Lt-Gen Aung Htwe tours Kehsi, Shan State (South)

YANGON, 14 May—Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence met officers and other ranks of local regiment of Kehsi, Shan State (South), on 10 May morning.

Lt-Gen Aung Htwe dealt with regional development and extension of agriculture and livestock breeding, and presented K 100,000 to the Maternal and Child Welfare Association of the battalion.


Next, they inspected the computer room, multimedia teaching rooms of Kehsi Township Basic Education High School and fulfilled requirements.

Later, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe held a meeting with departmental officials at the office of township Peace and Development Council. Officials reported on measures for regional development and future plans. The commander gave an account of preparations for the extension of motor roads, repaving of roads and repair of the bus road in the township. K 500,000 of the commander; K 200,000, and entrepreneurs K 300,000; the commander; K 500,000 for the project. Afterwards, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and party looked into health care services at the rural health care centre in Monagahan village, Kehsi Township, and attended to the requirements. — MNA

Meeting to ensure smooth and secure transport

YANGON, 14 May—The Yangon Division Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport held a coordination meeting at the office of All Bus-Line Control Committee (Yangon Division) in Tamway Township this evening, attended by Chairman of the Supervisory Committee Commander of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

Also present on the occasion were military region commanders, Secretary of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myint Kyi and members, Supervisory Committee members, rectors and registrars of universities and colleges in Yangon, local authorities, chairmen of bus lines and guests. First, the commander gave instructions on tasks for the supervisory committee members with a view to ensuring smooth and secure transport in Yangon and those from Yangon to other States and Divisions daily. Next, Supervisory Committee members, the rectors, region and the chairmen of bus lines participated in the discussions.

Afterwards, the commander delivered a speech, saying that Yangon City is being upgraded in all sectors such as extension of motor roads, repaving of roads and repair of pedestrian ways. For minimizing traffic accidents, drivers and conductors are to follow traffic rules and passengers on the bus should avoid throwing of litter and spittle on the road. Officials are to take action against those breaking traffic rules. Later, the commander fulfilled requirements. — MNA

Stake-driving ceremony of Ngamoeyeik Bridge (Kamakyi) held

YANGON, 14 May—The stake-driving ceremony of Ngamoeyeik Bridge (Kamakyi) to be constructed by Public Works was held at the top of Kamakyi Street on the bank of Ngamoeyeik creek in Thingangyun Township here this morning. It was attended by Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Deputy Minister for Construction Brig-Gen Myint Thein and departmental heads, local authorities, personnel of NGOs, members of band troupe and pom pom troupe and guests.

At the auspicious time, Minister Maj-Gen Saw Tun drove the Yadana Pile. The commander, the mayor and official sprinkled scented water on the pile, and the ceremony came to a close. Ngamoeyeik bridge (Kamakyi) across Ngamoeyeik Creek is of reinforced concrete type, linking between Thingangyun Township and Thakaya Township. It will be 850 feet long and 48 feet wide. It has 6 feet wide pedestrian lanes on both sides. It can withstand 60 tons of loads. On completion, the people of the townships of Thingangyun, Tamway, South Okkalapa, North Okkalapa and Dagon Myothit and Thakaya, Dawbon, Thanlyin, Kyauktan, Kayan and Thongwa can travel within a short space of time.

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.

Four political objectives

- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
- National reconsolidation
- Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

Four economic objectives

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

Four social objectives

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

National Convention will be successfully reconvened with the current delegates attending

YANGON, 14 May—The National League for Democracy today issued an announcement that they would not attend the National Convention.

The 86-NLD member group led by U Aung Shwe attended the National Convention launched in 1993. In November 1995 when the National Convention was moving into top gear, all the NLD delegates made a demand for political meeting and walked out of the National Convention after sending a letter to the chairman of the National Convention Convening Commission which said they would never return to the National Convention again so long as their demands were not met. The NLD delegates were biased against the rules and regulations of the National Convention, and consequently, the Commission had to terminate their representatives in the National Convention in accord with the rules and regulations of the National Convention.

With a view to ensuring national reconsolidation, the government invited the NLD to attend the National Convention which will resume on 17 May 2004. In fact, the NLD delegates would have to apply if they want to represent their party at the National Convention. The government would decide for the NLD to attend the National Convention only after receiving their application.

Though the NLD did not make any application, they accepted the government’s good will to the NLD to attend the National Convention and agreed to ensure that the NLD would attend the Convention in a plenary meeting, the government invited the NLD delegates to the Convention. The government made every arrangement for five NLD members representing the political parties and 49 NLD representatives-elect, altogether 54, to attend the National Convention.

The NLD gave a reason for the refusal of the government’s invitation in the declaration that U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi have no right to travel freely and the party has not obtained permission for reopening of its offices yet.

The government of the National League for Democracy U Aung Shwe did not receive the invitation when it was sent by officials to his house respectfully. Knowing their demands would not be met they were not asked for them. When their demands were not met they issued an announcement to the effect that they would not attend the Convention. The Government addressed and fulfilled the demands of the NLD to the most possible degree. Moreover, as emphasis is being placed on prevalence of peace and stability at a time when the National Convention is being reconvened officials held discussions with U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to retain their status quo with patience. But the NLD did not accept it and announced that they would not attend the Convention. As a matter of fact, U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were not included as delegates to the National Convention when it was held in 1993.

Though the NLD does not attend the National Convention, it will resume with delegates including delegates of political parties, delegates of representative-elects, delegates of national races and delegates of mass and class organizations. The government will successfully continue reconvening the National Convention, the first step of the seven-point Road Map of the State, as it has announced previously.—MNA

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 15 May, 2004

For human resource development

It can be vividly seen that changes in the field of science and technology have driven nations forward to improve the education standard continually, and each country is striving competitively for educational reform to be in conformity with global changes.

At present, the Government is laying emphasis on creating an education system which supports the historical background of the nation and its people, culture and customs, the striking features of the nation made up of different national races and the national policy based on the national character.

In his address at the ceremony held at the Diamond Jubilee Hall on Prya Road on 10 May, to open Seminar on Promotion of National Education (Yangon) for the Basic Education Sector 2004 of the Ministry of Education, Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said that the National Education Promotion Plan has been formulated and implemented with the aim of creating an education system which promotes the development of nation and its people leading on the correct national path, turns the students into qualified ones who are on par with the global development in science and technology, and preserves the national character and Myanmar social values and creates a constant learning society.

As a result, accessibility to education has been enhanced. In the basic education sector, child-centred approach has been adopted and vocational education programmes have been created. In the higher education sector also, institutes of vocational education have been established and post-graduate programmes provided.

Moreover, teacher-centred or one way system has been transformed into the education system which is based on Information and Communication Technology and interactive system. Multi-media classrooms, learning centres and resource centres which support the new system have been established so that the quality of teaching and learning has been promoted and the gap in accessibility to educational opportunities between urban and rural areas could be narrowed.

At the same time, achievements are being made in the education sector, responsible personnel, teachers and students are urged to strive harmoniously for raising the national education standard and human resource development.

Books donated to libraries of IPRD

YANGON, 14 May—Wellwishers donated various kinds of books to libraries of Information and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Information at the meeting of IPRD on Monday afternoon.

Present were Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, Director-General U Khin Maung Htay and Joint Secretary-1 U Myo Nyunt of IPRD.

Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein accepted 2,000 various kinds of magazines and journals donated by Dr Tha Tun Oo (Today Book House) of Pazundaung Township; 400 books by U Zaw Min Htoo (Padetha Sarpay) of Kamayut Township; 50 books written by Hila Sithu by Capt Khin Oo-Daw Mya Mya Soe of Bago, various titles of 204 books by U Nay Myo Thura (Tagaung Book House) of Kamayut Township; 25 books written by Hila Sithu by Poet Min Shwe Min-Daw Tin San of Botataung Township; 13 books written by Hila Sithu by Daw Phyu Phyu Lwin and Daw Nilar Lwin of Mayangon Township; 10 books written by Hila Sithu by Dr Pe Nyan of Sangyontung Township; 525 periodicals by actress Daw Su Hlaing Hnin of South Okkalapa Town-ship; and 250 sports journals by U Myo Min Hlaing (Htet Myet Aung Sarpay) of Dagon Myothit (North) Township.

Next, certificates of honour were presented to the wellwishers. The deputy minister thanked the donors.

Today’s donations totalled 3,477 books worth K 1,314,250. The books will be distributed to libraries of IPRD and self-reliant ones all over the country.—MNA

Nursery Market Festival continues

YANGON, 14 May — The Nursery Market Festival continued at Myay Padetha Park in Bahan Township here today with the aim of providing necessary assistance to growers and attracting the public to be interested in agriculture, horticulture, livestock breeding and vegetable farming.

