National Convention reconvenes in Nyaunghnapan Camp in Hmawby Township

YANGON, 17 May — With six objectives, non-disintegration of the Union; non-disintegration of national solidarity; perpetuation of sovereignty; flourishing of genuine multi-party democracy system; further burgeoning of the noblest and purest of worldly values namely justice, liberty and equality in the State; and for the Tatmadaw to be able to participate in the national political leadership role of the State, the National Convention reconvened at Pyidaungsu Hall of Nyaunghnapan Camp in Hmawby Township, Ngaung Division, at 9 am today.

Present on the occasion were National Convention Convening Commission Chairman State Peace and Development Council Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and members, National Convention Convening Work Committee Chairman Chief Justice U Aung Toe and members, National Convention Convening Management Committee Chairman Maj-Gen Lun Maung and members, chairmen and officials of sub-committees, ambassadors of Singapore, the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, Russia, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, Egypt, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Australia, Indonesia, Thailand and Pakistan, chargés d'affaires ai of Serbia and Montenegro, Nepal and the People’s Republic of China, the resident representative of UNHCR, the counsellor of the Japanese Embassy, the patron, the chairman and members of Myanmar Foreign Correspondents Club, officials of information and periodicals, observers, delegates of political parties (Kokang Democracy and Unity Party, National Unity Party, Union Kayin League, Union Pa-O National Organization, Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organization, Lah Lu National Development Party, Wa National Development Party, and Wa National Development Party representatives-elect of National Unity Party, Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organization and independents or representatives, delegates of national races from Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Rakhae, Shan (South), Shan (North) and Shan (East) States, Sagain, Taninthai, Bago, Magway, Mandalay, Yangon and Ayeyawady Divisions, delegates of State service personnel from the State Peace and Development Council Office, the President’s Office, the Pyithu Hluttaw Office, the Government Office, the Supreme Court, the Attorney-General’s Office, the Auditor-General’s Office, the Multi-party Democracy General Election Commission Office, the Civil Service Selection and Training Board, the Yangon City Development Committee, the Mandalay City Development Committee and ministries, other invited delegates, delegates from Shan State (North) Special Region-1, Shan State (North) Special Region-2, Shan State (North) Special Region-3, Shan State (East) Special Region-4, Shan State (North) Special Region-5 (KDA), Shan State (South) Special Region-6, Shan State (South) Special Region-7, Shan State (North) Special Region-1, Kachin State Special Region-1, Kachin State Special Region-2, Kayah State Special Region-1, Kayin State Special Region-3, Kayin and the success of the National Convention for formulating fundamental principles for the State Constitution for the emergence of a discipline-flourishing democracy which is being desired by the people.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt declared the seven-step Road Map on 30 August 2003. Of these, the National Convention which had been adjourned temporarily since 1996 is now being reconvened as the first step. (See page 8)

Delegates are to co-ordinate, discuss and forward suggestions without bias as regards person, ism, region or race

National Convention Convening Commission Chairman Lt-Gen Thein Sein delivers opening address at the National Convention

YANGON, 17 May — Following the opening speech delivered by National Convention Convening Commission Chairman State Peace and Development Council Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein at the National Convention today, Distinguished National Convention delegates, observers and guests, I wish the well-being of mind and body of all of you and the success of the National Convention for formulating fundamental principles for the State Constitution for the emergence of a discipline-flourishing democracy which is being desired by the people.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt declared the seven-step Road Map on 30 August 2003. Of these, the National Convention which had been adjourned temporarily since 1996 is now being reconvened as the first step. (See page 8)
**PERSPECTIVES**

**Tuesday, 18 May, 2004**

Strive for development of architecture parallel to other sciences and technologies

The Government of the Union of Myanmar is endeavouring for the development of the nation, relying on the knowledge and skills of her own people, especially the intellectuals and intelligentsia. At such a time like this, it is heartening to see the tangible results of the efforts made by various groups of technicians working together in their respective fields.

The Seminar on Tall Buildings sponsored by the Myanmar Architects Association was held at Myanmar Information and Communication Technology Park on 16 May and Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, who is also Chairman of the City Housing Project Supervisory Committee, attended it and delivered an address. The Prime Minister said that it was very appropriate to be able to hold the seminar to give a gesture of hailing the golden jubilee of the Myanmar Architects Association and it was true that the seminar would be useful for the nation and for the development of architecture and construction.

The Government is making all-out efforts on all fronts for the development of the Union and for strengthening the socio-economic life of the entire national people and raising their living standard. For this, dams, hydroelectric power stations, roads and bridges, international ports and airports and other development infrastructures are being built the length and breadth of the nation.

Moreover, measures are being taken to develop Yangon City and other major cities to possess international characteristics to build modern buildings, housing estates, parks, department stores and management and service infrastructures. In striving for development of the nation and for improved living standard of the people, architects and engineers play a vital role as urban development tasks and construction of modern buildings are essential for national development and enhancement of the living standard of the people. We would like to call on the architects to strive harder for urban development and at the same time for the development of architecture parallel to other sciences and technologies.

---

**Rural road construction inspected**

**Yangon, 17 May** — Director-General of the Development Affairs Department under the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Myo Myint on 14 May inspected the construction of Yoma west road being undertaken by the Mandalay Division Development Affairs Department.

The Yoma west road passing through five townships in Mandalay Division is now under construction. So far, 44 miles 5 furlongs, 26 miles 4 furlongs of gravel road and 1 mile of tarred road together with 11 overpasses, 3 bridges and 54 conduits have been built spending over K 970 million. — MNA

---

**Lt-Gen Aung Htwe inspect Kengtawng hydel project, meets departmental staff**

**Yangon, 17 May** — State Peace and Development Council member Lt-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence on 13 May morning visited Kengtawng and met with Tatmadaw officers, other ranks and family members at the hall of the regional battalion in Kengtawng in southern Shan State.

Next, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, together with Shan State Peace and Development Council Chairman Eastern Command Major-Maj Gen Khin Maung Myint and officials went to Kengtawng waterfall. At the briefing hall there, Assistant Director U Tha Aung of the Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise reported progress of work in implementing the project. Col Tin Lwin of the local station also reported on progress. Commander Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint also submitted supplementary report. Lt-Gen Aung Htwe gave necessary instructions. He urged personnel concerned to complete the project on schedule. He also fulfilled requirements.

In the afternoon, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and party went to Kengtawng General Administration Department and met with departmental personnel and those of social organizations. The Kholan-Kengtawng road is being built there as a gravel road. The Kengtawng-Kunhein road and the Kengtawng-Mongpong road will be upgraded into tarred roads. In delivering an address, Li Gen Aung Htwe said that efforts are being made by the State to ensure better transportation in respective regions and now the Kholan-Wansin-Mongchu road, the Kholan-Mongpong road, the Kengtawng-Mongpong road have been built. Energetic efforts are also being made for generating more electric power. After completion, the Kengtawng hydro-electric power project will supply electricity round the clock to the region.

After the meeting, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe inspected the construction of road at the entrance of Kengtawng town and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

**Commander, Minister meet WVO members in Sagaing Division**

**Yangon, 17 May** — Patron of the Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye and minister of the Central Organizing Committee of Myanmar War Veterans Association Lt-Gen Hla Myint Swe met the chairman and members of Sagaing Division Peace, Myanwa and Sagaing District Supervisory Committee for War Veterans Organization Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye also spoke on the occasion. Later, the minister handed over longsies for WVO members of two districts to officials.

On 16 May, they met with divisional authority and the ministry.

**Minister attends opening of GDP Accounting Course**

**Yangon, 17 May** — Organized by Planning Department under the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, the opening ceremony of Gross Domestic Product Accounting Course of Yoma west road being undertaken by the Mandalay Division Development Affairs Department was held at the training centre of the Planning Department at the Ministers’ Office here this morning with a speech by NPED Minister U Soe Tha.

Present on the occasion were heads of departments under the ministry, departmental officials, instructors and 44 trainees. — MNA

---

**Lt-Gen Aung Htwe inspect Kengtawng hydel project, meets departmental staff**

**Yangon, 17 May** — State Peace and Development Council member Lt-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence on 13 May morning visited Kengtawng and met with Tatmadaw officers, other ranks and family members at the hall of the regional battalion in Kengtawng in southern Shan State.

Next, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, together with Shan State Peace and Development Council Chairman Eastern Command Major-Maj Gen Khin Maung Myint and officials went to Kengtawng waterfall. At the briefing hall there, Assistant Director U Tha Aung of the Myanmar Electric Power Enterprise reported progress of work in implementing the project. Col Tin Lwin of the local station also reported on progress. Commander Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint also submitted supplementary report. Lt-Gen Aung Htwe gave necessary instructions. He urged personnel concerned to complete the project on schedule. He also fulfilled requirements.

In the afternoon, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and party went to Kengtawng General Administration Department and met with departmental personnel and those of social organizations. The Kholan-Kengtawng road is being built there as a gravel road. The Kengtawng-Kunhein road and the Kengtawng-Mongpong road will be upgraded into tarred roads. In delivering an address, Li Gen Aung Htwe said that efforts are being made by the State to ensure better transportation in respective regions and now the Kholan-Wansin-Mongchu road, the Kholan-Mongpong road, the Kengtawng-Mongpong road have been built. Energetic efforts are also being made for generating more electric power. After completion, the Kengtawng hydro-electric power project will supply electricity round the clock to the region.

After the meeting, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe inspected the construction of road at the entrance of Kengtawng town and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

**Commander, Minister meet WVO members in Sagaing Division**

**Yangon, 17 May** — Patron of the Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye and minister of the Central Organizing Committee of Myanmar War Veterans Association Lt-Gen Hla Myint Swe met the chairman and members of Sagaing Division Peace, Myanwa and Sagaing District Supervisory Committee for War Veterans Organization Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye also spoke on the occasion. Later, the minister handed over longsies for WVO members of two districts to officials.

On 16 May, they met with divisional authority and the ministry.

**Minister attends opening of GDP Accounting Course**

**Yangon, 17 May** — Organized by Planning Department under the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, the opening ceremony of Gross Domestic Product Accounting Course of Yoma west road being undertaken by the Mandalay Division Development Affairs Department was held at the training centre of the Planning Department at the Ministers’ Office here this morning with a speech by NPED Minister U Soe Tha.

