Senior General Than Shwe sends felicitations to Bulgaria

YANGON, 3 March — Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Georgi Parvanov, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria, which falls on 3 March 2005. — MNA

140m gallons to be added to city’s daily water supply system

YANGON, 2 March — Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, accompanied by Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and member Col Tin Soe, this morning, inspected functions of Yangon City Water Supply Project (Ngamoeyeik) being implemented by YCDC in Hlegu and Hmaswy Townships.

On arrival at the site of building the syphon crossing Ngamoeyeik Creek near Kalihtaw (West) Village in Hlegu Township, the Secretary-1 and party were welcomed by heads of departments of YCDC and officials of the project.

In the briefing hall, the Secretary-1 heard reports on construction of the site linking the main canal of Ngamoeyeik Dam, the pump station, lakes at different areas, construction of the sub-power (See page 8)

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

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Members of MFPTMA leave for Malaysia

YANGON, 2 March — A 10-member delegation led by Joint-Secretary of the Myanmar Forest Products and Timber Merchants Association Dr U Myo Thet, together with three officials of the Ministry of Forestry left here by air this morning for Malaysia to attend the Malaysia International Furniture Exhibition 2005 to be held in Kuala Lumpur from 3 to 7 March. They were called on the entire peasantry to work in concert with the national people for the development of the agriculture sector, the main pillar of the national economy, for peace and development of the nation and for the successful realization of the seven-point policy programme for the future of the State.

The agriculture sector is important not only for people’s need for food but also for development of their socio-economic life. Therefore, such irrigation facilities as dams, sluice gates and river-water pumping stations are being built wherever necessary across the nation. A total of 89,400 million kyats has been spent on the construction of 171 dams. All these dams are now benefitting more than 2.3 million acres of farmland. Not only that, 300,000 more acres of farmland are being irrigated by 271 river-water pumping stations. The government has been fulfilling all the requirements of the agriculture sector. New plots of farmland are being reclaimed from fallow and virgin land and wetlands to increase cultivated acreage. Quality strains are being provided and scientific cultivation methods disseminated to boost production.

While working for all-round development of the nation, the government is translating into reality the seven-point policy programme for the future of the State so that a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation will emerge. At such a time like this, we would like to call on the entire peasantry to work hand in hand with the national people for the successful realization of the policy programme, also known as the Road Map.

Commander, Mayor inspect upgrading of Yangon City

YANGON, 2 March—Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Brig-Gen Aung Thein Linn yesterday morning inspected the tasks for the upgrading of Yangon City and fulfilled the requirements. First, Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Linn at 6 am arrived at the site between Lannmadaw Street and 20th Street in Thaketa Township, Yangon West District, and inspected progress of laying concrete slabs on the platforms of Maha Bandoola Street, the tarmacking of Strand Road between Shwedagon Pagoda Road and Shwebontha Street in Pabedan Township, the laying of concrete slabs on both platforms of 33rd Street, 35th Street, and Anawaththa Road in Kyunktada Township, the dredging of the drains in Mingala Taungnyunt Township, Yangon East District, and the tarmacking of Banyadala Road in Tamway Township and gave necessary instructions to officials.

Afterwards, the commander and the mayor gave necessary instructions, saying that upgrading tasks are being carried out in Yangon City with the aim of enabling the city to possess the characteristics of city and stressed the need for officials concerned to try their utmost in the tasks for upgrading of Yangon City. They also called for stepping up the implementation of the projects for making contribution towards raising the health standard of Yangonites. Next, giving necessary instructions, the commander and the mayor fulfilled the requirements. — MNA

Minister attends completion certificate presentation ceremony

YANGON, 2 March—A ceremony to present completion certificates to State School of Fine Arts (Yangon) and the State School of Drama under the Ministry of Culture was held in conjunction with dance presentation and staging of masterpieces at the National Theatre on Myoma Kyawng Street in Dagon Township here yesterday morning.

It was attended by Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, Director-General of the Fine Arts Department U Kyaw Win, deputy director-general and officials under the ministry, advisers, principal and course instructors, the secretaries of the two schools, and the trainees. — MNA

Development tasks carried out in Magway, Mandalay, Ayeyawady Divisions

YANGON, 2 March—

1. Township Development Affairs Committees under the Development Affairs Department of the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Committees are undertaking rural and urban development tasks with added momentum.

2. Pyapon Township DAC of Ayeyawady Division carried out the tarring of the Kyaukkamon Pagoda road during 2004-2005 fiscal year. The road is 622 feet long and 16 feet wide, and was constructed at a cost of K3 million.

3. Similarly, Magway Township DAC of Magway Division undertook tarring of Yanpe 22nd Street during 2004-2005 fiscal year. The road, 950 feet long and 18 feet wide, was constructed at a cost of K5.8 million.

4. Likewise, Thazi Township DAC of Mandalay Division plans to take measures to build Min-Naung Ywagaleyi road section which will be 6,800 feet long and 20 feet wide. The executive officer and engineers carried out field surveys on 3 February of 2005. In addition, Kehsi Township DAC executive officer U Maung Maung Myint and chairman of Maungninn village POC U Sai San Kyar formally opened 1200-gallon-capacity brick tank on 10 February 2005 fiscal year. — MNA

Students of University of East Yangon perform a dance depicting the Union Spirit at the talks held on 11-2-2005. — MNA
Chinese, Mauritian leaders pledge to deepen bilateral ties

PORT LOUIS, 1 March — Mauritian Prime Minister Paul Raymond Berenger met visiting Chinese Vice-Premier Zeng Peiyan here on Monday with both of them pledging to deepen friendly bilateral relations and expand their mutual beneficial cooperation.

Zeng said China and Mauritius have enjoyed long and traditional friendship, and the bilateral relations have been growing steadily since the two countries established diplomatic relations 33 years ago. High-level contacts and exchanges between China and Mauritius have been frequent, and their cooperation in various fields have been effective, Zeng said, stressing that China highly appreciates the Mauritian Government’s adherence to the “one China” policy.

Zeng said the recent visit paid by Berenger to China was successful, since the two countries’ leaders have reached important consensus on further developing Sino-Mauritian relations, with the two sides entering into agreements on economic and technology cooperation.

The Chinese side would like to join hands with Mauritius to promote the bilateral relations to a new level by carrying out a variety of cooperation in the principle of mutual respect, equality, mutual benefit and common development, said Zeng.

China forged diplomatic ties with the Indian Ocean island country in 1972.

Trade volume between the two sides reached 138.28 million US dollars in 2004.

Berenger recalled his recent visit to China, saying he has visited the East Asian country for three times and each time he could feel the great changes being taken place in China.

He thanked the Chinese Government for providing Mauritius with aid and pledged that his government will strengthen cooperation with the Chinese side in political, economic and cultural fields to consolidate the traditional relationship between the two countries.

After the talk, Zeng left here for Beijing, concluding his African tour, which has taken him on official visits to Kenya, the Republic of the Congo and Angola.

MNA/Xinhua

Uruguayan President-elect meets Chinese special envoy

MONTevideo, 1 March— Uruguay's President-elect Tabare Vazquez on Monday met with Chinese Minister of Communications Zhang Chunxian, who is the special envoy of the Chinese Government.

The Chinese special envoy will attend the handover ceremony of the presidency of Uruguay on 1 March. During the meeting, Zhang presented a letter from Chinese President Hu Jintao and conveyed the warm greetings of Hu and Premier Wen Jiabao.

Hu said in the letter that China is willing to further develop friendly relations and cooperation with Uruguay. He believed that the long-term stable bilateral relations will grow further with joint efforts.

Vazquez expressed his appreciation for the participation of the Chinese special envoy, noting that the Uruguayan people cherished traditional friendship with China.

He said Uruguay is satisfied with the development of bilateral relations in recent years. The new Uruguayan Government views enhancing relations with China as a fundamental diplomatic policy, and will continue to promote friendly cooperation with China in political, economic and cultural fields.

