chip-in, on a faultless card, making light of strong winds on the volcanic Canary island.

The 29-year-old leader is trying to make a comeback after a fast start to his professional career, when he equalled Greg Norman's record by winning his second tournament before ending a slump.

He lost a playoff for the 1999 Moroccan Open to Miguel Angel Martin on his debut then won the European Grand Prix the following week. Park feels success possibly came too early but after his best season for four years in 2003 he is hoping for an improvement in fortunes.

"You'd like to win again as soon as possible but it hasn't really worked out that way and golf is a difficult game to forecast," Park said.

"For a couple of years I stagnated while everyone else improved, so I guess winning was difficult to deal with."

Donaldson's career has been just the opposite as he has improved steadily since qualifying from seven invitation events in 2001.

Also aged 29, his best result last season was second in the Algarve Portuguese Open, helping him to fifth place on the European money-list.

Donaldson played with veteran Briton Royal Chapman, who shot a 66 despite not managing a practice round to lie in third place, level with Frenchman Christian Cevat. — MNA/Reuters

**Zidane wins fans vote as best European player**

LOUGANIS (Cyprus), 24 April — Zinedine Zidane of France was named as the best European footballer of the last five years by fans on Thursday, finishing narrowly ahead of Germany's Franz Beckenbauer and Dutchman Johan Cruyff.

Zidane, polled 123.582 votes, just 1,013 more than "Der Kaiser" Beckenbauer, who totalled 122.569, with Cruyff third on 119.332.

Overall, more than 150,000 fans cast a total of seven million votes in the public poll, organized by European soccer's governing body UEFA to mark the Golden Jubilee of their foundation in 1954.

Votes could only be cast for modern-day players on the UEFA web site after votes for former players from each of the five decades had also been tabled.

The final three were announced at a Golden Jubilee ceremony at the start of UEFA's annual congress being held in Cyprus for the first time.

They topped a final list of 50 players gradually revealed by UEFA since the start of the 1999-2000 season. The top team from each of the five decades had also been tabled.

Reuters
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Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects construction of Parami Overpass

YANGON, 24 April — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, accompanied by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers, the Mayor, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads and officials, arrived at the construction site of Parami Overpass Project of Myanmar Railways on the 3rd day of work today.

At the briefing hall, the Prime Minister heard reports on facts about the project, construction tasks and efforts being made for completion of the tasks earlier than schedule presented by Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin.

Deputy Minister U Pe Than reported on completion of preliminary engineering works, driving of piles, building of pile caps and some parts of the overpass, construction of the platforms, the approach roads and the main overpass. After hearing the reports, the Prime Minister gave instructions on timely completion of the construction tasks meeting the set standards earlier than schedule.

Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin also submitted reports on facts about water supply project for Yangon City. Head of Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation) Dr Tun Than Tun reported on arrangements for supply of purified drinking water to the capital applying modern technology. Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt gave necessary instructions.

Next, General Khin Nyunt inspected driving of piles at the project site.

As Yangon City is being upgraded to have the characteristics of the capital, extension of lanes and roads are being carried out. Moreover, Yangon City is crowded with heavy traffic. Similarly, trains are encircling the city through the route in suburban areas once 15 minutes. Therefore, vehicles are waiting for a long time at the junction of motor road and railroad because of the closure of the level crossing. Accordingly, the plans are under way to build the railroad overpasses step by step.

Parami Overpass is located at the junction of Parami Road and the circular railroad. The overpass will be 1,175 feet long and 48 feet wide four-lane one. The overpass will have four feet wide pedestrian ways and the clearance of the overpass will be 14 feet.— MNA

Ngwetha Dam opened in Salingyi Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Division

YANGON, 24 April — A ceremony to open Ngwetha Dam built by the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation near Ngwetha Village, Salingyi Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Division was held at the pandal near the dam this morning with an address by member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and officials, members of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council, local authorities, officials of social organizations, staff of the Irrigation Department who were engaged in construction of the dam, local people and others numbering over 4,800.

First, Lt-Gen Ye Myint made a speech on the occasion. He said that Ngwetha dam opened today is the dam built on Ngwetha Creek near Ngwetha Village, Salingyi Township. The dam was built with the aim of contributing to regional development. It will be able to benefit 3,000 acres of farmland and local people will be able to enjoy self-sufficiency in water and regional greening.

The government has laid down the objectives for national development. The irrigation facilities are being constructed based on capabilities of own intellectuals and intelligentsia and efforts of the entire national people.

Dams, reservoirs and sluice gates are being built while river water pumping projects are being constructed not only in the regions where there is scantly rainfall but also in the regions where there is plentiful rainfall.

Head of State Senior General Than Shwe has given guidance that water availability is important for agricultural purpose and dams and embankments are therefore to be built in every region where there is favourable condition.

In accord with the guidance, in the time of the State Peace and Development Council, dams and reservoirs are being built across the nation. The government has spent over K 69,000 million on building 159 dams and reservoirs including Ngwetha Dam being opened today.

In Sagaing Division, there are 16 dams including Ngwetha Dam and they are now benefiting over 360,000 acres of land. In Salingyi Township, Ngwetha Dam and Salingyi Dam were constructed. Salingyi Dam will also be opened soon.

Based on major rivers, altogether 48 river water pumping projects were implemented in Sagaing Division. Other river water pumping projects are being implemented.

Meanwhile, altogether 99 Ywathaya lakes that have been able to benefit about 1,000 acres and artisan wells are being implemented in Yinnabin Township. As a result, progress has been made in cultivation of paddy and various kinds of crops in Sagaing Division. Only when production, trade and services of agriculture, forestry, fisheries and mining sectors of a region are meeting with success will education, health and social standard of local people increase.

Therefore, the government is making all-out efforts for bringing about harmonious development throughout the nation.

Nine district greenery projects in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway Divisions are being extended to 13. Progress has been made in the projects with the participation of the people. At the same time, there has been an increase in irrigated land, thereby contributing to development of socio-economic life of the people.

Sagaing Division is a granary of Upper Myanmar and it is also a region of economic significance for the State. Therefore, the local people are to make strenuous efforts for further development of Sagaing Division. If the government strives together with the people the nation will be able to keep abreast of other nations.

Steps are being taken for the emergence of a new modern democratic nation while making efforts for national development.

Those work programmes are being laid down for serving the interest of the people.

While striving for water availability for ensuring greening tasks and agriculture purpose, the government is building roads and bridges in eastern and western parts of Sagaing Division for better transport.

(See page 9)