Vice-Senior General Maung Aye inspects Coal-fired Power Plant Project (Tikyit),
Zawgyi Hydroelectric Power Plant

YANGON, 8 May — Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, accompanied by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Rear-Admiral Soe Thein, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Commander of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint, the ministers, the deputy ministers and officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, flew from Loikaw in Kayah State to the site of Coal-fired Power Plant Project (Tikyit) of Myanma Electric Power Enterprise in Pinlaung Township of Shan State by helicopter on 5 May afternoon.

They were welcomed there by Deputy Commander Col Win Myint of Eastern Command, members of Shan State Peace and Development Council and officials.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Chief Engineer U Huy Myint of MEPE reported on implementation of the project and progress of works. Next, Minister for Electric Power Maj-Gen Tin Htut reported on completion of building the sub-power station, preparations for test-running of the first generator in the second week of June, full operation beginning in July and arrangements for running the second generator in August. Chairman of Shan Yoma Dragon Co Ltd U Chit Khaing reported on supply of coal to the power plant.

In his response, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye delivered an address, saying that it is the coal-fired power plant which can generate 120 megawatt capacity of electricity. Emphasis is to be placed on construction of the plant meeting set standard as soon as possible. Similarly, systematic preparations are to be made for requirements of regular running the plant.

As power to be generated at the plant can supply demand of electricity of the State to a certain extent. He stressed the need to lay emphasis on all sectors.

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party inspected construction of Coal-fired Power Plant Project (Tikyit) in Pinlaung Township.—MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party went back to the power plant and inspected progress in building the sub-power station and installation of the grid. Later, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye gave necessary instructions.

The power plant can generate 120 megawatt. No 1 generator with the capacity of 60 megawatt will run in July and No 2 generator of same capacity at the end of August.

Afterwards, they went to Bahtoo Tatmyo in Yaksawk Township by helicopter. They were welcomed there by member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence, the Bahtoo Station Commander and senior military officers of the station.

(See page 8)

New office building of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation opened (Page 2)

Canal and power intake of Zawgyi Hydroelectric Power Plant seen in Yaksawk Township.—MNA
Greater role of Red Cross members

Now, the national forces are joining hands and making combined endeavours under the correct leadership of the government for enabling the motherland to stand tall with high national prestige and integrity among the world nations.

Like other national forces, the Myanmar Red Cross Society, a social organization, made up of the offsprings of the people, has been participating in the nation-building tasks.

With due encouragement and support of the government, the MRCS has been unitedly carrying out social welfare services and national tasks in addition to humanitarian tasks. That is why the government honours outstanding Red Cross members by holding Get-Together of Outstanding Red Cross Members every year.

The opening of the year 2004 Get-Together of Outstanding Red Cross Members of Myanmar Red Cross Society took place at the Institute of Nursing (Yangon) on 6 May, with an address by Chairman of the National Health Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt. In his address, the General called on them to work, throughout their life, closely with members of the community, treat them warmly and behave in such a way that befits outstanding Red Cross volunteers so as to win the trust and reliance of the people.

The outstanding Red Cross members selected across the nation are invited to the Get-Together held every year, enhancing the strength and capacity of the MRCS.

The Get-Together covers general discussions and camping of the outstanding Red Cross members to further sharpen up their skills and dynamism. So, the Red Cross members are to work hard and study to the best of their ability at the camp, and only then, can they exert and apply their invaluable knowledge and experiences gained from the camp in the most effective way.

Being dynamic and sharp youths of the State, the outstanding Red Cross members are, therefore, urged to continue to heartily and enthusiastically take part in the nation-building tasks, development projects along with humanitarian tasks with genuine goodwill and loving kindness by doing their bit, while treating the people mostly warmly.

People’s Desire

* Oppose those relying 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

New office building of MWAF opened

YANGON, 8 May — The opening ceremony of the new building for the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation was held at the building No-132 on Thanlwin Street, Bahan Township, here, this morning.

Present were Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, ministers patrons of the MWAF, the attorney-general, the chief justice, the chairman of Yangon City Development Committee the mayor, MWAF President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, Vice Presidents Daw Khin Lay Thet, Daw Khin Khin Win, Professor Dr Daw May May Yi, Patron of Yangon Division Organization for Women’s Affairs Daw Khin Thei Hsu, General Secretary Professor Dr Daw Khin Aye Win and members of the supporting group, departmental officials and guests. Before the ceremony, the commander, the ministers and officials of MWAF sprinkled the archway with scented water.

President of the MWAF Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe unveiled the signboard of the MWAF and sprinkled scented water on it. The commander, the ministers and guests viewed the building. After the ceremony, ‘soon’ offering ceremony followed. The ceremony was graced by the presence of Vice Chairman of Bahan Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Yangyihaung Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vissita Suddha and members of the Sangha. The Sayadaw invested the congregation with the Five Precepts. The Sayadaw and members of the recited precepts.

Afterwards, patrons, the president and the vice-presidents offered provisions to the Sayadaw, who then delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merits. The ceremony ended with the three-time recitation of Buddha Sasana Caramiththa. Next, ‘soon’ was offered to the monks. — MNA

World Red Cross Day 2004 observed

YANGON, 8 May — The World Red Cross Day was observed at the Institute of Nursing on Bogyoke Aung San Street this morning.

First, President of Myanmar Red Cross Society Dr Kyaw Win gave an opening speech and Acting Director-General of Health Department Dr Hla Pe read out the message sent by the Ministry for Health.

Next, leader of representatives of International Committee of the Red Cross Mr Patrick Vial read out the message sent by ICRC and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Afterwards, officials presented prizes to the winners in the contests to mark the World Red Cross Day. MRCS President Dr Kyaw Win gave away championship shields and pennant to the Red Cross brigade representing Yangon Division-A. Also present on the occasion were ambassadors and diplomats of foreign missions, representatives of WHO, ICRC and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, departmental heads, outstanding Red Cross volunteers and guests. — MNA

MWAF President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe formally unveils the signboard of the new office building. — MNA

To attend the General Assembly of the World Badminton Federation (2004) in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 9 May, Myanmar Badminton Federation President U Maung Maung Swe and Secretary U Robin Tin left Yangon by air Friday. The officials seen before departure at the airport. — MNA

Myanmar Red Cross Society President Dr Kyaw Win delivers an address at the World Red Cross Day ceremony. — MNA
673 US troops killed since beginning of military operations in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 8 May—As of Friday, May 7, 763 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq last year, according to the Department of Defense. Of those, 556 died as a result of hostile action and 207 died of non-hostile causes.

The British military has reported 58 deaths; Italy, 17; Spain, eight; Bulgaria, six; Ukraine, four; Thailand, two; Denmark, El Salvador and Estonia and Poland have reported one each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 625 US soldiers have died — 447 as a result of hostile action and 178 of non-hostile causes, according to the military’s numbers.

The latest identifications reported by the Pentagon.
- Marine Cpl Jeffrey G Green, 20, Dallas; found dead Wednesday in the Euphrates River in Iraq’s Anbar province; assigned to 2nd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force; Camp Pendleton, Calif.
- Killed Wednesday when an enemy hit his vehicle in Baghdad, Iraq; assigned to 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division; Fort Hood, Texas: Army Spc James E Marshall, 19, of Tulsa, Okla Army Pfc Bradley G Krizter, 18, of Irvona, Penn.

Soldiers back in US tell of more Iraq abuses

ANTIOCH (California), 8 May—Three US military policemen who served at Baghdad’s Abu Ghraib prison said on Thursday they had witnessed unreported cases of prisoner abuse and that the practice against Iraqis was commonplace.

“It is a common thing to abuse prisoners,” said Sergeant Mike Sindar, 25, of the Army National Guard’s 870th Military Police Company based in the San Francisco Bay area. “I saw beatings all the time.”

“A lot of people had so much pent-up anger, so much aggression,” he said. “The soldiers were laughing at him,” said Leal. “The soldiers were happy to have us around. They took our pictures and were happy to have us around.”

Leal said one female soldier in his unit fired a shot into a crowd of prisoners. Sindar, who was familiar with the incident, said one person was injured.

Another group of soldiers knocked a 14-year-old boy to the ground as he entered the prison and then twisted his arm. Sindar and Leal said “The soldiers were laughing at him,” said Leal. “I saw the other soldiers that would take out their frustrations on the prisoners.”

Prisoners stand near overflowing wash water in their compound at the Abu Ghraib Prison on the outskirts of Baghdad, Iraq on 7 May, 2004. —INTERNET

China produces 1.30 million automobiles during 1st quarter

BEIJING, 8 May—China produced 1.30 million automobiles during the first three months this year, 1.28 million of which have been sold, up 25.63 per cent and 28.98 per cent respectively from the same period last year, the statistics released by the China Automotive Industry Association said with the concern-12 consecutive months.