MNA/Xinhua

Hun Sen sets goals for nation’s next five-year development

PHNOM PENH, 1 March — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on Monday put forward the strategic goals and broad policies for the country’s future development.

“Four the present and future in particular the third five-year plan, Cambodia has to focus in the following three main points,” the Premier said at the opening of the national workshop on formulation of National Strategic Development Plan for 2006-2010.

First, Hun Sen said, is to speed up and to ensure a sustainable economic growth in between 6 percent to 7 percent per annum. The second is to implement population policy declared by the royal government by focusing on birth-spacing and ensuring the quality and health of human resources.

And the third is to rigorously implement governance reform especially corruption eradication to equally distribute economic outcome.

MNA/Xinhua

CPPCC Nat’l Committee received 4,400 proposals in 2004

BEIJING, 1 March— Since last year’s Second Session, the 10th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) had received more than 4,400 proposals from its members, participating institutions and special committees.

These proposals involved a wide range of issues concerning the development of the country.

In the past years, the CPPCC National Committee has held meetings with officials from different ministries and sent 30 inspection teams to make on-the-spot studies of hot issues, which include rural and urban development, private economy, food safety, land use and protection migrant workers.

Meanwhile, the CPPCC National Committee has also sent 29 delegations to 44 foreign countries and received 28 delegations from 23 foreign nations and three international organizations. So far, it has sealed ties with 184 organizations, from 107 foreign countries, and eight international bodies.

In 2004, the CPPCC National Committee’s sub-committee on the affairs of Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and overseas Chinese received 48 visiting delegations from the three areas and overseas Chinese communities.

MNA/Xinhua

Ukraine pull out troops from Iraq

Kyiv, 1 March — Ukraine’s top security body decided Tuesday to withdraw the nation’s troops from Iraq, and officials said the pullout would start this month and be completed by October.

The National Security and Defence Council, headed by President Viktor Yushchenko, made the widely expected decision to withdraw Ukraine’s 1,650-strong contingent.

Ukraine, which has lost 17 soldiers in Iraq, strongly opposed the US-led war but later agreed to send a large contingent to serve under Polish command. The troop deployment was widely seen as an effort by then-President Leonid Kuchma to repair relations with Washington, frayed by allegations that he approved the sale of radar systems and other military equipment to Saddam Hussein’s regime in violation of UN sanctions.

The deployment in Iraq is deeply unpopular among Ukrainians, and one of Kuchma’s last orders as president was to bring the troops home. In January, eight soldiers died in an explosion that Ukrainian defense officials described as a terrorist attack.

The pullout “will be completed by October 15,” Yushchenko said. Defence Minister Anatoly Gritsenko told reporters that the phased withdrawal would begin on 15 March, and that 150 soldiers would leave Iraq in the first group.

The second batch will have about 590 soldiers and the third the remainders,” Yushchenko said. The council, which also included the Foreign, Defence and interior ministers and other top officials, decided to order the pullout “after detailed consideration,” Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk said, according to the Interfax news agency.

“President announced this long ago, and apart from that there are two parliamentary resolutions on it,” Tarasyuk said. Last year, parliament issued two nonbinding resolutions urging Kuchma to order the pullout.

Internet
Slovak President visits Lithuania

RIGA, 1 March — Slovak President Ivan Gasparovic paid a state visit to Lithuania on Monday, seeking to boost bilateral ties, reports from Lithuania's capital Vilnius said.

After a meeting with his Lithuanian counterpart Valdas Adamkus, Gasparovic hoped bilateral cooperation will develop further.

Bilateral trade reached a record high of 21.3 million euros (about 27.7 million US dollars) in the first half of last year. Adamkus said he was looking forward to strengthening trade, investment and economic relations. — MNA/Xinhua

Indonesian fuel consumption up by 15%

JAKARTA, 1 March — Indonesia’s state oil and gas company Pertamina announced over the weekend that fuel consumption had increased by 15 per cent over the last two months from the same period last year.

The company said fuel consumption through February stood at 189,700 kilolitres per day, up from 165,100 kilolitre per day in the same two-month period in 2004.

The increase is believed to be linked to the government’s plan to increase fuel prices by an average of 29 per cent next month.

"The increase is not a usual phenomenon. Usually, fuel consumption decreases in the early months of the year," Pertamina said in a statement, as quoted on Monday by The Jakarta Post newspaper.

The company said it had a 22-day fuel stock to ensure supply security should the government’s plan to raise fuel prices come into effect.

Since the plan to raise fuel prices was announced, there have been allegations of stockpiling by distributors.

Pertamina also said in the statement that last year’s unaudited fuel consumption reached 61.7 million kilolitres, with automotive diesel fuel accounting for 26.9 million kilolitres, or 44 per cent of total consumption. — MNA/Xinhua

Shandong Province to invest heavily in energy in 2005

JINAN, 1 March — East China’s Shandong Province is planning to invest 15 billion yuan (1.8 billion US dollars) in its energy sector in 2005, according to the provincial development and reform commission.

A senior official of the commission said they would invest 6.06 billion yuan (about 730.1 million US dollars) in the coal sector, with plans to increase coal production by nine million tons. Most of the funds will be poured into the development of the Joyce coal field in the southeastern part of the province, which boasts proven reserves of 5.57 billion tons. — MNA/Xinhua

China invests 850b yuan in major projects

BEIJING, 1 March — To accelerate the development of China’s western regions and ethnic autonomous areas, China has invested 850 billion yuan (102 billion US dollars) in the construction of 60 important projects in its western regions since 2000, says a white paper issued by the Information Office of the State Council on Monday.

According to the white paper titled Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China, the Chinese Government launched a grand strategy for the development of western China in 2000, which covers five autonomous regions, 27 autonomous prefectures and 83 of the 120 autonomous counties (banners).

In addition, three other autonomous prefectures are allowed to enjoy the preferential policies the state has adopted for the western regions.

The white paper says that starting in the period of the First Five-Year Plan (1953-1957), the Chinese Government has arranged a batch of key construction projects in ethnic autonomous areas, including the Baotou iron and steel base in Inner Mongolia, major highways linking Sichuan and Tibet, Qinghai and Tibet and main railway lines linking Baotou, Lanzhou, and Lanzhou and Xining.

In the 1990s, large transport facilities were constructed, including the railway line between Zhongwei in Ningxia and Baotai in Shaanxi, and the Nanjiang Railway and Tacheng Airport in Xinjiang.

Since 2000, the state has assisted ethnic autonomous areas to further convert their resource advantages into economic advantages by investing in the construction of a number of key projects, such as the West-East Natural Gas Transmission Project, West-East Power Transmission Project and Qinghai-Tibet Railway.

Moreover, the white paper says, since 1999, the Chinese Government has launched large-scale transport infrastructure construction programmes that were intended to benefit all ethnic autonomous regions, such as “Outlet Highways for Impoverished Counties”, “Asphalt Roads to Every County in Western China” and “Inter-County and Rural Highways”.

MNA/Xinhua

French journalist captured in Iraq makes video plea for help

BAGHDAD, 1 March — French journalist Florence Aubenas, missing for nearly two months in Iraq, made a desperate plea for help on a video broadcast, saying her health was “very bad.”

“I am French. I am a journalist with Liberation. Please help me. My health is very bad. I’m very bad psychologically also,” the gaunt and exhausted-looking journalist pleaded in English on the undated video, of which AFP obtained a copy.

The 50-second film showed the veteran reporter for the left-wing daily wearing a pale long-sleeved top, seated on the floor with her knees bent against her chest.

It was the first public confirmation that Aubenas was alive since she and her Iraqi translator Hussein Hanum al-Saadi — who is still missing but was not shown on the tape — were seen leaving their Baghdad hotel on 5 January.

Liberation’s editor-in-chief, Serge July, said he was “shaken” to see the video, while the French-based media rights group Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said it was “disturbing” and “extremely worrying”.

Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said France was “very concerned” about Aubenas and “very mobilized” to obtain her release.

Another foreign reporter in Iraq, Giulianna Sgrena of Italy’s Il Manifesto, was kidnapped early February in Baghdad and later appeared in a video begging for her life.