Present on the occasion were heads of departments under the ministry, departmental officials, instructors and 44 trainees. — MNA

---

**Commander attends opening of rural tubewell in Monywa**

**Yangon, 17 May** — Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Chairman North-West Command Commander Maj-Gen Khin Maung Tha Aye attended the opening ceremony of a tubewell in Klawapya village of Monywa Township on 11 May. The villagers and local people can now enjoy sufficient clean water by having the new tubewell. — MNA

**Commerce Minister receives guests**

**Yangon, 17 May** — Managing Director of pacific Food Industries Ltd of UK Mr Christopher Quie and party called on Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone at the latter’s office on Strand Road here at 2 pm today. Present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun, Director-General of Trade Department U Nyunt Aye, Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading Management Vice-Chairman U Min Kyaw Aung and officials of Border Trade Department. — MNA

**Measures for holding four nations’ Trade Fair coordinated**

**Yangon, 17 May** — A meeting to coordinate measures for holding four nations’ Trade Fair 2004 was held at the Ministry of Commerce on Strand Road here at 3 pm today. It was attended by Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Tun, officials concerned and work committees from various ministries. — MNA

**Prawn breeding ponds inspected in Tanintharyi Division**

**Yangon, 17 May** — Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, accompanied by Director-General of fisheries U Tin Win of the Fisheries Department, Chairman of Myanmar Prawn Breeders Association U Hla Maung Shwe, Secretary U Tha Win Aung and members, met prawn-breeding entrepreneurs at the site of Tha Htoo Aung Sea Prawn Breeding Project in Lawlaw Village in Myeik District on 15 May. Officials briefed them on prawn breeding tasks. Next, the minister inspected completion of digging of ponds.

In the evening, Chairman of Tanintharyi Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Coastal Region Command Brig-Gen Ohn Myint and Minister Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein met the Chair- man of Myanmar Prawn Breeders Association, members and entrepreneurs at the hall in Myeik and instructed them to implement big farm of 15,000 acres of prawn breeding ponds within three years and assistance to be provided by divisional authorities and the ministry.

On 15 May, the minister and party went to Daung Dara Breeding Camp of Ahsaungkauk Co Ltd in Kyunsu Township, Shwebo and visited ponds and inspected works in progress. Officials of the association and entrepreneurs also visited sea prawn breeding in 219 acres of ponds in Palaw Township. — MNA
Blair deserted by voters over Iraq

Mr Blair appeared to win little relief from the sacking of Daily Mirror editor Piers Morgan after the tabloid newspaper admitted photographs it published purporting to show British troops abusing Iraqi prisoners were fakes.

The Mirror apologised and said all proceeds from the sale of the pictures would be donated to charity.

But a defiant Morgan said that while the photos might have been faked, the abuse in Iraq was real, and rival paper The Independent appeared to back him up, reporting that six British soldiers would be charged “within days”.

The soldiers to be charged were from the Queen’s Lancashire Regiment, which is at the centre of the row over pictures purportedly showing British troops beating and urinating on an Iraqi prisoner.

At least one soldier would be charged in connection with the death of hotel receptionist Baha Moussa, 28, who died after being severely beaten by British troops while in custody, the Independent reported. The nature of the other charges was not known.

The British Defence Ministry admitted four soldiers had been arrested as part of investigations into the abuse of Iraqi prisoners, but said they were later released and no charges had been laid.

Speculation over Mr Blair’s future intensified on Friday when his deputy, John Prescott, talked openly about the prospect of a leadership change in the Labour Party.

Asked in a newspaper interview whether senior ministers were preparing themselves for life post-Blair, Mr Prescott said: “Yes, people do talk about it and you get that discussion every British Prime Minister goes eventually.”

One report yesterday said Mr Prescott and Chancellor Gordon Brown were discussing the odds-on favourite to succeed Mr Blair, discussed a “peaceful” leadership succession while in Scotland last week.

The Sunday Times reported that Mr Brown’s allies had drawn up “detailed plans” for a Brown government following a handover of power at the Labour Party conference later this year.

The YouGov poll found 46 per cent of voters wanted Mr Blair to stand down before the next election, and 22 per cent wanted him to go after the ballot.

But 61 per cent said they were later released on as prime minister if re-elected.

An overwhelming 93 per cent said the Iraq war had damaged Mr Blair politically. — Internet

US takes over Spanish base in Iraq

Baghdad, 17 May—US troops have taken over operations at the Spanish military base in south-central Iraq as Spanish troops continue their withdrawal from the country, the Defence Ministry in Madrid said today.

The transfer ceremony was made in Dhiwaniyah, 100 miles south of Baghdad.

At the ceremony, Spanish General Jose Manuel Munoz thanked Spain’s coalition partners and the population of Dhiwaniyah for their affection, the Defence Ministry said.

The Spanish flag will fly over the base until the departure of the last convoy, with the Spanish troops remaining until then, the Ministry added.

Some 1,000 logistic experts and other troops are still in Dhiwaniyah to ship material home, and are expected to leave Iraq by May 27. Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, whose Socialist party won general elections in March, ordered the troops home saying he saw no sign that his terms for keeping them there beyond June 30 would be met.

Those conditions were that the United Nations assume military and political control of the Occupation Authority.

Some 1,300 troops were sent to Iraq by former Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar to support the US-led occupation. — Internet

Malaysian PM urges youth to acquire skills

Kuala Lumpur, 17 May—Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi Saturday urged youth to acquire skills in various fields and excel in whatever they do. “If we are not competitive and not in the forefront of economic development then we will be left behind while other countries forge ahead,” the Prime Minister said at the National Youth Day rally at Stadium Putra here.

“The youths should help develop the national economy by venturing into business and setting up their own viable companies, he said.

Malaysia needs a progressive and resilient youth to take on the challenges of a knowledge-economy era as it transforms,

The theme of this year’s celebration is “Excellent Youth, Glorious Nation, Country of Distinction”.

China leads world in motor vehicle production

Brunei, 17 May—China has become one of the world’s largest producers of motor vehicles, according to Duan Liren, a member of the professional panel for the “through transport scheme” launched by the Chinese ministries of Public Security and Construction.

The country turned out 19.95 million motor vehicles last year, including 4.45 million automobiles, 13 million motorcycles and 2.5 million vehicles for agricultural use, said Duan at the five-day second Sino-Spanish Forum for Urban Transport that closed here on Friday.

According to Duan, China has been producing 10 million motorcycles annually since 1997, accounting for half of the world’s total production, and the country’s annual production of such vehicles for agricultural use has been stabilized around two million to three million since 1995.

IRAQ guerrillas drive Italians from base

Baghdad, 17 May—Fighters loyal to radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr drove Italian forces from a base in the southern city of Nasiriyah on Sunday and attacked coalition headquarters there with grenade and mortar fire as tensions in the Shiite region escalated.

Two US soldiers died elsewhere. Gunmen also killed three Iraqi women working for the US-led coalition.

Two Italian fighters were killed and 20 were wounded in battles in Nasiriyah, mostly at two bridges crossing the Euphrates River, residents said.

The Italian troops evacuated as their base came under repeated attack. Portuguese police were called out to support the Italians, seeing action for the first time since the force of 128 deployed to Nasiriyah in November.

A Portuguese duty officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

At least 10 Italians were wounded, one of the critically, contingent spokesman Lt Col Giuseppe Perrone told The Associated Press by phone. He said the Italians relocated to the nearby Tallil air base.

Elsewhere in Nasiriyah, a convoy transporting the Italian official in charge of the city, Barbara Contini, came under attack as it neared the headquarters of the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority, Perrone said. Two Italian paramilitary police were wounded.

Senator Hillary Clinton says Bush administration on wrong track in Iraq

New York, 17 May—Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton said she would “perhaps” support the resignation of Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld if his stepping down marked a change in the Bush administration’s approach to the war in Iraq.

“I have a problem that goes far beyond the US military’s abuse of Iraqi prisoners, Clinton said in an interview broadcast Sunday on NewsChannel 4’s “News Forum.”

“I think that this leadership team in the Bush administration … has made a pattern and practice of misjudgments that add up to incompetence and lack of credibility,” she said.

If I thought that removing Rumsfeld would change the direction of this administration, perhaps I would be for it.

Rumsfeld himself would have to decide whether he should step down, because “clearly the President is not going to hold him or anybody else accountable for anything,” Clinton said.

Congress, too, deserved blame for not doing enough to question President Bush’s campaign in Iraq, she said. Lawmakers had long given the president “power of attorney” in responding to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, she said.

“The system is that that trust, that willingness to suspend judgment for a period of time … was not returned with the kind of good judgment and honest disclosures that one would hope for from the administration,” she said.

Clinton declined to discuss her career ambitions, including whether she would run for President. — Internet

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao (R) visits a furniture factory in Nanchang, capital of east China's Jiangxi Province, Sunday. (Xinhua/Peng Kun)
Bush vows to prevent further prison abuses in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 17 May — US President George W Bush said on Saturday he was determined that Iraqi prison abuses would never happen again, as he took stock of a difficult week in Iraq.

In his weekly radio address, Bush again suggested the abuse scandal was limited to those directly involved at Baghdad’s Abu Ghraib Prison. He pointed out that charges have been filed against seven soldiers and the first trial is set to begin next week.

“My administration and our military are determined that such abuses never happen again,” Bush said. “All Americans know that the actions of a few do not reflect the true character of the United States Armed Forces.”

US military interrogators have come under scrutiny following revelations of abuse at Abu Ghraib, which had been a torture centre under ousted president Saddam Hussein. Prisoners were kept naked, forced to wear hoodies over their heads, forced to engage in sex acts, struck by American jailers, and photographed in humiliating poses.

Defence officials said on Friday that the US military had prohibited several interrogation methods from being used in Iraq, including sleep and sensory deprivation and body “stress positions”. The abuse scandal, coupled with other bad news from Iraq, has been a factor in a drop in Bush’s approval rating.

A Newsweek poll released on Saturday showed the President’s approval rating sliding to 42 per cent, a new low for his presidency.

Bush has stood by Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld amid calls by Democrats for him to resign over the abuse scandal.

Bush said in his radio address that the United States was working with Iraqi leaders on an interim Iraqi government to take power on June 30. US troops will stay in Iraq after that for security, he said.

“America will keep its commitment to the independence and national dignity of the Iraqi people,” he said. MNA/Reuters

Powell apologizes to Iraqis abused at Abu Ghraib

DEAD SEA COAST, 17 May — Secretary of State Colin Powell apologized Sunday to Iraqi prisoners abused by US soldiers, one day after he gave a speech in which he promised justice but left many Arabs angry and distrustful.

President Bush on May 6 said he was “sorry for the humiliation” of Iraqis who were kept naked, stacked on top of each other, forced to engage in sex acts, struck by American jailers and photographed at the Abu Ghraib prison.

“The president has expressed an apology on behalf of the nation. (I will) reinforce that apology. We must make more pledges at a May 30 Economic Forum meeting in Jordan on questions of justice and doubt his promise that the United States would investigate and prosecute those accused of abuses. US credibility in the Arab world has been shredded by the prisoner abuses in Iraq, which remains a caldron of violence since the US-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein a year ago,” — Internet

World donors inject $1b into Iraq fund

DEAD SEA COAST (Jordan), 17 May — World donors have made good on pledges to inject about one billion US dollars of the 33 billion US dollars of aid earmarked for Iraq’s rebuilding into trust funds run by the United Nations and World Bank, the country’s Planning Minister said on Saturday.

Mehdi al-Hafedh told reporters ahead of a World Economic Forum meeting in Jordan that donors would assess the flow of aid and make more pledges at a May 25-26 meeting in Doha.