The automobile industry in China is entirely export-oriented and accounts for 40 percent of the country’s foreign exchange earnings. It employs over 100,000 workers and sustains the livelihood of over 350,000 people.

The United States is the largest market of Nepal’s automobile items exported abroad, consuming some 85 percent of its total garment export.

One of the major reasons of the decline in the export of Nepali garments is the shift of the United States importers to Caribbean and sub-Saharan African countries, which enjoy duty-and-duty-free market access to the United States.

HK police seize 5 kilos of suspected cocaine

HONG KONG, 8 May—Hong Kong police arrested Thursday a 51-year-old man and seized a total of five kilos of suspected cocaine.

According to a government press release, following extensive investigations, the Narcotics Bureau officers intercepted the man outside of a hotel. A small quantity of suspected cocaine was found in his possession.

A search in the hotel room found three kilos of suspected cocaine and some packaging paraphernalia.

The man was then brought to a flat in Yau Ma Tei, where two more kilos of suspected cocaine and some packaging paraphernalia were seized. The haul which is believed to be for local consumption could fetch about 5.2 million HK dollars (666,666 U.S. dollars) if sold in the local black market.

The man was arrested for trafficking in dangerous drugs and is still being detained for inquiries.

Nepal’s garment export to US declines in April

KATHMANDU, 8 May—Nepal’s ready-made garment export to the United States decreased by 35 percent in April over the same period of last year, the Garment Association of Nepal said Friday.

Garments valued at 7.35 million US dollars were exported to the United States last month, while the figure was 11.35 million dollars in the same month of 2003, according to the latest figures released by the association.

This is the ninth straight month that Nepal’s garment exports to the United States experienced a downfall, prior to which it had increased for 12 consecutive months.

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One of the major reasons of the decline in the export of Nepali garments is the shift of the United States importers to Caribbean and sub-Saharan African countries, which enjoy duty-and-duty-free market access to the United States.

Abuse will make US job in Iraq harder

WASHINGTON, 8 May—The abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers could make the jobs of aid workers difficult, says the Bush administration’s top official overseeing the reconstruction of Iraq.

“Iraqis saw us as a beacon of hope, and this has certainly damaged that,” US Agency for International Development Administrator Andrew Natsios told the Associated Press.

“I hope that the Iraqi people will keep their image of America based on the hundreds of thousands of people working for us, as opposed to this one set of terrible actions that means the prison,” Natsios said in a Thursday interview.

The reconstruction effort already has been hampered, especially during the past month during sporadic violence and tense military standoffs between US forces and Iraqi insurgents. The situation has forcing Westerners involved in local governance, community development and other projects to flee Fallujah, Najaf and other areas, Natsios said.

Elsewhere, the cost of providing security to workers involved in reconstruction has risen, averaging between 10 percent and 20 percent of all the money being spent, Natsios said. USAID has been allocated $3.8 billion of the $18.4 billion set aside for reconstruction so far, the US agency governing Iraq.

Moreover, since the security situation deteriorated at the beginning of April, roughly three out of 10 Americans and other non-Iraqis involved in USAID-sponsored reconstruction projects have left the country, Natsios said.

“We’ve had to reduce the number of expatriate technical workers working for us (in Iraq) by about 30 percent, which means 70 percent of the people are still there doing their jobs,” Natsios said.—INTERNET

China produces 1.30 million automobiles during 1st quarter

BEIJING, 8 May—China produced 1.30 million automobiles during the first three months this year, 1.28 million of which have been sold, up 25.63 per cent and 28.98 per cent respectively from the same period last year, the statistics released by the China Automotive Industry Association also show that the country produced 576,900 sedan cars and 567,000 of them were sold out during the first quarter this year, up 41.86 per cent and 44.47 per cent respectively from the same period last year.

A source from the China Automotive Industry Association said with the concern-
Rumsfeld takes responsibility for Iraq prison scandal

WASHINGTON, 8 May—US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld apologized and took responsibility for the Iraq prison abuse scandal, saying he would resign “in a minute” if he thought he could no longer be effective.

Appearing before three hearings in Congress on the mistreatment that has drawn global condemnation, Rumsfeld acknowledged he had failed to bring details of the mistreatment to President George W. Bush.

He also warned that more “blatantly sadistic” photos and videos exist on top of those already published, which sparked the controversy.

Facing resignation calls, Rumsfeld said he had given the scandal a lot of thought over the past week.

“Needless to say, if I thought I could not be effective, I would resign in a minute. I would not resign simply because people try to make a political issue out of it,” he said.

A Democratic senator asked Rumsfeld whether his resignation would help undo the damage done by the scandal.

“That’s possible,” Rumsfeld responded.

Senator Hillary Clinton said after the Senate hearing there were still many unanswered questions.

Polish TV crew attacked in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 8 May—Gunmen in Iraq have killed a leading Polish journalist and his picture editor in a drive-by shooting.

TV reporter Waldemar Milewicz, 47, was well known in Poland and had covered a number of conflicts around the world.

An Iraqi man travelling with the crew said the gunmen drove up behind their car and raked it with bullets before turning around to fire again. Mr Milewicz’s colleague, Polish-Algerian Mourir Bouamrane, also died.

Mr Ernst, who was shot in the arm, spoke to Poland’s TVP from his hospital bed. Mr Ernst said the main highway was blocked and their driver took a local road he thought was safe.

“Milewicz and Mourir were sitting in the back seat. I was in the front seat with my camera. Suddenly we heard shots from very close behind and the window was shattered,” he said.

“Then there was silence and suddenly Mourir started to shout. We got out of the car and we saw Waldek was sitting over, very pale, with blood running from his nose.”

The two tried to get Milewicz from the car, but the shooting started again, killing Bouamrane and wounding Ernst.

Mr Milewicz had been working for TVP since 1984, and was an experienced war correspondent who had covered various conflicts including in the Balkans, Chechnya, Cambodia and Rwanda.

He was awarded a journalism prize by Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in 1995 for his work in Chechnya and was named Poland’s Reporter of the Year in 2001.

Mr Bouamrane, 36, a Polish-Algerian national, had been working for about 15 years for TVP.

The three-man crew had only been in Iraq three days before the attack south of Baghdad. Their bodies were taken to a morgue in Latifiya, 30km south of the capital.

India keen to expand economic ties with Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, 8 May—India has said that it is keen to expand economic cooperation with Sri Lanka and ready to put together an aid package to rebuild the embattled northern Jaffna Peninsula.

After gifting a mobile library to the Ramakrishna mission in Point Pedro in northern Jaffna Peninsula on Thursday, Indian High Commissioner in Colombo Nirupam Sen told reporters that talks initiated with the previous government of former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe on the economic agreement would continue with the new government led by President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Sen noted with satisfaction that 150 million US dollars of Indian credit line has been well utilized to import commodities and merchandise.

He said India will pursue a comprehensive economic partnership agreement with the new government with keenness to push ahead with greater economic cooperation between the two countries.

China to close medicine companies failing to pass GMP

SHANGHAI, 8 May—Some 2,000 drug producing companies will be closed as they would certainly fail to pass the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) authentication by 1 July, said an official from the State Food and Drug Administration (SFDA).

Latest statistics show that more than 2,800 drug manufacturers out of 6,000 have passed the GMP authentication so far, leaving some 1,000 in the procedure of technology upgrading and another 2,000 which would certainly fail.

“Medicine producers which fail to pass the authentication will be closed down,” said Bai Huiliang, director in charge of safety supervision department under the SFDA at a seminar on China’s Medicine and Health Production held recently.

To those companies in the technology-upgrading, the SFDA will give six months of grace period. By the end of this year, if they still could not pass, they will be closed down.

China introduced the GMP authentication, an international standards of medicine production in 1998.

In 2003, as a measure to ensure medicine safety, the SFDA regulated compulsively that all drug enterprises and workshops would have to pass the GMP authentication since July 1, 2004 to continue operation.

Bai noted that the adoption of GMP has helped promote the structure and production upgrading of the medicine industries. In 1998, only 87 medicine manufacturers passed the GMP inspections.

Over 1,300 enterprises listed in Chinese stock markets

BEIJING, 8 May—By the end of March 2004, 1,302 enterprises were listed in Chinese mainland stock markets, with total circulation value of 1.59 trillion yuan (191.6 billion US Dollars), according to figures from the China Securities Regulatory Commission.

The total turnover in the Shanghai Stock Exchange and Shenzhen Stock Exchange, the only two stock markets in China’s mainland, stood at 569.72 billion yuan in March, down 20.08 per cent from February.