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

UMFCCI President meets guests

YANGON, 14 May — Deputy Minister of Transport of Malaysia Datuk Lim Beng Chuan met with Union of Myanmar Chamber of Commerce & Industry President U Win Myint at the Grand Plaza Parkroyal Hotel on Alanpya Pagoda Road here at 8.30 am today. They deliberated on exchange of trade between the two countries. Malaysian Ambassador to Myanmar Dato Cheah Sam Kip, UMFCCI Vice-Chairmen U Zaw Min Win and U Aung Lwin, General Secretary U Sein Win Hlaing and Joint Secretary-L U Myo Nyunt and CEC member U Tun Kyi were also present on the occasion. The business meeting between the Penang Port Commission and the UMFCCI was also held. UMFCCI

The Malaysian Deputy Minister calls on UMFCCI President U Win Myint and party.— sources
**Vatican says Pope expected to tell Bush he is wrong on Iraq**

Rose, 14 May — Pope John Paul II is expected to warn President George W Bush when the two men meet on 4 June that his policy in Iraq is wrong and the actions of US troops are damaging efforts to bring religions closer together, a senior Vatican official revealed.

Cardinal Pio Laghi said the US-led occupation force in Iraq should be replaced by “a multinational presence which is not dominated by those who wanted and fought the war.”

It was not enough for a military force in Iraq not to be under US command, “it must not even give the impression that it is,” he said Thursday.

Laghi was the pope’s envoy to Washington last year in a fruitless attempt to persuade Bush not to invade Iraq against the wishes of the majority of the United Nations and its 15-member Security Council.

Referring to revelations this month of torture and humiliating mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers, the cardinal asked “how is it possible to remain in Iraq if these abuses continue?”

Laghi said he liked the United States and “could not have imagined that this madness was possible.” He said he was “astonished” at the behaviour of US troops and called for “all light to be shed on this affair, justice to be done and guarantees given so it does not happen again.”

Bush is due to meet the pope on 4 June before traveling to France for ceremonies commemorating the 60th anniversary of the allied landings on the Atlantic coast on June 6, 1944, which began the liberation of Europe from Nazi occupation.

Laghi said Bush had been very anxious to see the pope and had changed his schedule to make the meeting possible, but said he did not think the President wanted to make political capital out of it before the election due to take place in November.

“If ever there were a difficult time to ask for an audience with the pope it is now,” he said.

The cardinal said also he expected the pope to tell Bush that his policies in the Middle East in general were not helping the cause of peace.

“We must build bridges with Islam, not dig trenches between us,” he went on. “And we must give top priority to the Israeli-Palestinian question, which is the root cause of terrorism.”

The pope would tell Bush that “the fight against terrorism must not be purely repressive and punitive but must also proceed from the elimination of its causes, which are rooted in injustice.”

Bush and the pope have met twice before, but the June 4 audience will be their first since the start of the war in Iraq.—Internet

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**Pentagon admits Iraq methods violated Geneva Rules**

WASHINGTON, 14 May — Top Pentagon officials conceded on Thursday some of the interrogation methods approved for use by the US military in Iraq may violate the Geneva Convention governing treatment of war prisoners.

The admission came as Senators investigated revelations of sexual and psychological abuse of detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad which prompted outrage around the world and undermined US efforts to stabilize the occupied country.

During a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Democrats confronted Deputy Defence Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, the No 2 official at the Pentagon, and General Peter Pace, the No 2 US general, with “rules of engagement” for interrogations approved by the top commander in Iraq, Lt General Ricardo Sanchez.

These methods included sleep and sensory deprivation, forcing prisoners to assume “stressful” body positions for up to 45 minutes, threatening them with guard dogs, keeping them isolated for longer than 30 days, and dietary manipulation.

Sen Jack Reed asked Pace if a foreign nation held a US Marine in a cell, naked with a bag over his head, squatting with his arms uplifted for 45 minutes, would that be a good interrogation technique or a Geneva Convention violation.

“I would describe it as a violation, sir,” replied Pace, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

US interrogation techniques have come under scrutiny amid revelations that prisoners were kept naked, stacked on top of each other, forced to engage in sex acts and photographed in humiliating poses.—Internet

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**Lawmakers shocked by new images of Iraqi prisoners**

WASHINGTON, 14 May — Members of the US Congress saw new images of violence and sexual humiliation from a US-run Iraqi prison on Wednesday in a closed viewing one lawmaker likened to a descent into “the wings of hell.”

Lawmakers said images showed inmates apparently being coerced to commit sodomy, wounds possibly from dog bites, a number of dead bodies, and examples of “sadistic torture” and “sexual humiliation.”

Some top Republicans urged that the still pictures and video not be released publicly, saying they could endanger US forces overseas.

“What we saw is appalling. It is consistent with the photos that you’ve seen in the press to date. They go beyond that in many ways in terms of the various activities that are depicted,” said Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a Tennessean Republican.

“There were some awful scenes. It felt like you were descending into one of the wings of hell and sadly it was our own creation,” said General Richard Derbin, an Illinois Democrat. “And when you think of the sadism, the violence, the sexual humiliation, after a while you just turn away, you just can’t take it any more. “I still cannot believe that this happened without the knowledge of those at higher levels,” Durbin added.

Many lawmakers said the images were similar to photographs shown around the world of naked prisoners stacked in a pyramid or positioned to simulate sex acts at the Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, but they said some were even more shocking.—Internet

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**An Iraqi boy peers through a shattered window of a car after the driver came under gunfire in Basra.**

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**Medics witnessed British troops’ Iraqi abuse**

BAGHDAD, 14 May— A pair of Danish army medics working in a British field hospital saw two Iraqis who were beaten during an interrogation admitted to the clinic, including one who allegedly died, the Danish defence ministry said today.

The September 2003 incident was not immediately reported to Danish authorities because none of Denmark’s 500 or so troops in southern Iraq were involved, Defence Minister Soeren Gade said.

In late 2002, 400 British troops based in Basra and nearby Qurnah, 400 kilometres southeast of Baghdad. They are under British command. The incident was reported today to defence officials in Denmark by an army lawyer in Basra.

According to her report, the two unidentified medics said they saw two Iraqis being brought to a British military hospital in Basra “after having been exposed to brutal treatment during an unauthorised interrogation in the field by a British unit”. The report has not been released and the nature of the injuries was not announced.

The Danish army lawyer contacted British authorities about the allegation and was told it was already being investigated, Gade said. Britain’s Ministry of Defence said it believed the case was that of Baha Mousa, who died in custody last year.

Mousa was a 28-year-old hotel receptionist who died after allegedly being beaten by British troops in Basra in September. His death was among those highlighted in a Red Cross report in February.—Internet

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**Iraqi’s neighbouring countries call on UN to play greater role**

ANJMAN, 14 May — Parliament speakers of Iraq’s neighbouring countries called on UN to play a greater role in building Iraq’s democracy, the official Petra news agency reported.

In their meeting held here on Wednesday, the speakers stressed the importance of ending the grave situation in Iraq and restoring security, stability and democracy to the war-torn country.

Secretary-General of the Arab Parliamentary Union (APU), Norridin Boskjon, said the Anman meeting reflected parliamentarians’ intentions of providing assistance to Iraq. He indicated the occupation of Iraq is part of a plan to dominate the region and control its wealth, especially oil.

President of the Syrian People’s Council, Mahmoud Abrah, underlined the importance of supporting democracy and freedom in Iraq as well as enabling the Iraqis to choose their independent national government without the interference of the occupation forces.

Speaker of the Kuwaiti Parliament, Jassem Kharafi, said the meeting expressed the commitments towards the Iraqi people and affirmed their support for Iraq at this critical stage.

He added the meeting also reflected their keenness to determine the region’s future, preserve its security and independence of its countries and people.—MNA/Xinhua

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**Supporters of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr show their support in the center of Sadr City, a suburb of Baghdad, Iraq on 12 May, 2004.**
Second Iraqi identifies himself in prison abuse photographs

BAGHDAD, 14 May—Saddam Saleh, an Iraqi who says he was one of the naked prisoners shown in the photographs of abuse inside Abu Ghraib jail, has accused American soldiers of torturing him for 18 days.

He said he saw several senior figures connected with the Saddam Hussein regime being held in the now notorious area of Abu Ghraib shown in the pictures, including Saddam’s nephew and the owner of the house where the former dictator was hiding when he was captured last year.

Mr Saleh is the second Iraqi to come forward and identify himself as one of those in the Abu Ghraib photographs. He says that he is one of the naked Iraqis shown standing in a row, while Private Lynndie England points at their genitals and grins, the third from the right.

He says he knows that he is the man in the photograph despite the fact he was wearing a hood because American soldiers brought the picture to him in his cell and pointed his own naked body out to him, apparently to humiliate him further. That would back up Private England’s claim that she had been ordered to pose for the photo so it could be used as evidence to frame prisoners for interrogation.