“We now have in the range of more than one billion US dollars now and I expect more to come,” Hafedh said. “This is money deposited in the (trust) funds.”

The funds have come in despite escalating violence in Iraq that has seen scores of foreign civilian contractors killed in the reconstruction process, US government officials said.

Hafedh said. “There are problems, no doubt, and this will continue as a concern to us. Without security and stability in the country it will be difficult for us to proceed,” said Hafedh, charged with overseeing relations with donors.

Several countries that opposed the US-led war to oust president Saddam Hussein, including France and Germany, refused to contribute any aid to Baghdad if the United States and Britain — who currently occupy Iraq — control the funds.

They said they preferred to give aid directly to Iraq or contribute to trust funds run and audited independently, Washington has been injecting its billions of reconstruction money directly into Iraqi projects.

Hafedh had outlined four billion US dollars of projects for donor consideration at a February meeting in Abu Dhabi to activate aid pledged at a September donors’ summit in Madrid.

At the time, the United States said it would have committed 10 billion US dollars of the 18.6 billion US dollars it has earmarked for Iraq reconstruction by mid-year.

Other donors said they would funnel one billion US dollars of the aid they had pledged in Madrid to the trust funds. — MNA/Reuters

Two Iraqi women killed in bus attack

BAGHDAD, 17 May — Gunmen fired on a minibus Sunday, killing two Iraqi women who worked for the US-led coalition, and assailants in a southern city killed a coalition translator and critically injured another, police and witnesses said.

A US soldier, mean-while, was killed and another was wounded in a roadside bomb explosion Saturday night, the military said.

The attackers who fired on the bus in Baghdad also detonated explosives in it, killing the driver and injuring another woman. Lt Ali Omran of al-Dora police station said the women were working for the Americans but he did not specify their jobs.

Early Sunday, an Iraqi woman working with US troops as a translator was killed and another was critically injured when gunfire broke into their houses in Mahmoudiyah, said Dawood al-Tace, director of the city’s hospital.

In the southern city of Nasiriyah, forces loyal to cleric Muqtada al-Sadr’s movement killed a man — police said — and a civilian was shot dead in a Babil district.

The ANSA news agency said a convoy transporting the Italian official in charge of Nasiriyah, Barbara Conti, came under attack as it neared a coalition headquarters building, but that she was uninjured. Two carabinieri paramilitary police were injured, the agency said, citing military sources.

Strong explosion heard in central Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 17 May — A strong explosion was heard in central Baghdad on Sunday, and large pillar of smoke rose from the Green Zone headquarters of the US-run occupation.

It was unclear what caused the blast, which was heard about 2.40 pm or whether it was in the controlled zone. The smoke could be seen rising from the west side of the Tigris River. A rocket struck the Green Zone on Saturday, wounding one US soldier and one civilian, the US military said.

The soldiers to be charged are from the Queen’s Lancashire Regiment — at the centre of the row over hoax pictures of supposed torture in the Daily Mirror newspaper — said The Independent on Sunday.

The charges would be the first levelled against British soldiers since the war in Iraq began. At least one soldier will be charged in connection with the death of 28-year-old hotel receptionist Baha Moussa, who allegedly died after being severely beaten by British troops while in custody, the newspaper said. The nature of the other charges are not known, it added. Britain’s Defence Ministry said Saturday it had arrested four British soldiers as part of investigations into the abuse of prisoners in Iraq, but they were later released and no charges have been filed.

The spokeswoman did not say whether the arrests were linked to the probe into the faked photographs of British troops torturing Iraqis published by the Daily Mirror, which on Friday issued a humiliating apology for running them and sacked its editor.

The pictures, first printed on 1 May, appeared to show British troops beating and urinating on an Iraqi. — Internet

Report says first British soldiers to be charged over Iraq torture
US military hit by another Afghan abuse charge

KABUL, 17 May — The US military in Afghanistan has launched its second investigation into prisoner abuse in a week as the scandal over the treatment of Iraqi detainees threatens to spread.

US spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Tucker Mansager told reporters on Saturday that fresh allegations of mistreatment were relayed to the military on Thursday, days after a former detainee said he had been sexually abused in 2003.

"Upon notification, coalition forces launched an immediate investigation into these new allegations. Coalition forces are committed to ensuring that all detainees are treated humanely and consistent with International Law," he added. He added that such allegations threatened the military's interests in Afghanistan.

"Our investigation is proof that we are concerned about these things," he said. "Our centre of gravity is the Afghan people. When allegations like that go public, the light, that can affect that centre of gravity and we take that very seriously." There were few details of the latest complaint, except that it was made to the US military via a third party.

On Wednesday, the Americans launched an investigation into allegations made by a former police officer, Sayed Nabi Siddiqui, that he had been subjected to beating, sleep deprivation, sexual abuse and humiliation during about 40 days in US custody last year.

Kabul, 17 May — The US military in Afghanistan has launched its second investigation into prisoner abuse in a week as the scandal over the treatment of Iraqi detainees threatens to spread.

Human Rights Watch has complained of prisoner abuse in Afghanistan before, and this week called the problem "systemic." Hundreds of Islamic militant suspects are in detention centres around the country, including to the main one at Bagram air base, north of Kabul. Some are sent to Guantamano Bay in Cuba, where many are kept incommunicado for months.


The US military leads a force of around 20,000 soldiers in Afghanistan hunting down militants from the al-Qaeda network and the ousted Taliban regime. MNA/Reuters

Poll shows almost half British voters say Blair should go

London, 17 May — Speculation about the future of Prime Minister Tony Blair intensified on Sunday, with an opinion poll showing nearly half of British voters think he should step down before the next general election.

A third Briton detained at Guantanamo Bay told a newspaper he was mistreated by his US captors and said guards at the camp in Cuba filmed his beatings.

Tarek Dergou, 26, from London, was one of five Britons released from the camp in March. Four others, said by Washington to be more dangerous, remain captive.

He told The Observer newspaper on Sunday he had been repeatedly assaulted by Camp Delta’s punishment unit, known as the Extreme Reaction Force, during his 22-month imprisonment.

"They pepper-sprayed me in the face and I started vomiting," he was quoted as saying. "They pinned me down and attacked me, poking their fingers in my eyes, and forced my head into the toilet and flushed.

"They tied me up like a beast and then they were kneeling on me, kicking and pouncing.

"Finally they dragged me out of the cell in chains... and shaved my beard, my hair and my eyebrows," he said.

"There was always this hatred, this humiliation, this abuse.

"They took me out of the cell in chains so they could see me. That was the message."

The US military, whose interrogation techniques have come under fire amid revelations of abuse of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib jail near Baghdad, has denied allegations of abuse at Guantanamo, where more than 600 people are being held without charge or access to lawyers.

Shafiq Rasul and Asif Iqbal were quoted as saying that the next British prime minister is under way.

Prescott’s office later issued a statement saying the headline was “untrue”.

In the interview, Prescott was asked about speculation that Blair was going to resign and suggested that they were preparing for a seamless shift in government.

"It is true that, when plates appear to be moving, everyone positions themselves for it," Prescott said. "Yes, people do talk about it and you get that discussion... every British prime minister goes eventually.

"I think it is true that, when plates appear to be moving, everyone positions themselves for it," Prescott said. "Yes, people do talk about it and you get that discussion... every British prime minister goes eventually.

On Wednesday, the Americans launched an investigation into allegations made by a former police officer, Sayed Nabi Siddiqui, that he had been subjected to beating, sleep deprivation, sexual abuse and humiliation during about 40 days in US custody last year.

Kabul, 17 May — The US military in Afghanistan has launched its second investigation into prisoner abuse in a week as the scandal over the treatment of Iraqi detainees threatens to spread.

Human Rights Watch has complained of prisoner abuse in Afghanistan before, and this week called the problem "systemic." Hundreds of Islamic militant suspects are in detention centres around the country, including to the main one at Bagram air base, north of Kabul. Some are sent to Guantamano Bay in Cuba, where many are kept incommunicado for months.


The US military leads a force of around 20,000 soldiers in Afghanistan hunting down militants from the al-Qaeda network and the ousted Taliban regime. MNA/Reuters

Two Sadr fighters killed in Kerbala clash

KARBALA, (Iraq), 17 May — US forces clashed with fighters loyal to Iraq’s rebel Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr early on Saturday, killing at least two guerrillas and wounding seven others, witnesses said.

It was the latest round in more than a month of fighting that has turned the Shiite shrine cities of Iraq into battlefields, with US forces trying to crush an uprising by Sadr’s forces across southern Iraq and in the capital Baghdad.

Witnesses said occupying troops destroyed Sadr’s office in Kerbala, where his fighters had been set up, while helicopters blasted positions of the firebrand cleric’s Mehdi Army with cannon fire.

US snipers perched on the roofs of buildings surrounding the shrines of Imam Hussein and Imam Abbas, an area that is among the most sacred ground in Shiite Islam and which has witnessed fierce firefight in recent days.

Sadr’s men have seized police stations and government buildings in southern cities during the fighting. Kerbala police denied reports they had lost control of a station on the fringes of the city along with its store of weapons. It could not immediately be verified whether the station had been seized.

The shrine area, normally packed with worshippers, was closed, some having had their windows smashed and their merchandise looted in the wake of the fighting. — MNA/Reuters

Major Iraqi newspaper demands Rumsfeld quit

BAGHDAD, 17 May — One of Iraq’s most widely read newspapers, the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld over American abuse of Iraqi detainees.

Two days after Rumsfeld visited Baghdad’s Abu Ghraib Prison, Azaman, printed a rare front-page editorial that recalled his role in negotiating with Saddam Hussein in the 1980s and said he should have used the trip to resign and free Iraqi prisoners.

"Rumsfeld, who humili
cated the Iraqi Army and undermined the history and dignity of the Iraqi people, forgot the unforgettable of his service before they were later released on 15 May, 2004. — MNA/Reuters
British troops fight off Iraq, killing 20

BAGHDAD, 17 May — British troops killed up to 20 Iraqis as the soldiers fought their way out of a series of three roadside ambushes in southern Iraq, a British military spokesman in Iraq said on Saturday.

Two British soldiers were wounded when a convoy headed north on Friday toward the city of Amara from their main base at Basra came under attack. Troops returned fire “to save their lives.”

A second patrol which came to the rescue was ambushed by guerrillas who detonated a roadside bomb and opened fire with mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and machineguns, the spokesman said. In all, there were three attacks, he added.

“About 20 were killed and 13 captured,” the spokesman said, adding that some Iraqis were being treated for wounds.

“We regret they were forced to respond but we will protect our lives,” he said.

The British took no further casualties and the two initially wounded were being treated. A Defence Ministry spokesman in London, who declined to identify the regiment involved, added that the wounded were expected to survive.

The spokesman in Iraq said it was not yet clear who the attackers were. The prisoners were being questioned.

The ambushes came on a day of widespread violence across southern Iraq, as fighters from Shiite Muslim cleric Moqtada al-Sadr’s Mehdi Army militia struck back at US-led coalition forces.