Investors had opened 71.04 million accounts at the two exchanges by March, figures showed.

Female soldier charged with abuse

BAKU, 8 May—The US military has charged a female soldier with abusing Iraqi prisoners, making her the seventh to face charges.

Private Lynndie England, 21, is accused of assaults, conspiring with other soldiers to mislead the detainees, conspiring with other soldiers to mislead the detainees, conspiring with other soldiers to mislead the detainees, conspiring with other soldiers to mislead the detainees, conspiring with other soldiers to mislead the detainees, conspiring with other soldiers to mislead the detainees, conspiring with other soldiers to mislead the detainees, conspiring with other soldiers to mislead the detainees.

The forthright statement of the secretary of defence that his effectiveness going forward now is at issue is one that I agree with,” she told reporters. Apologies by the president and other top officials have so far failed to quell international outrage over the photos of abused prisoners, first shown on CBS television on 28 April, which also show US military jailers smiling and pointing at the inmates.

Rumsfeld has already been scolded by Bush for not telling him sooner about the photographs after the abuse was first drawn to official attention in January.

“I feel terrible about what happened to these Iraqi detainees,” the secretary told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

In another, she is smiling with a cigarette hanging from her lips, pointing a mock gun at the genitals of a naked prisoner in Baghdad’s Abu Ghraib jail.

Ms England is said to have joined the army as a reservist after leaving high school. She left for Iraq in February 2003.

She has now been reassigned to a military police unit in the state of North Carolina following her return. Her family says she is pregnant with the child of Charles Graner, another soldier accused of mistreating Iraqi prisoners.
Contractors return to Iraq, but numbers are still down

BAGHDAD, 8 May — Contractors involved in the rebuilding of Iraq have begun returning to the country, but their numbers are still down by about a third from what they were before violence intensified in early April, American officials said Friday.

Of the hundreds of Westerners under contract to rebuild $3.3 billion in power plants, sewage treatment plants and other facilities as well as local governmental institutions, just over 50 per cent are now on the job compared with immediately before the violence flared, an American government official in Baghdad said.

But Portia Palmer, a spokesperson for the US Agency for International Development, said some of the reduction was a result of projects coming to an end and workers rotating out of the country for scheduled rest. A reduction across the board of about a third was probably a result of the security situation, she said.

“Seventy percent of the expatriate staff continues to work in Iraq,” she said, “and as the security situation continues to normalize, those expatriates who are mission-critical to our work are returning to work throughout the country.”

In late April, government officials and private companies reported that two major contractors, General Electric and Siemens, had suspended most of their operations in Iraq, slowing some projects by as much as a month. But Tom Wheelock, director of infrastructure programmes for the American contractor, said Friday that “G E is back in country,” and that he hoped Siemens would be operating at close to full strength as early as next week.

Mr Wheelock said that returning contractors had generally put in place new security measures to cope with the continuing dangers in Iraq. A G E spokesman, Gary Sheffer, declined to discuss directly the number of employees that the company now has in the country citing security concerns. But he said the company “is committed to meeting our customers’ requirements in Iraq and continuing to be a part of the reconstruction.”

US, Britain face questions on who controls Iraqi troops

UNITED NATIONS, 8 May — The United States and Britain on Thursday promised stepped-up efforts to form a new Iraqi government but several UN diplomats questioned why Iraqi forces would be under US control when the occupation ends.

The differences emerged during informal UN Security Council talks on a new Iraqi resolution that would support a caretaker government and define its relationship to US-led forces after a handover of power on June 30.

But no text was circulated at the session, chaired by British Ambassador Emly Jones Parry, nor one is expected to be distributed until UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, now in Baghdad, reports on his efforts to form a caretaker government.

US and British officials say the resolution is expected to mark the end of the occupation, the dissolution of the occupying Coalition Provisional Authority, arrangements for the new interim government, the role of the United Nations — and approval of a US-led multinational force.

Other issues include an arms embargo and the fate of an occupation-run fund for Iraq’s oil revenues as well as laws and regulations already promulgated by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

While Council members recognized that US forces would stay in Iraq after June 30, differences emerged on the definition of full sovereignty. US and British envoys said again that this does not mean total authority over defence.

Consequently, several members, including Germany, Algeria, France and Brazil, questioned why Iraq could not at least control its own forces, participants told Reuters.

China’s per-capita edible oil consumption tops 10 kilos

BEIJING, 8 May — The per-capita consumption of edible oil in China has surpassed 10 kilos, compared with 2.2 kilos in the 1980s, according to Ren Xiaozheng, a deputy director of the State Administration of Grain.

Since the reform and opening-up drive in 1978, China has developed into a major producer and consumer of edible oil, the official said.

In 2003, the country produced 28.05 million tons of edible oil and imported 5.41 million tons of edible oil from abroad.

China has over 5,000 edible oil processing companies, with annual capacity of over 40 million tons.

In general, China has caught up with developed nations in the technology of edible oil processing, the official said.

Iraq inspector cites Halliburton cost problems

WASHINGTON, 8 May — The United States’ chief inspector in Iraq said on Thursday auditors still under way have found problems with prices charged by Halliburton unit Kellogg Brown and Root for work in Iraq and Kuwait.

Stuart Bowen, inspector general for the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority, told Reuters that aside from concerns found with hotel costs and the purchase of trucks, a broad audit would soon be announced on KBR’s task of providing services to the CPA, because of concerns over pricing.

KBR’s work in Iraq, which could eventually amount to up to 18 billion US dollars in business for the Texas-based company, has already come under the scrutiny of military auditors.

The company, which has more than 24,000 employees working in the Iraq-Kuwait region, argues its prices in Iraq have been driven up by the high level of danger.

“I think the danger drives security costs but not for everything else. Their security costs are high because of the danger and that is to be expected but tying the loss of life and costs to it is inappropriate,” said Bowen in a telephone interview from Baghdad.

Halliburton, which was the biggest logistics contractor in Iraq and provides services ranging from laundry to oil-field repair.

Asked to comment on Bowen’s audits, which are continuing, Halliburton spokeswoman Wendy Hall highlighted the cost of security. “Cost of security is a part of every dollar spent in Iraq, whether it is for vehicles, shelter or equipment. Safety for our employees is KBR’s top concern especially now as we have had kidnappings, gunfire, and in-surgent attacks on our people,” she said.

Hall added: “We believe that costs and security have to be integrated and not doing this would be irresponsible.”

KBR has lost more than 30 of its employees and contractors in Iraq and Bowen acknowledged the company had suffered more than any other firm working there. — MNA/Reuters

China Premier begins visit to Italy to boost bilateral ties

ROSTO, 8 May — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao arrived here Thursday on a three-day official visit to Italy, aiming to boost Sino-Italian political, economic and trade ties.

The Sino-Italian political ties have been consolidated and the exchanges and cooperation have achieved fruitful results in various areas since the two countries established diplomatic ties 34 years ago, he said in the statement.

“The Chinese Government persistency attaches importance to developing relations with Italy, and is willing to deepen and expand bilateral mutual benificial relations, thus contributing to maintaining world peace and promoting common development,” he added.

“I am looking forward to meeting Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and other Italian leaders to enhance mutual understanding, expand common consensus and push forward bilateral cooperation,” said the Chinese Premier.

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Don’t smoke

US Army soldiers detain Iraqi men during a patrol in the centre of Baghdad, Iraq on 7 May, 2004. — INTERTIM

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Images of Iraq

An Iraqi man searches through the rubble of his house in Fallujah after it was shelled by a mortar during a fight between Iraqi guerrillas and US troops on 27 April, 2004.

An old Iraqi man points toward a hole on the ceiling of his house in Fallujah, west of Baghdad. The man’s house was damaged during the bloody battles between US Marines and guerrillas defending the city on 5 May, 2004.

An Iraqi man stands looking at shattered glass after a rocket attack in the northern city of Mosul on 14 April, 2004.

Iraqis search through the rubble of their house, which was shelled by a mortar during a fight between Iraqi guerrillas and US troops in Fallujah, Iraq, on 2 May, 2004.

Fallujah shells: An Iraqi woman collects ammunition cases from the floor of her house that the Marines left behind after evacuating their positions in the city of Fallujah on 3 May, 2004.

An injured Iraqi man is rushed into a hospital in Baghdad, after a suicide car bomb exploded in central Baghdad on 6 May, 2004.

An Iraqi boy waits with his grandfather Hussein who was injured when a suicide car bomb exploded in Baghdad on 6 May, 2004.
New and fast developments throughout Myanmar

The three-storey school building of Wakema BEHS-2.

Nyaungdon oil and gas field in Nyaungdon region, Ayeyawady Division.

