**Four political objectives**

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

**Four economic objectives**

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

**Four social objectives**

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

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**Kyaukpyu District holds ceremony to hail Union Day and support National Convention**

YANGON, 29 Jan—A ceremony to hail the Union Day and support the National Convention was held at the Institute of Nursing on Bogyoke Aung San Street here this morning, with an address by Chairman of National Health Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Yangon Division PDC Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, the ministers, the Yangon mayor, officials, departmental heads, members of the MRCS Central Council and executives, resident representatives of UN agencies and local and foreign NGOs, leader of delegation of the International Committee of Red Cross Mr Patrick Vial and members, leader of delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society Mr Joanna Maclean and members, presidents of state/division RC Supervisory Committees and members, and distinguished guests.

The Secretary-1 in his address said that the MRCS established in 1920 has a fine tradition, and it is heartening to learn that the association standing as a social organization has been constantly shouldeering humanitarian tasks in successive eras in the interests of the nation and the people.

That is why the government is providing encouragement and assistance in various sectors for enabling the association to stand as a national force and to play an active role in the national development drive. Furthermore, after designating the association as a reserve force that contributes towards restoration of peace and stability, the government again has assigned lofty duties to it in building and upgrading the nation, he added.

The Red Cross services were introduced first in the western nations, but at that time humanitarian tasks and community welfare services had already been in existence in Myanmar. Now, the Red Cross... (See page 8)

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**Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.**
Safeguard the sovereignty with Union Spirit and stand by nationalism

In the Union of Myanmar, Our Three Main National Causes — non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty — has been adopted as an immutable national policy. All the national races have come together to create a modern and developed nation which is free from the colonial clout as the government is implementing national policies and objectives relevant to the historical background and prevailing conditions of the country.

State Peace and Development Council Chairman, Defence Services Commander-in-Chief Senior General Than Shwe received the trainees of BEd Course No 36 of the University for Development of National Races at Mingala Hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw Building on Pyay Road, Yangon, on 28 January this year.

In his guidance given at the ceremony, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe said: “It is also required to take all necessary measures not to lose independence and sovereignty again and to be able to march on the correct national path, which the people themselves chose after overcoming the alien instigations and interventions”.

All the national people should engrave in their heart as national concern the patriotic fervour, the sine qua non for permanent sovereignty of the country, so they will be able to preserve it and hand it down to posterity.

The government restored stability, ensured the enforcement of law and order, and undertook national development tasks by conducting analytical approaches to the prevailing conditions after building national solidarity. It is crystal clear that the combined efforts between the government and people resulted in building national solidarity. All the national races have come together and hand it down to posterity.

Continued efforts are to be made to produce well-rounded individuals nationwide as a prime source of human resources to ensure that progress and peace, which is a product of the endeavours the leadership of government and the leaders of national races made, are left in good hands.

All in all, the entire national people should inspire themselves with Union Spirit to maintain and protect the independence and sovereignty of the country while keeping the right track of nationalism.

**People’s Desire**

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

**Industry-I Minister meets with employees of Bilin Sugar Mill**

**YANGON**, 29 Jan — Minister for Industry-I U Aung Thaung, accompanied by Managing Director U Soe Hlaing of Myanma Foodstuffs Industries and officials, met with officials of Bilin Sugar Mill in Bilin yesterday morning.

Managing Director U Soe Hlaing reported on crushing of sugarcane, monthly production of sugar, purchase of molasses and quality of sugarcane and sugar.

After hearing the reports, the minister gave instructions that it is necessary to enhance production capability from now on. Arrangements are to be made for purchase of sugarcane and transport matters in time. Thus, all the employees are to try their best for carrying out tasks with goodwill.

The minister viewed round production processes of the mill. At Bilin Industry-used Spirit Plant and inspected completion of building the warehouses.— MNA

**USDA Central Level Extempore Talks Contest held**

**YANGON**, 29 Jan — The Work Committee for Organizing the Literary and Photo Contests in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day organized the USDA Central Level Extempore Talks Contest to mark the Armed Forces Day at the USDA Headquarters on University Avenue, here, this morning.

Among 17 contestants of States and Division, Maung Myat Thu of Bago Division (East) won the first prize. Maung Aung Myat Soe of Ayeyawady Division, second and Ma Mya Thazin Aung of Taninthayi Division, third.

Also present on the occasion were Vice-Chairman of the Organizing Committee Chief of Staff (Navy) Captain Nyan Tun, members of the panel of judges and officials. — MNA

**UDNR trainees continue excursion in Yangon**

**YANGON**, 29 Jan — The trainees of the BEd Course No 36 of the University for Development of National Races, accompanied by Director-General of the Civil Service Selection and Training Department U Hla Kyi, Rector Col Zaw Min Thein, Pro-rector Daw Khin Si Si and officials, visited Myawady TV Broadcasting Unit in Hmawby Township this morning.

Commandant of Myawady TV Broadcasting Unit Lt-Col Chit Swe extended greetings and explained the broadcasting programmes.

Afterwards, the trainees proceeded to Central Institute of Civil Service in Hlegu Township. At Ohndaw Hall of CICS, Rector Col Win Maung explained the salient points of the institute with the use of video tapes.

On arrival at Ngamoeik Dam, Director U Kyaw Thein of the Irrigation Department explained area of the dam and benefited acres. Next, they observed the dam by car.

In the evening, they visited No 1 Livestock Breeding Farm of Yangon Command in Insein Township.

Afterwards, they paid homage to Lawka Chantha Abhaya Labha Muni Buddha Image on Mindhamma Hill in Insein Township.

Next, the trainees donated cash for the Buddha Image and a trainee expressed thanks on behalf of the trainees. — MNA
Chinese experts wind up tour of Sri Lanka, Maldives

COLOMBO, 28 Jan — A team of 11 Chinese experts on assessment and reconstruction ended their tour of Sri Lanka and the Maldives on Thursday.

During their stay in Sri Lanka and the Maldives, the team met with senior officials of the two countries for talks on reconstruction involving a damaged-port in Sri Lanka and tsunami-hit houses in the Maldives which China is likely to aid to construct, said an official with the team.

They have also assessed the damages of the two countries objectively and got more knowledge on how to provide concrete help to the countries, the official said.

The task force is composed of specialists from the Chinese Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Construction, and Ministry of Civil Affairs.

China tightens control over assisted reproductive technologies

BEIJING, 28 Jan — China's Ministry of Health issued a circular Thursday calling for health departments and supervising bodies to exert more control over assisted reproductive technology and sperm banks.

The circular also called for strict punishment for practicing assisted reproductive technology and setting up sperm banks without the ministry's approval.

Those medical institutions that have been approved by the government will also be punished if found violating the technical standards and ethical principles or overstepping their operational ranges.

The ministry has recently assessed more than 70 medical institutions in 23 Chinese provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities.

The sperm bank in the affiliated hospital of the family planning institute of Chongqing municipality, southwest China, has been suspended to operate because of malpractice.

By the end of December 2004, the ministry had approved 37 medical institutions to practice assisted reproductive technology, five to set up sperm banks.

Cold conditions continue unabated in northern India

NEW DELHI, 28 Jan — Intense cold wave conditions continued unabated Thursday in the northern region of India with mercury plummeting at many places and the weatherman predicting heavy snowfall in the hills and thunder squall accompanied by rain in the plains.

Temperatures plunged by one to four degrees below normal at most places in the plains of Punjab and Haryana and hills of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

In Delhi, the mercury dipped to 5.5 degrees Celsius, three degrees below normal. The maximum temperature at Bhopal was 10.3 degrees above normal.

Himachal Pradesh and Punjab during the next two days. — MNA/PTI
China to see another favourable foreign trade balance in 2005

BEIJING, 28 Jan— Despite possible slower global economic growth in 2005, China’s foreign trade will continue to grow with an estimated favourable balance of 15 billion US dollars, said a Chinese economist here Wednesday.

However, the foreign trade surplus in 2005 may be less than that in 2004. The possibility of trade deficits continues to exist for certain months, said Zhang Yansheng, an economist with the think-tank of the State Development and Reform Commission.

According to Zhang’s estimates, China’s export volumes are expected to break the 700 billion US dollars, marking an increase rate of 20 per cent. The import volume, rising at a rate of 23 per cent, will reach 685 billion US dollars.