About 170 foreigners have been kidnapped in Iraq over the past year. More than 30 have been killed and the rest were released or escaped. — Internet

MNA/Xinhua

US soldiers take up defensive positions after several shots were fired by guerrillas at their convoy in Mosul on 2 March, 2005.— INTERNET
HR lawyers to file lawsuit against Rumsfeld

WASHINGTON, 2 March — Human rights lawyers will file a lawsuit in federal court on Tuesday against Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on behalf of eight men who say they were tortured by US forces in custody in Iraq and Afghanistan, sources familiar with the case said.

The lawsuit charges that officials at the highest levels of the US government shoulder ultimate responsibility for the physical and psychological injuries sustained by the men while in American custody.

It was the latest development in a scandal over ill-treatment of US war prisoners that has drawn criticism from around the world.

The case will be filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights First in US District Court. The two groups scheduled a news conference later on Tuesday to announce details.

The groups did not state who would be named in the lawsuit, but sources familiar with the case said it was Rumsfeld.

“The men represented in the lawsuit were incarcerated in US detention facilities in Iraq and Afghanistan, where they were subjected to torture and other cruel and degrading treatment, including severe and repeated beatings, cutting with knives, sexual humiliation and assault, mock executions, death threats, and restraint in contorted and excruciating positions,” the two groups said in a statement.

None of the eight men was charged with a crime.

Malaysia, Singapore to move forward talks on bilateral issues

KUALA LUMPUR, 2 March — Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak Tuesday expressed confidence that the problem related to Indonesia’s claim over Malaysia’s oil concession area in the Sulawesi Sea can be resolved at the negotiating table.

Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta were enjoying a close relationship, Najib told reporters here, adding that “our relationship is good. We can resolve whatever problem through negotiations.”

Najib, who is also Defence Minister, was asked about Indonesia’s deployment of three warships in the oil concession area. Last week, the republic lodged a protest against a Malaysian oil production sharing contract with Anglo-Dutch giant Royal Dutch Shell in the Ambalat and East Ambalat Blocks in the Sulawesi Sea, which Jakarta claims as its territory.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Monday that the area granted by Petronas, the Malaysian National Oil Company, to Shell to explore oil and gas in two deep-water blocks in the Sulawesi Sea was within Malaysian territory.

Petronas, on 16 February, signed a contract with Shell for the oil and gas concession, when it won the bid tendered in September last year.

However, Indonesia has claimed that the Ambalat and East Ambalat Blocks to the east of Kalimantan have long been under the republic’s administration and contracts for the development of the Ambalat Block and East Ambalat Block have already been awarded to Italian oil company ENI and US oil firm Unocal.

Indonesia has been protesting against Malaysia’s claim of the areas since 1980, saying that Malaysia has no right to the oil and gas areas in Sulawesi Sea as both countries have yet to decide on the new border between them.

US soldier killed in gunfire in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 1 March — A US soldier was shot dead late Sunday while manning a traffic checkpoint in Baghdad, the US military said on Monday.

The Task Force Baghdad soldier died at a level two care facility just after 9 pm, 40 minutes after being shot while manning a traffic control point in southern Baghdad, the military said in a statement.

More than 1,400 US servicemen have been killed in Iraq since the US invasion of the country in March 2003.

Wen Jiabao hopes for more cooperation with Malaysia

BEIJING, 2 March — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said here on Tuesday that he hopes that both China and Malaysia will strengthen cooperation to the benefit of the peoples of both nations.

Premier Wen made the remarks at a meeting with Malaysian Supreme Head of State Tuanku Syed Sirajudin, who is here on a state visit to China at the invitation of President Hu Jintao, concerning Sino-Malaysian trade, Wen said that Sino-Malaysian trade have grown rapidly over recent years and bilateral fruitful cooperation have been conducted in agriculture, high-tech, resources development and tourism.

He said the Chinese side is satisfied with the progress scored in bilateral economic and trade cooperation and there are still huge potentials for further cooperation.
**China strengthening aid to ethnic minority areas**

_Beijing, 1 March — China has increasingly strengthened its assistance to impoverished ethnic minority areas, a white paper issued by the Information Office of the State Council on Monday._

According to the white paper titled Regional Autonomy for Ethnic Minorities in China, since the mid-1980s, when the Chinese Government launched its large-scale poverty-alleviation drive in an organized and programmed way, ethnic minorities and areas they live in have always been key targets of governmental aid. Among the 331 impoverished counties designated as key recipients of state aid in 1986, 141 are in ethnic autonomous areas, accounting for 42.6 per cent of the total.

In 1994, China began implementing a Seven-Year Programme for Delivering 80 Million People out of Poverty, and among the 592 impoverished counties designated as key recipients of state aid, 257 are in ethnic autonomous areas, accounting for 43.4 per cent of the total.

The Outline Programme for Poverty Alleviation and Development in the Rural Areas of China, which began being implemented in 2001, once again recognized ethnic minority areas as key targets for assistance, the white paper says. In the 592 counties newly designated for state poverty alleviation and development, 267 are located in ethnic autonomous areas (excluding Tibet), accounting for 45.1 per cent of the total. Tibet as a whole has been included as a target for key poverty alleviation and development from the state.

In 1990, the state established the Food and Clothing Fund for Impoverished Ethnic Minority Areas, aiming primarily at impoverished ethnic minority counties. In 1992, the state established the Fund for Ethnic Minorities Development, which is mainly used to deal with special difficulties encountered in the development of ethnic autonomous areas, and in the production and lives of ethnic minorities.

MNA/Xinhua

**E China’s sacred mountain to get renovation**

_Jinan, 2 March — China will renovate the sacred mountain of Taishan, a World Heritage site, to boom local tourism beginning in early March._

The face-lift, which costs an estimated 15 million yuan (about 1.8 million US dollars), will finish in late October, said an official with the tourism bureau of Shandong Province, where the mountain is located.

Dubbed “the most preeminent of China’s five sacred mountains,” Taishan was listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1987 as a world natural and cultural heritage.

The other four mountains are western Huashan, northern Hengshan, northern Etnity and central Songshan.

The renovation includes repair work on historic relics and rebuilding damaged cultural architecture. Besides, slots on the landscape inconsistent with the historic scenery, such as modern buildings, will be demolished, the official said.

Taishan has received the warning for its commercialization, followed by Huangshan Mountain in east China’s Anhui Province and the Wuliangyuan Scenic Area in Zhangjiajie in central China’s Hunan Province.

MNA/Xinhua.

**Deal on Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline possible if India agrees**

_Islamabad, 2 March — Pakistani Petroleum Minister Amanullah Khan Jadoon on Monday said agreement on the multi-billion dollars Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project is possible in mid-March if India agrees to join the proposed project._

_Indian Oil Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar will visit Pakistan in March to attend an energy conference of petroleum ministers from seven South Asian countries._

“If India agrees we can ink an agreement on the pipeline proposal with India and Pakistan since 1996. Pakistan would have access to the gas, and earn an estimated 600 million dollars a year in transit fees. Iran said the proposed pipeline would save India around 300 million dollars a year in energy costs._

MNA/Xinhua

**Tobacco export tops $117m in Yunnan Province**

_Kunming, 2 March — Southwest China’s Yunnan Province exported 81,500 tons of flue-cured tobacco in 2004, which topped 117 million US dollars, creating a record high, according to local Customs on Monday. Exports of the province’s flue-cured tobacco account for 52.9 per cent of the country’s total in 2004 which stood at 221 million US dollars, or 9.7 percentage points higher than the 2003 figure._

The flue-cured tobacco exported by the province in 2004 was priced at 1,434 US dollars per ton on average, representing an increase of 250 US dollars over figures registered in 2003. Some 18 countries and regions imported flue-cured tobacco from Yunnan in 2004, instead of 15 in 2003._

MNA/Xinhua

**Indonesia to teach students how to anticipate natural disasters**

_Jakarta, 2 March — The Indonesian Ministry of National Education has planned to introduce a natural disaster anticipation programme to schools located in disaster-prone areas following the tsunamis that devastated Aceh in December._

The programme was part of the master plan now being prepared by the National Development Planning Board.