He recalls being ordered to stand in a line and hearing the click of the camera, but said that he did not know until he was shown the photograph that a woman soldier was posing in front of the line of prisoners.

He alleges that he was held, complete with trousers, for 18 days, and that American soldiers beat him, tortured him with an electric shock baton, set dogs on him, and at one point urinated on him.

It is impossible to confirm Mr Saleh’s allegations, and some Iraqis who have claimed they suffered abuse in US-run prisons since the Abu Ghraib pictures emerged have been accused of lying. Mr Saleh has US prisoner release papers which give his prisoner number as 200144, and the dates he was held as 1 December, 2003, to 28 March this year. The document is signed by Lieutenant Colonel Craig A Essick. Mr Saleh says he wants to be allowed to give evidence at the first court martial of a soldier for mistreating prisoners, scheduled for Baghdad next week.

Neighbouring countries call for end of US occupation in Iraq

ASAD, 14 May—Parliamentary speakers from countries neighbouring Iraq have called for an end to the occupation in the war-torn country and a wider UN role in restoring the sovereignty to it, local newspaper Jordan Times reported on its website on Thursday.

The speakers made the call during their meeting in Amman, in which all delegates agreed that consensus among different Iraqi groups and factions should be reached before the country embarks on a true rebuilding process including political reform and free elections. Parliamentary speakers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, Egypt, Bahrain, Turkey and Jordan as well as representatives of Arab and international parliamentary unions took part in the two-day meeting.

Participants continued their discussions, as the meeting came into its second day on Thursday, on the current situation in Iraq, the support of the international community towards achieving security and constitutional process in Iraq.

“Achieving stability, freedom and prosperity for the Iraqi people will not happen without a truly representative political system based on national unity and consensus,” said Saleh Hamad, President of Saudi Arabia’s Al Shura Council.

Ross Mountain, special representative of the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, said there was urgent need to restore stability and security in Iraq but the prevailing conditions make it difficult to work on the ground. He underlined the UN role in helping Iraqis establish an interim government after the handover of sovereignty on 30 June, referring to the work undertaken by the international body to prepare for elections in January 2005.

While, delegates approved an initial draft statement on the Iraqi issue. The official document is expected to be released at the conclusion of the meeting later Thursday, according to the website.

Turkey criticizes US sanctions against Syria

ANKARA, 14 May—Turkey on Wednesday criticized a decision by its NATO ally the United States to impose sanctions on Syria, saying they would prove counterproductive.

US President George W Bush announced economic sanctions on Syria on Tuesday for backing militant factions fighting Israel and for failing to prevent guerrillas opposed to the US occupation entering Iraq.

“I don’t think embargoes are in accordance with human rights in this era. This kind of approach does not help a solution but increases the problem,” the state Ankara news agency quoted Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan as saying.

“The way to peace and globalization is not through embargoes,” he said during a joint news conference with visiting Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri.

Turkey came close to war with its much smaller neighbour Syria in 1998 over Damascus’ harbouring of Turkish Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan. Syria finally relented and expelled Ocalan, who was captured and jailed by Turkey in 1999.

Chirac, Schroeder express horror at beheading, torture in Iraq

PARIS, 14 May—French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder expressed horror over the beheading of US businessman Nick Berg in Iraq and the torture of Iraqi detainees in US custody.

Chirac told a joint news conference Thursday that images of US soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners, along with Berg’s gruesome slaying “in conditions that were unimaginable in their barbarity”, inspired “horror and indignation.”

For his part, Schroeder spoke of “the horror that this frightening crime conjures up”, with reference to Berg’s killing. “Nothing can ever excuse such acts,” the German chancellor said.

Chirac on Sunday had indirectly criticized the US abuse of Iraqi prisoners, saying: “Everyone humiliated, in one way or another, you create aggressive reflexes. Respect for others is the key to development and peace in the world.”

S Korean FM regrets over abuse of Iraqi prisoners

SEOUL, 14 May—South Korea’s Foreign Minister Wi Sung-lac regretted the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US soldiers.

Ban Ki-moon called the mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners by US troops “inhuman behaviour” and expressed hope that no such cases would recur. Public pressure is mounting for the South Korean Government to scrap its plan to send troops to Iraq, following the disclosure of graphic scenes of abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American and British soldiers.

But in the wake of continuing instability in Iraq and the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by the US and British soldiers, more and more South Korean people oppose the plan. Local activists plan to hold an anti-war candle vigil in downtown Seoul Friday evening to urge the government to scrap its plan.

A US Marine surveys an area where at least four soldiers were wounded in a attack, after getting struck with a roadside explosive device near Falluja, on 13 May, 2004.
Sadr defiant but says may disband militia

Najaf, 14 May — Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr vowed on Wednesday to press on with his fight against the US-led occupation of Iraq but said he would disband his Mehdi Army militia if Shia leaders asked him to.

“If the Americans want to leave Iraq then this would bring peace, but their presence in Iraq is not peace and will lead to the spread of terrorism,” Sadr said in Najaf’s Imam Ali shrine, one of Shia Islam’s most sacred sites.

“Shias are ready for any American escalation. We don’t expect anything else,” he told a rare news conference.

Sadr did not say whether talks over the past two days among Shia groups in Najaf had produced an agreement that could end his 16-month uprising. But he praised efforts by “honest parties” to try to end the crisis and accused US-led forces of sowing discord.

If Shia religious authorities issued a fatwa, or edict, telling him to disband his Mehdi Army militia then he would comply with it, Sadr said.

“The dissolution of the Mehdi Army depends on the religious authorities. If they issue an edict to disband the Mehdi Army then we will disband it. If not, then it will remain to defend this country and its sanctity,” he said.

On Tuesday, the US general commanding forces in the Najaf region indicated that elements of the Mehdi Army could be included in a local force that could take over security in Najaf. But Sadr said the Mehdi Army would not join such a force until foreign troops left Iraq.

“When the occupying forces leave Iraq, at that time the Mehdi Army could be merged into the Iraqi army,” he said.

Sadr condemned the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US forces, and said the American people should press their leaders to withdraw from Iraq.

“Look at what your army has done at the behest of its leaders — torture of all kinds,” he said. “Are those who came to overthrow Saddam becoming just the same as Saddam?” — MNA/Reuters

Decrying Rumsfeld, Kerry eyes McCain for defence

ORLANDO (Florida), 14 May — Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry said on Wednesday Republican Senator John McCain topped his list for defence secretary as he criticized the Bush Administration for failed policies in Iraq.

Kerry slammed President George W. Bush and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld over the abuse of Iraqi prisoners, their failure to build an international coalition and other “miscalculations surrounding this war.”

“Torturing has been so extraordinarily mismanaged and ineptly prosecuted,” the Massachusetts senator told the “Imus in the Morning” radio programme one day after Army Major General Antonio Taguba, who investigated the mistreatment at the Abu Ghraib prison, told Congress the abuse reflected a failure of leadership in the US Armed Forces.

Renewing his call for Bush to take full responsibility for the prison scandal and Rumsfeld to resign, despite his apology, Kerry singled out McCain of Arizona, a fellow Vietnam War veteran and frequent Bush critic, when pressed on who he would want running the Pentagon.

“I’m not the president today,” Kerry said, but he added: “I have any number of people that I would make secretary of defence, beginning with our good friend John McCain as an example.”

Kerry listed other possible candidates “who could manage it (the top defence job) very effectively”, including Democratic Senator Carl Levin of Michigan and Republican Senator John Warner of Virginia, the top ranking senators on the Armed Services Committee.

McCain’s office had no comment to Kerry’s remarks. “In any case the whole chain of command has to be held accountable,” Erler said.

Meanwhile, Senator George Allen, a Virginia Republican, responded incredulously when told of Kerry’s comments. “Kerry said that? Allen said with a grin. “It’s a political gambit.”

Kerry said his goal was to bring other countries into Iraq to “get rid of this American occupation, (to) get the target off the American troops alone, (and) to get the war out of the pocket of the American taxpayer exclusively.” — MNA/Reuters

Germany’s ruling coalition says Rumsfeld should go

BRUSSELS, 14 May — Leaders of Germany’s ruling coalition called for the resignation of US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Wednesday, warning the West would be held collectively accountable for the abuse of Iraqi prisoners.

Franz Muentefering, chairman of Social Democrats and the SPD’s foreign policy expert in Parliament, Gerhard Erler, said Rumsfeld should leave office.

Erl er told German radio it was “completely warranted” for Rumsfeld to resign. “In any case the whole chain of command has to be held accountable,” Erler said.

UNICEF disturbed by reports on abuse of Iraqi children detainees

GENEVA, 14 May — The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said on Tuesday that it is profoundly disturbed by news reports alleging that children may have been among those abused detainees in Iraq.