The price declines of global energy products is a major factor contributing to China’s possible foreign trade surplus in 2005, said Zhang.

Compared with soaring oil products in 2004, there are less possibilities to see sharp rise of oil product prices in 2005, said Zhang.

According to his estimates, the price may drop from an average of 39 US dollars per barrel to 36 US dollars per barrel in 2005.

“It will be a piece of good news for China’s oil product users, who has witnessed an import volume of 120 million tons of crude oil in 2004 and is expected to see more this year,” said Zhang.

In 2005, more textiles and clothes, topping favourable trade balance products of China, will be exported due to the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing (ATC), said Zhang. The changing trend of the exchange rate of the US dollar is another important factor affecting China’s foreign trade volume in 2005, said Zhang.

As more efforts are expected to be made by the US Government to increase the interest rate of the US dollars in 2005, more international capital will be drawn to the US.

As a result, other countries including China will see less foreign direct investment, which is another factor affecting China’s foreign trade volume.

China’s stable financial and monetary policies in 2005 might hinder the increase of import volume, Zhang said. But he said China’s economy will continue the strong growth, at around 8.5 per cent in 2005. The booming economy guarantees strong demands for imported raw materials such as energy and resources products.

Trains crash kills at least 11 in US

LOS ANGELES, 28 Jan— At least 11 people were killed and nearly 200 injured on Wednesday when two Los Angeles commuter trains collided after one struck an automobile left on the tracks in what authorities called an aborted suicide attempt by a “deranged” man.

Police and fire officials said the man slashed his wrists and stabbed himself in the chest shortly before parking his Jeep Cherokee on the tracks. But he jumped clear at the last moment and watched as the two high-speed trains smashed together and derailed in a fiery wreck.

The man was identified by police as Juan Manuel Alvarez, 28. He was found wandering the scene after the predawn accident, muttering: “I’m sorry, I’m sorry,” according to a local television report.

Police said the man, who was unjured in the crash, was arrested and would be charged with at least 10 counts of murder. Los Angeles County District Attorney Steve Cooley said decisions about the suspect would be made by Friday.

Glendale Police Chief Randy Adams said Alvarez admitted parking on the tracks with the intention of killing himself, but apparently changed his mind and fled as one of the commuter trains bore down on his Jeep. “He was very distraught and upset and realized that he caused a major disaster,” Adams told a news conference.

The commuter trains also struck a parked freight train, sparking a brief fire.

The collision occurred just after 6 a.m., near a shopping strip at the edge of an industrial area near Glendale, north of downtown Los Angeles.

About 125 people hurt in the train wreck were hospitalized, and 60 others were treated for minor injuries and released, fire officials said. Ten people initially reported dead included a sheriff’s deputy and a train conductor.

S Korea appoints new Education Minister

SEOUL, 28 Jan— Former South Korean vice-prime minister and minister of Finance and Economy Kim Jin-pyo was appointed by President Roh Moo-hyun as new Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Human Resources on Thursday.

Fifty-eight-year-old Kim was a career public official in the economic sector. “As an economic and financial expert, I have long tried to explore ways of enhancing the country’s international competitiveness through market and education reform,” Kim said.

KIM JIN-pyo, presidential secretary for personnel management, said in a Press release of the Presidential Office.

Kim Jin-pyo is expected to effectively handle a range of pending issues including the reform of colleges, added Kim Wan-key, presidential key.

Korea appoints new Education Minister

A woman speaks on her cell phone as she passes by NTT DoCoMo mobile phone shop in downtown Tokyo on 28 Jan, 2005.—INTERNET

Japan’s 2004 jobless rate dropped to 4.7%

TOKYO, 28 Jan— Japan’s unemployment rate in 2004 dropped 0.6 percentage point from the year before to 4.7 per cent, edging down for the second consecutive year, a government report said on Friday.

The country’s jobless rate in December stood at a six-year low of 4.4 per cent, contributing much to the lower annual data, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. The number of jobless people in December was 2.7 million, down 300,000 from the year earlier.

In a separate report, the Health, Labour and Welfare Ministry said ratio of job offers to job seekers amounted to 0.94 in December, up 0.02 point from November.

The indicator means that there were 94 jobs available for 100 job hunters. In December, the unemployment rate for men came to 4.6 per cent, down 0.1 point from the previous month, and that for women was 2.2 per cent, down 0.1 point.

US stocks slide as Iraq, Merck weigh

NEW YORK, 29 Jan— US stocks fell on Friday, weighed down by a sharp fall in Merck & Co Inc on concerns about a key drug, weaker-than-expected economic growth.

Dow component Merck tumbled 10.5 per cent to $27.91, as it said a federal judge ruled that its second-biggest product, the osteoporosis drug Fosamax, will lose its US patent protection by early 2008—10 years earlier than expected.

In addition, US securities regulators upgraded their probe of the company’s handling of its withdrawn arthritis drug Vioxx.

Household products company Procter & Gamble Co. also hurt the Dow, sliding 2.3 per cent to $53.05 after announcing a $57 billion stock deal to buy Gillette Co Shares of Gillette rose 12.7 per cent to $51.50. The Dow Jones industrial average was down 72.12 points, or 0.69 per cent, at 10,395.28.

The Standard & Poor’s 500 Index was down 7.07 points, or 0.60 per cent, at 1,167.48.

The Nasdaq Composite Index was down 18.90 points, or 0.92 per cent, at 2,028.25.

The Nasdaq was looking set to close lower for the week as a whole— which would mark its fourth consecutive weekly drop.

Data showing weaker-than-expected economic growth in the fourth quarter of 2004 dampened stocks.

A government report showed the US economy grew at a 3.1 per cent annual clip— its slowest since the beginning of 2003.

Online
UN calls for multilateral anti-terrorism cooperation

ALMATY, (Kazakhstan), 28 Jan—A UN anti-terrorism meeting was held here on Wednesday, focusing on strengthening cross-border cooperation to fight terrorism.

At the two-day meeting of the UN Security Council’s Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), over 70 representatives from international and regional organizations will also discuss how to intercept funds for terrorists and to guarantee the security of the international transport.

At the opening ceremony, Kazakhstan’s President Nursultan Nazarbayev said terrorism has posed a global threat to international security.

Nazarbayev pointed out that the United Nations (UN) has played an important role in international anti-terrorism campaign, and only the UN can form a most wide-ranging and effective anti-terrorism alliance.

Nazarbayev also expressed support for the UN’s proposal to establish a regional security and cooperation mechanism in order to prevent international and national conflicts.

Those regional mechanisms should include the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Central Asian Coopera- tion Organization and the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia, he added.

Also at the opening ceremony, CTC Chairman Andrey Denisov said the CTC will strengthen cooperation with international and regional organizations because they have accumulated rich experience in fighting terrorism.

Denisov said the CTC was evaluating those countries who need help in the field of anti-terrorism so that the CTC can offer practical aid to them.

Meanwhile, Vladimir Rushailo, top official of the Commonwealth of Independent States, said many CIS countries are now on the frontier of the anti-terrorism campaign.

Rushailo said the CIS was eager to fight terrorism, but called on the Western partners to avoid “double standards.”

He also announced that the CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre will hold joint military exercises in August in Kazakhstan.

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Mexico rejects US criticism of its war on drugs

MEXICO CITY, 28 Jan—Mexico angrily rejected US criticism of its war on drugs on Thursday and warned Washington not to interfere in its internal affairs.

A letter from the US ambassador on Wednesday that accused Mexican police of failing to halt drug killings on the US border has upset Mexico’s Government, which says it is fighting “the mother of all battles” against violent drug cartels.

The missive came the same day the US State Department issued a travel alert warning Americans of increased murders and kidnappings in Mexican border cities.

Suspected drug cartel hit men killed six prison guards last week in Matamoros, across the border from Brownsville, Texas, prompting President Vicente Fox to send hundreds of federal police and troops to the area.

Interior Minister Santiago Creel said internal security was a question for Mexico alone.

“We are partners in a free trade agreement but that’s it. South of the Rio Grande is ours. Period,” Creel told the Televisa television network.

Creel also accused the United States of doing too little to jail drug lords on its soil, fight money laundering by drug cartels and curb consumption by US drug users.