In Samawa, at the northern end of the British-run area of operations, troops clashed with Sadr’s militia over-night, the British spokesman in Iraq said, but sustained no casualties. Fighters had set up roadblocks in the town and resisted attempts by Iraqi police to remove them, he said.

Dutch and Japanese troops are based in Samawa.

In Nassiriya, controlled by Italian forces, militants besieged the offices of the occupation authority, firing rifles and rocket-propelled grenades. The British spokesman said “a number of militia are believed to have been killed,” he added.

An Italian spokesman in the building said two soldiers were killed and another 15 wounded.

The latest deaths brought to 781 the number of US soldiers killed in Iraq since the US-led invasion started in March last year, and 568 of them were killed by hostile fire.

Three British soldiers were killed in Iraq when the US-led invasion started in March last year, and 568 of them were killed by hostile fire.

An elderly Iraqi man sits outside Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, while he waits to get information about a relative being held inside the jail, on 15 May, 2004. —INTERNET

Deputy PM stirs speculation about Blair’s future

LONDON, 17 May — His popularity flagging since the Iraq war, British Prime Minister Tony Blair faced renewed speculation on Saturday that he may resign after his deputy said senior ministers had discussed who might take his place.

The Times ran an interview with Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott on its front page under the headline “Race to seize Blair’s crown is under way.”

Prescott’s office issued a statement on Saturday saying the Times headline was “untrue.”

In the interview, Prescott was quoted as saying senior ministers had discussed a future without Blair and suggested they were preparing for a seismic shift in government.

“I think it is true that, when plates appear to be moving, everyone positions themselves for it,” Prescott said in the interview with the Times.

Asked if senior ministers were preparing for a new leader or had discussed it, Prescott said: “Yes, people do talk about it and you get that discussion... every British Prime Minister goes eventually.”

But in the statement issued on Saturday, Prescott played down the significance of his comments. “Of course there has been speculation over the leadership, but the reality is there is no race for the prime minister’s position,” he said.

Blair’s office declined to comment. His spokesman has repeatedly denied rumours he is planning to resign ahead of an election expected next year.

Blair’s trust ratings plummeted after the Iraq war and his government has been hit by negative headlines on issues from Europe and the Middle East to health and public services.

“Blair, who swep to power with a landslide election win in 1997, dismissed talk of his resignation as “froth” on Friday.

But newspapers have speculated there is growing support within the government for Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, Blair’s key ally and main rival for the leadership.

Prescott confirmed in the Times interview that Blair and Brown had a “pretty serious breakdown in relations” soon after Labour came to power, but they had been working “extremely well” together more recently.

Political folklore says the pair made a pact in 1994 that if Blair became prime minister he would one day step aside to allow Brown to take over.

Prescott admitted that Labour had been “rather dampened by the whole business of Iraq.” “We understand that it has been difficult,” he told the paper.

Four British soldiers questioned over abuse claims

LONDON, 17 May — Four British soldiers have been quizzed over alleged mistreatment of Iraqi prisoners, Britain’s Defence Ministry said on Saturday, a day after a newspaper editor was sacked for printing hoax pictures of such abuse.

The questioning of the soldiers about abuse cases unrelated to the hoax pictures showed that pressure was still on the government despite the backtracking by The Daily Mirror.

The ministry said the four had been arrested and released without charge by military police probing some of the alleged cases against British troops.

The interviews were standard practice in an investigation of this nature,” an MoD spokeswoman said, adding the arrests were unrelated to the fake photos.

“No charges have been made against any individual and no individuals are currently in custody,” —INTERNET

Chavez suspects US lying like “Pinocchio”

CARACAS (Venezuela), 17 May — Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez accused the US of lying when he was called a plot by his enemies to topple him.

Chavez’ government said on Sunday it had captured a force of Colombian paramilitaries near Caracas that were part of a plan to kill him, attack the presidential palace and take over military and oil plants in the country’s No 5 crude exporter.

“We have serious doubts about the US Government. I’d like to believe them, but the US Government is like Pinocchio, its nose is longer than the earth’s diameter,” Chavez told foreign correspondents.

An elderly Iraqi man sits outside Abu Ghraib prison near Baghdad, while he waits to get information about a relative being held inside the jail, on 15 May, 2004. —INTERNET

Chavez tells Bush to ask Pope’s pardon for Iraq war

CARACAS (Venezuela), 17 May — US President George W Bush should kneel before Pope John Paul and ask for forgiveness for abuses committed by US soldiers in Iraq, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said on Friday.

In his latest jibe against the US leader, the outspoken left-wing Venezuelan President urged Bush to use his planned visit to the Vatican on June 4 to announce the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq.

“Even though he’s not a Catholic... he should ask God’s forgiveness at the Vatican... go down on his knees in front of the Pope and ask for the forgiveness of the world, not just the Iraqi people,” Chavez told a news conference in Caracas.

While he criticized the actions of US troops, the Venezuelan leader also condemned as “a horror” the decapitation of US businessman Nick Berg by Islamic militants in Iraq.

He made the comments after noting that senior Vatican officials had criticized the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers which has caused an international scandal.

Over the last few months, Chavez has repeatedly condemned Bush for waging the war in Iraq. He called the US President a “jerk” earlier this year and accuses his administration of seeking to topple him, a charge denied by Washington.

Two US soldiers killed in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 17 May — Two US soldiers were killed by guerrillas in two separate attacks south of Baghdad, the US military said in a statement on Saturday. One soldier died at 3 pm Friday from wounds sustained during a mortar bombing and a second was killed by sniper gunfire, said the statement.

The military said two more soldiers also died in non-combat incidents: One was killed when his vehicle overturned early Saturday and another died of natural causes on Friday. Three of the four soldiers were from the 1st Armoured Division and all the names were withheld pending notification of their families.

The latest deaths brought to 781 the number of US soldiers killed in Iraq since the US-led invasion started in March last year, and 568 of them were killed by hostile fire.

Chavez tells Bush to ask Pope’s pardon for Iraq war

CARACAS (Venezuela), 17 May — US President George W Bush should kneel before Pope John Paul and ask for forgiveness for abuses committed by US soldiers in Iraq, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said on Friday.

In his latest jibe against the US leader, the outspoken left-wing Venezuelan President urged Bush to use his planned visit to the Vatican on June 4 to announce the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq.

“Even though he’s not a Catholic... he should ask God’s forgiveness at the Vatican... go down on his knees in front of the Pope and ask for the forgiveness of the world, not just the Iraqi people,” Chavez told a news conference in Caracas.

While he criticized the actions of US troops, the Venezuelan leader also condemned as “a horror” the decapitation of US businessman Nick Berg by Islamic militants in Iraq.

He made the comments after noting that senior Vatican officials had criticized the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers which has caused an international scandal.

Over the last few months, Chavez has repeatedly condemned Bush for waging the war in Iraq. He called the US President a “jerk” earlier this year and accuses his administration of seeking to topple him, a charge denied by Washington.

Two US soldiers killed in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 17 May — Two US soldiers were killed by guerrillas in two separate attacks south of Baghdad, the US military said in a statement on Saturday. One soldier died at 3 pm Friday from wounds sustained during a mortar bombing and a second was killed by sniper gunfire, said the statement.

The military said two more soldiers also died in non-combat incidents: One was killed when his vehicle overturned early Saturday and another died of natural causes on Friday. Three of the four soldiers were from the 1st Armoured Division and all the names were withheld pending notification of their families.

The latest deaths brought to 781 the number of US soldiers killed in Iraq since the US-led invasion started in March last year, and 568 of them were killed by hostile fire.
From National Convention to a new nation

Aung Si Hein

The National Convention which has been adjourned since 1996 was reconvened on 17 May 2004. Eight delegate groups — the political parties’ delegate group; the representatives of the nationalities and ethnic groups; the peasants delegate group; the workers delegate group; the State service personnel delegate group; the intellectuals and intelligentsia delegate group; and other interest groups have thoroughly discussed points on formation of the State, legislation, judiciary and administration and laid down fundamental principles and details for the new Constitution.

This article is aimed at presenting points to be pondered by providing examples of some nations in view of building up a new nation possessing the above-mentioned characteristics and practising multi-party system and market oriented economy.

First, we have to study the points regarding to population. Greek philosopher Aristotle (BC 384-322) said that for an nation, population should not be too much or too few to have difficulty in administration as well as too few to have difficulty in ensuring secure and peaceful social life of the people. Population should be the amount adequate to bring about prosperous life. Nowadays, China with about 1,300 million people has the largest population. Nauru with 13,000 population is the least populated republic. French philosopher Renee (AD 1712-1778) said that population should not be less than 10,000 to build up a democratic nation. His expression is noteworthy.

Secondly, we have to study the characteristics of territory. There must be precisely designated land territory, water territory and air territory. It must be drawn clearly on the map. Generally, the territory is designated by natural marks such as sea, river, mountain and forest. Wall, barbed wire and other barriers can be used as markers. The population should be in good harmony with the territory of the nation. Too small territory renders narrow outlook and slows down the development pace. At present, Switzerland with 21 square kilometres is the smallest republic in the world. Canada, Switzerland, Germany and India; those practising unitary system such as Britain, France and China; those practising uni-camerализm such as China and Bangladesh; those practising bi-camerализm such as Britain, USA, Canada, Japan, France and Australia; those practicing one-party system and those practising multi-party democracy system.

There are various State formation, administration and democratic practice. There can be found advantages and disadvantages in every State system. Each country must be studied and applied in the proportionate and without the nation, systematic and modern political system, and genuine democracy. Switzerland is well-organized and genuine democracy, and genuine democracy. Switzerland is well-organized and genuine democracy, and genuine democracy. Switzerland is well-organized and genuine democracy, and genuine democracy.

In the rich countries like the USA, South Korea and the Philippines. The remaining category is quasi-presidential model of government. Such governments can be seen in France and Sri Lanka.

There are various State formation, administration and democratic practice. The United States consists of 50 States, each State has a president and vice president. The president provides close supervision to the government. Another category is presidential government and the president is the head of the government. Prime Minister of France is the head of the government. Such parliamentary system and market oriented economy.

Therefore, for development of a nation it will not be possible and without the nation, systematic and modern political system, and genuine democracy. Switzerland is the federal system and genuine democracy. Switzerland is well-organized and genuine democracy, and genuine democracy. Switzerland is well-organized and genuine democracy, and genuine democracy. Switzerland is well-organized and genuine democracy, and genuine democracy.
National Convention reconvenes ...