Although the news reports have not been independently substantiated, they are alarming, UNICEF said in a statement released here.

UNICEF said any mistreatment, sexual abuse, exploitation or torture of children in detention is a violation of International Law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the Geneva Conventions.

The New York-based agency warned that the detention or imprisonment of a child must be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

For their safety and protection, children should never be incarcerated with adults, and should have prompt access to legal, medical, emotional and other appropriate assistance, it said.

UNICEF reiterated that all persons in detention must be treated with humanity and with respect for their inherent dignity as human beings.

In particular, states have an obligation to protect children and to ensure that their officials are aware of, trained in, and comply with the relevant international standards, it said.

Mortars fired at Italian Embassy in Baghdad

ROSN, 14 May — Three mortar rounds were fired at the Italian Embassy in Baghdad on Wednesday but the building was not damaged, Italy’s ANSA news agency reported.

The agency gave no further details on the attack.

The report came after a journalist from Italy’s state broadcaster Rai said that an explosion had hit the embassy building.

The journalist, Monica Maggioni, reporting live, said she had received news from the Qatar-based Al Jazeera Arab television that the embassy had been hit by a blast. Seconds later the link between Rome and the reporter failed. Last November, the Italian Embassy in Baghdad was hit by an explosion at night causing structural damage but no injuries.

Italian forces and officials have been on high alert in Iraq since a suicide attack killed 19 Italians in the southern city of Nasiria, also last November. — MNA/Reuters
Iraqis survey the scene of a bomb explosion at a market in the northern town of Kirkuk, on 11 May 2004.

An emergency vehicle attends the scene after a bomb exploded at a market in Kirkuk, northern Iraq, on 11 May 2004.

Iraqis wait for treatment at a hospital in Kirkuk, on 11 May 2004 after a bomb exploded in a crowded market.

An Iraqi girl walks past a wall marked with bullet holes in ‘Sadr city’ district of Baghdad, on 12 May 2004.

An Iraqi schoolgirl runs past burning tires in the Sadr City suburb of Baghdad, on 12 May 2004.

Badly wounded eleven-year-old Iraqi girl who lost seven members of her family during clashes between militiamen and US forces on 12 May 2004 sits on a hospital bed in Najaf, Iraq.

The blast in the northern town of Kirkuk, Iraq, killed three people and wounded 22 on 11 May 2004.

Images of Iraq
Border and rural area developments

The Development Affairs Department is implementing rural housing project to raise the living standard of rural people. The photo shows a rural house built by the Development Affairs Department in Moglaung Village in Aunglan Township, Magway Division.

For better transportation in rural areas: The Cheinchaung Bridge in Zokthok Village, Bilin Township, Mon State.

A tube-well sinking truck in action in Pyibin Village, Chaung Township, Magway Division to supply potable water to rural people.

Youth Development Training School built in Kengtung, Shan State (East), for border area and national races development.

To supply water for agricultural purpose, river water pumping station was built in Tayokehla Model Village, Hpa-an Township, Kayin State.
The National Convention to be reconvened on 17 May

Aung Moe San

The entire national people in Myanmar suffered internal armed conflict and disintegration of national solidarity after regaining independence. Myanmar that suffered the scourge of World War II for the second time continued to suffer internal armed conflict. So economic, political and social conditions diminished like a patient with anaemia. After realizing these situations, the Tatmadaw unavoidably took up the duties of State in 1988 and rebuilt national reconsolidation and made efforts for national development. Then, the government gave top priority to national reconsolidation, building of a new democratic nation in unity, development of economic productive forces and uplifting the quality of life.

Looking back at Myanmar history in the course of independence, it was found that the Tatmadaw took up the duties of State when there was political instability and independence, it was found that the Tatmadaw took up the duties of State when there was political instability and was forced to national reconsolidation, building of a new democratic nation in unity, development of economic productive forces and uplifting the quality of life.

With respect to the present government’s endeavours, 17 armed groups that opposed the successive governments with arms for years returned to the legal fold. National reconciliation that the successive governments could not carry out has been achieved. Nation-building tasks were implemented unprecedentedly including the border areas. This is why the present government laid down seven future tasks for establishment of discipline-flourishing democratic nation and is implementing them.

The National Convention to be resumed on 17 May is the first step of seven future tasks and it is also the convention that will decide the establishment of a new democratic State. It is the National Convention that is attended by most of the national forces in Myanmar history.

However, there are still some groups that oppose and slander the National Convention which aims at national reconciliation and establishment of a new democratic nation.

These groups are unable to convene the National Convention themselves and yet are opposing what is being held by the Government. Hence, they could not reach the trend of reconsolidation but to fall into the vicious circle. Indeed, such pessimistic acts are antagonizing and opposing the steps namely after the successful holding of the National Convention, step by step implementation of the process necessary for the emergence of the genuine and discipline-flourishing democratic system; drafting of a new constitution in accordance with fundamental principles and detailed basic principles laid down by the National Convention; adoption of the Constitution through the Constituent Assembly; convening of Hluttaw attended by Hluttaw members in accordance with the new Constitu- tion; and building a modern, developed and democratic nation by the State leaders elected by the Hluttaw, and Government and other central organs formed by the Hluttaw.

Hence, the following four basic agreements are required for the national forces to shape the future of the nation unitedly and for the National Convention to meet success.

1. To give up confrontation
2. To ensure national reconciliation and emergence of a new democratic nation
3. To make collective efforts in implementing the seven-point Road Map of the State which knows least problems in building up a new democratic nation
4. To focus on modernization and development of economic productive forces for ensuring the emergence of a new democratic nation.

Of them, the fourth point is the fundamental social requirement for building up a new democratic nation. The reason is clear. The development of economic productive forces is the highest criterion for the advancement of a society. Human history is the history of fulfilling the food, clothing and shelter needs of the people as well as the history of production. The heart of mankind is the economy and production. In as much as the development and progressive achievements in production, society gains prosperity and development. As regards the availability of human rights, it can be said that under feudalism, man did not own himself or herself. When the man or he has human rights, he or she owns himself or herself as well as his or her own production without requiring to give them up to the feudal lords. He or she can expand his or her economy with the interest so gained. In this way, production and economic undertakings can be expanded with momentum. Gradually, human rights overwhelm the whole universe”, said the modern political economy.

In today’s international sphere, some nations open up the political freedom first before taking firm economic steps in transitional period towards democracy. Thus, they had to encounter social crisis and problems. Hence, it can be witnessed that these nations which are taking firm economic steps in combination with the provision of political freedom are achieving stability and gradual development.

Basically, the national interests depend on the development of economic productive forces. Economic sanctions are, in fact, violation of human rights. Only when there is national reconciliation, will there be national stability. Only when there is national stability, can production be carried out for prosperity. This way, a new modern and democratic nation can be built up. To do so, it is incumbent upon the delegates to make collective efforts in oneness in line with the seven-point Road Map of the State at the National Convention to be reconvened on 17 May.

Rural water supply endeavours gaining momentum

by T. Htut

Water is very valuable where it is scarce. It is natural that the people in arid regions in central parts of Myanmar prefer water than gold. There is a saying which goes “We want water rather than gold”.

As a result of zealous efforts of the officials and staff of the Development Affairs Department with the assistance of local authorities, a ceremony to unveil the billboard to mark the provision of sufficient water to the entire rural people of Myittha Township was held at the junction of Myinyang-Mandalay Road in downtown Myittha on 13 May morning. Director-General Col Myo Myint delivered an address. As guided by Head of State Senior General Than Shwe, five rural development tasks are being implemented with might and main throughout the country, he said. In this context, rural water supply works are carried out with added momentum while emphasis is being laid on building of rural roads. In Myittha Township, 144 manual water pumps have been built and 77 tube-wells sunk to supply sufficient water to 145,026 people of 227 villages in 82 villages-tracts. To supply rural water in Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Divisions, huge sums of fund have been spent. So far, 4,007 villages out of 8,042 villages in these three divisions have been supplied with sufficient water.

Rural development, in fact, is very beneficial to the rural people that make up the majority of our nation’s population.

It is believed that the five rural development tasks namely ensuring smooth and secure transportation in rural areas; enabling rural people to obtain clean water; enhancing education standard of rural people; stepping up health care facilities of rural people and bringing about economic development of rural people will be carried out with added momentum.
Development works inspected in Mingin, Kalaw

YANGON, 14 May—Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye arrived at the Yeiktha of Mingin Township General Administration Department, Kalaw District, on 9 May morning. Officials reported on development tasks in the region.

Sagaying Division Development Affairs Committee Director U Khin Maung Sweto and officials reported on their respective sectors.

Next, the commander attended the opening ceremony of Napin Suspension Bridge in Kyewku Village, Kalawy Township. The commander formally opened the bridge. He also opened the library in Myothit Village, Kalawy Township.