Indra said his office had started training teachers and students in certain areas after a major earthquake hit Bengkulu in 2002.

MNA/Xinhua

**Exxon Mobil plans to sell Sinopec shares**

_New York, 2 March — Exxon Mobil Corp said that it planned to sell its stake in China Petroleum & Chemical Corp (Sinopec) for 1.4 billion US dollars._

_Indian fishermen paddle their boats as sun rises over the River Ganges in the northern Indian city of Allahabad on 1 March, 2005. — INTERNET_
Towards new nation with flourishing Niraggala

The national people of the Union of Myanmar have been independent throughout the history of the nation. With our culture, customs and traditions along with natural resources in abundance, the nation has put emphasis on the legislative, judicial, and administrative sectors. In like manner, democracy will flourish only in the disciplined human society where peace and stability prevail with the rule of law. The British colonialists also enacted the 1935 Myanmar administration law, of which Section 41 (1) said that the prescribed laws did not dominate the hill regions. And these took effect only when the British colonialists issued special notifications. The invaders then designated Myanmar as a state of India. The invaders replaced the Myanmar’s code of laws with the English code of laws that was being practised in the courts of India. There were changes in the constitution of courts and judicial sector of Myanmar.

The judicial power practised in Myanmar in the colonial days contributed towards strengthening the colonialism alone, and it was not in conformity with the customs and traditions of the nation. The National Convention that resumed on 17-5-2004 to lay down detailed basic principles for division of the legislative power and the judicial power.

Now, the National Convention is on its way. The delegates made discussions at the National Convention that resumed on 17-5-2004 to lay down basic principles for the sharing of legislative power. The delegates attending the National Convention (MARCH 2005) are holding discussions to adopt detailed basic principles for division of the legislative power and the judicial power. The delegates made discussions at the National Convention (MARCH 2005) are holding discussions to adopt detailed basic principles for division of the legislative power and the judicial power. The delegates at the National Convention (MARCH 2005) are holding discussions to adopt detailed basic principles for division of the legislative power and the judicial power.

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Repaved road put back into service in Thakayta

YANGON, 2 March — As a gesture hailing the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, a ceremony to put back the repaved Yadanabon 2nd lane into service was held at the archway on the street in Ward 9, Thakayta Township, this morning.

Present were those in charge of Yangon Division USDA Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and Vice-Chairman Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa, officials and local people. USDA CEC member Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Yangon Division USDA Acting Secretary U Aung Myint and wards elder U Ba Khin formally opened the street.

Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and Col Maung Pa sprinkled scented water on the stone plaque.

The street, 1,205 feet long and 10 feet wide, was built at a cost of over K 3.3 million.

Next, the CEC members managed to supply drinking water to local people of Ward 9.— MNA

Grovit chewtablets introduced

YANGON, 2 March — The product Grovit chewtablet, imported by the USV Co Ltd and distributed by the Zizawa Healthcare Co Ltd, was introduced at the Traders Hotel here this afternoon.

Managing Director of the company U Saw Mya Aung and Country Manager of the USV delivered speeches on the occasion.

The officials concerned briefed those present on the product.— MNA

Spoken English course opened

YANGON, 2 March — The opening of the spoken English course No 1/2005 for staff of the Inland Water Transport of the Ministry of Transport was held at the IWT on Pansodan Street here yesterday.

A total of 54 trainees are attending the course.

MNA

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appeased

MNA

140m gallons to be added to...

(from page 1)

station and installation of power lines by the mayor and construction of the syphon and use of 76 inches diametre steel pipes by YCDC member Co Tin Soe.

After giving necessary instruction, the Secretary-1 inspected documentary photos of building the head regulator and the syphon and progress of tasks.

Next, they proceeded to the construction site of Yangon City Water Supply Project (Ngamoeyeik) near Ahtayu Village in Hmawby Township and oversaw construction of lakes at the different areas, the pump station and the sub-power station.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein hears reports on functions of Yangon City Water Supply Project (Ngamoeyeik). — MNA

MNA

NC delegates in recreational activities

As today being a public holiday, the delegates to the National Convention Convening took relaxation at Nyaunghnapin Camp in Hmawby Township today.

During their recreation, they took physical exercises playing valleyball, golf, tennis, badminton and lifting weight.

Moreover, the delegates bought the personal goods, books, journals and notebooks from the welfare shops opening at the camp. They also enjoyed foreign and local news and other interesting programme through channel lines of TV.

NC delegates practising golf on holiday of National Convention.

National Convention delegates taking physical exercises.

MNA
Minister for Foreign Affairs sends felicitations to his counterpart of Bulgaria

**Yangon**, 3 March — Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Solomon Passy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria, which falls on 3 March 2005. — MNA

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Minister inspects paving of roads, extension of runway at Hkamti Airport

**Yangon**, 1 March — Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun and officials of Public Works inspected paving of the road in Taze Township, Shwebo District on 19 February.

On 20 February, the minister and party inspected waterway in Maikatara Creek in Minkin Township. The minister gave instructions on maintenance of bridges and culverts and regular inspection.

The minister inspected the site for construction of Phoetone Creek Bridge on Thetkaklyn-Phaungpyin-Hkamti. On completion of the Bridge, one can go to Kalewa from Mawleik via Thetkaklyn and Thanandaw. The minister inspected Aw, Maing and Mu Creek bridges.

On 21 February, the minister met officials and told them to build all-weather road and extend the roads. He inspected construction sites for Nunt Heinkwin Bridge and Uru River Bridge.

Uru River Bridge, a suspension bridge, is 1,090 feet long. On 22 February, the minister and party inspected extension of the runway at Hkamti Airport. The runway will be extended to 8,500 feet long and 100 feet wide. In the future jets can take off and land at the airport. — MNA

**Yangon**, 2 March — USDA CEC member Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt met with executives and organizers of Bogale and Mawlamyingpun Township USDA's and War Veterans Organizations at Bogale Township USDA Office.

In the afternoon, the CEC member attended the ceremony to formally open Mandalay City Hotel, where the CEC member oversaw construction of the annex of Mudon Hotel for the Aged. He also inspected construction of the annex of Mudon Home for the Aged.

On 28 February, the ceremony to formally open Mandalay City Hotel was held at the Mon State Hall. The CEC member attended the ceremony together with Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council and Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint and Min- dustry Affairs Col Tin Ngwe discussed national races affairs

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On 27 February, the CEC member met with local USDA members in Ye Township and Khawza Township. In his tour, the CEC member oversaw rural development tasks.

On 28 February, Brig-Gen Ohn Myint met with the secretary and executives of Ye Township at the Ye Station Hall. In Lamein, he also met with local authorities and departmental officials and inspected progress of building the combined team.

On 1 March, the CEC member explained success of the seven-step road map and active participation of rural development after meeting with the acting Secretary and executives of Mon State USDA. In Paung, the minister inspected salt production area and gave necessary instructions to officials.

**Yangon**, 2 March — At the invitation of Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs of Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Tin Ngwe arrived back here by air yesterday evening.

The Myanmar delegation was welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt, Vietnamese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Pham Quang Khon, Director-General of Department of Development Affairs Col Myo Myint and officials concerned.

The Myanmar delegation and Vice-Chairman of Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs Deputy Minister Mr Hla Hing exchanged views on national races affairs and development tasks of border areas. After the meeting, the Myanmar delegation was hosted dinner by Chairman of Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs Minister Mr Ksor Phuc.

The Myanmar delegation went on study tour of Vietnamese border areas such Lang Son Province as Quang Ninh and Tra Vinh.
Syria seeking help from some Arab friends

DAMASCUS, 2 March—Syria is seeking the help of some Arab friends who are also regional allies of the United States to fend off mounting pressure above its presence in Lebanon, analysts and diplomats said on Tuesday.