The State Peace and Development Council formed the National Convention Convening Commission on 6 September 2003 under Notification No 10/2003. The National Convention, without bias as in accordance with the six objectives of the National Convention, reconvened fully in continuation of the National Convention held during Constitution. At the meeting hall to discharge their duty of all citizens of our country. We are now in this meeting hall to discharge this duty which is of utmost importance. In fact, it is very important to formulate strong fundamental principles for drawing up an enduring Constitution. At the National Convention held during the period from 1993 to 1996, altogether 104 fundamental principles and details to form the basis in drafting the State Constitution have been formulated by the delegates. Now, we are to continue to co-ordinate, discuss and approve detailed principles to form the basis in formulating the remaining State fundamental principles. The delegate groups like previous ones are the political parties’ delegate group, the representatives-elect group, the nationalities delegate group, the peasants delegate group, the workers delegate group, the intellectuals and intelligentsia delegate group, the State service personnel delegate group, and the other invited delegate group. Except those who passed away and who are not in sound health, all the members of these groups are now here. As the nationalities are residing all over the country in amity, the delegates representing the nationalities are also accounted for. Arrangements have been made for accommodation, food, health care and entertainment of the delegates during the Convention. Necessary assistance will be provided to the delegates by over 1,000 staff. Weaknesses, loopholes and requirements can be pointed out without hesitation. The National Convention is to formulate fundamental principles for drafting the State Constitution which is the base for a disciplined-flourishing democracy. For the emergence of an enduring Constitution, strong fundamental principles are required. I would like to urge the delegates to co-ordinate, discuss and forward suggestions in line with the procedures prescribed by the National Convention Convening Commission and in accordance with the six objectives of the National Convention, without bias as regards person, ism, region or race, in the interests of the nation and the people.
Meetings to elect vacant...  

(from page 16)  

Then, U Law Hsin Kwan of Kokang Democracy and Unity Party was elected as member.  
The meeting to elect three members of panel of chairmen out of the five members in the  
delegate group of national races was held at Pyidaungsu hall at 2 pm. Original members of  
the panel of chairmen, U Mya Sein of Mandalay Division and U Maung Ohn Maung of Kayin State  
presided over the meeting. First, the master of ceremonies announced the attend-  
ces of 627 out of 633 delegates and the start of the meeting. U Mya Sein clarified  
the procedures for electing three vacant members of panel of chairmen for the delegate  
group to the National Convention. Next, those present at the meeting  
tabled the motion for seven  
persons. Then, Duwa Zoke  
Daaung of Lashio Township, Shan State (North), U Kyaw Nyunt Maung Aye of Sagaing Division, U Kyaw Myo Win of Bago Division, U Bo Thein of Shan State (East), U Khin Maung Aye of Sagaing Division, and U Kyaw Win Tun of Mandalay Division were elected as members.  
A meeting to elect three members of the panel of chairmen out of five in delegate  
group of intellectuals and intelligentsia was held at meeting hall No 6 at 2 pm.  
At the meeting, former member of the panel of chairmen U Aung Tun announced the start of the meeting as there were 55 delegates attending out of 56 listed. Member of the panel of chairmen of delegate group of service personnel U Aung Maung clarified procedures of the National Convention for re-electing four members of panels of chairmen.  
Those present at the meeting seconded the motion for the approval of four members of the panel of chairmen.  

Next, member of the panel of chairmen U Hla Myint announced Dr Thein Oo Po Saw and Dr U Thein Oo Po Saw of the Ministry of Science and Technology were se-  
lected as members of the panel of chairmen.  
A meeting to elect four members of the panel of chairmen out of five in group of  
other invited delegates was held at meeting hall No 5 at 2 pm. During the meeting,  
former member of the panel of chairmen U Sai Aung Tun presided over the meeting.  
First, emcee announced the start of the meeting as there were 104 delegates att-  
tending out of 105 listed. Member of the panel of chairmen of delegate group of other invited delegates U Sai Aung Tun clarified proce-  
dures of the Nation Convention for re-electing four members of panels of chairmen.  
Those present at the meeting seconded the motion for four members of the panel of chairmen.  

Next, member of the panel of chairmen U Sai Aung Tun announced U Aung Khan Htih of Shan State (South) Special Region-6, Dr Ma Nan Tu Jar of Kachin State Special Region-2, U Tun Aung Chein and U Paw Laik Kham of Shan State (North) Special Region-2 were selected and the meeting  
recessed.  

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Tuesday, 18 May, 2004
Regulations are prescribed...

(from page 16)

Some of the most important ethics and rules are as follows:

1. To be loyal to the Union of Myanmar and not to accept any other country’s patronage.
2. To follow instructions given by the chairman of group and Panel of Chairmen of the National Convention.
3. To comport according to the dignity of a delegate and not to disturb and hinder the functions of the National Convention.
4. Not to seek self-interest missing the responsibilities of a delegate.
5. To discuss at the meeting objectively and to avoid speaking ill of others personally or of a certain organization.
6. Whenever entering or going out of the meeting hall, all are to bow to the State flag.
7. Before releasing the news about the National Convention officially, delegates are to keep it secret.

In holding the sessions, panel of chairmen is necessary to supervise the session and thus, it is designated to form the panel of chairmen with five representatives form the National Convention Convening Work Committee from delegates of political parties and delegates of representatives-elect, five each from delegates of national races, delegates of peasants, delegates of workers, delegates of intellectuals and intelligentsia, delegates of State service personnel and other invited delegates and in doing so, the representatives of the respective groups are to select on their own.

Regardless of reasons, there are vacancies in the panel of chairmen and thus substitutions are to be made.

The Chapter (3) touches upon accounting the number of the delegates attending a meeting and validity of the meeting. National Convention meetings are valid if 50 per cent of the delegates attend the meeting.

The Chapter (4) of the National Convention Procedures deals with the procedures to be followed in discussing matters and making suggestions. He first presented procedures to be followed at the group-wise meetings as follows:

1. (1) Delegates are to submit their proposals and make suggestions to the Panel of Chairmen only after making discussions in respective delegate groups. The Panel of Chairmen is to collect same proposals and submit them to the National Convention Plenary Meeting.

2. (2) In addition to proposals agreed by the majority of respective political parties, proposals of delegates representing political parties, independent representatives-elect and proposals agreed by two or three delegates are to be submitted to the National Convention Plenary Meeting with permission of the Panel of Chairmen only after making discussions in respective groups.

3. (3) Delegates of political parties and representatives-elect are to submit proposals and suggestions to the National Convention Plenary Meeting through the Panel of Chairmen only after making discussions in respective groups.

4. (4) Along with proposals agreed by the majority of respective political parties, proposals of delegates representing political parties, independent representatives-elect and proposals agreed by two or three delegates are to be submitted to the National Convention Plenary Meeting with permission of the Panel of Chairmen only after making discussions in respective groups.

5. (5) If there is a disagreement over the proposals among political parties, respective delegate groups and independent representatives-elect, the National Convention Convening Work Committee will have to make adjustments as far as it can in order to settle down the disagreement.

Next, he presented the procedures of the National Convention as follows:

1. (1) Proposals and suggestions to be submitted to the National Convention Plenary Meeting are to be stated exactly and clearly.

2. (2) The proposals and suggestions papers are to be attached with the list of delegate or delegates who will read out them at the meeting and to submit them to respective chairman at the designated time.

3. (3) With complete lists of delegates and papers to be discussed, the National Convention Convening Work Committee will begin the Plenary Meeting.

4. (4) In reading out the proposals and suggestions at the Plenary Meeting, the papers must the ones that have been already submitted in advance to be confirmed. Besides, the papers are to be read out by the one whose name has been already enlisted, and he has to read out only suggestions in the confirmed papers.

5. (5) At group-wise meeting or Plenary Meetings, proposals and suggestions are to be submitted in the frame of the six objectives of the National Convention.

If there are differences in the suggestions presented at the meeting, the National Convention Convening Work Committee is to make necessary arrangements for making suggestions included again to settle them amicably.

There are also prescribed rules and regulations to be followed in holding discussions at the plenary meeting and the group-wise meeting to be in conformity with the dignity of the Convention and to ensure the successful holding of the Convention. They are:

1. do not express disloyalty to the State
2. do not talk about something that is detrimental to non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty
3. do not talk about the interest of organizations and persons that are not in the framework of law
4. do not talk about something that is detrimental to national solidarity, mutual help and respect
5. do not talk ill of any language and religion
6. do not talk about topics that are not related to the matters being discussed
7. do not accuse and talk ill of a certain delegate subjectively
8. do not abuse the meeting by discrediting other organizations and persons and crediting own attributes
9. a delegate is to discuss the topics in line with the proposal paper sent in advance and not to discuss the topics that are not included in the proposal paper. If a delegate reads out some topics that are not included in the proposal paper, only the original paper will be put on record.

When the plenary meeting or the meeting of the delegate groups are in progress, the delegates are not allowed to walk out individually or in group and to mock others. It is important for the delegates to follow the regulations for success of the National Convention. There are some don’ts for the delegates for successful holding of the National Convention.

These regulations are prescribed not for repression but for the interest of the national races and the delegates. Some important points in the don’ts are — not to distribute documents which are not permitted by the National Convention Work Committee, not to talk about the documents nor publish them outside and not to bring arms and ammunition into the hostels and meeting hall when the meeting is in progress. He said these are some points of procedure on the National Convention and they aim at successful holding of the National Convention. I would also like to present the fulfillment regarding management for enabling the delegates to attend the Convention with peace of mind, he said.

New hostels were built along with mass halls and kitchens and meals are being served with daily menu. Necessary health and food items have been provided to delegates. A hospital complete with specialists and modern medicines and medical equipment is being opened in the camp while restaurants, beauty parlour, barber shop, optical shop and grocery shop are being opened for the delegates. In addition, telephones, faxes, ferries are also facilitated. All the necessary requirements have been fulfilled by the committees under the leadership of Prime Minister General Khun Nyunt in accord with the guidance of Head of State Senator General Than Shwe.

In accord with the instructions which call for paying special attention to the health of the delegates, the group including medical specialists are checking and supervising meals for delegates daily. Only wholesome meals that are conducive to the rainy season are served to the delegates. The delegates are advised to put on suitable clothes, to avoid having bath at an unreasonable time and eat junk food and are advised to go hospital even they catch cold. I would like to explain matters related to security to the delegates. Discipline on security have been prescribed as necessary requirements for the Convention and the delegates. In this regard, the delegates should not regard them as strict discipline but for the interest of the national races and the delegates. These regulations are prescribed not for repression but for the interest of the national races and the delegates. Some important points in the don’ts are — not to distribute documents which are not permitted by the National Convention Work Committee, not to talk about the documents nor publish them outside and not to bring arms and ammunition into the hostels and meeting hall when the meeting is in progress. He said these are some points of procedure on the National Convention and they aim at successful holding of the National Convention. I would also like to present the fulfillment regarding management for enabling the delegates to attend the Convention with peace of mind, he said.

New hostels were built along with mass halls and kitchens and meals are being served with daily menu. Necessary health and food items have been provided to delegates. A hospital complete with specialists and modern medicines and medical equipment is being opened in the camp while restaurants, beauty parlour, barber shop, optical shop and grocery shop are being opened for the delegates. In addition, telephones, faxes, ferries are also facilitated. All the necessary requirements have been fulfilled by the committees under the leadership of Prime Minister General Khun Nyunt in accord with the guidance of Head of State Senator General Than Shwe.
Lt-Gen Maung Bo attends opening of Kyonhtaw Sluice Gate in Paung Township

YANGON, 17 May — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of the Ministry of Defence attended the ceremony to open Kyonhtaw Sluice Gate in Paung Township, Mon State, this morning and formally unveiled its stone inscription.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander South-East Command Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental officials, local authorities and people, totalling over 4,000.