In Masein Station, the commander presented a computer and accessories and 100 bags of cement for Basic Education High School Branch to officials and garments and periodicals to the local people. On arrival at Natmawkei Village, he inspected building of Kalawy-Mawlaik Road and bridges on it. — MNA

Commander inspects thriving of sunflower, paddy in Lashio Township

YANGON, 14 May—Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander Brig-Gen Myint Hlaing, accompanied by departmental officials, on 12 May inspected thriving plantations of Hsinshweli special Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, accompanied by the deputy ministers participated in the discussions.

On 12 May, the commander, along with the Shan State Peace and Development Council Commander Myint Hlaing, visited the Mingin Township General Administration Department, Kalaw District, and gave necessary instructions to officials concerned.

Next, the commander proceeded to the high land farming-1 where he inspected digging of new lakes, storage of water, seasonal crop plantations, land reclamation with heavy machinery and the 50-acre model plantations being jointly undertaken by the command and Myanmar Agriculture Service and attended to the needs.

Afterwards, he inspected the environmental protection activities in the region.

Altogether 90 participants from the Eastern Command, the Central Command, the Southern Command and the North-East Command are taking part in the boxing tourney which continues up to 16 May —MNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung delivers an address at the meeting. — MNA

Environmental Conservation Committee meets

YANGON, 14 May—The Environmental Conservation Committee held the third meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs this afternoon.

Present were Chairman of Environmental Conservation Committee Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Vice-Chairmen of the committee Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint and Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung and members.

Chairman of the committee Minister U Win Aung delivered an address. He said that environmental issues are being given priority at the international forums, and global efforts are being made to address environmental issues such as global warming and climate change, the depletion of the ozone layer, deforestation, land degradation, deforestation, and loss of bio-diversity. At the national level, countries are implementing plans and strategies to protect and conserve the environment.

In Myanmar, the State Peace and Development Council is paying great attention to environmental matters, and has recently formed the Environmental Conservation Committee to further promote environmental protection activities in the country. In order to systematically address the environmental issues, the Committee will set down environmental plans and strategies to protect and conserve the environment.

In Ayeyawady Division, 3.4 million acres had been targeted to be put under summer paddy cultivation for 2004-2005. In 2004-2005, 3.5 million acres are to be put under paddy. — MNA

Commander attends prize-presentation ceremony of basketball tourney

YANGON, 14 May—The final matches and prize-presentation ceremony of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Chairman’s Trophy men’s and women’s Basketball tournament took place at Koethein gymnasium in Pathein yesterday morning.

Present on the occasion were Ayeyawady Division PDC Chairman South-West Command Commander Maj-Gen Soe Naing and wife, Secretary Col Thein Hlaing, council members, officials and guests.

In Ayeyawady Division, 3.4 million acres had been targeted to be put under summer paddy cultivation for 2004-2005. In 2004-2005, 3.5 million acres are to be put under paddy. — MNA

Minister for National Planning & Economic Development U Soe Tha welcomed back at the Yangon International Airport. (News on page 16) — mna

Financial outlay provided on township Maternal and Child Welfare Associations

YANGON, 14 May—Yangon Division Maternal and Child Welfare Association provided financial outlay on township MCWAs in Yangon East District at No 4 Basic Education High School in Tamway Township this afternoon.

Present on the occasion Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife and Patron of Yangon Division MCWA Daw Khin Thet Htay, No 2 Military Region Commander Li-Col Ne Win, local authorities, departmental heads, officials, presidents and members of township MCWAs and guests.

On the occasion, Daw Khin Thet Htay briefed those present on the purpose of providing small loans to the township MCWAs and presented cash assistance to MCWAs of Dagon Myothit (Selikkan), Tamway, North Okkalapa, Dawbon, South Okkalapa, Mawka Tanmyin, Yanan, Dagon Myothit (South), Dagon Myothit (East) and Patyandaung townships. Member of Panel of Patrons of Yangon Division MCWA Daw Nan Shwe presented 1,008 membership applications to Chairman of Yangon Division MCWA Head of Division Health Department Dr Hla Myint, who then accepted cash donations by township MCWAs in Yangon East District to Yangon Division MCWA Supervisory Committee. President of South Okkalapa Township MCWA Daw Thida Aye expressed gratitude. — MNA

Wellwishers invited for sinking tube-wells

YANGON, 14 May—The Development Affairs Committees under the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs are making concerted efforts in sinking tube-wells in order to get sufficient fresh water in rural areas in States and Divisions where water is scarce.

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

Those who wish to donate cash for the tube-well sinking projects for rural areas may contact the Director-General (Tel: 01-245420 & 253088), the Deputy Director-General (Tel: 01-245418), the Director (Engineering) (Tel: 01-291967), the Directors (Sagaying Division Development Affairs Committee) (Tel: 071-21012), the Director (Mawgyaw Division Development Affairs Committee) (Tel: 063-23164) and the Director (Mandalay Division Development Affairs Committee) (Tel: 02-54657). — MNA

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.
US lawmakers differ on whether to release more abuse photos

WASHINGTON, 14 May — US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said during a surprise visit to Iraq on Thursday that Administration lawyers are advising the Pentagon not to make public any more photos of Iraqi prisoners being abused by American soldiers, a stance rejected by Democrats at home.

Rumsfeld said no government lawyers were recommending releasing the photos, though he would personally be "happy" to do so and "get it behind us," reports said.

The government lawyers argue that releasing such photos, which would certainly show images of prisoners viewed as degrading, would violate the Geneva Convention, Rumsfeld said.

But Senator Edward Kennedy, a Democrat from Massachusetts, prefers to get the seizure of foreign hostages and persistent violence showed the country and region were spining out of control.

"It all gives the impression of a total lack of direction," Foreign Minister Michel Barnier told Le Monde newspaper in unusually tough comments about Iraq under US-led occupation.

"What strikes me is the spiral of horror, of blood, of infamies, for one sees on all fronts, from Fallujah to Gaza and in the terrible pictures of the assassination of the unfortunate American hostage," he added of images on an Islamist Web site of the decapitation of a young American in Iraq.

Barnier, due in Washington on Friday to meet US officials, reaffirmed that France would not contribute troops to any peacekeeping force in Iraq, and renewed his call for the US-led occupying force to hand over full sovereignty to the Iraqis.

Paris, which led international opposition to the war in Iraq, has sought to ease tensions with Washington and has generally avoided criticizing its policy there.

But France, Russia and others on the UN Security Council want the United States to make sure that Iraqis have a major say in their future before endorsing a UN resolution on the official end of the occupation, due by June 30.

Barnier said the resolution should include arrangements for an international conference including various Iraqi parties which would help guide the transition process—an idea which Moscow also backs but which has yet to gain wide support.

He said the interim government should be put in place after June 30 should have authority over Iraqi Armed Forces and that the future administration to be elected next year should have the power to end any foreign peacekeeping mission.

"The fully sovereign government which emerges from the 2005 elections should be able to decide what becomes of this force, and if need be, its departure," he said.

Iraqis kill, seven wounded in Najaf fighting

BAGHDAD, 14 May — Three Iraqis were killed and seven wounded yesterday in overnight fighting between US forces and militia loyal to radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in the holy city of Najaf, a hospital source said Thursday.

"We have three people killed and seven wounded, three of them seriously," Dr. Falah at Najaf hospital told Xinhua.

Heavy fighting erupted last night between US soldiers and Sadr’s militia, or Mehdi Army, when US troops entered the city of Najaf from three directions.

US tanks and armoured vehicles entered the city’s 1920 Revolution Square, less than two kilometres from the holy Shi’ite Muslim Imam Ali shrine in the city centre, a witness named Muhssin Jawad told Xinhua.

The battles continued until dawn. Many families in the city were forced to evacuate their houses to safer places, the witness said.

Iraqi neighbours reject US sanction against Syria

AMMAN, 14 May — Parliament speakers of Iraq’s neighbouring countries on Thursday expressed absolute rejection to the US sanction against Syria.

The sanction is a clear violation of International Law, conventions and human norms, according to a statement issued by Parliament speakers in their meeting in Amman.

Parliamentary speakers from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Syria, Egypt, Bahrain, Turkey and Jordan as well as representatives of Arab and international parliamentary unions took part in the meeting.

Such sanction is an odd practice that comes within the double standard policy adopted by the US Administration towards the region, to serve the Israeli policies of discrimination and expansion, as well as the course of state terrorism practised by Israel against the Palestinian people, the statement said.

The statement affirmed that such policy comes within the framework of practising pressure on the Arab countries due to their stand regarding what is taking place in Iraq and Palestine.

It stressed the Parliaments’ full solidarity with the Syrian people and their support to Syria’s efforts to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The two-day meeting which concluded Thursday evening, is aimed at helping to end the unprecedented situations in Iraq and enable Iraqis to form a national government.