Lebanon’s Syrian-backed government collapsed on Monday at a parliamentary sitting on the assassination of former prime minister Rafik al-Hariri, which shocked Lebanon and piled pressure on the country many held responsible — Syria.

“There is a drive to secure an Arab cover for the situation,” said prominent Syrian political analyst Imad al-Shaabi. “Syria is directing its effort into preventing the situation from becoming an international matter.”

“It is only normal that Syria cooperates with its traditional allies, who are at the same time allies of the United States, to deflect tension,” an Arab diplomat said. Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara met top Egyptian and Saudi officials at the weekend, apparently to try to offset US pressure, compounded by Israeli accusations that Damascus had had a hand in a Tel Aviv suicide bombing on Friday.

Syria also appears to be offering some tokens of goodwill, the analysts said. It has given some of its strongest verbal support to Palestinian peace efforts with Israel and last week said it wanted to cooperate with the United Nations to find a way to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1559 calling for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Lebanon.

It also agreed on Monday to hand back to Jordan a huge tract of land along their border, heralding a new era of ties with Amman after decades of Syrian incursions on its land.

And it might also be helping Washington on the Iraq front to placate it over Lebanon, analysts and diplomats said.

“It seems Syria wants an easier way out — a compromise of some sort under an Arab umbrella,” a diplomat said. “They appear more convinced that they should comply with Resolution 1559 but maybe they want to dress it with an Arab cover.”

That cover, an Arab diplomat said, could be in the guise of the Taif Accord that ended Lebanon’s 1975-90 civil war, under which Syrian troops, which poured into Lebanon during the war, were to redeploy to the eastern Bekaa Valley. Syria and Lebanon were supposed to later negotiate a complete withdrawal of Syria’s 14,000 troops.

Damascus wanted “to marry 1559 with the Taif Accord, which is an Arab arrangement, while the resolution is an American and French measure,” the Arab diplomat said. Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia, informal allies of Syria, helped craft the 1989 Taif Accord. — MNA/Reuters

Bosnian energy firm plans $60 m investment in Indonesia

JAKARTA, 2 March—Bosnia and Herzegovina intends to increase its trade with Indonesia and invest 60 million US dollars in the power sector in the near future.

“Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Energoinvest Co is planning to invest around 60 million in Indonesia’s power sector, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s ambassador to Indonesia Zdravko Rajic was quoted on Tuesday by The Jakarta Post as saying.

“It has already signed a memorandum of understanding with PLN (state-owned electricity company PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara) to build transmission lines,” he said, adding Bosnia and Herzegovina’s power and coal companies had a lot of experience in Indonesia.

Despite the two nations’ close ties — especially on the political front — their economic relations are not reflective of the two countries’ potential. Rajic said that in 2003, the value of bilateral trade reached $4 million dollars.

He is optimistic that the situation will change rapidly in the coming months, after Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Chamber of Commerce signed a memorandum of understanding on bilateral trade in December 2004 with its counterpart in Indonesia.

Indonesia exports ca-cao, furniture, wheat products, wood and carpet to Bosnia and Herzegovina and imports electrical products, machinery and mechanical equipment from the country. Rajic said the high level contacts between the two country’s leaders have strengthened the relationship. — MNA/Xinhua

Oil prices hold firm near $52 per barrel

NEW YORK, 2 March—Oil prices held firm near 52 US dollars a barrel on Tuesday as cold, snowy weather in the northeast kept furnaces blazing, putting strain on already tight heating oil stockpiles.


A blast of cold weather in the northeast, the world’s largest heating oil market, was expected to bring this week’s demand for the key winter fuel 14 cent per barrel above normal, according to the US National Weather Service.

US heating oil inventories are already running about 7 percent below a year ago, even as stockpiles of crude oil and gasoline run at an 8 percent surplus, according to the latest government figures.

The US Energy Information Administration will release its new weekly inventory report on Wednesday morning, with dealers anticipating further declines in distillate stocks, which include heating oil.

Traders said a tight global supply and demand balance and a weaker US dollar has also attracted increased fund interest in recent weeks, keeping prices lofty.

“Commodities seem to be a rather popular alternative (to bonds, equities and the dollar) for funds searching for a trend,” wrote Edward Meir of brokerage Man Energy.

“The energy complex has captured its fair share of interest, as evidenced by expanding open interest. Whether this growing level of interest can be re-warded by ever-higher prices remains to be seen,” he added.

Headline 50 US dollar-crude oil producers to back away from talk of a possible out-put cut for the second quarter. — MNA/Reuters

Chile, Bolivia sign visa exemption deal

SANTIAGO, 2 March—Chile and Bolivia signed an agreement Tuesday to enable their citizens to travel across the common border without visas or passports.

The agreement was signed by Foreign Ministers Ignacio Walker of Chile and Juan Siles of Bolivia at the Uruguayan capital of Montevideo, where the two were attending the inauguration ceremony of Uruguayan President Tabare Vazquez.

Under the deal which will take effect in April or May, citizens of the two South American nations can carry their identification documents to move through the common bor-der. Chilean President Ricardo Lagos highlighted the importance of the agreement, saying people used to spend two hours to have their docu-ments authorized along the common border.

— MNA/Xinhua

Combined image of Syrian president Bashar al-Assad and his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, and a scene from the recent theatrical production. (News on page 9) — SANA

Minister for PBNRDA Col Thiri Nyunt attends the ceremony to inaugurate Aung Awba 18th Street in Bogale on 28-2-2005. (News on page 9) — PBNRDA

Selected Myanmar volleyball team and Kinki University of Japan team seen in action of Myanmar-Japan Friendly Volleyball Match on Wednesday. (News on page 16) — NLM

Selected Myanmar volleyball team and Kinki University of Japan team seen in action of Myanmar-Japan Friendly Volleyball Match on Wednesday. (News on page 16) — NLM
Britain has one of the highest levels of child poverty

London, 2 March — Britain has one of the highest levels of child poverty of the world’s richest nations even though there was a significant drop in poverty rates over the last decade, a UN report said on Tuesday.

The UNICEF study said 15.4 per cent of British youngsters under 18 live in households with yearly income at 50 per cent or less of the national average of about 27,000 pounds.

The rate is classed by UNICEF as “exceptionally high”.

But despite Britain’s low showing, the UN report praised the government for its efforts to reduce child poverty. Britain was on course in the 1990s, the report concluded, to reduce child poverty overall on the rise.

About 22 per cent of young people under the age of 18 in the United States and 28 per cent in Mexico live in poverty, but in Denmark the figure is only 2.4 per cent, 2.8 in Finland and 3.4 per cent in Norway, it said.

The report was based on figures supplied over the past 15 years by national governments to the OECD in Paris, which tracks the economies of its 30 high-income member nations, including the 24 in the study. 

The researchers are planning studies in a small number of myeloma patients to test the activated marrow T-cells alone and in combination with a myeloma vaccine.

“While T-cells from circulating blood traditionally are used in immunotherapy strategies because they are easy to obtain and grow, they often don’t recognize the tumour,” Borrello said.

“In the case of myeloma, we believe the marrow T-cells have certain surface markers that may help them migrate back to the site of the tumour,” he added. “Moreover, the marrow itself contains some type of stimulant to attract the cells,” says Kimberly Noonan, first author of the paper.

FAO reports 36 countries need food assistance

Rome, 2 March — A report of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said Tuesday 36 countries worldwide need external food assistance and 11 others face unfavourable harvest.

According to the latest issue of Foodcrops and Shortages, 23 of the countries that need external food assistance are located in Africa.

In Eritrea, “successive years of inadequate rains have seriously undermined crop and livestock production,” and in Sudan, the harvest will be below average due to conflict and drought. Kenya’s poor second season maize crop will exacerbate food shortages in parts of the country, while Somalia’s good secondary harvest will improve food supplies in main agricultural areas, the report said.