Speaking on the occasion, Lt-Gen Maung Bo said that the State Peace and Development Council laid down political, economic and social objectives and is striving day and night for all-round development of the State. It is known to all that plans were laid down systematically for development of the entire nation with a view to ensuring uplift of socio-living standard of the people. In addition, the government, overcoming disturbances and obstacles of local and abroad, is firmly establishing economic and social infrastructures such as agriculture, production, industrial development, education and health sectors of the State.

In this regard, schools, hospitals, dams, sluice gates, airports and bridges including Union Highways and village-to-village roads have been built for equitable development of all the regions of the country. Moreover, universities and colleges have also been built to be able to develop human resource in respective regions.

Head of State Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance on wetlands being precious land of the nation to be utilized for enabling it to benefit the State.

In accord with the guidance of the Head of State, Kyonhtaw Sluice Gate was built on Kyonhtaw Creek in order to prevent flooding of the region in rainy season and ensuring of salty water in summer. The sluice gate will contribute toward cultivation of paddy on time, increase of farmland areas and thriving of crops in the wetlands on both sides of the creek. So, the sluice gate can benefit over 20,000 acres of farmland.

At present the government has built five dams and diversion weirs in Mon State plus two sluice gates—Zaikay and Kyonhtaw. And then, plans are underway to build more dams and sluice gates in necessary regions. In the entire nation, there are 160 dams including Kyonhtaw Sluice Gate benefiting over 2 million acres of farmlands. Over K 70,000 million of the State funds have been spent on building 160 dams.

The government is spending a large sum of money and making efforts with genuine goodwill for ensuring uplift of living standard of the people, narrowing gap among rural regions and developing the agriculture sector. Realizing goodwill and noble aims of the State, local farmers and people using better development effectively are to join hands with the government to enable the country and the people to stand tall in the world.

Mon State yielded over 50 million baskets of paddy. It contributes not only to local food sufficiency but also over 9 million baskets of surplus paddy. Thanks to efforts of the local farmers and full utilization of cultivable lands, it can be expected to yield over 10 million baskets of paddy next year.

In the period of the State Peace and Development Council, dams, sluice gates and canals could be built because of correct policies of the government and active participation of the people. In other words, these are fruits of harmonious cooperation of the government and the people.

Furthermore, under the correct leadership of the government, local people are to unity participate with nationalism and Union Spirit to reach modern, developed and democratic nation.

Minister Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin delivered an address in which he said that 160 dams implemented by the State has benefited 2,200,000 acres of farmland during ten years. The areas of cultivable land increased from 119 per cent in 1988 to nearly 150 per cent to date.

Rice, cotton, sugarcane, beans and pulses, rubber and oil palm are mainly cultivated in Mon State. Therefore, the local farmers are to make efforts for increased production of crops, he urged. For boosting production of crops, irrigation projects including sluice gates are being implemented. Twenty-one projects of dams and sluice gates are going to be implemented in Mon State, he said.

Afterwards, Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung also delivered a speech.

Later, Lt-Gen Maung Bo unveiled the signboard of the sluice gate and Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung and Maj-Gen Nyunt Tin formally opened the sluice gate.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party had documentary photos taken together with the local people and inspected the sluice gate.

Construction group-6 of the Irrigation Department built the Kyonhtaw Sluice Gate at a cost of K 535.15 million. The sluice gate is located near Kyonhtaw Creek in Paung Township. It was built of 27 six-foot-wide and 12-foot high gates and it benefits 22,000 acres of wetland.

The two canals of the sluice gate are 700 feet and 500 feet long respectively.

Mr Chairman and esteemed delegates,

My clarification are summary of the detailed basic principles that have been laid down by the National Convention.

The details include in the book “Basic Principles and Detailed Basic Principles laid down by National Convention Plenary Meetings up to 30-3’96” which have been distributed to the delegates to the National Convention.

If you are unclear about my clarification, you may be able to raise a question at the group discussions and to the National Convention Convening Work Committee.

At the plenary session, the National Convention Convening Work Committee will present Union legislative list and Region or State legislative list to be legitimized by the respective legislative bodies if necessary and matters that can be legitimized by leading committees of Self-administered Zone.

After the clarifications, the delegates to the National Convention are requested to discuss the matters thoroughly at the respective groups and prepare papers to be submitted.
Three killed in fireworks factory explosion in central China

Zunyuan, 17 May — Three people were killed in a fireworks factory blast Thursday afternoon in Songxian County, central China’s HeNan Province, the local government said Friday.

Another three people were injured and are receiving treatment in a local hospital. The blast occurred at 2:30 pm in an enclosed fireworks factory in Yaoshang Village of Tianzhu Town. The blast tore down a dozen mostly single-storey rooms used as workshops and warehouses, killing three immediately at the scene.

The factory’s bosses, two locals who are brothers, named Ni, have fled and police are tracking them down, according to the police.

The cause of the explosion was under investigation, government officials said. MNA/Xinhua

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY 2004 OPENS IN HONG KONG

HONG KONG, 17 May — The two-day International Museum Day 2004 organized by Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department was kicked off here Saturday.

Under the theme of Enjoying, Learning and Exploring at Museums, 23 museums and cultural institutions from Guangdong Province, Macao and Hong Kong participate in the event, and the highlight programme, Museum Exposition, is also being held.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Director of Leisure and Cultural Services of Hong Kong Government, Anissa Wong Sean-ye, said that museums in Hong Kong had over the years been introducing rich and diverse programmes to meet public needs.

Wong said, “To foster a better understanding and closer cultural co-operation with cities in the Pearl River Delta region, museums from Guangdong Province and Macao have also been invited to take part in the International Museum Day this year. “We hope that the event will enhance the communication and cultural exchange between these cities,” said Wong.

The Museum Exposition provides glamorous booths and stalls as well as programmes for family such as a puppet show, talks on tea and Chinese medicine, model making, origami workshops, and a “Treasure Hunting” game.

Uganda’s GDP up 6% in 2003/04 financial year

KAMPALA, 17 May — Uganda’s gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to rise by 6 per cent in the financial year 2003/04 which will end on 30 June, 2004. MNA/Xinhua

Three officials prosecuted for deadly coal mine flooding

IVAN, 17 May — Three officials were prosecuted for accident due to dereliction of duty in a fatal coal mine flooding in which 22 miners had been trapped, with one dead, according to People’s Procuratorate of Zichuan District of Zibo City in Shandong Province.

The procuratorate gave only surnames of the three defendants: Yang, Sun and Wang who were responsible for the production and technical affairs of the coal mine, situated in Kusun Township, Zichuan District of Zibo City, east China’s Shandong Province. The flooding happened on November 14, 2003 in one of the coal mine’s shafts. The officials were charged with dereliction of duty in a government order to close the unsafe shaft and to follow a government order to close the unsafe shaft and to illegally run it without special flooding control and prevention equipment.

After the accident occurred, the officials did not immediately report to the authorities and therefore delayed the best time for rescue operation, leading one miner’s death and causing a total economic loss of 670,000 yuan (81,000 US dollars), according to the procuratorate.

Germany’s trade with China grows rapidly

BERLIN, 17 May — Germany had the fastest growing trade with China last year than with other countries, the Federal Statistics Office reported Friday.

In 2003, Germany exports to China were worth 18.2 billion euros (21.5 billion US dollars) or a 24.9 per cent rise over the year before, while its imports from China were worth 25 billion euros (29.5 billion US dollars), a 17.3 per cent increase, the statistics office said.

China’s place among Germany’s largest five exporting markets moved from 12th to 10th last year, it said.

Overall, German exports last year rose 1.6 per cent to 661.6 billion euros (780.6 billion US dollars), while imports gained by 2.6 per cent to 532 billion euros (627.7 billion US dollars).

The top three countries for German exports were still France, the United States and Britain, while France, the Netherlands and the United States were largest sellers for Germany.

AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMAR FIVE STAR LINE

Phone: 295279, 295280, 295281, 295658, 295659

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV MAWLAMYINE VOY NO (3) TC-06

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAWLAMYINE Voy No (3) arrived on 17-5-2004 are hereby notified that their cargo will be discharged into the premises of Myanmar Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed from 8 am to 11 20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm. Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMAR FIVE STAR LINE

Phone: 295279, 295280, 295281, 295658, 295659

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE MV KOTA MUTIARA VOY NO (105)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA MUTIARA Voy No (105) are hereby notified that their vessel which arrives on 18-5-04 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A WP T. where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm. Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMAR PORT AUTHORITY AGENT FOR: MS ADVANCE CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV SITTWE VOY NO (5)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SITTWE Voy No (5) which arrives on 18-5-2004 are hereby notified that their cargo will be discharged into the premises of Myanmar Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed from 8 am to 11 20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm. Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMAR FIVE STAR LINE

Phone: 295279, 295280, 295281, 295658, 295659

The New Light of Myanmar

Donate blood

DONATE BLOOD

A D V E R T I S E M E N T S

JUNIOR LEADER

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY 2004 OPENS IN HONG KONG

HONG KONG, 17 May — The two-day International Museum Day 2004 organized by Hong Kong Leisure and Cultural Services Department was kicked off here Saturday.

Under the theme of Enjoying, Learning and Exploring at Museums, 23 museums and cultural institutions from Guangdong Province, Macao and Hong Kong participate in the event, and the highlight programme, Museum Exposition, is also being held.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Director of Leisure and Cultural Services of Hong Kong Government, Anissa Wong Sean-ye, said that museums in Hong Kong had over the years been introducing rich and diverse programmes to meet public needs.

Wong said, “To foster a better understanding and closer cultural co-operation with cities in the Pearl River Delta region, museums from Guangdong Province and Macao have also been invited to take part in the International Museum Day this year. “We hope that the event will enhance the communication and cultural exchange between these cities,” said Wong.

The Museum Exposition provides glamorous booths and stalls as well as programmes for family such as puppet show, talks on tea and Chinese medicine, model making, origami workshops, and a “Treasure Hunting” game.

MNA/Xinhua

Three officials prosecuted for deadly coal mine flooding

IVAN, 17 May — Three officials were prosecuted for accident due to dereliction of duty in a fatal coal mine flooding in which 22 miners had been trapped, with one dead, according to People’s Procuratorate of Zichuan District of Zibo City in Shandong Province.

The procuratorate gave only surnames of the three defendants: Yang, Sun and Wang who were responsible for the production and technical affairs of the coal mine, situated in Kusun Township, Zichuan District of Zibo City, east China’s Shandong Province. The flooding happened on November 14, 2003 in one of the coal mine’s shafts. The officials were charged not to follow a government order to close the unsafe shaft and to illegally run it without special flooding control and prevention equipment.