Greece condemns human rights violations in Iraq

ATHENS, 14 May — The Greek Government Wednesday condemned reported serious human rights violations in Iraq.

Greece shares the abhorrence of the international public opinion over the photographs brought to light of the torture of Iraqi prisoners, by US soldiers, government spokesman Theodoros Roussopoulos told reporters.

"The Greek Government condemns violations from wherever it originates," he stressed, adding that "violence only breeds violence." Seventy MPs of the main opposition PASOK Party and an MP of the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYR) issued a statement Wednesday, denouncing the "unprecedented violation of human rights in Iraq."

The MPs called on the US Government to take measures proving that it actively condemns the torture and humiliation of Iraqi citizens.

They further called for an emergency discussion of the human rights violation in Iraq at the upcoming session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

Russian hostages in Iraq believed to be alive

MOSSOW, 14 May — Two Russians seized in Iraq on Monday are apparently alive and well but their whereabouts are unknown, their employer said Wednesday.

The men were captured after coming under fire as they were driving home on Monday, but a third colleague was killed, Interenergoservis, eight of whose employees were briefly taken hostage last month, is involved in a power plant project just outside Baghdad.

"We have encouraging evidence that our people who were kidnapped in Iraq are alive and well, but so far we don’t know where they are," company general director Alexander Abramov told Interfax news agency.

Frances raises alarm over Iraq chaos

PARIS, 14 May — France expressed deep concern on Thursday over the future of Iraq, saying prisoner abuses, the seizure of foreign hostages and persistent violence showed the country and region were spinning out of control.

"It all gives the impression of a total lack of direction," Foreign Minister Michel Barnier told Le Monde newspaper in unusually tough comments about Iraq under US-led occupation.

"What strikes me is the spiral of horror, of blood, of infamies, for one sees on all fronts, from Fallujah to Gaza and in the terrible pictures of the assassination of the unfortunate American hostage," he added of images on an Islamist Web site of the decapitation of a young American in Iraq.

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"The fully sovereign government which emerges from the 2005 elections should be able to decide what becomes of this force, and if need be, its departure," he said.
India-China bilateral trade set to cross $10b this year

Beijing, 14 May — India-China bilateral trade is set to establish a new record this year by crossing the $10-billion-US-dollar mark and this figure could even touch $20 billion dollars by the end of 2010, Indian Ambassador to China, Nalin Surie said here recently.

Noting that bilateral trade has already touched $3.1 billion US dollars during the first quarter (January-March) of 2004, Surie expressed confidence that total trade during the year will exceed $10 billion US dollars by the end of this year, setting a new record.

In 2003, India-China bilateral trade touched a record $7.6 billion US dollars.

In his personal view, India and China could easily aim to achieve bilateral trade of $20 billion US dollars by the end of 2010. Surie said here in his inaugural address at ‘India Day’ seminar on ‘Business Opportunities for Global Companies in China’ that India and China are competitors but there are also significant complementarities, he said.

As a major player in the world market, China as a business partner, not as a competitor. It is not India or China is it India and China,” he said while addressing the seminar, organized by Chemtech Foundation as part of the ongoing ‘Achemasia 2004’, a major exhibition of chemical and process engineering.

Abdullah urges UN to help ease tension in West Asian conflict

Kuala Lumpur, 14 May — Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Thursday urged the United Nations to intervene effectively in easing tension in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The world body could establish a UN mission or authorize an international peacekeeping mission to monitor the situation, ease tension and maintain peace and security on the ground, the Prime Minister said.

He was addressing a one-day Ministerial Meeting of the Committee on Palestine of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Putrajaya, the Federal Administrative Centre.

With a membership of 117 nations, NAM plays a significant role in the post-Cold War world as custodian of Southern interests.

NAM members of the Committee on Palestine are Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, Colombia, Cuba, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Palestine, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Other members are Angola, Chile, Pakistan and the Philippines, NAM Caucus members of the United Nations Security Council.

“...This is the way to end the bloodshed and bring about a medium of calm to situation steeped with blood and antipathy,” the Prime Minister said.

The United Nations, notably the Security Council, remains the last hope of the Palestinian people,” he said. Abdullah, who is the current chairman of the 117-member NAM, said that given the deep mistrust between the Palestinians and Israelis, there is no guarantee that a solution will be found on their own.

Clearly, he said, the situation demanded the intervention of the international community, particularly the UN Security Council.

The Prime Minister said that the continued non-action by the international community, particularly by the UN Security Council, was tantamount to appeasing the occupying power, Israel.

Senior CPC official pledges to draw overseas Chinese talents

Beijing, 14 May — China will step up its efforts to absorb more than 100,000 overseas Chinese talents to serve their motherland, said a senior Communist Party of China (CPC) official here Wednesday.

Citing the overseas students as invaluable resources, the official said high-level governments at all levels were required to create a ‘favourable environment’ for their return.

He Guoqing, a member of the Political Bureau and head of the Organization Department of the CPC Central Committee, made the remark while meeting with a Chinese scientist who won a prestigious honour in the United States.

Dr Wang Xiaodong was elected member of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of the United States in April, one of the highest honours attainable by American scientists. Wang was awarded the basis of his remarkable contribution to the biochemical studies of cell death, a phenomenon in which a cell activate a self destruction programme.

The 41-year-old scientist was also appointed director general of the Chinese National Institute of Biological Science (NIBS) in May 2003.

He expressed congratulations on Wang’s membership in the NAS and his position at the NIBS, and briefed him on domestic personnel situations.

Collection of stamps on Deng Xiaoping’s miliy life published

Beijing, 14 May — A collection of stamps and other historic files on the military life of late Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) was officially published Wednesday on the 70th anniversary of his birthday.

Deng, a native of Sichuan Province, southwest China, was one of the leaders of the Communist Party of China (CPC)-led Armed Forces and the chief architect of the country’s reform and opening policy. A total of 3,600 copies of the stamp collection, titled ‘Strategic Deng Xiaoping’, are printed, according to the All-China Philatelic Federation.

Malnutrition slashed 5% of Vietnam’s GDP

Hanoi, 14 May — Vietnam’s gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated to be malnourished by 5% by mid-2004, calculated by the World Bank.

The malnutrition rate in the country is still high, standing at 28.4 per cent, according to an article in the state newspaper ‘Labour on Thursday.

Meanwhile, the rate of anemia in the country is still high, standing at 38.2 per cent, and that of Vitamin A deficiency among infants aged under six months is 32.7 per cent.

The malnutrition rate has annually decreased by 1.5 per cent in recent years, Vietnam has a population of more than 80 million people.—MNA/Xinhua

AIDS anger as woman dies in Hungary

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Construction of Chinese-invested EPZ in Vietnam kicks off

Haiphong (Vietnam), 14 May — The groundbreaking ceremony for a Chinese-invested export processing zone (EPZ) with total investment of 75 million US dollars was held here on Wednesday.

Investors of the 150-hectare EPZ named Hai Phong Incube include the Zhonghong Corporation of China, the Hengtong Company of Hong Kong, and the Hai Phong Industrial Development Company of Vietnam.

The Chinese partners contribute 70 per cent of the investment.

Addressing the ceremony, Vietnam’s Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Nguyen Bich Dat said the Hai Phong 96 is the result of cooperation between Vietnamese and Chinese sides, of their efforts to overcome difficulties, and of support of the governments of the two countries.
North China region uses Japanese loans in sewage treatment

Hohhot, 14 May — The Japan Bank for International Cooperation will provide a loan totalling 681.59 million yuan (82.41 million US dollars) for sewage treatment projects in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, north China, in the coming four years.

Relevant departments of China will offer a complementary fund of 233.16 million yuan (28.19 million US dollars) for constructing four sewage treatment plants and waste water discharge pipelines and other facilities, and for renovation of 150 kilometres of pipelines for discharging rainwater in the regional capital Hohhot, according to an agreement signed between the Japanese bank and the Chinese Ministry of Finance recently.

Upon completion of these projects in 2008, 90 per cent of Hohhot City's waste water will be treated and used for other purposes. Currently, Hohhot generates 230,000 tons of waste water daily, only 43.5 per cent of which is treated.

China has a target to have 70 per cent of waste water treated in provincial and autonomous regional capitals by 2010, for the purpose of improving urban environment.

ADB’s Annual General Meeting to be held in S Korea this week

Seoul, 14 May — The Asian Development Bank’s (ADB) 37th Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors will be held on southern Jeju Island in South Korea this week, with participants expected to exchange views on a host of outstanding issues facing the region and the world, organizers for the event said Wednesday.

The three-day meeting, which will officially start on Saturday, will touch on challenges and opportunities for ADB members, ranging from governance, poverty reduction, development finance and international financial architecture to regional economic and social development, according to a rough schedule released by the ADB.