In southern Africa, FAO said prospects for the 2005 main season crops are mixed because of “delayed, erratic, and generally below normal rainfall during the first half of the season.” The food situation, particularly in Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland, is precarious during the current lean months. In Asia, the earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami on 26 December “caused a large number of deaths and destroyed livelihoods of millions of people in several countries. The worst affected include Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, India and Thailand.”

Total cereal production in China is forecast by the report to increase by 11 per cent over last year, as a result of good weather, strong prices and government support policies. A good harvest is expected in Afghanistan and Asian countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, owing mainly to favourable weather conditions, the FAO said. — MNA/Xinhua

Russia to test sea-based missile system

Moscow, 2 March — Russia will begin flight tests of a new sea-based intercontinental ballistic missile, Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said on Tuesday, according to ITAR-TASS news agency.

“We will begin flight tests of the sea-based Balala intercontinental ballistic missiles while adopting the Topol-M mobile missile systems,” Ivanov told German and Italian Press. The minister did not say when the test of the strategic missile system, which could be armed with a nuclear warhead and modernized for land-based use in the future, will start.

Russia currently stores most of its heaviest, intercontinental ballistic Topol-M missiles in silos, the Russian leadership has repeatedly said that it was developing unrivalled missiles that could penetrate any defence systems in the world and no other countries could catch up with.

Russia will remain a major nuclear power, “but we will not bake missiles like cakes as we did in the Soviet era,” Ivanov was cited as saying.

He stressed that the quantity of the missiles should ensure Russia’s security in any potential development of the international situation. 

UN says level of child poverty lowest in Nordic region

Stockholm, 2 March — The Nordic countries have the lowest levels of child poverty in the developed world, Radio Sweden reported on Tuesday.

According to a report released by the United Nations Children’s Fund, the Nordic region fares so well because of their generous public spending on social benefits for families.

Mexico and the United States were on the other end of the spectrum, having the worst rates of child poverty. At least one-fifth of US and Mexican children live under the national poverty line, according to the study undertaken by UNICEF’s Innocenti Research Centre.

The target of this campaign will be young people and we know they are the target of the tobacco companies,” he said.

“The average age of taking up smoking in the EU has gone down to 13. This is a very worrying trend,” he told a news conference.

The campaign, called “HELP - For a life without tobacco”, is the EU’s second and will cost 72 million euros ($91.5 million US dollars) up to 2008. The first ended in December and cost 18 million euros over three years. — MNA/Reuters

Lavish campaign unveiled to stamp out smoking across Europe

Brussels, 2 March — Europe’s health chief unveiled a lavish campaign on Tuesday to stamp out smoking across the European Union and reduce the hundreds of thousands of deaths each year that are blamed on consuming tobacco.

“Eupset me, it makes me furious that the single cause of so many preventable diseases is still there,” EU Health and Consumer Protection Commissioner Markos Kyprianou said two days after a global anti-smoking treaty went into force.

“The target of this campaign will be young people and we know they are the target of the tobacco companies,” he said.

“Apple’s popular iPods are everywhere, logic dictates that there’s a pretty penny to be made selling accessories for the must-have music player.” — Internet

This is an undated photo, released by Nyko Technologies, of the Nyko Movie Player. Now that Apple’s popular iPods are everywhere, logic dictates

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INTERNET

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China draws framework on protecting Chinese fauna fossils

Scores of paleontologists from various parts of China are gathering at Chengjiang, a small town in southwestern China’s Yunnan Province, to draw up a framework on protecting famous Chengjiang fauna fossils and adjacent geological environment.

The framework was made to deal with the contradictions between the protection of Chengjiang animal fossils and mineral exploitation. In recent years, people in Chengjiang County and some surrounding counties began to open up phosphoric deposits on the fringes of the Chengjiang fauna fossil protected zones, posing a threat to this vital archaeological site.

The framework, drawn up by prestigious Yunnan University, underscores on coordinating efforts in protecting Chengjiang fauna fossils while boosting local economic growth and integrating scientific-research with protection. It covers a wide range of subjects, said Zhang Keqin, vice-president of Yunnan University. Meanwhile, the paleontology laboratory of Yunnan University was inaugurated last week to make a further study on fauna fossils in Chengjiang where fossils recording “Cambrian explosion” were discovered.

New York, 1 March

The US Justice Department has sought to dismiss a lawsuit by Vietnamese who say they were poisoned by the chemical defoliant Agent Orange used by US forces in the Vietnam War.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of millions of Vietnamese, accuses US corporations of “knowingly committing crimes against humanity by supplying to US forces Agent Orange, which contains dioxin and is extremely toxic.”

However, the US Government, which is not among the accused in the suit to be presided over by US District Judge Jack Weinstein, has contended that the claimed effects of Agent Orange are not supported by direct evidence.

State Department lawyers sent a note to Weinstein last month, saying that if the case were not thrown out, the “implications of plaintiffs’ claims are astounding as they would (if accepted) open the courthouse doors to any time in history for former enemy nations to claim that others have harmed them by their actions.”

US companies paid 180 million US dollars to keep veterans’ class action suit out of court.

Tanzania cracks down on vandalism of nat’l infrastructure

DARES-SALAAM, 2 March — The Tanzanian Government is to crack down on vandalism of the country’s economic infrastructure as President Benjamin William Mkapa has given the go-ahead, according to the local Press reports on Tuesday.

The President has described theft of transformer coolant oil, telephones cables, petroleum oil pipelines and railway tracks as economic sabotage and has ordered the arrest and prosecution of vandals.

EU seeks to dismiss lawsuit over use of agent orange in Vietnam

Brussels, 1 March — EU agriculture ministers agreed Monday new wood packaging rules aimed at keeping out tree-eating insects that the United States has complained would disrupt 80 billion US dollars worth of its exports, officials said.

The insects, which lurk in wood packaging used for a wide variety of products, can emerge to do harmful damage, for example eating insects that the United States has complained that its wood packaging rules are aimed at keeping out tree-eating insects that the United States has complained would disrupt 80 billion US dollars worth of its exports, officials said.

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Germany's winter warmer than usual despite cold snap

BERLIN, 2 March — Germany's winter was warmer than usual despite a cold snap that has sent temperatures plunging in many parts of the country, the country's National Meteorological Service said on Monday.

“In winter 2004/05 (December to February) temperatures averaged 0.7 degrees Celsius (33.3 Fahrenheit), or about half a degree above the long-term average of 0.2 degrees,” Deutsche Wetterdienst said in a statement.

The statement came just hours after overnight temperatures in parts of Germany plunged as low as minus 29 degrees Celsius, leading to a spate of road accidents.

Most of the country is forecast to remain frosted in the first days of March.

MNA/Reuters

Over 250,000 foreign diamond diggers expelled in Angola in 2004

LUANDA, 2 March — The Angolan authorities expelled over 250,000 foreigners from the southwestern African country last year in a crackdown against illegal diamond miners, a senior government official has said.

Speaking at a ceremony held here on Monday to mark the 29th anniversary of Angola’s National Police Force, Interior Minister Osvaldo Serra Van-Dunem said a total of 256,417 foreigners had been deported in 2004 in the operation against illegal diamond miners, mainly from the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Van-Dunem said the Angolan Government was “satisfied” at the results of its operation to repatriate foreign diamond diggers, launched at the end of 2003. Separately, he told Angolan police commanders that their officers needed to be “disciplined and efficient,” criticizing the “less dignified” behaviour of some police that tarnished the image of the force.

Angolan gems are of high quality and each carat can fetch up to 400 US dollars, officials say. The government, which relies almost exclusively on oil for revenue, is eager to develop the official diamond industry.

However, Angola has lost millions of US dollars as a result of illegal diamond prospecting mainly by foreign citizens, according to local reports.

MNA/Kinhaa

Blood test a must for workers in Chinese entertainment industry

BEIJING, 1 March — China’s worst HIV/AIDS-affected province, Henan, has enacted a controversial law requiring mandatory HIV/AIDS and venereal disease tests and study related issues before taking up their jobs, the state media reported Saturday.

Also, entertainment centres have to maintain admission and registration systems, which require all employees in the industry to have health certificates and relevant identification, the official China Daily reported.