Chindwin River-crossing Hsinbyushin Bridge that links Sagaing and Magway Divisions.
Vice-Senior General Maung Aye... (from page 1)

On 6 May morning, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party inspected Zawgyi Hydroelectric Power Plant of MEPE in Yaksawk Township.

First, they inspected the canal and power intake of the plant. Next, they looked into the drain. No 2 generator and No 1 generator and control room.

At the plant, Minister for Electric Power Maj-Gen Tin Htut reported on annual generating capacity at the plant.

In response to the report, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye gave instructions, saying that as Zawgyi Dam is a prerequisite for not only water supply for agricultural purpose but also for generating electricity it is important to implement the two tasks harmoniously.

Responsible officials are to make integrated and well-coordinated efforts for ensuring the effective use of the dam, he added. The two 6-megawatt turbines have been installed at the hydel power plant of Zawgyi Dam and the plant generates 12 megawatt. The plant was opened on 16 March 2000.

Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party arrived at Kyaukson Village, Yangon Township and met with departmental officials and local people.

Afterwards, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party inspected the stone inscription of Shwenyaung-Yaksawk-Kyaukgu-Tapalan-Nawnghkio motor road opened on 24 February 1998.

At the briefing hall, Senior Engineer U Pe Min of Public Works (Taunggyi District) reported on the prevailing situation of Shwenyaung-Yaksawk-Kyaukgu-Tapalan-Nawnghkio motor road. Commander Maj-Gen Khin Aye gave necessary instructions on construction of gravel road. Later, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party looked into Kyaukson Village.

Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party arrived at the village’s monastery where they paid homage and presented offertories to Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Samvarya and members of the Sangha.

After that, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party inspected construction of Shwenyaung-Yaksawk-Kyaukgu-Tapalan-Nawnghkio motor road and Dokhtawady Bridge (Nawnghkio) on Shwenyaung-Yaksawk-Kyaukgu-Tapalan-Nawnghkio motor road under construction. On completion of the bridge, there will be smooth and secure transportation in the region.

At the briefing hall, the District Senior Engineer reported on matters related to construction of a new road linking Indaw and 18-mile junction of Yaksawk Township to Vice-Senior General Maung Aye who gave necessary instructions on construction of gravel road.

In response to the reports, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye gave instructions, saying that it is encouraging to see a national entrepreneur making all-out efforts like this for development of farming.

The government granted permits to national entrepreneurs to reclaim thousands of acres of fallow and virgin land to enable them to engage in farming.

Only when there emerges a number of acres of modern farmland together with farming undertakings being engaged on manageable scale will the agricultural sector develop, thereby contributing to further development of export. Only then, farming undertakings will benefit both the State and the entrepreneurs. There are thousands of acres of fallow and virgin land between Dokhtawady river and Indaw in Yaksawk region. According to geographical conditions, cultivation of coffee and other perennial crops can be successful.

This region is a place where coffee can grow like PyinULoLwin and Nawnghkio. The region was allocated to national entrepreneurs and arrangements have been made for cultivation of coffee and other perennial crops in the region. The national entrepreneurs, on their part, are striving to reclaim fallow and virgin land for perennial crops in the interest of the State and the people.

Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party inspected the coffee and orange plantations.

In the afternoon, they arrived back at Bahtoo and looked into mango plantations of Bahtoo Station.

First, Brig-Gen Zaw Win of Bahtoo Station reported to Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and party on sample of mango cultivation and mangos.

In response to the report, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye gave necessary instructions and inspected thriving of mango plantations. Altogether 13,000 Yinkwe and Seintalon mango trees have been grown in Bahtoo Station.

Sanitation tasks carried out in Yangon municipal area

Yangon, 8 May — To make Yangon city clean, neat and tidy and ensure proper drainage in its municipal area, Tamadawmen, members of Myanmar Police Force, staff of Yangon City Development Committee, those of social organizations and public carried out sanitation tasks today.

Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe and YCDC Chairman Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspected the activities and attended to the needs.

The commander and mayor inspected the sanitation tasks such as dredging and unblocking of ditches for proper drainage, systematic disposal of garbage, cleaning of weeds and bushes, planting of flowering plants in the townships of Kyauktada, Pabedan, Latha, Linnadaw, Ahsan, Kyimi, Save, Shwe, Kamayut, Hline, Dagon and Mingala Taungnyunt.

Officials conducted the commander and the mayor round there. During the inspections, the commander instructed to carry out collective works by district- and township-wise for ensuring the proper drainage in the drains and ditches in the city as the rains are setting in.

Commander inspectes livestock breeding tasks of Yangon Command

Yangon, 8 May — Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, accompanied by No 1 Military Region Command Colonel Tun Nyein and officials, this morning inspected livestock breeding camps of Yangon Command.

In the afternoon, the commander and party arrived at No 2 Livestock Breeding Camp in Hmaubwa Township where they were welcomed by Secretary of Yangon Command Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Supervisory Committee Lt-Col Thein Hsiu and officials.

No 2 Camp in-charge Maj Myat Nyein reported on raising of layers and sale of eggs. Lt-Col Thein Hsiu reported on breeding tasks of the command.

The commander gave necessary instructions. Next, officials conducted the commander and party round the camp. The commander gave instructions on carrying out of sanitation tasks, cultivation of vegetables in vacant lands and sale of chicken and eggs to tax-free markets and development markets in the division.
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hoists... (from page 16)

Next, the ministers and wellwishers presented offerings to the Sangha and nuns.

Afterwards, the Commander accepted K 30 million for use in missionary tasks of the Kyakhtihsaung Sayadaw donated by U Khin Shwe-Daw San San Kywe (Zay Gabar Co); K 5 million by Mandalay Thein Zaw Dr Cho Aye Han; K 2.5 million by U Aung Kyaw Tin-Daw Nan Than Htwe (Kanbawza Bank Ltd) and K 600,000 by Daw Aye Mya Nwe (Bagan Hotel).

Director-General Dr Myo Myint of Religious Affairs Department presented the assignment to maintain Shwebontha Pagoda by the Township Sangha Nayaka Committee to Kyakhtihsaung Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa.

Vocalists Daw Tin Tin Mya and Daw Htar and Mandalay Thein Zaw re- presented the assignment to the members of the Sangha. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party presented offerings to the members of the Sangha. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa delivered an Ovadakatha.

Next, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa and Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hoisted the Seinbudaw and Hgetmyatnadaw atop the pagoda.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa and Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt formally unveiled the inscription of the pagoda.

2.5 million by U Aung Ko

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt planted mango tree and Ingyin tree. The Seinbudaw and Hgetmyatnadaw hoisting ceremonies of replicas of the Shwedagon, Kyakhtihsaung Hngetmyatnadaw Pagoda, Kyakhtihsaung Hngetmyatnadaw, Kyaikhtihsaung Hsandawshin Pagoda, Kyaikhtihsaung Hsandawshin Pagoda were held at noon.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party presented offerings to the members of the Sangha. Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa delivered an Ovadakatha.

Next, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party con- veyed the Seinbudaw and Hgetmyatnadaw.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa and Prime Min- ister General Khin Nyunt hoisted the Seinbudaw and Hgetmyatnadaw atop the pagoda.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pathadipa and Prime Min- ister General Khin Nyunt formally unveiled the in- scription of the pagoda.

Prime Minister attends... (from page 16)

Zokthok Village BEHS, the Prime Minister heard reports by the township PDC Chairman U Tin Cho on location and area of the township, cultivation of paddy, oil crops and other crops, local rice sufficiency, education, health and road and bridge construction and attended to the requirements.

The Prime Minister then presented the headmaster with a computer, a TV and a VCR for the Tattaw U Pho Yahan BEPS.

Next, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs U Myo Nyunt, member of State Peace and Development Coun- cil, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung accepted cash donations for Zokthok model village BEHS.

The donations included K 1.1 million by Kyakhtihsaung Sayadaw, K 3 million by Zay Gabar Dr Khin Shwe and Daw San San Kywe; K 300,000 by U Than Han and Daw Win Ni; K 1.5 million by U Kennet Pi Lay and Daw Thin Thin Htwe; K 500,000 by Mandalay Thein Zaw and Dr Cho Aye Han; K 500,000 by U Myint Thein and Daw Cho Cho; K 500,000 by Daw Aye Mya Nwe (Bagan Hotel); K 300,000 by U Tun Ngwe, U Kyaw Win and U Kyaw Myint; K 300,000 by U Hla Sein, U Khin Htaw and U Khin Myint; K 300,000 by U Shwe Khine, U Tin Hla and U Pe Gyi; K 300,000 by U Aye Myo Min, Daw Kyin Myint, U Tin Ngwe, K 300,000 by U Nyein Aung, U Tin San and U Tin Thaw; K 200,000 by U Kyaw and U Than San, K 150,000 by U Than Aung, U Win Thein and U Me Nyo; K 1 million by Yuzana U Htaw Myint; K 1 million by U Win Aung(Dagon International); K 1 million by Olympic U Ask Tun; K 500,000 by Asia Maung Maung, K 500,000 by Dr Zaw Tun of Shwe Kyaw Pyan Co and K 1 million by U Tin Sein (Universal Co).