The meeting was told that 45 per cent of the current ADP was implemented until March 31, 2004. The previous ADP of 2002-2003 also witnessed 45 per cent implementation while it was 42 per cent in 2001-2002 fiscal.

The ministries which are lagging behind in implementing the ADP must improve their performance with proper monitoring, the Prime Minister said at the meeting.

Inability to utilize foreign aid due to various factors, including donors’ conditions, is cited by the ministers project implementation and bureaucratic hassles were identified as the main reasons for the unsatisfactory implementation of the current ADP. But the three months ahead of the expiry of the fiscal year.
Economic indicators to turn “green” in China

China is making progress toward its plan to take environmental factors into account when determining the gross domestic product, or GDP, in a bid to ensure a sustainable economic and social development.

Southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality, the trial city for developing the “green” GDP system, has recently had its research outcome of a cost accounting approach for natural resources and environment pass experts appraisal.

According to Professor Lei Ming with the Guanghua Management Institute of the Beijing University in China’s capital, the “green” GDP will be an important indicator to measure how harmonious the relationship is between economic growth and natural environmental protection.

Traditional GDP statistics failed to take into account the affect of industrial pollution and consumption of water resources on the domestic economy, said Qin YAO, head of the research team for the “green” GDP accounting approach.

The failure to deduct enviromental deterioration caused by industrial pollution and cost of water resources from GDP deprived the traditional indicator of objectively reflecting whether and how a local economy is sustainable, added Qin.

According to Qin, in 2001 the National Bureau of Statistics designated Chongqing as the only city in the nation to experiment with resources cost accounting for GDP. The city has since studied data collected from 1,415 local enterprises and non-profit institutions. Based on the study, an initial feasible “green” GDP accounting approach has come into being.

It is imperative for China to establish a new “green” GDP growth assessment system, which will increase the potential to absorb more, ameliorating climate change.

Cholera kills 10 in southwest Nigeria

LAGOS, 14 May — An outbreak of water-borne cholera in southwest Nigeria, has, on the last 16 years, with police having done little to solve the crimes, native groups said on Wednesday.

The cases include that of Lumen Derrick, a 19-year-old forestry student who disappeared in 1995 along northern British Columbia’s Highway 16, called the “Highway of Tears” by local residents because of the six women feared to have been abducted or killed on the road since 1988.

“When it comes to indigenous women it seems easy for authorities to overlook unexplained murders and missing person cases,” said Wilton Littlechild, a lawyer and prominent Native leader from Alberta.

Due to lack of potable water in the town in the past 10 years, the river, along with another one, had been the major source of water used for domestic purposes by the residents, it said.

This image, courtesy of the University of Nebraska Entomology Department (UNL), shows adult Periodical Cicada (Magadicta septendecim). From Maryland to Indiana Americans are bracing themselves as billions of cicadas begin to emerge from a 17-year slumber.—AFP

Scientists say wetter world counters greenhouse gases

SYDNEY, 14 May — Australian scientists have found the Earth may be more resilient to global warming than first thought, and they say a warmer world means a wetter planet, encouraging more plants to grow and soak up greenhouse gases.

“The global water cycle has changed in response to greenhouse emissions,” almost 100 Australian greenhouse scientists said in an annual statement on their research received on Wednesday.

“As the world warms it is, on average, getting wetter,” the scientists, who met recently under the banner of Australia’s Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Accounting.

A wetter and cloudier world would see more plants and more photosynthesis to counter greenhouse gases and also mean less evaporation as less solar radiation reaches the Earth. “Contrary to widespread expectations, potential evaporation from the soil and land-based water bodies like lakes is decreasing in most places,” the scientists said.

An increase in trees and shrubs in the world’s grasslands in recent decades was a major counter to greenhouse gases, they said. “Forests, farms and grasslands across the world absorb significant volumes of greenhouse gases. They have the potential to absorb more, ameliorating climate change.

“Property managed, they could buy time for the world’s third world to make the major reduction in greenhouse emissions from power generation, industry and transport that will be required to reduce the damage from climate change.”

Rising diabetes cases a global threat

HOUSTON, 14 May — India, China and United States top the list of countries with the maximum number of diabetes cases and this number is expected to more than double by 2030, a report says on Wednesday.

In the United States, third only to India and China in diabetes cases, the number will increase by 70 per cent, says a study by researchers with the World Health Organization and universities in Scotland, Australia and Denmark. — MNA/PTI

Canadian groups decrie killings of native women

UNITED NATION, 14 May — Some 500 indigenous women have disappeared or been murdered in Canada over the last 16 years, with police having done little to on behalf of the victims in Canada.

“This is the number one issue that aboriginal women in Canada,” Brown added. “Our lives are at risk.”

Delegates likened the situation to that of Mexico’s Ciudad Juarez, on the southern US border, where federal and local residents because of the six women feared to have been abducted or killed on the road since 1988.

“With the potential to absorb more, ameliorating climate change.”

Some of the victims thought they were buying “Coochoi,” a homemade Caribbean moonshine with a wooden aftertaste. Each bottle of the deadly boozes costs about $1.50 US dollars.

This image, courtesy of the University of Nebraska Entomology Department (UNL), shows adult Periodical Cicada (Magadicta septendecim). From Maryland to Indiana Americans are bracing themselves as billions of cicadas begin to emerge from a 17-year slumber.—AFP

Fuel pumped from stricken ship off South Africa

CAPE TOWN, 14 May — Salvage experts began pumping fuel from the tanks of a stricken bulk carrier off South Africa’s west coast on Tuesday, to avert an environmental disaster.

The rate of the 150,000-ton Taiwanese-registered Cape Africa remains in the balance after heavy seas-delayed for three days efforts to transfer 1,900 tons of fuel to a waiting salvage tug.

Local shipping authorities fear the vessel, which was transporting iron-ore from Brazil to Japan, may sink after it started taking on water two weeks ago through a hole.

The hole has now grown to 20-metre wide and between five- and seven-metre high.

The South African Marine Safety Authority (SAMSA) said in a state-ment salvage workers began pumping fuel from the car-rier to a Russian tug on Tues-day.

“A pumping rate of approxi-mately 50 tons per hour is currently being achieved and the operation will continue day and night, weather and swell condi-tions permitting,” SAMSA said.

The ship is to be kept at least 120 nautical miles west of Cape Town until all the fuel that can be pumped out has been removed so as to minimize possible environ-mental damage.

Deadly cocktail kills 10 Colombians

BOGOTA, Colombia, 14 May — A poisonous cocktail of industrial methanol, whiskey and sugar-cane liquor has killed 10 Colombians in the northern city of Barranquilla, and caused blindness in others, authorities said on Wednesday.

Some of the victims thought they were buying “Coochoi,” a homemade Caribbean moonshine with a wooden aftertaste. Each bottle of the deadly boozes costs about $1.50 US dollars.

“I never knew that this would happen,” cried Colombian police said on Wednesday.

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The ship is to be kept at least 120 nautical miles west of Cape Town until all the fuel that can be pumped out has been removed so as to minimize possible environ-mental damage.

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters
**Lazio fight back against Juve to win Italian Cup**

**Texas (Italy), 14 May** — Lazio came back from two goals down to lift the Italian Cup for the fourth time on Wednesday with a 2-2 draw at Juventus in the second leg to secure a 4-2 aggregate victory.

Juventus, trailing 2-0 from the first leg, pulled a goal back through French striker David Trezeguet in the 20th minute and then Alessandro del Piero brought the tie level with a goal right after the interval. But Lazio fought back with a header from Bernardo Corradi and a late Stefano Fiore strike to make it 2-2.

The match was Juve coach Marcello Lippi's last on the bench at the Delle Alpi as he will leave the club at the end of the season. Lazio manager Roberto Mancini brought on Simone Inzaghi to boost his attack and Lazio coach Roberto Mancini brought on Alexei Smertin to help Lazio through the final 30 minutes of the game.

**Brazil’s Belletti eyes move to Barcelona**

MADRID, 13 May (Reuters) — Brazil defender Juliano Belletti is hoping to seal a move from Spain’s Villarreal to Barcelona, a deal put at about four million euros ($4.75 million), Spanish Press reports said on Wednesday.

The clubs reached an agreement on the transfer last Tuesday but Barcelona still have to work out terms with Belletti, a member of Brazil’s 2002 World Cup-winning squad, they said.

Spanish news agency Europa Press quoted Belletti as saying on Wednesday he saw no problems with sealing the move because, he said, he was not difficult in negotiations given that he liked “football more than money.”

If the deal goes through, Belletti would be reunited with Ronaldo, who inspired Barcelona’s 17-match unbeaten run in the Primera Liga which ended last Saturday.

Celtic manager Martin O’Neill rated Belletti as saying on Wednesday he saw no problems with sealing the move because, he said, he was not difficult in negotiations given that he liked “football more than money.”