After the accident occurred, the officials did not immediately report to the authorities and therefore delayed the best time for rescue operation, leading one miner’s death and causing a total economic loss of 670,000 yuan (81,000 US dollars), according to the procuratorate.

Uganda’s GDP up 6% in 2003/04 financial year

KAMPALA, 17 May — Uganda’s gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to rise by 6 per cent in the financial year 2003/04 which will end on 30 June, 2004. MNA/Xinhua

Uganda’s GDP at 6.9 per cent in 2003/04

Uganda attained 4.9 per cent increase in GDP for 2003/04 fiscal year.

“Uganda has a stable economic environment typified by single digit inflation rates. In 2004, it was 5.2 per cent,” said Kigongo.

The Uganda’s GDP was enumerated by the International Council of Swedish Industry, East African Business Council and UNCTAD recently.

Uganda’s GDP up 6% in 2003/04 financial year

KAMPALA, 17 May — Uganda’s gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to rise by 6 per cent in the financial year 2003/04 which will end on 30 June, 2004. MNA/Xinhua

Uganda’s GDP at 6.9 per cent in 2003/04

Uganda attained 4.9 per cent increase in GDP for 2003/04 fiscal year.

“Uganda has stable economic environment typified by single digit inflations rates. In 2004, it was 5.2 per cent,” said Kigongo.

The Uganda’s GDP was enumerated by the International Council of Swedish Industry, East African Business Council and UNCTAD recently.
German Government has announced that it will enter into a third deal with Indonesia worth 25 million euros (29.25 million US dollars) for environmental projects.

German Deputy Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, Ushi Eid, said that the German government was pleased with the ongoing projects being implemented under the first two debt swap deals. “Our government is also interested in stronger and more effective cooperation to protect the natural resources of Indonesia. That’s why the third deal is dedicated to the environmental field,” she was quoted Saturday by The Jakarta Post as saying.

Eid was on a five-day visit to Indonesia. She met with several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Cabinet ministers, and also visited a number of Indonesian-German projects. The third deal has yet to be officially signed, but discussions about what type of environmental projects are currently underway with the Ministry of Environment and the Office of the State Minister for the Environment.

Debt swaps are usually carried out to reduce a country’s debt by requiring the debtor to spend a specified amount of the original debt on financing certain programmes that are of concern to the donors. As a consequence, the borrowing country does not have to repay the amount of the debt that is used for these programmes. Under the Indonesian-German debt swap scheme, Germany will write off a certain amount of debt after Indonesia spends 50 per cent of the renounced amount in rupee projects that have been agreed by both governments. Indonesia owes up to one billion euros to Germany. The two countries signed the first debt swap deal worth 25.6 million euros in December 2000 for education projects.

As a consequence, Indonesia must spend 12.8 million euros to build and equip 511 learning resource centres in 17 provinces to enhance the quality of teacher training in the basic sciences. These projects are nearing completion. — MNA/Xinhua

NASA’s finances in disarray

NEW YORK/WASHINGTON, 17 May — As NASA sets course for the moon and Mars, the space agency's finances are in disarray, with significant errors in its last financial statements and inadequate documentation for 565 billion US dollars posted to its accounts, its former auditor reported.

NASA’s chief for internal financial management said last week the agency had been compromised by a rough transition from 10 different internal accounting programmes to a new integrated one, but audit firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers noted basic accounting errors and a breakdown in NASA’s financial controls.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers and NASA’s top management promised earlier this year, according to the space agency’s inspector-general, Robert Cobb. PriceWaterhouseCoopers declined to comment, but a source familiar with the situation said the audit firm opted out of the contract because it was unhappy with the relationship.

In a scathing report on NASA’s September 30, 2003, financial statement — which got scant attention at its release but was detailed in a cover story in the May issue of CFO Magazine — the audit firm accused the space agency of one of the cardinal sins of the accounting world: failing to record its own costs properly.

The same report said the transition to the new accounting programme triggered a series of blunders that made completing the NASA audit impossible. — MNA/Reuters

China to host 27th FAO Regional Conference for Asia, Pacific

Beijing, 17 May — The 27th Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific will be held in Beijing, capital of China, from 17 to 21 May.

More than 200 representatives from 43 countries across the Asia and Pacific region will attend the conference. At the conference, representatives will discuss issues of great importance to the regional agricultural development, including institution building to strengthen agriculture, the extension of the role of rice in sustainable agriculture and rural development in Asia and the Pacific, and the subregional strategy for food security. — MNA/Xinhua

Forest fires kill seven in southeastern Russia

MOSCOW, 17 May — Forest fires in southeastern Russia have killed seven people, including a child, with officials evacuating hundreds of residents from stricken areas, Russian media reported on Saturday.

News agencies quoted the Emergency Ministry as saying an IL-76 water bomber aircraft had dumped more than 160 tons on 5,000 hectares of fires fanned by high temperatures and winds. Oleg Bogomolov, governor of Kurgan region, told NTV television that firefighters had been battling the blaze in four villages only to find that a fifth had been razed.

One elderly woman told NTV rescuers came too late to her village to evacuate residents. Pelageya Germanova, a woman in her fifties, said her husband had died as he could not walk. “Felt my feet were already on fire and my eyes felt like they were full of sand,” she said, hunched on her hospital bed.

“Don’t leave me,” she was unhappy with the relationship.

One elderly woman told NTV rescuers came too late to her village to evacuate residents. Pelageya Germanova, a woman in her fifties, said her husband had died as he could not walk. “Felt my feet were already on fire and my eyes felt like they were full of sand,” she said, hunched on her hospital bed.

“Don’t leave me,” she said the problem stemmed from a rough transition from the ongoing projects being implemented under the first two debt swap deals. “Our government is also interested in stronger and more effective cooperation to protect the natural resources of Indonesia. That’s why the third deal is dedicated to the environmental field,” she was quoted Saturday by The Jakarta Post as saying.

Eid was on a five-day visit to Indonesia. She met with several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Cabinet ministers, and also visited a number of Indonesian-German projects. The third deal has yet to be officially signed, but discussions about what type of environmental projects are currently underway with the Ministry of Environment and the Office of the State Minister for the Environment.

Debt swaps are usually carried out to reduce a country’s debt by requiring the debtor to spend a specified amount of the original debt on financing certain programmes that are of concern to the donors. As a consequence, the borrowing country does not have to repay the amount of the debt that is used for these programmes. Under the Indonesian-German debt swap scheme, Germany will write off a certain amount of debt after Indonesia spends 50 per cent of the renounced amount in rupee projects that have been agreed by both governments. Indonesia owes up to one billion euros to Germany. The two countries signed the first debt swap deal worth 25.6 million euros in December 2000 for education projects.

As a consequence, Indonesia must spend 12.8 million euros to build and equip 511 learning resource centres in 17 provinces to enhance the quality of teacher training in the basic sciences. These projects are nearing completion. — MNA/Xinhua

Singapore expresses admiration for Shanghai’s development

SHANGHAI, 17 May — Visiting Singaporean Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong expressed admiration for Shanghai’s rapid development here Saturday evening at his meeting with Shanghai Mayor Han Zheng.

Lee said that Shanghai’s rapid development inspired Singapore to learn more from others in the economic global- ization era.

Lee arrived in Shanghai Saturday noon for his two-day visit to Shanghai and Suzhou, a scenic city in east China’s Jiangsu Province.

Lee told the Shanghai mayor that he has come here to know how Shanghai is able to deal with problems it is encon- 13

enced in the time full of chal- langes.

Han Zheng said that Shanghai also had learned a lot from Singapore thanks to its special and close ties with Singapore, adding that Shanghai is China’s first city to implement the housing accumulation fund system which was introduced from Singapore.

Currently, about 5,000 Shanghai people are studying working in Singapore while enterprises of both sides also participate increasingly more in each other’s eco- nomic and social development, Han said.

Trade between Shanghai and Singapore reached three billion US dollars in 2003, a sharp rise of 60 per cent over the previous year.

“IT is a wonder,” Han said, “showing that great cooperation potential between the two sides.”

Lee is on a six-day China visit at the invitation of Chi- nese Vice-Premier Wu Yi.

Lee made the remark at a ribbon-cutting ceremony of Raffles City, a 350-million US-dollar complex invested by some Singaporean companies, which has become Shanghai’s new landmark building.

Singapore should, on one hand, lower its production cost and give up disadvan- taged industries in the competition with China. On the other hand, Singaporean businesses are advised to invest in this Asia’s fastest- growing economy, said Lee in Chinese.

He said China’s more explicit legal documents and simplified administrative procedures after its accession to the World Trade Organization have created an environment more favourable to business activities.

Interfax

A groom lifts a cloth covering his bride’s face during their traditional Chinese wedding ceremony in Beijing, on 15 May, 2004. Some young people in China are going back to their roots for more traditional weddings, and turing away from Western-style ceremonies, that had gained popularity. — INTERFAX

Singaporean Deputy PM encourages cooperation with China

SHANGHAI, 17 May — Singapore has encouraged its people to get along well with and learn from China’s fast growing economy, said Lee Hsien Loong here Sunday.

Lee made the remark at a ribbon-cutting ceremony of Raffles City, a 350-million US-dollar complex invested by some Singaporean companies, which has become Shanghai’s new landmark building.

Singapore should, on one hand, lower its production cost and give up disadvan- taged industries in the competition with China. On the other hand, Singaporean businesses are advised to invest in this Asia’s fastest- growing economy, said Lee in Chinese.

He said China’s more explicit legal documents and simplified administrative procedures after its accession to the World Trade Organization have created an environment more favourable to business activities.
Celta, Valladolid on the brink of relegation

MADEIRA, 17 May— Celta Vigo and Valladolid were left tittering on the brink of relegation after they were both defeated in the Primera Liga on Saturday.

Ten-man Celta slammed to a comprehensive 3-0 defeat against Galician rivals Deportivo Coruna, while Valladolid went down 1-0 at Real Betis.

With most of their immediate rivals yet to play this weekend, both sides could now find themselves relegated if results go against them on Sunday.

Already-relegated Murcia prop up the table on 23 points, Valladolid have 38 and Celta have 39, a point adrift of Espanyol who travelled to Real Mallorca on Sunday in the knowledge that a win will ensure they retain their top-flight status.

At the other end of the table newly crowned champions Valencia, who clearly had their minds on next week’s UEFA Cup final against Olympique Marseille, slipped to their first defeat in 11 games on Friday when they lost 2-1 to top of the league Villarreal.

Valencia have an unsailable 77 points from 37 games, Real Madrid are seven back on 70, one ahead of Barcelona and two clear of Deportivo.

Real play Murcia on Sunday while Barcelona host of Deportivo.

China lift Uber Cup for fourth in a row

JAKARTA, 17 May— China’s women’s team was crowned again at the Uber Cup badminton tournament here on Saturday with an arduous 3-1 win of South Korea in the final. It is the ninth time and fourth in a row for Chinese girl shuttlers to wrap up the Uber Cup.