Some critics say the admission system will discriminate against HIV carriers or AIDS patients suffering from a very rare birth defect known as craniofacial paranasal, a problem linked to that of conjoined twins linked at the skull.

A 13-hour operation in Benha north of Cairo to remove the head, which could smile and blink but was not capable of independent life, ended on 19 February.

Doctors treating Manar were not immediately available to comment further but had previously told Reuters her parents and Egyptian officials had asked them not to talk to journalists.

MNA/Reuters

Egyptian baby being trained to breathe independently

CAIRO, 2 March — An Egyptian baby who underwent an operation to remove the head of a twin that failed to develop in the womb is gradually being trained to breathe independently, one of the doctors treating her was quoted saying on Monday.

“The child was placed on a ventilator and it is removed from time to time to train her to breathe naturally, so it can be permanently removed,” Egypt’s official Middle East News Agency (MENA) quoted doctor Waleed Sharheeh as saying. Ten-month-old Manar Maged had been suffering from a very rare birth defect known as craniopagus parasiticus, a problem linked to that of conjoined twins linked at the skull.

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MNA/Reuters

Nigeria promises to treat 250,000 AIDS sufferers by 2006

LAGOS, 2 March — The Nigerian Government has initiated a drive to treat 250,000 persons living with the human immunodeficiency virus and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) by June 2006, local newspaper The Guardian reported on Monday.

Nigerian Health Minister Eyiyyayo Lambo was quoted as saying that Nigeria will be able to treat 250,000 persons living with AIDS (PLWHA) by June 2006 with grants from Global Funds, President Bush Relief Project for AIDS in Africa (PEPFAR) and the Nigerian Government.

According to an initial plan, the government plans to treat 100,000 PLWHA by June 2005. However, he admitted that this was far from the WorldHealthOrganization (WHO) target of treating 400,000 infected persons by the end of this year.

WHO, through its “3 by 5” initiative, hopes to provide three million AIDS suffers in developing countries with life-prolonging anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs by the end of 2005, with Nigeria billed to cater 400,000 of the infected persons. Nigeria is able to treat only 15,000 PLWHA out of the 400,000 that are eligible for treatment under the highly subsidized scheme of 1,000 naira (about 7.5 US dollars) per patient monthly for anti-retroviral drugs under the National AIDS Treatment Programme.

MNA/PTI

Over 300 passengers evacuated after flight on fire in England

LONDON, 2 March — More than 300 passengers escaped down emergency chutes after a Pakistan International Airlines flight caught fire at Manchester Airport in northwestern England on Tuesday.

The Boeing 777 Flight PK789, carrying 340 passengers from Karachi, landed at 0903 GMT and was taxing on the runway when a fire began in the undercarriage, said an airport spokesman.

A small fire in the undercarriage was spotted and the plane stopped near Terminal One where the airport’s firefighters tackled the blaze, according to local media. Police said a number of people were treated at the scene for minor injuries.

The Fire Brigade attended but there was no evidence that a fire actually started, although it is believed overheating may have occurred in the undercarriage,” a Greater Manchester Police spokesman said. "As a small number of passengers were treated at the scene for minor injuries,” he added.

The flight was stopping at Manchester en route to Toronto, Canada, when the emergency happened. The airport spokesman said passengers, who were unhurt, are now waiting in transit for a replacement jet to Toronto.

MNA/Xinhua

The lions of Goddess Cibeles’ fountain in Madrid are frozen due to a wave of cold weather on 28 Feb, 2005.—INTERNET

Director Sidney Lumet greets Actress Julia Roberts at the Governors Ball following the 77th Academy Awards on 27 Feb, 2005, in Los Angeles. Lumet received an honourary Oscar from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.—INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Thursday, 3 March, 2005 13
Spanish coach fined 3000 euros for remarks about Henry

MADRID, 2 March— Spain coach Luis Aragones was fined 3,000 euros for remarks about France’s Thierry Henry.

Aragones caused controversy in October when he was heard in a training session telling striker Jose Antonio Reyes he was better than “that Black shit”, referring to the Spaniard’s Arsenal team mate Henry. “They have fined him 3,000 euros. The judge understood that because of the position he holds he should have behaved differently,” a Federation spokesman said.

“It is not considered that he has broken any anti-racist rule. It is not considered that Luis Aragones is racist,” the spokesman added.

Clermont upset Lyon 4-2 in French Cup

PARIS, 2 March— Second division Clermont Foot pulled off a huge upset when they beat champions Olympique Lyon 4-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw to reach the French Cup quarter-finals on Tuesday.

Third division Nimes crushed Ligue 1 Nice 4-0 in another shock result and second division Sedan beat fourth division Quevilly 2-0.

Clermont Striker Bruno Rodriguez slotted in a 20-metre free kick to put his side 1-0 up in the 54th minute and French international Sylvin Wiltord equalised for Lyon four minutes into stoppage time. The hosts hung on in extra time to force a penalty shootout, in which Lyon had their shots saved by Clermont goalkeeper Vincent Bouchard.

Clermont are only the second French side to leave Ligue 1 club Lille to beat Olympique Lyon this season.

Lille eliminated the champions in the first round of the League Cup and beat them again in a home league match in January.

The result was a setback for Lyon, who demolished Werder Bremen 3-0 last weekend in the away leg of their Champions League first knockout round tie and beat arch-rivals St Etienne 3-2 in Ligue 1 on Saturday.

To add salt to their wounds, Lyon captain Sidney Govou picked up a thigh injury and is doubtful for the League match against Caen on Friday.

Man Utd star Keane in court on assault charge

LONDON, 1 March— Manchester United and Ireland soccer star Roy Keane grabbed a teenage boy round the neck, swore at him and swung a punch towards his face before stopping his fist at the last minute, a British court heard on Monday.

The midfielder, who denies a charge of assault and a public order offence, clashed with the 16-year-old student near his home in Manchester, northwest England, last year. Trafford Magistrates’ Court was told.

Keane, 33, was walking his dogs when he rode past on a moped with a friend and beeped his horn to acknowledge the five-year-old. Then the court was told.

As the moped passed, Keane — who was then injured — swung out with his walking stick, prompting the 16-year-old, who was not named in court, to turn around and make a crude hand gesture at the soccer player. A few weeks later in September 2004, the pair were visiting a friend near Keane’s home when they were approached by the sportsman, the boy said in a videotaped interview to police shown to the court in place of direct testimony.

The teenager told police he noticed Keane walking towards him. “He elbowed me up to me and I’m not sure what he said next; he was being a bit aggressive,” the boy said.

Espanyol hold Barcelona to goalless draw

MADRID, 2 March— An inspired performance from Espanyol keeper Carlos Kameni prevented Barcelona from extending their lead to 11 points at the top of the Primera Liga as they were held to a goalless draw at the Nou Camp on Tuesday.

Barcelona started the day eight points clear of Real Madrid, who host fourth-placed Real Betis on Wednesday, but their local rivals frustrated them with a robust defensive display.

Miguel Angel Lotina’s side, who moved up to fourth in the standings, finished the game with 10 men after defender Daniel Jarque received a straight red card in the 66th minute.

Barcelona pressured Espanyol throughout the second half and created a number of scoring opportunities, but Kameni and his defenders held firm to leave Barca nine points clear at the top.

La Liga’s top scorer Samuel Eto’o had the perfect chance to put Barca ahead inside the opening minute as he cut into the visitors area and fired goalwards, but Kameni made his first intervention of the night to turn the shot wide with his foot.

Arsenal, Southampton, Blackburn reach FA Cup quarterfinals

LONDON, 2 March— Premier League sides Arsenal, Southampton and Blackburn Rovers reached the FA Cup quarter-finals with victories over lower division opponents in fifth-round replays on Tuesday.

Arsenal needed extra time and penalties to beat second division Sheffield United. English defender Ashley Cole converting the decisive spot-kick to win the shoot-out 4-2 following a goalless draw.