Chris Sutton and Stilian Petrov, before the Cup final against Dunfermline on May 22 at Hampden Park. They conceded the opening goal to David Clarkson after 64 minutes but Craig Beattie earned his side a point when he equalised 11 minutes from time.

Celtic have completed the league campaign without losing an away match but manager O’Neill is already building for next season and will speak with Brazilian forward Nicolas Amoroso on Thursday.

The 29-year-old striker left German Bundesliga club Borussia Dortmund last month when his contract was terminated following a series of rows.

Amoroso, who joined Dortmund for 18 million pounds ($21.11 million US dollars) from Italian club Parma in 2001, has a knee ligament injury last September and has not played a competitive match since.

**Newcastle draw puts Liverpool at Europe’s door**

LOUGHOOR, 14 May — Newcastle United's dream of a place in the Champions League was blown out in a 3-3 draw at Southampton on Wednesday, but both Arsenal qualified for the playoffs.

Newcastle's substitute Leandre Griffit, who had been on the pitch seven minutes, put Southampton 3-2 ahead after a breakaway two minutes from time after the home side had twice trailed.

Midfielder Darren Ambrose squeezed in an injury-time equalizer for Newcastle but it was not enough to keep them in contention for fourth spot.

The Magpies needed to beat both Southampton and Liverpool in their last Premier League match on Saturday to bag England’s fourth and remaining berth in Europe’s premier club competition.

Liverpool can now only be caught by Aston Villa on goal points but fifth-placed Villa had a far inferior goal difference.

Champions Arsenal and second-placed Chelsea have qualified for the Champions League group stage, while Manchester United, who are third, go into the third qualifying round.

Sixth-placed Newcastle are now battling with Villa and Bolton Wanderers for a UEFA Cup berth.

Newcastle coach Bobby Robson pointed to his team’s disappointing away form and said: “If we’d played like this (tonight) much of the season away from home we’d be laughing, we’d have been home and dry, but then Liverpool might be saying the same sort of things.

“They’ve had some depressing results.”

**Players of Colombian soccer club celebrate their victory over Brazilian club Cruzeiro**

Players of Colombian soccer club celebrate their victory over Brazilian club Cruzeiro in their Copa Libertadores match at the Mineirao stadium in the Brazilian city of Belo Horizonte, on 13 May, 2004. Cruzeiro won the match 2-1 to tie the series, but Deportivo Cali won the penalty shootout 3-0 to qualify for the tournament's quarterfinals. — Reuters
15-5-2004 (Saturday)
Day time
3:25 am

15-5-2004 (Saturday)
Evening Time
23:30 am

16-5-2004 (Sunday)
Day time
3:25 am

16-5-2004 (Sunday)
Evening Time
23:30 am

Summary of observations recorded at 09:00 hours MST:
During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kayin State, lower Sagaing and Magway Divisions, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Shan State and Mandalay Division, widespread in Kachin, Mon States and Tanintharyi Division and scattered in the remaining areas with isolated downpours. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Myitkyina (3.31) inches, Dwe (2.80) inches and Kawng (2.13) inch.

Maximum temperature on 13-5-2004 was 28.8°C (84°F). Minimum temperature on 14-5-2004 was 21.5°C (77°F). Relative humidity at 9:00 h MST on 14-5-2004 was 89%. Total sunshine hours on 13-5-2004 was nil. Rainfall on 14-5-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 90 mm (3.54 inches) at Yangon Airport and 102 mm (4.02 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 98 mm (3.86 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 18 mph from southeast at 12:30 h MST on 13-5-2004.

Bay inference: Monsoon is moderate to strong in the Andaman Sea, South Bay and weather is partly cloudy else-where in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 15-5-2004: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered to widespread in Kayin, Mon, Kayin State and Moeintawgyi Division and isolated in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Sea will be moderate in Gulf of Martaban, Delug and along Mon Tanintharyi coast and slight else-where in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Advance of southwesterly Monsoon is likely in the forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 15-5-2004. One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

Weather outlook for second weekend of May 2004: During the coming weekend, rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Yangon Division and isolated in Mandalay Division.

(Issued at 12:00 hrs MST on 14-5-2004)

According to the (06:30) h MST observation today, the water level 420 cm of Chin Phyu River at Hamtii shows a sharp rise of 60 cm since 15-5-2004 within 24 hours. The Chin Phyu water level will sharply rise about 150 cm (about 5-feet) along Chin Phyu River during the next 2 days above the present water levels commencing soon.

Sat, 15 May 2004

WEATHER

Rainfall

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Coord meeting on water supply for Meiktila District

Yangon, 14 May — The coordination meeting on supply of water and greening tasks in Meiktila District was held at the meeting hall of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council on 12 May morning.

Present were Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, local authorities of Kyaikkse and Meiktila Districts, Director of Mandalay Division Development Affairs Committee U Kan Hla and members of Mandalay Division, Kyaikkse and Meiktila District Agricultural Coordination Committees.

Officials reported on supply of water by pumping from Dokhtawady River and digging of canals and ponds for extension of irrigated areas. The commander attended to their needs.

Next, the commander gave instructions on ways to supply water to farmlands and extension of monocrop and summer paddy cultivation. Later, division- and district-level committees for supply of water and greening tasks in Meiktila District were formed. — MNA

Jade and gems special sale on 26 June

Yangon, 14 May — The special sale of jade and gems will be held at Myanmar Gems Mart from 26 June to 3 July. The Myanmar citizens who are engaged in gem mining in accord with the Myanmar Gems Law and Myanmar citizens who are engaged in sale of gems in foreign currency will be permitted to attend the special sale in accord with the prescribed rules and regulations.

Moreover, sales counters are being arranged for national entrepreneurs who are engaged in sale of gems in accord with the Myanmar Gems Law to enable them to sell gems on the ground floor of Myanmar Gems Mart during the special sale period.

Those wishing to attend the special sale and those wishing to obtain sales counters are to contact Myanmar Gems Enterprise beginning 25 May. — MNA

Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe meets advisers to MWAF

Yangon, 14 May — President of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe met with wives of the ministers who are advisers to the federation at the meeting hall of the federation on Thahtwin Road in Bahan Township this afternoon.

Also present on the occasion were Vice-Presidents Daw Khin Lay Thet, Daw Than Than Nwe, Daw Khin Khin Win and Prof Dr Daw Mya May Yi. General Secretary Prof Dr Daw Khin Aye Win and executives and members of supporting groups.

NPED Minister U Soe Tha arrives back

Yangon, 14 May — The Myanmar delegation led by Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha arrived back here by air this evening after signing the contract related to edible oil development project with OPEC Fund in Vienna, Austria.

The minister and party were welcomed back by Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Hla, departmental officials and families.

Members of the delegation, Director-General U Tin Htet Oo of Agricultural Planning Department of the Ministry of Agriculture & Irrigation and Director U Maung Maung Khin of Foreign Economic Relations Department also arrived back on the same flight. — MNA

Conservation of environment in Kachin State coordinated

Yangon, 14 May — Conservation of environment in Kachin State was coordinated at the town hall in Myitkyina on 10 May.

Present on the occasion were Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Commander of Northern Command Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe, Chairman of Myanmar Environmental Conservation Committee Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Minister for Transport U Pe Tha, the directors-general of the Ministry of Mines and Ministry of Forestry, senior military officers, Secretary of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Maung Myo and members, chairman of Myitkyina District and Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental officials and townswelders.

The commander spoke at length on participation of private jade and gold entrepreneurs in the tasks of environment conservation.

Chairman of Myanmar Environmental Conservation Committee Minister U Win Aung said the beauty of nature is of great value and contributes to the well-being of the State and the people.

He said the people are to conserve the beauty of nature and to abide by the rules and regulations laid down by the State.

Assistant Director of Myanmar Gems Enterprise U Phone Naing reported on the blocks jade and other tasks.

The commander, the minister and party inspected building of retaining walls and preventive measures on bank erosion. — MNA

Minister inspects Myittha Bridge (Kalewa) construction

Yangon, 14 May — Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun inspected the construction of Myittha Bridge (Kalewa) in Sagaing Division on 12 May morning.

At the briefing hall, Senior Engineer U Kyaw Lin reported to the minister on progress in construction of the bridge and future tasks.

Next, the minister inspected floating of the main bridge and tarring on the approach bridge at Kalewa side. He then gave necessary instructions to officials.

The Myittha river-crossing bridge is situated on Monywa-Yagyi-Kalewa road.

The bridge is 1,320 feet long and has four feet wide pedestrain lanes on both sides. The motor road is 28 feet wide.

The clearance of the bridge is 600 feet by 14 feet. It can withstand 60-ton load. It will link Sagaing division and Chin State (North). — MNA

Delegates from States and Divisions arrive here to attend National Convention by car. — MNA

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