The economies of Mexico and the United States have become closely linked since the North American Free Trade Agreement came into force in 1994.

But Mexico, which lost half of its territory to the United States in a 19th-Century war, is still sensitive to anything it suspects is US interference in domestic matters.

Drug violence broke out this month after Fox’s government launched a crackdown on cartels operating from high security prisons.

US Ambassador Tony Garza said in his letter to Mexican Government leaders that Mexican security forces were not in control of the violent border area.

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Helicopter crash kills six workers in southern Peru

LIMA, 28 Jan—A helicopter carrying six Camisea gas workers has crashed in Peru’s southern jungle, its operator Transportadora de Gas del Peru (TGP) said on Thursday.

“We have made contact with an injured crew member by satellite phone but we don’t know anything about the others,” said a spokesman for the Argentine-led consortium that supplies Lima with gas from the Camisea gas field. Some of those on board the aircraft were Argentines, the company said.

TGP lost contact with the helicopter carrying technical crew on a routine flight on Wednesday, when it crashed.

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Peru, China sign eight cooperation accounts

LIMA, 29 Jan—Peru and China signed eight cooperation accounts Thursday following a meeting between Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo and visiting Chinese Vice-President Zeng Qinghong.

The accords include a treaty on criminal judicial assistance, and agreements on economic and technological cooperation, tourism, investment and energy.

Toledo and Zeng attended the signing ceremony.

After the signing ceremony, Toledo said these documents demonstrate that bilateral ties are proceeding in an in-depth way and bilateral cooperation in culture, economy, trade and investment is in a good state.

He expressed the hope that his visit to China later this year would further boost economic and trade cooperation.

Toledo reiterated his country’s recognition of China’s status as a full market economy and Peru’s adherence to the “one China” policy.

Zeng said the accords indicate that mutually beneficial cooperation is making new progress.

He suggested the two sides make more efforts to maintain high-level contacts so as to enhance political trust, expand economic cooperation, and strengthen dialogue and consultations in multilateral organizations to safeguard common interests.

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Large amount of heroin seized in Turkey

ANKARA, 28 Jan—Turkish police seized 247.5 kilos of heroin in two operations, semi-official Anatolia News Agency reported Thursday.

Acting on a tip, police tried to stop drug smugglers near Govelek Village of eastern province of Van bordering Iran on Thursday. One smuggler was killed in shoot out and another arrested, the report said, adding that 40 kg of heroin was seized in the operation.

On Wednesday, Turkish police confiscated 207.5 kilos of heroin and detained 6 people in a farm near northwestern city of Bursa and...—MNA/Xinhua

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Singapore, Malaysia agree to quicken telecom equipment recognition

SINGAPORE, 29 Jan—Singapore and Malaysia signed on Friday the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for telecommunications equipment, the third of its kind within the framework of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

According to a statement by the infocommunications Development Authority of Singapore on Friday, the two countries committed to lower costs and time for telecom equipment recognition in an in-depth way and bilateral cooperation in culture, economy, trade and investment is in a good state.

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INTERNET

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With a height of 2.58 metres, Xi Shun (R), an applicant for the title of the tallest man, poses with an applicant for the longest haired woman during a presentation for the Guinness World Records in Beijing on 28 Jan, 2005. It’s hard to stand out in a country of 1.3 billion, but on Friday hopes of a world record brought out some of China’s most extraordinary citizens.—INTERNET
Minister of Education says Chinese teachers mentally healthy

BEIJING, 28 Jan—Teachers in China are not faced with serious psychological problems, said Chinese Minister of Education Zhou Ji here Thursday.

It was earlier reported that 48 per cent of the teachers in Shanghai have some sort of psychological problem, stemming from the pressure and anxiety caused by students’ enrollment rate.

When asked to comment on this report at a Press conference held by the Information Office of the State Council, Zhou said he took note of the report but cited some figures in research findings as inaccurate. General speaking, he said, the whole contingent of teachers in China are healthy psychologically, so are the country’s primary and middle school students.

It is an objective reality that some sort of psychological problems exist among some teachers, and China will enhance healthy education in this regard. But China cannot simply copy from ethics and concept from Western psychology and, therefore, should not mix psychological problems with people’s mind-sets, which makes it difficult to draw a fair conclusion, he said.

Zhou said China will step up the psychological education for teachers, since the education work relies on teachers’ quality. — MNA/Xinhua

HK students win eight bronzes at Maths contest

HONG KONG, 28 Jan—Eight Hong Kong secondary school students have won eight bronze medals, the greatest number ever for Hong Kong in the China Mathematical Olympiad 2005 held in Zhengzhou, capital of central China’s Henan Province.

A total of 153 mathematically gifted secondary students from 36 teams participated in the competition, jointly organized by the China Mathematical Society Olympiad Committee, the Editing Department of Maths, Physics and Chemistry for High School Students and Zhengzhou Foreign Language School between January 20-25.

Teams from Hong Kong, Macao and Russia were specially invited to join provinces of China to take part in the competition, which aims to enhance students’ standard of mathematics and learning motivation, identify the mathematically gifted and step up mathematics education in the Mainland.

Visit to cultural relics and historical sites in Zhengzhou were arranged. The Hong Kong team also participated in sharing sessions to acquaint themselves with the Mainland, boost their sense of national identity, and strengthen their communication and inter-personal skills. — MNA/Xinhua

Russian oil, gas output up 8.9% in 2004

The largest oil producers included YUKOS with nearly 85.4 million tons, Lukoil with 83.8 million tons, and Surgutneftegas with 59.2 million tons, the service was quoted by Interfax news agency as saying.

Output of natural gas grew 1.9 percent year-on-year to reach nearly 632 billion cubic metres in 2004, including 533.7 billion cubic metres from the country’s gas monopoly Gazprom.

Russia, the world’s second largest oil producer after Saudi Arabia, has been reaping considerable profits from soaring world oil prices.

Last year, Russia exported nearly 182.2 million tons of oil to countries outside the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), up 17.5 percent compared with 2003. Oil exports to CIS countries grew 7.3 percent to stand at some 40.3 million tons in 2004, the central administration in charge of dispatching the country’s fuel and energy resources said earlier this month. — MNA/Xinhua

Paintings of Da Vinci, Michelangelo to be shown in Beijing

BEIJING, 28 Jan—Paintings by Da Vinci and Michelangelo, never on public display before, will be put on show in China’s National Art Gallery (NAG) from February 1 to 15, to celebrate the Chinese Spring Festival, sources with the NAG said here Thursday.

This show is part of the celebrations held by NAG for the Spring Festival. During the period, this top artist museum of China will stage four arts shows simultaneously for the first time.

The second show Air crash kills two pilots in Romania

BUCHAREST, 28 Jan—A mail plane crashed in northeastern Romania early Thursday, killing the two pilots on board, the local radio station Radio Total reported.

The plane was on its way from the Romanian capital to Hungary when it crashed near the city of Fas, 400 kilometres north of Bucharest, the radio quoted a local official as saying. Only the two pilots were reportedly on board.

It was snowing when the accident occurred. No further details were available. — MNA/Xinhua

China to eliminate extra educational fees

BEIJING, 28 Jan—Chinese Minister of Education Zhou Ji said here Thursday that Chinese Government is confident that it can eliminate extraneous fees charged by individual schools.

“Random charging in education infringe upon people’s interests, obstruct the education reform and especially has a bad effect upon the school children,” Zhou said in a Press conference held here Thursday.

In recent years, Zhou acknowledged, China has been promoting “one fee for all” in compulsory edu-

A Vietnamese vendor displays oranges at a wholesale market in Hanoi, on 28 Jan, 2005. — Interfax

According to Feng, the painting works for the Renaissance Art show were purchased by the French Government with 100 million euros donated by famous French company Carrefour.

As an important project for the Sino-French culture exchanges, the show chose China as the first overseas stop. The paintings, valued at 11 million euros, will arrive in Beijing in several days, Feng said.