Next, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt made a speech. He said that they were there to fulfil the requirements for development of education, health, eco- nomic and social sectors of local people and for devel- opment of Bilin Township.

For development of rural regions and enhancement of living standard of local people the five rural develop- ment tasks of the Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda, Myanmar Sithu Co Ltd, Kyaw Thiha, Naing Naing Yin Aung Latt in the sec- ond position after firing 210 strokes in the professional golfers division, Thein Zaw Myint retained its position with 224 strokes for third day at the third with 223 each.

The tour sponsor is Rothmanns of Pall Mall Myanmar Pte Ltd together with co-sponsors — Myanmar Sithu Co Ltd, May and Mark Co Ltd, Kaung Myat Co Ltd and Punt Sun Hotel. The fourth and final round of the tour will be held tomorrow.—MNA

Zaw Zaw Latt leads Myitkyina Open Golf Tour

YANGON, 8 May — The Myitkyina Open Golf Tour, co-organized by Northern Command, Myanmar Golf Federation and MPGA and mainly sponsored by Jade Land Myanmar Co Ltd, continued for third day at Northern Star Golf Course in Myitkyina this morning. Zaw Zaw Latt (Pan West) was standing in the first position after firing 210 strokes in the professional golfers division, followed by Myint Thaung (KM Golf Centre) with 221, Min Naing (Sixon) with 222 and Kyaw Swa Lin (Ping) with 223.

In the men’s amateur golfers division, Thim Zaw Myint retained its position with 214 strokes for three days. His runners-up were Yin Aung Latt in the sec- ond position with 220, Kyaw Thiba, Naing Naing Lin and Zaw Zin Win tied at the third with 223 each.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt planted a mango tree. The ceremony of replicas of the historic Hngetmyatnadaw of ancient Panñadipa delivered a ser- mon by Sayadaw Bhaddanta Ngaingtha and Nu Phaung Ngaingtha for use in missionary activities of the Kyaikhtihsaung Sangha and nuns.
Cuba denounces “brutal”, Bush measures
HAVANA, 8 May — Cuba’s Communist Government on Friday denounced US President George W Bush’s plans to hasten its demise as “brutal” interference in another country’s affairs.

Bush took Thursday to address the flow of dollars to cash-strapped Cuba while stepping up propaganda broadcasts and support for opponents of President Fidel Castro, in power since the 1959 revolution. Visits by Cuban-American relatives, whose remittances inject about one billion dollars a year into the island’s economy, will be limited to one trip every three years to deny resources to what Bush called a “tyranny”.

The ruling Communist Party newspaper Granma reported the US decision under a banner headline: “Brutal economic and political measures against our country and against all Cubans residing in the United States.” “The solid support for the revolution by almost all Cubans, both in Cuba and in other countries, is an irrefutable verification of Mr Bush’s vile idea.”

Havana charged that White House plans to deploy a C-130 military plane to beam television signals into Cuba and counter Cuban jamming of the US funded TV Marti were aimed at violation of international broadcast rules.

The White House said it would spend 59 million US dollars over the next two years to hasten Castro’s end by supporting pro-democracy groups, relatives of imprisoned dissidents. Up to 18 million US dollars of the earmarked funds will pay for airborne broadcasts to Cuba. The Cuban Government complained that such tough sanctions come at a time of rising world food prices and are aimed at hitting tourism, the island’s main source of hard currency. Ordinary Cubans, many of whom rely on money from relatives in the United States to supplement their meager wages, were relieved that Bush had not cut a 1,200-US dollar-a-year ceiling on money Cuban-Americans can send to their families. — MNA/Reuters

China’s discipline inspection officials told to perform duties
GUANGZHOU, 8 May — A senior CPC official asked departments for discipline inspection at all levels of China to fully perform their duties and step up supervision.

The request was made by Wu Guanzheng, member of the Political Bureau of the Standing Committee of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and secretary of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, during a study tour to southwest China’s landlocked Guizhou Province from May 2-6.

It was necessary to step up inspection implementation of the Party line, relevant policies, as well as the state laws and regulations, and correct and deal with cases wherein laws are not followed or not obeyed by state officials.

Wu also told officials for discipline inspection across the country to take the lead in studying the Constitution and other laws of China, and to keep improving the capabilities of carrying out discipline inspections according to law.

Registered NGOs in China number 142,000
by 2003
BEIJING, 8 May — By the end of 2003, China had 142,000 registered non-governmental organizations (NGOs), an increase of 6.8 per cent over the figure of the previous year, according to the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The number of national or trans-provincial NGOs was 1,736, up 49 year-on-year; the number of provincial-level NGOs stood at 21,030, up 961; and the number of prefecture- and county-level NGOs was 48,731, down 6,565. Meanwhile, China had 19 foreign chambers of commerce.

The ministry said the government will give support to the development of charitable groups and NGOs that are closely related to foreign trade, industries and rural economy.

Minister U Aung Thaung being welcomed back at the airport. — INDUSTRY-1

Myanmar-Thai industrial cooperation discussed
YANGON, 8 May — The Myanmar industrial delegation led by Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung arrived back here from Thailand yesterday. The delegation was welcomed back by Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office Maj-Gen Thein Swe, the deputy ministers and officials. Managing Director of Myanmar Ceramics Industries U Soe Yi, Deputy Director-General of Regional Industrial Coordination and Inspection Department U Zaw Shan, General Manager of Myanmar Textile Industries U Ye Win, General Manager of Myanmar Pharmaceutical Industries U Tin Maung Win, General Manager of Myanmar Paper and Chemical Industries U Tin Maung Win and Deputy General Manager of Myanmar Textile Industries U Ko Ko Lwin also arrived back on the same flight. Under the industrial cooperation programme between Myanmar and Thailand and at the invitation of Minister of Industry of Thailand Mr Phunij Jarusomt, the industrial delegation led by Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung arrived in Thailand on 3 May.

In the afternoon, Secretary-General of the Board of Investment (BOI) of Thailand Mr Sompong Wanapha hosted a luncheon in honour of the delegation and he reported on measures of BOI. In the evening Minister U Aung Thaung and Minister of Industry of Thailand Mr Phunij Jarusomt discussed bilateral industrial cooperation at the Ministry of Industry. Minister Mr Phunij Jarusomt hosted a dinner in honour of Minister U Aung Thaung and party at Sofital Central Plaza Hotel.

On 4 May, Minister U Aung Thaung and party went to Thai Rayon Public Co Ltd in Angthong District. They were welcomed by Governor of Angthong Province and Chairman of Thai Rayon Public Co Ltd Mr Bajaj. Chairman Mr Bajaj briefed on the factory to the minister and party. The delegation visited Viscose Rayon and sulphuric acid factory.

On 5 May, the minister and party arrived at Nipro (Thailand) Co Ltd in Ayuthaya. They were welcomed by Governor of Ayuthaya Province and Chairman of Nipro (Thailand) Corporation Mr Osama Nakano. Chairman Osama Nakano reported on production process and sample items. The minister and party observed production process of disposable syringes and dripsets used in injection.

On 6 May, they went to Head Office of Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand (IEAT). The Chairman and the Governor of IEAT reported on functions and bilateral cooperation in connection with the establishment of industrial zones on Myanmar side along Thai-Myanmar border. Minister U Aung Thaung said Myanmar is cooperating with not only ASEAN countries but also BMIST-EC ones through friendship and development strategy. Myanmar and Thailand have long border and they are carrying out various bilateral economic relations.

On arrival at Amata Nakorn Industrial Estate in Chonburi District, the delegation was welcomed and conducted round the zone by Chairman of Industrial Zone Police General (Red) Chavalit Yongchayath and they discussed strengthening of Thai-Myanmar goodwill relations and bilateral economic cooperation. Chairman of Federation of Thailand Industrial (FTI) Mr Kataya Gregirm hosted a dinner in honour of Myanmar delegation at Pacific Hotel.