World number one Gong Ruina came through a tough opening game to beat top Korean Jun Jae Yun 7-11, 11-5, 11-7. Seven-ranked Jun, who had five losses to Gong before the match, played a much more authoritative game than her top-ranked opponent, leading 9-0 in the first set with Gong’s several unforced errors.

Gong reacted immediately, however, driving back to 7-9. But Jun served the match and wrapped up the first set with a backpack drop shot on set point.

Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen, the world’s top-ranked doubles pair, lost 15-7, 15-10 to Lee Hyon Jung and Hwang Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen, the world’s top-ranked doubles pair, lost 15-7, 15-10 to Lee Hyon Jung and Hwang Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen, the world’s top-ranked doubles pair, lost 15-7, 15-10 to Lee Hyon Jung and Hwang Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen, the world’s top-ranked doubles pair, lost 15-7, 15-10 to Lee Hyon Jung and Hwang Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen, the world’s top-ranked doubles pair, lost 15-7, 15-10 to Lee Hyon Jung and Hwang Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen, the world’s top-ranked doubles pair, lost 15-7, 15-10 to Lee Hyon Jung and Hwang Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen, the world’s top-ranked doubles pair, lost 15-7, 15-10 to Lee Hyon Jung and Hwang

Bayern lose again, Stuttgart close the gap

BERLIN, 17 May— VfB Stuttgart beat Bayern Munich 3-1 on Saturday to send the champions to their second defeat in a week and keep alive their hopes of qualifying directly for the Champions League.

At the top, there was a surprise loss for new titleholders Werder Bremen who were thrashed 6-2 at home to Bayer Leverkusen. Hungary striker Imre Szabics scored twice for VfB against Bayern’s wobbly defence and Kevin Kuranyi beat Oliver Kahn with a poorly hit shot to make it 3-0, prompting the German goalkeeper to throw away his gloves in disgust.

But for Claudia Pizarro scored a consolation goal for Bayern with 13 minutes left. Bayern, beaten by Wender Bremen 3-1 at home last week, have 65 points with one match left and remain in second place but are just one point ahead of Stuttgart.

“It was a black day for our defence,” said Bayern coach Ottmar Hitzfeld. “We let Stuttgart keep coming through and positioned ourselves poorly. It’s disappointing that some of (them) let their nervousness show.”

The two top clubs go straight into the Champions League while the third-placed team have to qualify.

Champions Yokohama close gap in J-League

TOKYO, 17 May— Defender Daisuke Naoi powered home a 65th-minute winner as champions Yokohama F-Marinos beat leaders Jubilo Iwata 2-1 away on Saturday to throw the title race wide open in the J-League first stage.

Second-placed Yokohama improved to 21 points from 10 matches, three behind Jubilo, who had been looking to hit back after being knocked out of the Asian Champions League in midweek.

Japanese midfielder Daisuke Ou opened the scoring against his old club after 15 minutes, curving in a superb free-kick from 30 metres to silence the 30,000 crowd at Ecopa World Cup Stadium.

Jubilo equalized through Toshiya Fujita two minutes later, but Naoi gave Yokohama a deserved victory when he headed in from a corner on Oku, keeping the pressure on Iwata with five matches left in the first stage.

Urawa Reds held on to third place but failed to take all three points as they were held to a 3-3 draw at home by JEF United Ichihara.

United playmaker Yuki Abe converted a last-minute penalty to give the visitors a share of the spoils in front of 20,000 in Saitama.— MNA/Reuters

Gerrard on verge of world class, says Houllier

LIVERPOOL, 17 May— Liverpool manager Gerard Houllier believes his team’s captain Steven Gerrard is the man France must beware when they face England in their opening Euro 2004 match next month.

“He will be England’s dangerman when they play France in the European Championsh— the Frenchman, a former coach of his country’s national team, said. England meet title holders France on June 13 in Group B of the tournament in Portugal.

“Steven Gerrard is an awesome footballer,” Houllier said after Liverpool’s 1-1 draw with Newcastle United at Anfield in their final Premier League match on Saturday. “He did everything today and showed that he is becoming a world-class player. He can do anything and has pulled his teammates forward,” Houllier told reporters.

“Steven has really stepped up his game and has been leading by example recently and has lifted all his teammates today and also against Birmingham last weekend when we won 3-0. They followed him.”

Liverpool secured fourth place in the Premier League and a berth in the third qualifying round for the Champions League next season.

“Steven started at academy level here at Liverpool and then progressed into Premier League level and also international level,” Houllier said.

“Now he must aim to be a truly world-class player of which there are only 10 and I think that could happen in the next two or three years.”

Shola Ameobi put Newcastle ahead in the 25th minute but Liverpool equalized in the 67th through Michael Owen, who scored after an exquisite through ball from Gerrard. “Steven never gives up and I feel that is the mark of a very good captain. He did it today against Newcastle with what I think his most dominant personal display I’ve ever seen from him,” Houllier said.

“He works extremely hard in training and is fired by a real passion for the game which you can see every day when he is practising. Steven can pass, score and assist the goalscorers and he is also very fast.”
THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR  
Tuesday, May 18, 2004

WEATHER

Monday, 17 May, 2004
Summary of observations recorded on 16:30 MST:
During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers has been isolated in Shan and Kayah States, scattered in Kachin, Rakhine and Kayin States, Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Divisions, and widespread in the remaining areas with isolated heavyfalls in Magway and Tanintharyi Divisions. The total amount of rainfall recorded were Daws (3.03) inches, Myek (2.76) inches, Zungm (2.68) inches, Chauk (2.65) inches and Hmawbi (2.20) inches.

Maximum temperature on 16-5-2004 was 38.0°C (96°F). Minimum temperature on 17-5-2004 was 16.9°C (62°F). The relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 17-5-2004 was 96%. Total sunshine hours on 16-5-2004 was 2.0 hours approx. Rainfall on 17-5-2004 was 3.3 mm (35.0 mm at Yangon Airport (27.1 mm at Kaba-Aye and 198 mm (7.80 inches) at central Yangon). Maximum wind speed was 12 mph from East (7:20) hrs MST on 17-5-2004.

Bay influence: Monsun is moderate to strong in the Andaman Sea, Central and south Bay and weather is partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until 16-5-2004: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Kachin, Shan, Kayah and Chin States, Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas with isolated heavyfalls in Ayeyawady, Yangon, Bago and Tanintharyi Divisions. Degree of certainty is (P). State of the sea offshore will decrease and moderate to rough sea is likely off and along Myanmar Coast. Surface wind speed in squall may reach 35 mph.

Outlook for subsequent two to three days: Increase of thunder conditions in central Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 18-5-2004:
For two or three days: Showers. Degree of certainty is (P).

Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas

5:25 am
1. Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
2. The beautiful green ice
3. Taung-Zabu-Paing Royal Group Dance
4. Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
5. The beautiful green ice
7. The beautiful green ice
8. *Unforgettable Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”*

5:55 pm
1. Signature Tune
2. New Light of Myanmar
3. National News
4. Weather Report
5. Myanmar Traditional Dance
6. Taung-Zabu-Paing Royal Group Dance
7. Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
8. The beautiful green ice

1:55 am
1. Signature Tune
2. New Light of Myanmar
3. Myanmar Traditional Dance
4. Taung-Zabu-Paing Royal Group Dance
5. Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
6. The beautiful green ice
7. *Unforgettable Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”*
8. The beautiful green ice

8:50 am
1. Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
2. The beautiful green ice
3. Taung-Zabu-Paing Royal Group Dance
4. Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
5. The beautiful green ice
7. The beautiful green ice
8. *Unforgettable Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”*
Meetings to elect vacant members of panels of chairmen of delegate groups to the National Convention held

YANGON, 17 May — The meetings to elect vacant members of panels of chairmen of delegate groups to the National Convention were held this afternoon at the designated places on Nyaunghnapin Camp where the National Convention is being held, attended by members of the National Convention Convening Work Committee and group-wise delegates.

The meeting to elect three members of panel of chairman out of the five members in the delegate group of political parties was held at the meeting hall-1 at 2 pm. Original members of the panel of chairmen, U Tun Yin Law of Wa National Unity Party and U Saw Philip (a) U Philip Sam of Wa National Development Party presided over the meeting. First, the master of ceremonies announced the attendance of 25 out of 29 delegates and the start of the meeting. Then, U Tun Yin Law delivered an opening speech. The delegates passed the resolutions not to elect next three members and to carry out the work with current two members, U Tun Yin Law and U Saw Philip (a) U Philip Sam only.

The meeting to elect one member of panel of chairman out of the five members in the delegate group of representatives-elect was held at the meeting hall-2 at 2 pm. Members of the National Convention Convening Work Committee, U Maung Aung and U Nay Win presided over the meeting. First, the master of ceremonies announced the attendance of 12 out of 15 delegates and the start of the meeting. U Maung Aung clarified the procedures for electing one vacant member of panel of chairman for the delegate group to the National Convention. Next, those present at the meeting tabled the motion for electing one member. (See page 9)

Regulations are prescribed in the interest of the national races and the delegates

YANGON, 17 May — The following is a translation of the clarifications of Chairman of the National Convention Convening Work Committee Chief Justice U Aung Toe at the plenary session of the National Convention in Nyaunghnapin Camp, Hlaingtharyar, today.

Estimaded Chairman and delegates to the National Convention,

I extend my greetings to the National Convention delegates with best wishes for your well-being both in mind and body and all auspiciousness.

As you know, the National Convention is discussing and laying down fundamental and detailed principles for writing a State Constitution in order to build a discipline-flourishing democratic nation in accord with the prevailing views, geographical conditions, background history, politics, economy, social affairs and culture of the nation.

Copies of the book featuring the fundamental and detailed principles adopted by the National Convention have been distributed to you in advance for your study. I would like to brief you on the fundamental and detailed principles adopted by the National Convention. The 15 headings that should be included in the State Constitution have been placed in order in respective chapters. According to this order, the detailed principles were laid down for the chapter on the State Constitution.

With respect to the State Constitution, the State is constituted with Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union) system. And the State is delineated and constituted with seven regions, seven states and Union territories. These regions, states and Union territories are of equal status and authority. In regions or states, self-administered areas are to be prescribed for national races who reside together with the Union.

In Chapter 2, representatives who should be invited to attend the National Convention are described as:

1. delegates of political parties
2. delegates of representatives-elect
3. delegates of national races

In Chapter 3, representatives-elect described in the following:

1. delegates of peasants
2. delegates of workers
3. delegates of intellectuals and intelligentsia
4. delegates of State service personnel
5. other invited delegates

In performing the duties of the National Convention, seven duties and three rights are being designated. All are to enjoy the rights and subject to the duties. Moreover, code of ethics and discipline to be abide by delegates are also drawn. Delegates should realize and abide by these rules which are laid down with the aim of holding the National Convention successfully which is the most important for the State and the people.

(See page 10)

The National Convention is the concern of all our national races.