Feng stressed the NAG is taking every opportunity to promote Chinese arts and painters. — MNA/Xinhua

A model of the Rolls-Royce engine to be used in Boeing’s 7E7 Dreamliner is displayed at a China Aerospace Exhibition in Zhuhai, China, November 2, 2004. Boeing Co. will sign on 28 Jan, 2005 deals worth up to $7.5 billion to sell 60 of its 7E7 Dreamliner planes to six Chinese airlines, a source familiar with the transactions said on Thursday. — Interfax

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Humanitarian work of MRCS

Aung Kyaw Hsan (MRCS)

Founded in 1920 with the aim — to reduce poverty and suffering — the Myanmar Red Cross Society is now 85 years old. During these years, the MRCS carried out its three major tasks — to raise the health standard of Myanmars, to control diseases, and to help the people in need.

It is a reserve force of the nation as well as a long-living humanitarian organization. In addition to its international standard humanitarian activities, the MRCS is also launching philanthropic programmes at home in accord with the nation’s geographical and historical conditions, traditions and cultural, and the national character.

The Red Cross is an altruistic activity, protecting, saving and helping the vulnerable and the victims according to seven fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, unity, voluntary service and universality.

The emergence of Red Cross activities and the seven fundamental principles concern the human history. In the earliest part of human history, men set up consolidated and peaceful communities based on kindness and sympathy for their continued existence. But later greed divided human beings into friends and foes, and created conflicts and wars in the world. But Henry Dunant founded a humanitarian organization and the symbol the “Red Cross” that stands for humanity, based on kindness and sympathy without making any discrimination between friend and foe.

History has it that the Red Cross originated in the heart of Henry Dunant at the Battle of Solferino in Italy. The Red Cross movement represents the activities of the ICRC, the IFRC and the Red Cross societies all around the world in accord with the seven fundamental principles. Up to 2005, the ICRC and IFRC have 181 member nations.

Loving kindness (metta), sympathy (karuna), compassion (mudita) and forbearance (uppakkha) have flourished in Myanmar society since yore. A Buddhist treatise teaches man to help the needy with food, clothing and medicine for livelihood. The teaching agrees with the concept of the Red Cross. The treatise also says that persons like the Red Cross volunteers will enjoy a better life in their future existence.

In accord with its fine traditions, the Myanmar Red Cross Society is launching its activities with greater momentum, standing shoulder to shoulder with its sister organizations all around the globe. The MRCS has been laying down work programmes to stand as a qualified organization in the future also. Based on its 2010 strategy — to help improve the lives of disaster victims, with humanitarian strength as the base — the MRCS is trying to realize her lofty aim: to become a top organization capable of organizing the public to take part in the humanitarian programmes for the vulnerable and the victims in any place of the nation.

The work programmes involve the task of improving the health of the communities of the vulnerable and the victims or the individuals and setting up a disaster-free environment for them with the strength of volunteers nation-wide; and of helping disaster victims to lead a normal life.

With the leadership of the MRCS (Central) and supervisory committees, Red Cross volunteers at all levels are exerting energetic efforts to implement the work programmes covering health care services, first aid, anti-HIV and AIDS campaigns, health education, blood donation, artificial limb programmes, information, disaster management, school Red Cross, and dissemination of Red Cross knowledge.

Supporting bodies including the management department, financial department, health department, communication department, training department, disaster management department, printing department and transport department have been formed to systematically implement the work programmes.

Under the MRCS are 17 state/division Red Cross supervisory committees, 65 district supervisory committees, 324 township Red Cross societies and 33 Red Cross societies of universities and colleges. The total manpower of the MRCS is 43,553 life-long members, 33,262 members, 102,769 school Red Cross members, and 201,226 Red Cross brigade members. As it has lived long, it has also produced a large number of volunteers helping people with sacrificing spirit.

The goodwill efforts of Henry Dunant Award winner Red Cross Sergeant Sai Aung Hlaing Myint and Florence Nightingale award winners Matron Daw Khin Ohn Mya (Retired), nursing staff officer Daw M Yaw Nan and midwife Daw Thein Yi have been honoured and acknowledged by the world.

Dailies are featuring the open-handed activities of the Red Cross and motos, and songs are also honouring them.

The MRCS has held meetings to draw the seventh strategic work programme and to develop the subordinate associations as well as a meeting with sister associations from foreign countries. In this regard, we are confident that the MRCS will come out as a qualified humanitarian organization standing tall among the world Red Cross societies in the near future.

And with this article, I honour the volunteers for carrying out Red Cross activities energetically and dedicating their entire lives in the humanitarian work, and hail the eighth MRCS Conference.

(Translation: TMT)


Paper reading session on health held

YANGON, 28 Jan—The paper reading session on health co-sponsored by the Central Health Education Division of the Health Planning Department and the Worksite Health Division of the Health Department under the Ministry of Health and NGOs was held at the National Health Museum in Sangyoun Township at 2 pm today. Assistant Project Manager of the Worksite Health Department Dr Nay Win Oo presented a paper on healthy cities and explained the background history of the healthy cities and measures being taken for healthy cities and procedures.

Next, Deputy Director of the Central Health Education Department Dr Khin Maung Lwin and party made demonstration on inspection tour of villages for water-borne diseases and those present inspected sample of water.

The paper reading session will be held once a month regularly.

It will be held on 25 February and anyone may attend it.—MNA

Pulses & beans export promotion workshop held

YANGON, 28 Jan — The workshop on promotion of pulses and beans export organized by the external and internal market news and research group of the Ministry of Commerce was held at the ministry this morning.

Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun gave an opening address. Next, Manager U Aung Swe of Myanmar Agriculture Service, Chief Engineer U Ng Paw of MAPT, Managing Director U Tun Tun Naing of E Trade Myanmar Co Ltd and Chairman of Myanmar Pulses and Beans and Sesame Merchants Association U Tun Aung submitted papers to the workshop.—MNA
Cooperation with ICRC and... (from page 1) activities have gathered momentum and flourished in the nation, standing as voluntary services. The government is implementing the political, economic and social objectives for transforming the nation into a peaceful, modern and developed one under the correct leadership of the government and with the participation of the departments, national people and social organizations.

The government, while building a new nation on self-reliant basis, has been rendering necessary assistance constantly for all the social organizations born of the national people to enable them to gain development momentum on the correct national trend. It is heartening to see that the association is participating actively in the community welfare concerns the length and breadth of the nation, it noted.

In an attempt to implement the national health plans based on the national health policy, through which priority is given to primary health care services for the people, the government is enlisting social organizations like the MRCS and the private sector, he said. Similarly, the government is helping local and foreign organizations, UN agencies and NGOs take part in precautionary measures against possible natural disasters. The government is also carrying out health promotion tasks such as AIDS control, promoting the consump- tion of iodized salt, and caring of children and elder persons, with the help of the social organizations and the UN agencies, he said.

The council was formed with high-ranking officials and departmental officials and concerted efforts are being made to carry out functions of Myanmar Red Cross Society in line with the projects and work pro- grammes of the State and for the nation to be able to provide assistance to the society. Accordingly, high-ranking officials, departmental officials and representatives from the states and divisions are making integrated and well-coordinated efforts in the council in the interest of the State and the people and for development of the society with the na- tional outlook. Hence, it is sure that the activities of Red Cross in all parts of the nation will make progress with added momentum.

Therefore, in electing the representatives from the states and divi- sions, it is imperative to elect those who are capable of serving the interest of the State and the people. Cooperation with the ICRC and the IFRC, should not be centred on acquiring financial assist- ance and assessment is to be made in order not to tarnish the national pres- tige and character. At a time when the Red Cross representatives all over the country are meeting, plans and future work programmes that will contribute much to successful realization of the national objectives and development of the Red Cross activities are to be embodied.

In conclusion, the Secretary-1 stressed the need for Red Cross mem- bers to be in oneness under- work programmes which will contribute much to the progress with added mo- mentum. It is sure that the activities of Red Cross in all parts of the nation will make progress with added momentum.

The National Convention is held with the aim of formulating a constitu- tion for it is the only way to the emergence of a modern, developed, disci- pline-flourishing democratic nation.

The government is accelerating equitable develop- ment tasks in States and Divisions including rural and urban areas. In the district, he recalled de- velopment tasks such as construction of village-to-village roads, repair of ba- sic education schools, sink- ing of tubewells. He added that nowa- days there are 29,508 acres of farmlands in the district thanks to construction of nine dams in the district. Progress has been made in the health care sector.