On 7 May, the minister and party arrived at Asian Insulator Public Co Ltd in Singburi District. They were welcomed by Administrator of Singburi District and Chairman of the company Mr Narong. He reported on organizational set-up of the factory, production and market. The delegation observed production of insulators. MNA

Minister U Aung Thaung visits Viscose Rayon and Sulphuric acid plants of Thai Rayon Public Co Ltd in Angthong, Thailand. — INDUSTRY-1
Iraqi cleric defies US troops, taunts over abuse

Kuwait, Monday, 8 May — Iraqi Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr defied US troops closing in on his militia forces, vowing in a Friday sermon to drive out an American Army he said was discredited by prisoner abuse in Iraq.

Sporadic fighting in the holy cities of Najaf and Kerbala left perhaps 20 people dead by various accounts a day after US troops, spurred by rival Shi'ite leaders, made their boldest move yet against Sadr's month-old insurgency.

But there was no sign of them rushing to make good on a pledge to capture or kill him. American forces kept a low profile to allow Sadr to preach at his usual mosque at Kafa, on the outskirts of Najaf, 110 miles south of Baghdad.

"We won't allow you to control us. You will be made to leave sooner or later," he said in front of thousands of supporters in the mosque, heavily guarded by men from his Mehdi Army militia.

"You get your soldiers to beat prisoners with their guns. What kind of justice is that? What kind of humanity?" he declared, as a political storm built in Washington over the murder and torture of Iraqis in US-run jails in Iraq.

He scoffed at an apology offered by President George W Bush and demanded those responsible be tried of supporters in the mosque, heavily guarded by men from his Mehdi Army militia.

Kerry calls on Bush to take full responsibility for prisoners abuse

Presidency, 8 May — Democratic challenger John Kerry called on President George W Bush to allow Friday to take full responsibility for the scandal over US soldiers' abuse of Iraqi prisoners because "the chain of command goes all the way to the Oval Office."

"Harry Truman used to say 'The buck stops at the Pentagon,'" Kerry told the Democratic Leadership Council, a moderate party group that he helped propel Bill Clinton to the White House. The presumptive Democratic presidential nominee called for the resignation of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld despite his apology on Friday to Congress after photographs surfaced last week of US soldiers mocking naked Iraqi prisoners.

"America does not merely need a new secretary of defence," Kerry said. "We need a new president."

"Calling the images of Iraqi abuse "apalling", Kerry said the United States should have been the leader in condemning them "not following others who showed them to us."

"When I am president," the decorated Vietnam War veteran said, "I will demand accountability from those who serve and I will take responsibility for their actions."

"It's not a new way or a third way, it's the right way to lead America and make America strong again," MNA/Reuters

Bush apologizes for abuse of Iraqi prisoners

Washington, 8 May — US President George W Bush apologized for the humiliation suffered by Iraqi prisoners in some US facilities in Iraq on Thursday, one day after he condemned the abuse without a formal apology.

At a White House news conference after talking with visiting Jordan's King Abdullah, Bush said: "I told him I was sorry for the humiliation suffered by the Iraqi prisoners and the humiliation suffered by their families."

"I told him I was as equally sorry that people seeing those pictures did not understand the true nature and heart of America," Bush said. "I assured him that Americans like me did not appreciate what we saw, that it made us sick to our stomach."

Bush on Wednesday gave interviews to two Arab television stations, saying the abuse of prisoners in Iraq were "abhorrent" practices that does not represent the America he knows. But he stopped short of a formal apology.

"I told His Majesty as plainly as I could that the wrongdoers will be brought to justice," Bush said at the news conference.

"As a global failure over abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers appeared to grow towards causing irreparable damage, the Bush Administration has rushed to a damage-control campaign to contain the diplomatic and political fallout."

Putin calls for UN conference on Iraq

Moscow, 8 May — Russian President Vladimir Putin has renewed his call for a UN conference on Iraq, the Russian Presidential Press Service reported Thursday.

In a message to Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah bin Ahmad Badawi, Putin said: "The international community should help Iraq develop democracy and retain national unity and territorial integrity."

"We think that a conference following the Afghan model and under the auspices of the UN aegis can help achieve this goal. All political forces in Iraq, representatives of neighbouring countries and members of the UN Security Council could define a strategy for a lasting settlement in Iraq at this conference," the message said.

"Only broad participatio-n from the international community and an active role from the UN and Iraq's neighbours can give positive dynamics to the settlement in Iraq," it noted.

The Russian President praised the UN's intensified role in Iraq's political process, including the involvement of Lakhdar Brahimi, the special representative of the UN secretary-general, in the political negotiations in Iraq.

"However, the United Nations can only begin full-scale work in Iraq after June 30 when the safety of UN personnel can be ensured. That will require drawing a line for the occupation period and proclaiming a new phase under the UN aegis," Putin said in the message. MNA/Xinhua

Bangladesh condemns abuse of Iraqi prisoners

Dhaka, 8 May — Bangladesh Thursday strongly condemned the sadistic and "inhuman" abuse of prisoners by some members of the occupying forces in Iraq, reported the official Bangladesh News Agency.

This was asserted emphatically by Bangladesh Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan in a Foreign Ministry release.

The release said Bangladesh believed the torture on Iraqis in prison constitute a gross violation of human dignity and human rights and is in total disregard to humanity, adding it is a criminal act.

Bangladesh hoped a fair and transparent investigation would be undertaken without delay and persons responsible for such heinous act be brought to justice.

Bangladesh Government also urged the concerned authorities to take all necessary measures immediately to avoid repetition of any such criminal act by anyone anywhere in Iraq or elsewhere, and that innocent Iraqi prisoners be released without any delay, said the release. —MNA/Xinhua

Drive safely
Global mobile phone market up 29% in first quarter

LOS ANGELES, 8 May — The growth of worldwide market for mobile phones slowed slightly in the first quarter of 2004 but still managed to post a 29 per cent year-on-year increase, as reported Tuesday.

Relocating its Worldwide Mobile Phone QView, the US high-tech market re-search firm said worldwide mobile phone shipments in the first quarter of 2004 were 152.7 million units, up 29.3 per cent from the same quarter of 2003.

But the figure represents a 5.9 per cent sequential decrease from the fourth quarter of 2003, due to expected seasonal adjustments, the research firm said.

Additionally, the nascent market for converged mobile devices, or “smartphones”, posted a sequential decrease of 5.5 per cent but a year-over-year increase of 85.8 per cent, according to IDC.

Among the top vendors, Nokia experienced the sharpest sequential drop with a decrease of 19.2 per cent resulting largely from a lack of mid-range handsets.

Motorola posted record shipments in the first quarter of 2004, bringing its formerly slumping market share up 2.7 per cent to 16.6 per cent.

Sumsung continued its steady march to outpace Motorola with a year-on-year shipment increment of 18 per cent, increasing its market share to 13.1 per cent.

IDC said it expects the worldwide mobile phone market to surpass 595 million units shipped in 2004 and over 800 million units shipped annually at towards the end of the decade.

MNA/Xinhua
French agency says air pollution "kills thousands a year"

Paris, 8 May—Air pollution, much of it caused by cars, kills 5,000-6,000 people a year in France, a state agency said on Thursday.

“Tobacco still kills more people than pollution, but that is no reason to abandon the effort to reduce air pollution,” Michele Froment-Vedrine, director of the Agency for Environmental Health Safety (AFSSE), said.

An AFSSE report that estimated the death toll also proposed corrective action, such as a tax on cars based on the degree to which they pollute.

“Health gains expected from the pursuit and strengthening of policies to reduce air pollution are substantial—seven preventable deaths,” it said.

The report proposed a tax on cars linked to both energy consumption and pollution levels, and also recommended better regulation of emission limits for cars, buses and trucks.

“But it is not just on the government,” Froment-Vedrine said. “Nobody living in a city centre needs a four-wheel drive vehicle to go shopping. People should question their habits and take public transport more often.”

Air pollution was cited as one major factor behind the deaths of thousands of French people in a heatwave last summer, as sizzling temperatures and a lack of wind kept a cloud of smog hanging over Paris and ozone levels rose.

While ozone in the upper atmosphere is vital for filtering out harmful ultraviolet light, ground-level ozone — caused by sunlight reacting with certain forms of pollution, especially car exhaust emissions — can cause respiratory problems.

The report comes as French farmers criticized the government for not doing enough to promote environmentally friendly alternatives to petrol and standard diesel, such as fuels derived from crops like rapeseed, sugar beet or grain.

In a bid to cut carbon dioxide emissions, European Union countries have signed up to a target of 2005 to ensure that fuels contain a larger amount of more environmentally friendly biofuel ingredients. — MNA/Reuters

Vietnam strives to improve people's height

Hanoi, 8 May—Vietnam plans to pour 614.5 billion Vietnamese dong (3.3 million US dollars) into improving physical health of its citizens and increase the height of youths by 3.4 centimetres by 2010.