He continued to say that four tubewells could be sunk in four villages by spending K 2 million, and three tubewells in the ur- ban area with a K 3.5-mil- lion donation of a wellwisher. In addition of historical... reports on rural development tasks in Yamethin District. He said that five rural de- velopment tasks are being carried out as the organiza- tional tasks of the associa-

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Taking lessons from history…

YANGON, 29 Jan — A ceremony to offer gold plates and gold foils to the Shwedagon Pagoda was held at the platform of the pagoda this morning.

Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Yangon Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and officials donated ‘soon’ to Sayadaws.

Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe offered gold plates and foils donated by wellwishers and alms to Vice-Chairman of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Ovadaçäryia of the pagoda board of trustees Abhidhaja Maha Raththa Paññindabhivamsa. Similarly, Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Chairman of the Committee for All-round Perpetual Renovation of Shwedagon Pagoda Maj-Gen Hsan Hsint, the deputy ministers and officials presented gold plates and foils and provisions to the Sayadaws. The Secretary Sayadaw delivered a sermon. And officials conveyed gold plates and foils round the pagoda. Next, Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Maj-Gen Hsan Hsint and the deputy ministers fixed gold plates and foils at the pagoda. The commander and the minister sprinkled scented water on them.

In conclusion, he said, reaching towards a new peaceful, modern developed nation, all national people are actively take part in their respective roles in accord with the objectives of the 58th anniversary of Union Day — for all the national races to safeguard the national policy non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty; to keep the Union spirit ever alive and dynamic among the national people; for all the national people to defend and safeguard the Union Spirit for its perpetual existence; to prevent, through national solidarity, the danger of internal and external destructive elements undermining peace and stability of the State and national development; and for all national races to make concerted efforts for successful implementation of the seven-point future policy programme. Thandwe Township USDA Secretary U San Naing said that the Panglong Conference was held in Panglong in the early days of February 1947 and the Panglong Agreement was signed on 12 February. The conference indicated national solidarity and it is vividly clear that national unity plays the most crucial role in ensuring non-disintegration of the Union.

In so doing, the plan is under way to spend over K 18,500 million on the gold plates and foils offering ceremony. Next, Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Maj-Gen Hsan Hsint and the deputy ministers fixed gold plates and foils at the pagoda. The commander and the minister sprinkled scented water on them.

The British colonialists waged three aggressive wars on Myanmar. But all Myanmar national people put up a stiff armed resistance to them. Realizing the national unity of Myanmar, they drove a wedge among the national people to cause misunderstanding. Again, when the British granted Myanmar’s independence, they plotted to leave the hilly regions behind. However, with the national unity of all the people armed with Union spirit, Panglong agreement was signed on 12 February 1947. Consequently, Myanmar managed to declare itself as an independent sovereignty nation on 4 January 1948.

The chairman said now it will turn 58 years on 12 February this year since the Union Day was born on 12 February, 1947. And it is the duty of all national people of the Union of Myanmar to ensure non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty with Union Spirit. The chairman added that taking lessons from history, all are needed to uphold Our Three Main National Causes while they are es-saying to shape a modern, developed state. It is so important that the National Convention is to be held successfully for the emergence of an enduring State constitution to be able to build up a peaceful, modern and developed nation. The National Convention, which has adjourned since 1996, was reconvened on 17 May 2004 and will resume on 17 February 2005 at Nyaungshpin Camp. That is why, the meeting chairman said, all the people are urged to play their respective roles in successful implementation of the seven-point Road Map.

Also present on the occasion were State Ovadaçäryia Sayadaws, Secretary Magway Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara and members of the Sangha, officials and wellwishers.

MNA

Taking lessons from history…

USDA members and local people of Kyenitali Town marching to the mass rally. — MNA

(See page 15)
Yangon, 29 Jan — Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye and Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan attended the ceremony to donate cash and books to village self-reliant libraries in Sagaing Division, at the city hall in Monywa yesterday morning.

Also present were local authorities, departmental personnel, social organizations and 146 wellwishers.

Speaking on the occasion, Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye said that the Government has set the national goal to build a peaceful, modern and developed nation. The objective on uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation is included in four social objectives. Head of State Senior General Than Shwe has given a guidance that the qualified human resource plans are to be implemented significantly in building the nation. As such, self-reliant village libraries were established for ensuring dissemination of knowledge to the rural people. Upto 31 December 2004, self-reliant libraries have been opened in 1,761 villages of Sagaing Division. Therefore, cash and books were donated today so as to open libraries in remaining 4,165 villages by the year 2006.

The commander urged those present to carry out rural development tasks as national duty with national spirit in order to narrow the gap between rural and urban areas. Later, he thanked Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan said he thanked Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, heads of departments, organizations and wellwishers for donation of over K 5.4 million and over 40,000 books of various kinds in order to realize the objectives of the Ministry of Information. To-day being the Knowledge age, it is essential for the people to promote their knowledge, he added.

He quoted Head of State Senior General Than Shwe as saying that Myanmar Society is to be established as a life-long learning one. That is why the ministry is opening self-reliance libraries for gaining much knowledge of rural people, he continued. Over 11,000 libraries have been opened so far and efforts are being made for opening of another 50,000 libraries in 2006, he said.

He said cash and book donation contributes much towards the realization of the objectives of the ministry and all cash and books donated will be used for rural libraries in Sagaing Division only. In opening of the libraries, the most appropriate and easiest ways and means are utilized and opening of the library aims at cultivating of reading habit and obtaining books for rural people to read. Continued efforts are to be made for maintenance of libraries, increase in the number of books, providing furniture needed and establishment of long-lasting libraries, he added.

He requested heads of departments and wellwishers to provide assistance of emergence of long-lasting libraries. Donations inclusive of K 5,459,500 and 500 FECs and 40,156 books worth K 4,312,120.

Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye and Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan inspected construction of Union Highway (from Monywa Home for the Aged to Kyweye junction) and construction of 12 feet wide road for slow-moving vehicles on Monywa-Kyayuka Road.

In Mandalay, the minister inspected printing of newspaper at the sub-printing press. He then gave instructions on better impression of the newspaper, printing as scheduled, distribution of papers to the people to read in early morning, transport of newspaper to other towns, supervision on distribution, maintenance of machines daily, weekly and monthly, fire prevention measures, supply of fire fighting equipment and drills for fire fighting.

Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min and Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin formally open CNG filling station No 005 (Thakayta). — MNA

Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min and Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin formally open CNG filling station No 005 (Thakayta). — MNA

Yangon, 29 Jan — The CNG filling station No 005 (Thakayta) of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise was opened at the station on Ayeyawain Road in Thakayta Township this morning.

Present were ministers, deputy ministers, the No 2 Military Region Commander, departmental heads, members of USA and social organizations and officials. Director U Myint Htay of MOGE reported on matters related to the station. Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min and Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin formally opened the station. Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lan Thi unveiled the signboard of the station.

The ministers, the deputy ministers and guests inspected the CNG filling stations. Director U Myint Htay briefed them on storage system of the gas, functions of the compressor, the dispenser and the calculator. The ministers, the deputy ministers and guests viewed filling of CNG to buses and departmental vehicles. The station can sell CNG to about 300 NGV cars a day. It can fill CNG to four cars at the same time. One hundred and sixty-five cubic feet of CNG, which is equal to a gallon of petrol in driving a car, is priced K 100. Plans are under way to open more CNG filling stations in Yangon City. — MNA
India, China economic ties poised to grow

NEW DELHI, 29 Jan — Describing India and China as the “twin engines of growth” of Asia, India’s Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath said Thursday there were several complementarities in the two economies that could be harnessed in order to achieve rapid and further expansion of trade and economic ties.

“I do not see this as an India versus China debate but rather in India with China context,” Nath said at a session on ‘Beijing and New Delhi-navigating new territories’ at the World Economic Forum meeting at Davos. He said the complementarities were reflected in the fact that India had a comparative advantage in IT software and China in IT hardware, adding there was tremendous untapped potential in trade between them.

“The India-China two-way trade is now one billion US dollars a month, compared to one billion US dollars a year a decade ago. This twelve-fold increase compared to one billion US dollars a year now is one billion US dollars a month,” Nath said. “We are still left with tremendous untapped potential in trade.”

The India-China ‘twin engines’ are also evidenced in the territories’ at the World Economic Forum. While the US is trying to boost its economic ties with China, India is targeting greater FDI, Nath said. The median age for smokers, this suggests that smoking can affect both the initial development and spread of cancer. “Since the age of diagnosis of earlier smokers was younger than nonsmokers, this suggests that smoking could impact upon the initiation phase,” Brand said.

In 2005, an estimated 32,180 people will be diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, and 31,800 people will die from it, according to American Cancer Society projections. It is the fourth leading cause of cancer death. “Since pancreatic cancer is almost uniformly fatal, a younger age of onset means more potential years of life lost. Thus, these findings offer yet another important reason for individuals not only to stop smoking, but never to start,” Brand said.

Smoking also causes lung, esophageal and bladder cancer, among others. A second study presented at the meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology found that adding a new drug to standard chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer gave some patients a few extra weeks of life. The new drug, erlotinib, is sold under the brand name Tarceva by Genentech Inc. and OSI Pharmaceuticals Inc. and is one of a new generation of targeted cancer drugs that affects a molecule used by tumour cells to grow. For the study, half of a group of 569 pancreatic cancer patients got a standard therapy, Eli Lilly & Co.’s gemcitabine or Gemzar, while the other half got Gemzar plus Tarceva. After a year, 24 per cent of the patients who got Tarceva were alive, compared to 17 per cent of patients given Gemzar alone.

Japan has no specific plans to stop loans to China

Tokyo, 29 Jan — Japan has no specific plans to stop cheap development loans to China, Japanese officials said on Friday, responding to a newspaper report that such aid could end as early as 2008 when Beijing hosts the Olympics.

Japan has already reduced low interest loans to booming China for three straight years, adding to tensions rooted in Japan’s brutal occupation of parts of the country from 1931 to 1945. Japan says all wartime compensation issues concerning China were settled by a 1972 joint statement that established diplomatic ties. But some analysts say China sees Japan’s development aid as a form of reparations.

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun business daily said the government had started to consider further cuts in aid and may stop fresh loans from as early as the fiscal year starting in April 2008. “An amicable ending for both sides would be for there to be closure when the Olympics are held and the impression of (China as) a developing country disappears,” the newspaper quoted a senior Japanese Foreign Ministry official as saying.

Asked about the report, Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said he did not think specific plans were being considered. “I absolutely do not think that considerations are being made to stop them to specific countries or in specific years,” Hosoda told a news conference. “I do not think there are such facts.” Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki also said no decision had been made to stop new yen loans to China. “Nothing in particular has been decided yet,” Tanigaki told reporters.

Singapore launches new frigate

SINGAPORE, 29 Jan — The Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN) launched its new frigate RSS Steadfast here on Friday, Tan.

Addressing the ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister Tony Tan called the launch of RSS Steadfast a milestone in the growth and capability development of not just the RSN, but of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF).

“Defence scientists and operational users were brought together to define requirements and to identify promising technologies that would meet our unique operational demands,” said Tan.

Equipped with state-of-the-art command and control systems, sensors, precision weapons as well as naval helicopters, the new frigate will integrate seamlessly with other SAF assets so as to enhance its battlespace awareness and mission success.

According to the frigate programme started by the Ministry of Defence a decade ago, Sim-
SAARC LDCs to get EU duty-free access to ready-made garments

DHAKA, 28 Jan—The European Union (EU) has decided to give duty-free access to ready-made garments (RMG) from the least developed countries (LDCs) belonging to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Anmol Huq, President of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Thursday confirmed to Xinhua that the EU will offer the free access under new Generalized System of Preference (GSP) facilities to be effective from July 2005, while Bangladesh as an LDC will be one of the beneficiaries.

He said under the new EU GSP, rules of origin will be relaxed in case of garment export from the LDCs in South Asia to the EU countries, as the EU will allow the industries here to use fabrics and other raw materials imported from the SAARC and ASEAN countries.

Huq further pointed out there is a bright possibility of Bangladesh RMG products to get duty-free access to the US market, the largest importer of Bangladesh apparels.

A bill will be placed before both the US Congress and Senate, seeking approval for duty-free access of garments from some of the Asian and Middle East countries including Bangladesh.

The BGMEA president was optimistic about Bangladesh’s getting the approval from the US Government, and expects a boost in RMG export with the duty-free access to the 25-nation EU market.

Huq noted the United States now levies a 16-per-cent duty on RMG imports including those from Bangladesh, but with the end of the quota regime at the beginning of 2005, Bangladeshi garment products will become free from all tariff and non-tariff barriers once the duty-free access come into force after approval of the US Congress and the Senate.

MA/N/Xinhua

19 Chinese seamen held in Malaysia return to China

KUALA LUMPUR, 28 Jan—Chinese Embassy in Kuala Lumpur confirmed Wednesday that 19 Chinese seamen on a Taiwanese fishing boat which was seized in Malaysia Port of Johore Baru last Sunday have returned to China Tuesday evening.

The Malaysian Marine Police patrol vessels last Sunday intercepted the fishing boat Dong Yi 668 in the Malacca Straits and escorted it to the Port Johore Baru. It is reported there was a suspected mutiny on the deck of the vessel.

Kosasih from Singapore’s Ministry, the official newspaper as say Wednesday, that 19 Chinese seamen held in Malaysia return to China Tuesday evening.

19 Chinese seamen held in Malaysia return to China

MA/N/Xinhua

Northwest Airlines orders eight new Airbus aircraft

MINNEAPOLIS, 28 Jan—Northwest Airlines said it has ordered eight new Airbus A330s, saying that the deal will help it replace its aging DC-10s on flights to Europe.

Northwest said Wednesday it would begin using the new aircraft next year, with the last ones to be delivered in 2007. It also said it would take delivery on three more A330s in 2006, one to two years earlier than planned.

The eight new planes are to be delivered to Northwest Airlines Corp. owns 21 DC-10s, which are an average of 25.8 years old, according to BACK Aviation Solutions.

The nation’s fourth-largest airline had 2.46 billion US dollars in cash at the end of December, and by the end of this month it is expected to take delivery of the eight planes.

It also said it would buy six A330-300 and two of the longer-range A330-200s. The A330-300 has 264 coach seats and 34 in business class on the A330-200.

Northwest said it now has 32 A330s on order, of which 15 have been delivered. An Airbus spokesman said the order for the eight new planes was finalized this week.

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MA/N/Xinhua

Indonesian Parliament endorses purchase of four Russian choppers

JAKARTA, 28 Jan—A commission at the Indonesian House of Representatives has done a turnround and will allow the government to go ahead with the purchase of four Russian-made Mi-17 helicopters worth 21.6 million US dollars in total.

However, the legislators demanded that individuals suspected of committing infractions in the procurement process be brought to court.

“We will support the purchase of the helicopters, but there must also be a legal process for those involved in offenses,” Effendi Simbolon, a legislator who chairs a team assessing the procurement process, quoted Thursday by The Jakarta Post newspaper as saying.

Effendi did not name any suspects. Earlier reports suggested that Andy Kosash from Singapore’s Swiss Air allegedly manipulated contractual documents for the planned purchase.

Follow legislator Haji Ayatun Thohari of the Golkar Party confirmed that Commission 1 members approved the purchase. The endorsement, agreed upon during an informal meeting of the commission on Wednesday, negated a decision last year to reject the purchase.

Last year, after initially questioning several issues, the commission raised irregularities in the procurement process, the commission recommended that the Defence Minister cancel the purchase of the helicopters. Commission 1 also demanded that Swiss Air, a mediator in the procurement, return the 3.24-million-US-dollars advance payment.

It also said the decision made by the Army chief on October 10, 2002 to name PT Putra Prima as government’s agent in the transaction was illegal, and that Commission 1 also demanded that the Defence Ministry cancel the purchase of the helicopters. Commission 1 also demanded that Swiss Air, a mediator in the procurement, return the 3.24-million-US-dollars advance payment.

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Indonesian Parliament endorses purchase of four Russian choppers

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MA/N/Xinhua

Syrian media speaks highly of Assad’s visit to Russia

DAMASCUS, 28 Jan—Syrian President Bashar al-Assad’s landmark visit to Russia will lay a “strong basis for stronger cooperation”, the official Syria Times newspaper said in an editorial Thursday.