The ambitious plan, to be implemented next year, will focus on applying more scientific findings on nutrition and physical training in educational establishments and families, according to the country’s Sports Physical Culture Scientific Institute on Thursday.

Pupils at the age of 6-18 are to benefit most from the plan, under which 90 per cent of the money will be spent on the Ministry of Education and Training and schools.

The average height of local people increased to 164.14 centimetres for men in 2001 from 158.9 centimetres in 1975, the centre said.

The respective figures for women were 153.88 centimetres in 1975 and 159.06 centimetres in 1997.

The percentages of local people aged 18-22 meeting the height standards, 165 centimetres for male or 155 centimetres for female, are 39.1 and 31.9 per cent respectively, shows a recent statistics by the Ministry of Health.

On average, an urban youth is 158.5 centimetres high, while the rural counterpart’s height stands at 157.4 centimetres. — MNA/Xinhua

Study shows stalking more prevalent than thought

London, 8 May—Hollywood stars are not the only people to be hounded by stalkers.

Stalkers are more likely to harass ordinary people than generally thought, according to a study published in Britain on Thursday, which said one in eight British adults are victims of “persistent or unwanted attention.”

The public perception of stalking as a problem that affects only celebrities, the experts said.

The report by researchers at the University of Liverpool.

“However, recent large-scale studies in the USA and Australia suggest the prevalence in the general population may be far higher than expected.”

Stalkers are most likely to target professional women in their 40s with jobs that put them in positions of responsibility or bring them into close contact with clients, the researchers found.

People such as surgeons, social workers, lawyers and therapists may become a target for harassment, said co-author Professor Paul Froment-Lee.

“If you are in a professional position and somebody does seem to be taking a particularly strong interest in you, you do have to be alert to the possibility that this could be difficult to handle,” Canter told Reuters.

Vietnam sentences two foreigners for money frauds

Hanoi, 8 May—Vietnam’s Ho Chi Minh People’s Court, on Wednesday, handed down imprisonment sentences of six years and seven years to two Cambodian men on charge of swindling to grab citizens’ property.

Simo Fosso Victor, receiver of a seven-year jail term, and Tala Pierre Marie, receiver of a six-year jail term, were sentenced by the court.

Simo, a 41-year-old Cambodian, named Nguyen Hoang Long in July 2003, local media reported Wednesday.

After making the acquaintance of Long, the two foreigners told him that they needed to use negative films issued by the World Bank, chemicals and real US dollar banknote to print more greenbacks. The local man agreed to give them 30,000 dollars to do the printing.

During the printing in Long’s house, Tala put the money in his underpants and tried to flee away. Being suspicious, the local man called the police to arrest the swindlers.

According to the local police, Long violated laws by printing dollars up to a long-term contract. However, the man was imposed a fine only, because he was a victim, and did not cause consequences.

Pilot error blamed for plane crash that killed Macedonian President

Thessaloniki, 8 May—Pilot error caused the plane crash that killed Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski and eight others, said the final report by a special commission investigating the crash on Wednesday.

The pilot and his co-pilot lowered the plane’s altitude much too early while approaching the Mostar Airport and crash the plane into the mountainous terrain in southern Bosnia and Herzegovina, said the report.

The report noted that the aircraft was properly equipped and in solid technical condition before the flight, and that all pilots, with valid flying licences, were in good physical shape.

Navigation and communication equipment was functioning properly at the Mostar Airport when the crash occurred.

Trajkovski’s closest advisers died instantaneously when their plane crashed on 26 February on their way to attend the International Investment Conference in Mostar. — MNA/Xinhua

UN agency criticized for pushing GM food aid in Africa

Johannesburg, 8 May—A United Nations food-aid agency has been criticized by Africa’s non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for pushing genetically modified (GM) food aid in African countries.

More than 60 NGOs from 15 African countries have sent an open letter to the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID), accusing them of denying African rights to reject GM food aid.

The NGOs say that first time that so many African organizations have spoken out against international donor policies on genetically modified food for hunger relief, local newspapers and the World Bank’s Business Day reported Wednesday.

The WFP and the USAID, the largest supplier of food donations to the WFP, have placed inappropria-

ete pressure on the Sudan and Angola to lift their restrictions on genetically modified food aid, said the report quoted the organizations as saying.

“Since the US does not have safeguards, some of the surplus harvest it supplies to the WFP such as maize and soya include genetically modified corn,” it said.

The Sudan has asked the food aid to be certified “genetically modified free”, while Angola has said it will accept genetically modified food aid only if it has been milled.

However, the report said that USAID has cut off food aid to the Sudan despite the Sudan’s constant decision to temporarily waive its food restrictions until July, it said.

In the World Food Programme’s (WFP) report on May, it was known since last May that the Sudan did not want food with genetically modified components.

The Sudan had told the WFP that Angola was willing to face a significant decrease in the provision of food aid if it continued to insist the grain was first milled, according to Mamat Mayet, director of the African Bureau of the WFP.

The WFP spokesperson said the government’s grain created additional costs, and added delays in getting food relief to hungry populations.

Meanwhile, both the World Health Organization and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in October criticized genetically modified food safe to eat.

Lee said. — MNA/Xinhua
**PORTO success causes problems for Scolari**

*Lisbon, 8 May—Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari will be without seven players for the start of his side’s Euro 2004 training camp because of Porto’s Champions League success and other club commitments. Scolari has put back the announcement of his squad for the finals by two days to May 20, with the players due to assemble on May 20 in Oeiras, 30 kilometres north of Lisbon. Porto’s place in the Champions League final will mean five Scolari regulars will not be able to join the squad until at least a week after the start of the camp. Centre-back Ricardo Carvalho, full-backs Faustino da Silva and Vagner Valentim and midfielders Deco Souza, Francisco Costinha and Maniche Ribeiro should all be in the Porto side to take on Monaco on May 26 in Cologne, Germany. Real Madrid midfielder Luis Figo will also be absent for a few days, with the final of the Spanish league season not until May 23. Leading striker Paulista Resende will be an even later arrival as his Paris St. Germain side take on Chateauroux in the final of the French Cup on May 29. Scolari also faces uncertainty over the availability of defender Rui Jorge, who has been provisionally suspended after an anti-doping medicine he had taken caused him to fail a drugs test. The positive test was down to the failure of his club, Sporting to inform the national anti-doping council that the medicine had been prescribed. The medicine is allowed if declared but Jorge still faces a six-month suspension. Portugal have two friendly matches to come before the start of Euro 2004, against Luxembourg on May 29 and against Lithuania on June 5. The Euro 2004 hosts are in Group A alongside Greece, Russia and Spain. The tournament starts on June 12 and runs until July 4.—**

**Clijsters out of Berlin, doubtful for French Open**

*Berlin, 8 May—World number two Kim Clijsters has pulled out of the German Open because of a recurrent wrist injury that makes her a doubtful starter for the French Open. The Belgian, who withdrew on Thursday before her scheduled third round match against Croatia’s Karolina Sprem, said she would not play in Rome next week and would need further tests before knowing whether to enter the French Open starting on May 24. The other top players in action on Thursday, Melanie Maugrassof France and world number one Venus Williams, easily advanced to the quarterfinals on a rainy day in the German capital. The 20-year-old Clijsters, playing her first tournament in seven weeks, had struggled to move past Spanish qualifier Marta Marrero in her first match at the Berlin tournament on Wednesday. ‘My wrist did not respond well to that match,’ the top seed said on Thursday. ‘I’m pulling out and will not go to Rome next week. ’ I will undergo further tests tomorrow (Friday). For the French Open, I would say it’s 50-50 but I don’t know how it will evolve.’ Clijsters’ compatriot Justine Henin-Hardenne, the world number one, is also a doubtful starter for the French Open because of a viral infection. Henin-Hardenne beat Clijsters in the Paris final last year. Clijsters, who resumed playing in a Fed Cup tie late last month but had not played a WTA event for seven weeks, was wearing a brace around her left wrist on Wednesday. She had said on Tuesday that she would enter the Paris Grand Slam but was not expecting too much because of her injury. The Belgian is a righthander but the injury to her left wrist prevents her using two-handed backhand properly.—**

**Lazio’s Stam to join AC Milan**

*Milan, 8 May—Lazio’s Dutch international defender Jaap Stam has agreed to join Italian champions AC Milan, the player’s agent said. “At the end of the season Jaap will leave Lazio and he will play for Milan next year,” Henk van Ginkel told the web site. “We reached an agreement with Milan for a two-year contract only after Milan had agreed a deal with Lazio.” Neither club were immediately available for comment. The move has been widely expected for some months. Lazio have financial difficulties and said they would be prepared to sell Stam rather than risk him leaving at the end of his contract in 2005 for no transfer fee. Milan vice-president Adriano Galliani has promised two big name signings for the freshly crowned champions with Stam now set to be the first of those arrivals. Stam made his name in the Netherlands with PSV Eindhoven before moving to Manchester United in 1999 where he helped the club win the European Cup a year later. A strong central defender, who has also operated at right-back for Lazio, Stam moved to the Rome club in August 2001 following a reported dispute with United manager Alex Ferguson.—**

**Swinburne v Howne**

Villarreal’s Jose Mari, left, fights for the ball against Valencia’s Maurice Pellegrino, from Argentina, during their UEFA Cup semifinal, second-leg soccer match at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia, Spain, on 6 May, 2004.