The paper reviewed the long history of cooperation between the two countries, saying that “both people have the goodwill for furthering relations to their highest strategic level.”

The summit between Assad and Russian President Vladimir Putin offered a “gold opportunity” to further cooperations in all fields, the paper said.

The paper justified future military cooperation between the two countries “for the sake of peace in the region and the world”.

It added that “Assad has been and continues to be a firm supporter for a Russian role in the Mideast peace process”.

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MNA/Xinhua

Vietnam reports over 1,300 HIV infections in January

HANOI, 28 Jan—Vietnam has so far this year detected more than 1,300 HIV carriers, raising the total to 90,600, according to the country’s General Statistics Office on Wednesday.

Of the total cases, 14,500 have developed into AIDS, including over 4,400 fatalities. In Vietnam, some 62 per cent of HIV carriers are in the age bracket of 20-29, when they are mostly sexually active, and most of transmissions result from drug injecting.

In a move to reduce the infection rate among its 82-million population to below 0.3 per cent by 2010, and keep it unchanged after 2020, Vietnam has centred its efforts on raising public awareness, supervising drug injectors, improving quality of HIV/AIDS treatment, better caring affected people, and increasing state budget for anti-disease activities.

The country has recently intensified propaganda about HIV/AIDS active, and most of transmissions result from drug injecting.

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The country has recently intensified propaganda about HIV/AIDS active, and most of transmissions result from drug injecting.

In a move to reduce the infection rate among its 82-million population to below 0.3 per cent by 2010, and keep it unchanged after 2020, Vietnam has centred its efforts on raising public awareness, supervising drug injectors, improving quality of HIV/AIDS treatment, better caring affected people, and increasing state budget for anti-disease activities.
Overseas experts to examine HK’s red fire ant samples

HONG KONG, 28 Jan — Samples of the suspected red fire ants found in a Hong Kong’s wetland park will be sent to the Chinese Mainland, Japan and Britain for examination, Hong Kong’s Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food York Chow said here Thursday.

The ants’ reproductive power is the same as that of Queen ants. They bite harder than other ants.” Samples have been taken for examination and the department is investigating the source of the ants and the time of their habitation.

Ecuador, Costa Rica sign document on cooperation

Ecuador, 29 Jan — Ecuador and Costa Rica signed here a document Thursday on bilateral cooperation and regional integration.

The document was signed by Ecuadoran President Lucio Gutierrez and his Costa Rican counterpart, Abel Pacheco. It covered trade, tourism, the fight against crime, culture and education exchanges, science and technology cooperation and environmental protection.

In the document, the two leaders expressed satisfaction with the results of Wednesday’s summit of Latin American banana-producing countries. At the summit in Ecuador, leaders from six countries — Colombia, Peru, Panama — issued a statement opposing a European Union plan to raise tariffs drastically on their banana exports as from 2006. Latin America is the largest banana producer and exporter of the world. Ecuador and Costa Rica are the world’s fourth and fifth largest banana producer and exporter respectively.

In the document, Gutierrez and Pacheco expressed concern over drug-trafficking in the global context.

Kazakhstan’s relations with China made significant headway in 2004

ASTANA, 28 Jan — Kazakhstan’s relations with China made significant headway in 2004 and they are destined for sound development in the coming years, Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister Akhmetzhan Yesimov told Xinhua in a recent interview.

The two neighbours have enjoyed fast-developing friendly relations since they forged diplomatic ties 13 years ago, Yesimov said.

The Year 2004 was specially important for the two countries’ ties as Kazakh President Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev visited China twice in the year and Kazakh Foreign Minister Kasymzhomart Kemelevich Tokayev toured Beijing three times, during which a string of strategic agreements were reached, he said. Other key Kazakh Cabinet members, including the Defence Minister, Energy and Mineral Resources Minister and Transport Minister, also visited Beijing in 2004, Yesimov said.

A notable development was the convening in July of the first meeting of the Kazakhstan-China Cooperation Committee, co-chaired by Yesimov himself and Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi, the Deputy Prime Minister said.

Kazakhstan highly values the establishment of the joint committee and hopes that it would serve as an efficient tool coordinating mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries, he said.

The committee, set up in May 2003 during Nazarbayev’s visit to Beijing, comprises 10 sub-committees and is responsible for implementing bilateral agreements and promoting cooperation in various fields.

Speaking of economic cooperation, Yesimov said bilateral trade has seen steady growth in the past decade, with two-way trade topping four billion US dollars last year (4.5 billion US dollars last year, 4.5 billion US dollars last year, 4.5 billion US dollars last year, 4.5 billion US dollars last year), Chinese official statistics).

The two countries also carried out fruitful cooperation in the energy sector. — Xinhua

Two little polar bears born recently at the zoo in Rostock, northern Germany, are presented to the public. — INTERNET
Barca signs Argentine striker Lopez

**SPORTS**

**MADRID**, 29 Jan—Barcelona have signed Argentine striker Maxi Lopez on a 4-1/2-year deal from River Plate, the Primera Liga leaders said on Friday.

The Catalan club are paying a reported fee of six million euros (7.82 million US dollars) for the 20-year-old, who has been signed to cover for injured Swedish striker Henrik Larsson who is out for the season after tearing knee ligaments in November.

Lopez passed a medical with the Catalan club on Thursday but was unable to sign his contract until Barca agreed payment terms with River on Friday morning.

The club already have former River Plate striker Javier Saviola on their books but the 23-year-old was loaned out to Monaco at the start of the season.

**Lopez is the second new recruit to join Barcelona in the January transfer window.** The 33-year-old Italian defender Demetrio Albertini signed earlier this week after being released from his contract with Serie A side Atalanta.— **MNA/Reuters**

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**Santos beat Mogi Mirim 4-2 in Paulista C'ship**

**RIO DE JANEIRO**, 29 Jan—Brazilian champions Santos maintained their perfect start to the season when they beat Mogi Mirim 4-2 away in the Paulista championship.

Substitute Douglas, who replaced forward Robinho, scored two late goals to wrap up the points in Thursday night's game after Mogi Mirim had twice come from behind the level the scores at 2-2.

Robinho, whose agent Wagner Ribeiro has repeatedly denied that he has agreed terms to join Real Madrid in July, failed to score for the first time this season.

Santos have a maximum nine points from three games in the regional competition, which serves as a prelude to the Brazilian championship. They lead Palmeiras and Sao Paulo on goal difference.

**MNA/Reuters**

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**Hewitt becomes first Australian finalist in 17 years**

**MELBOURNE**, 29 Jan—Lleyton Hewitt battled his way into the Australian Open final with a typically tenacious 3-6, 7-6, 7-6, 6-1 win over Andy Roddick on Friday to become the first Australian men's singles finalist in 17 years.

"It’s awesome," the 23-year-old said after downing the second seed. "I always said I'd do anything to play in the first night final in Australian Open men's history and I've got my chance."

Only Marat Safin stands between Hewitt and his dream of becoming the first Australian to win the men's title since 1976.

The Russian, twice a runner-up, beat marathon match point after fourth set 6-4, 6-4, 6-7 (3), 6-4, 6-4 in a match that lasted over four hours.

"I was so tired, I was feeling like I couldn't go on..." Hewitt said.

"(But) I just had to dig deep..." he admitted.

The Australian’s 7,000 capacity centre court crowd roared him on as he fought off a determined Roddick.

"I didn’t think I could do it..." Hewitt said.

"I'm thinking about going out there and give it everything I’ve got and see what happens."

Hewitt becomes first Australian finalist in 17 years...

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**Santos beat Mogi Mirim 4-2 away in the Paulista championship.**

**MNS/Reuters**

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**End of season signings of Greek players**

**PORTSMOUTH, 29 Jan—**Portsmouth have completed the signings of Greek keeper Konstantinos Chalkias and midfielder Giannis Skopelitis, the Premier League club said on Friday.

The 31-year-old Chalkias, part of Greece’s victorious Euro 2004 squad, has moved to Fratton Park from Panathinaikos, where he worked with Portsmouth’s new Croatian coach Velimir Zajec.