Valencia won 1-0. — INTERSport

**Tripplet leads after late birdie hat-trick**

*Charlotte (North Carolina), 8 May—Kirk Tripplet closed with three consecutive birdies to shoot a course record eight-under-par 64 and take a two-shot lead after the first round of the Wachovia Championship.

**Crossword Puzzle**

**ACROSS**

1. Provole, nettle
2. Soup ingredients (2,4)
3. Periodical allowance
4. Notches
5. Classic for 3-year-olds fillies
6. Boat race-meeting
7. Transgression
8. Zodiac
9. Snakes
10. Common rodents
11. Classic for 3-year-old fillies
12. Boat race-meeting
13. Transgression
14. Snake
15. Boundary
16. Inn
17. Soup ingredient (2,4)
18. Wachovia Championship
19. Eight-under-par 64 and shoot a course record consecutive birdies to
20. Triplett closed with three of the first 15 points of the second set to go 3-0 down.
21. Zabatea took charge of the decider as Henman’s confidence crumbled. A wide forehand gave Zabatea a break in the opening game, and the Argentine broke again in the fifth.—MNA/Reuters

**DOWN**

1. Shepherd
2. Fast
3. Uniform
4. Cross-fertilisation
5. Strick hermaphrodite
6. Narrow neck of land
7. Young salmon
8. Emblish
9. Artist in carving
10. Narrow neck of land
11. Young salmon
12. City on River Avon
13. Guide
14. Actor in carving
15. Fast
16. City on River Avon
17. Guide
18. Fast
19. Guide
20. Fast
21. Guide
22. Guide
23. Guide
24. Boundary
25. Bird
26. Make certain
27. Inn

**Sports**

**Stuart Appleby, South African Rory Sabbatini and Brett Quigley tied for second place at 5-under par 67.**

*AC Milan*

**11 Classic for 3-year-olds fillies**

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**Sports**

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*AC Milan*
**WEATHER**

**Saturday, 8 May, 2004**

**Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST:**
During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Yangon Division, scattered in Shan, Kayin, Mon and Mon States and Taninthayi Division and isolated in Maban and Bago Divisions and weather has been cloudy in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Chin State, Sajagi and Tamu Division (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Kayin State, Yangon Division and wore below normal in the remaining areas. Significant day tempera-
tures were (41°C) each in Monywa and Nyangao.  

Maximum temperature on 7-5-2004 was 32.0°C (90°F). Mini-

mum temperature on 8-5-2004 was 22.0°C (72°F). Relative hu-

midity at 9:30 hrs MST on 8-5-2004 was 79%. Total sunshine Mo-

ments was 95 minutes. Rainfall on 8-5-2004 at 11:30 mm (0.45  

inch) at Yangon Airport, 9mm (0.35 inch) at Kaba-Aye and  

9mm (0.35 inch) at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004  

was 263 mm (10.35 inches) at Yangon Airport and 199 mm (7.8  

inches) at Kaba-Aye and 55 mm (2.2 inches) at central Yangon.  

Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 35 mph from 

South at (04:00 hrs) MST on 5-5-2004. 

**Infrared Radiation Warning:** for South Bay, Andaman Sea and partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.  

Forecast valid until evening of 9-5-2004: Rain or thun-

derstorms scattered in central Shan, Kayin-Monywa and Mon  

States and Taninthayi Division, isolated in Kayin State, Ayeyawady, Yangon and Bago Divisions and partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%). State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in 


**Sunday, May 9**

**Tune in today:**

8.30 am Brief news  
8.35 am Music: Tell me tell me baby (Nige)  
8.40 am Perspectives  
8.45 am Music: I got to know you (Oscar)  
8.50 am National news/ 
Slogan  
9.05 am Music: See you later Atomic Kitten  
9.10 am International news  
9.15 am Music: Baby in your arms (Aaron Carter)  
1.30 pm News/Slogan  
1.40 pm Story for children Master Thumb  
1.50 pm Songs for children  
9.00 pm Weekly news review  
9.10 pm Music  
9.15 pm Article  
9.25 pm ‘Maw Kaung’ improves English through songs/latest hits machines, free of charge (George Michael) - Not in love (Enrique Iglesias)  
9.45 pm News/Slogan  
10.00 pm PEL
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt hoists Htidaws, Seinbudaws, Hngetmyatnadaws atop six pagodas in Bilin

YANGON, 8 May — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, accompanied by ministers, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads and officials left here by Tatmadaw helicopter this morning and arrived at Zokthok Model Village in Bilin Township, Tharton District, Mon State, at 8:30 am.

The Prime Minister and party were welcomed there by Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of South-East Command Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, senior military officers, local authorities and local people.

First, the Prime Minister and party paid homage to the Buddha image at the prayer hall of Kyaikhtihsaung Hsndawshin Pagoda.

Next, the Prime Minister and party donated provisions to Kyaikhtihsaung Sayadaw Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Bhaddanta Patthadipa. They paid obeisance to Kyaikhtihsaung Hsndawshin Pagoda.

The ceremony to share merits gained for hoisting Htidaws atop Shwebontha Pagoda, Kyetmintaung Pagoda and Bamei Hsandawshin Pagoda was held in conjunction with the ceremony to pay homage to the Kyaikhtihsaung Sayadaw at the Tazaung of the pagoda this morning, attended by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present were Vice-Chairman of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Thayet Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kesara and member Sayadaws, the Kyaikhtihsaung Sayadaw and members of the Sangha, Li-Gen Maung Bo, the commander, the ministers, the deputy ministers, officials, wellwishers and disciples.

First, the Vice-Chairman Sayadaw gave Ovada Katha.

Next, the Kyaikhtihsaung Sayadaw administered the Nine Precepts. The Prime Minister offered Hngetmyatnadaw and Seinbudaw for Shwebontha Pagoda and provisions to the Vice-Chairman Sayadaw and Seinbudaw and Hngetmyatnadaw for Shwebondaw Replica Pagoda and provisions to the Kyaikhtihsaung Pagoda.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo, the commander, Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Zaw Lwin and Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone donated Seinbudawas and Hngetmyatnadaws for Bamei Hsandawshin Pagoda, Kyaikhtihsaung Hsndawshin Replica Pagoda, Kyaikhtihsaung Hsndawshin Pagoda and Kyetmintaung Pagoda, and provisions to members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee.

Prime Minister attends opening of new school buildings in Zokthok model village in Bilin township, Mon State

YANGON, 8 May — A ceremony to open the new school buildings of Tattaw U Pho Yahan Basic Education Primary School and Mya Kyangtaung BEPS in Zokthok model village, Bilin township, Mon State, was held at the school at 10 am today. It was attended by Myanmar Education Committee Chairman Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party, members of district and township Peace and Development Councils and members of the committee for construction of the school buildings, those of social organizations, the director-general of No 1 Basic Education Department and officials, members of the school board of trustees, the school heads, teachers and students, townswelders and local people.

First, Mon State PDC Chairman Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, Deputy Minister for Education U Myo Nyunt and the chairman of the village PDC formally opened the new school building of Tattaw U Pho Yahan BEPS by cutting a ribbon. Next, Chairman of the committee for school building construction U Myint Yi (recipient of medal for outstanding performance in social field, grade II) handed over the documents related to the school building to No 1 BED Director-General U Tin Nyo. The signboard bearing the education motto was unveiled. Meanwhile students sang Myanmar Kyaung song.

The Prime Minister formally unveiled the stone inscription and sprinkled scented water on it. The ceremony came to a close after the Prime Minister and party had viewed round the new school building.

After that, the Prime Minister and party went to the construction site of Gwaydanshe sluice gate in Bilin township being implemented under the leadership of the Kyaikhtihsaung Sayadaw.

Irrigation Department Deputy Director General U Khin Zaw and officials reported on matters related to the construction of the sluice gate that will benefit 1200 acres of farmlands. Next, the Prime Minister gave necessary instructions and fulfilled the needs.

In meeting with Bilin Township PDC members, departmental officials and members of social associations at

(See page 9)