Skopelitis, 26, cost one million euros (1.89 million US dollars) from Greek club Egaleo, and both players could make their debuts in Saturday's FA Cup fourth-round tie at arch-rivals Southampton.

"The players we have announced today are proven and experienced," chairman Milan Mandaric told Portsmouth’s website.

"Konstantinos is a giant of a goalkeeper regarded as one of the top in Greek football and in my book you can never have enough class keepers."

"Skopelitis is a solid defensive midfielder man. Obviously, with Nigel Quashie and Andy Faye departing we felt we needed to reinforce in the midfield department.”

"Mandaric said there could be more arrivals before the end of the transfer window on Monday, although the signing of Russian midfielder Dmitri Bulykin has been delayed by paperwork.

"We may not have finished yet and are still looking to possibly bring in two more players with one of them an offensive midfielder man,” Mandaric said.

**MNA/Reuters**

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**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

**ACROSS**

1. Ova
3. Sound letter “H”
9. Mending-piece
10. “... this earth, this realm, this—”
11. Tree
13. Lewis Carroll character (3,6)
14. Planet
16. Erase
18. Victims of practical joke
in spring (5-4)
20. Graduate
22. European
23. Rap
25. Tunes
26. River of C. Europe

**DOWN**

1. Vacant
2. Obtain
4. Fast
5. Thankless person
6. Suite of rooms
7. Write on back of
8. Counterfeit
12. Cataraq
14. Sports ground
15. Reassembled
17. Leap, spring
19. NT Book
21. Card-game
24. Aged

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**Jumping for joy : Seventh seed Serena Williams of the US jumps for joy after winning match point against fourth seed Maria Sharapova of Russia in their women’s singles semifinal match at the 2005 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne.** Internet

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**Zimbabwe’s fifth seeds Wayne Black (R) and Kevin Ullyett celebrate their win against second seeds Bob Bryan (news) and Mike Bryan (news) of the US at the 2005 Australian Open double’s final in Melbourne on January 29, 2005. Black and Ullyett won in straight sets 6-4, 6-4—**Internet
The State constitution is of utmost importance in building a discipline-flourishing democratic nation. To be able to draw a complete State constitution, the seven-point Road Map has been laid down and is being implemented. The National Convention, the very first step of the seven-point Road Map, will soon resume. Therefore, the entire national people who are present on the occasion are to actively take part in successful realization of the National Convention by doing their bit in accordance with the objectives of the convention. The mass rally held in Bagan’s cultural region in 2003 unanimously approved the declaration for successful realization of the seven policy programmes. On behalf of the entire people, she said emphatically supported the national convention to be held on 17 February. She was glad to see that the government in cooperation with USDA, Red Cross, other related social organizations built schools, wells, roads and other transport facilities for improvement of socio-economic life of rural people. She supported rural development tasks in the directive, progress of work and future tasks presented by U Soe Win. She said USDA will serve the interest of the people and communities and urged the people to participate in the tasks for development.

Next, those present at the meeting unanimously agreed to the tasks of safeguarding Our Three Main Causes. The Chairperson of the meeting declared that the people supported the national convention and he confirmed the approval of the meeting. The meeting ended with shouting of the slogans.—VNA

WEATHER

Saturday, 29 January, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours

MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kachin State and upper Sagaing Division and generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Chin and Shan States, Tenasserim Division, (3°C) above normal in Sagaing Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were Namsam and Heho (3°C) each. Rainfall was 0.4 (Lashio) and PyinOoLwin (5°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 28-1-2005 was 95°F. Minimum temperature on 29-1-2005 was 62°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 29-1-2005 was 96%. Total sunshine hours on 28-1-2005 was (7.9) hours approx. Rainfalls on 29-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 8 knots from North-west at (14:30) hours MST on 28-1-2005.

Bay inference: Weather is cloudy in North and Central Bay and fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Rainfall valid until evening of 30-1-2005: Possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin, Chin and Rakhine States, Northern Shan States and upper Sagaing Division, weather will be partly cloudy in Mandalay, Magway and Lower Sagaing Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (40%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Possibility of isolated light rain in upper Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 30-1-2005: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 30-1-2005: Possibility of isolated light rain. Degree of certainty is (40%).
Taking lessons from history, all are to uphold Our Three Main National Causes while essaying to shape modern, developed nation

Thandwe District hails Union Day, supports National Convention

**Yangon, 29 Jan** — A ceremony to hail the Union Day and to support the National Convention took place in Kyetanti, Gwa township, Thandwe District, Rakhine State, this morning.

It was attended by the secretary of Rakhine State Union Solidarity and Development Association and executives, the secretary of Thandwe District USDA and executives, members of township USDAs in the district, departmental staff, members of social organizations and local people totalling over 2100.

Thandwe District USDA Secretary U Saw Myint Oo presided over the ceremony together with ex-headmaster of Kyetanti BEHS U Htein Lin, Chairman of Thandwe Township War Veterans Organization supervisory committee U Khin Maung Aye, Secretary of Thandwe District Organization for Women’s Affairs Daw Khin May Myint and Gwa township Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee Chairperson Daw Myint Myint Thein. Thandwe District USDA Executive Daw Thabyae Nyunt acted as MC. First, the MC announced the start of the ceremony and those present saluted the State Flag. Next, the meeting chairman, Thandwe District USDA Secretary U Saw Myint Oo delivered a speech. He said 12 February 2005 is the 58th anniversary of the Union Day that had been designated so to forge national unity and national solidarity of the people. Today is an auspicious day because we are all here to

Ceremony to hail Union Day and support National Convention in progress in Kyetanti, Gwa Township, Thandwe District. — MNA

**Yangon, 29 Jan** — A ceremony to honour the Union Day and to support the National Convention took place at Ywathitgyi Village, Pyawbwe Township, Mandalay Division, this morning.

Present were Mandalay Division Union Solidarity and Development Association Secretary U Tin Maung Oo and executives, the secretary and executives of Yamethin District USDA, secretaries and executives of local township USDAs, social organizations, Red Cross and fire brigades, and local people totalling over 11,500.

Yamethin District USDA Secretary U Tin Maung Aye and executives of Yamethin Township USDA,secretaries and executives of local township USDAs, social organizations, Red Cross and fire brigades, and local people totalling over 11,500.

Yamethin District USDA organizes the ceremony to hail Union Day and support National Convention in Ywathitgyi Village, Pyawbwe Township. — MNA

**12 Feb** is a day of historic importance

National Convention to resume on 17 Feb as declared

Rally commemorates Union Day, supports National Convention

**Yangon, 29 Jan** — A ceremony to honour the Union Day and to support the National Convention took place at Ywathitgyi Village, Pyawbwe township, Yamethin District, Mandalay Division, this morning.

Present were Mandalay Division Union Solidarity and Development Association Secretary U Tin Maung Aye and executives, the secretary and executives of Yamethin District USDA, secretaries and executives of local township USDAs, social organizations, Red Cross and fire brigades, and local people totalling over 11,500.

Yamethin District USDA Joint-Secretary U Tin Soe presided over the mass meeting. Daw Nwe Ni and Daw Khin Ma La, executives of Yamethin Township USDA, acted as MC and co-MC respectively.

U Tin Soe spoke on the occasion. He said the mass rally was held to hail the Union Day and to support the National Convention. The 12th of February 1947 is of historic importance as it is the day on which the entire national people came together to fight against the colonialists. From that day onwards, the Union Day is celebrated without missing a single year.

Now, the government is building the nation into a modern and developed one after laying down Our Three Main National Causes — non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and the perpetuation of sovereignty.

Strenuous efforts are also being exerted on agriculture, transport, industry, education and health to ensure all-round development across the country.

The National Convention, which started in May 2004 in line with the seven-point Road Map, will resume on 17 February this year. In conclusion, he called for active participation of the entire people in the successful realization of the Road Map.

U Kyi Shwe Myint, executive of Tatkon Township USDA, in his proposal for hailing the Union Day, said this year’s Union Day would be celebrated with the five objectives, adding that any

(See page 9)

INSIDE

Founded in 1920 with the aim — to reduce poverty and sufferings — the Myanmar Red Cross Society is now 85 years old.

(See page 8)

AUNG KYAW HSAN (MRCs)