Striker Peter Crouch scored twice to help Southampton beat third division Brentford 3-1, and Blackburn’s Morten Gamst Pedersen lashed in an 86th-minute winner to seal a 2-1 victory over local rivals Burnley.

Southampton will entertain holders Manchester United in the last eight, Arsenal travel to Bolton Wanderers and Blackburn host second division Leicester City.

Second division Nottingham Forest play Tottenham Hotspur in the last fifth-round replay on Wednesday with the winners travelling to Newcastle United in the quarter-finals on March 12 or 13.

Sheffield United forward Michael Tonge missed a golden opportunity to put his side ahead in the opening minute against Arsenal when he blazed the ball wide from just two metres out with the goal gaping.

The champions dominated the rest of the match, midfielder Francesc Fabregas hitting the crossbar in the second half, but their goalkeeper Manuel Almunia had to make a fine save in stoppage time to deny United defender Jon Harley.

Arsenal, severely depleted by injuries and suspensions, also enjoyed the better of extra time, with defender Pascal Cygan and substitute striker Jeremie Aliadiere wasting good chances.

In the shoot-out, Arsenal’s Lauren, Patrick Vieira, Freddie Ljungberg and Cole held their nerve to score, and Almunia produced good saves from Alan Quinn and Harlay to put the London side through.

“It was a really tough game and you must give a lot of credit to Sheffield United,” Vieira told Sky Sports. “But we always produce when our backs are against the wall and we are really happy to be in the next round.”

Brentford took a shock lead after four minutes against Southampton through midfielder Eddie Hutchinson, only for Crouch to level seven minutes later.

The third division side had chances to restore their advantage but experienced forward Kevin Phillips put the visitors ahead from close range on 67 minutes and Crouch wrapped up victory in stoppage time.

Blackburn host second division Leicester City in the next round. They won 2-1 at the City Ground despite being a goal behind at half-time thanks to a 30th minute winner from substitute striker Jeremie Aliadiere.

Arsenal and Southampton will face each other at the semi-final stage, while Blackburn face Coventry City in the other semi-final.

Arsenal’s Frederik Ljungberg (L) and Mathieu Flamini (R) and Sheffield United’s Andy Gray (C) vies during tonight’s FA Cup clash at Bramall Lane, Sheffield. Arsenal won 4-2 on penalties. — INTERNET

Arsenal, Sheffield United, Andy Gray (C) vies during tonight’s FA Cup clash at Bramall Lane, Sheffield. Arsenal won 4-2 on penalties. — INTERNET
Uruguay restores full diplomatic relations with Cuba

MONTevideo, 2 March— The new socialist government of Uruguay announced Tuesday to restore full diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Only three hours after taking office as Uruguay’s President, Tabare Vazquez presided over the ceremony for the resumption of diplomatic relations between the two Latin American countries.

“We received with pleasure the representatives of the sister nation of Cuba,” said Vazquez.

Then, Uruguayan Foreign Minister Reinaldo Gargano and his Cuban counterpart Felipe Perez signed and exchanged notes on re-establishing the relations.

“It is very good that the nations of Latin America are united,” said Vazquez, the first socialist president of Uruguay.

“The tokens of friendship and solidarity of Uruguay toward Cuba are permanent,” Perez said after signing the documents.

Syria to withdraw troops from Lebanon soon

WASHINGTON, 2 March — Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has said that his country will withdraw its troops from Lebanon in a few months, the Times magazine reported Tuesday.

“(Withdrawal) should be very soon and maybe in the next few months. Not after that,” Bashard told the Times magazine in an interview published on its web site on Tuesday.

Bashar declined to give a definite timetable for the pullout, saying it depended on technical, rather than political, considerations.

“I could not say we could do it in two months because I have not had the meeting with the Army people. They may say it will take six months.”

Syria plays a dominant role in Lebanon and maintains 14,000 troops there. It said last week that it would begin moving its troops in Lebanon closer to its own border to allay mounting world and Lebanese calls for Syria to withdraw all its forces from its neighbour.

Syria and Lebanon had been at war since 1976 and the cease-fire agreement of 1978 was not respected.

EU remains divided over GMO foods

BRUSSELS, 2 March— The European Union remains deeply divided over genetically modified (GMO) foods, with the planting of biotech seeds a tremendously touchy area even though Brussel has resumed authorizing GMO products after a break of nearly six years.

Several EU states have passed a patchwork of laws to control growing of biotech crops but many are holding back in the hope that uniform EU rules will be drafted, officials say.

At the moment, EU governments must make their own rules for separating different crop types to minimize cross-pollination and for financial liability if a farmer claims a neighbour’s sowings have damaged his crop. Few have done so.

Only a few GMO crops are allowed for growing, mostly maize.

Despite calls for more than a year from anti-GMO diehards such as Austria and Luxembourg for a bloc-wide law on crop separation, so-called co-existence, the EU’s executive Commission has declined to oblige. One result of this approach is that several countries now have laws far stricter than the Commission would have wanted, angering the biotech industry and raising the prospect of legal action for distorting the EU’s single market.

Germany’s law, perhaps the most controversial so far, has attracted the attention of Commission lawyers charged with checking that national laws comply with EU legislation and also conform with broad Commission guidelines from July 2003.

One clause specifies the joint liability of all GMO farmers with fields that border a “contaminated” non-GMO crop in cases where it is impossible to name an individual farmer as liable.

Critics say this would force a GMO farmer to prove that his crops were not to blame in a neighbour’s contamination claim — a powerful and costly deterrent to planting GMO crops at all.

“The Commission, being the guardians of the law, should see that the measures introduced aren’t disproportionate,” said Simon Barber of Brussels-based industry lobby group Europlab.

“What the German Government has done is way beyond what is required,” he said for, only Germany, Denmark, Italy and five regions of Austria have laws to regulate GMO cultivation, while the number of farming organizations that have reached a voluntary agreement.

Another eight countries are drafting laws, with those from Spain, Luxembourg, Portugal, Poland and the Czech Republic the most advanced. Others have no plans yet for legislation.

France, the EU’s top cereals grower, should submit a first report on a co-existence law to the Commission in a year.

WEATHER

Wednesday, 2 March, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours

MST: During the past 24 hours, except for the light rain in Kachin State, weather has been generally fair in the whole country. Day temperatures were (3˚C) to (4˚C) above normal in Shan, Kachin, Rakhine and Kayin States, Sagaing and Magway Divisions, (5˚C) above normal in Mandalay Division, (8˚C) above normal in Tanintharyi Division and about normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 1-3-2005 was 100˚F. Minimum temperature on 3-3-2005 was 63˚F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 2-3-2005 was 74%. Total sunshine hours on 1-3-2005 was (9:0) hours approx. Rainfalls on 2-3-2005 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 4 mph from Southwest at (15:30) hours MST on 1-3-2005.

Bay influence: Weather is partly cloudy in the Central Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 3-3-2005: Except for the possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin State and eastern Sittang Division, the weather will be generally fair in the whole country. Degree of certainty is (40%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Generally fair weather in the whole country.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 3-3-2005: Partly cloudy. Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 3-3-2005: Fair weather.

Earthquake report

(Issued at 18:30 hours MST on 2-3-2005)

An earthquake of strong intensity Richter Scale (6.8) with its epicenter outside Myanmar about (2,600) miles southeast of Kaba-Aye seismological observatory was recorded at (17) hrs (19) min (30) sec MST on 26 March 2005.
8th Waning of Tabodwe 1366 ME

**60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives**

- To work in concert with the people to achieve success in implementation of the seven-point Road Map for emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation
- To exert energetic efforts in carrying out the five rural development tasks
- To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the twelve State Objectives while upholding Our Three Main National Causes
- To build a strong, efficient and modern Tatmadaw

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**Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win sends felicitations to his counterpart of Bulgaria**

**YANGON, 3 March — Lt-Gen Soe Win, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Simon Saxe-Coburg Gotha, Prime Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria, on the occasion of the National Day of the Republic of Bulgaria, which falls on 3 March 2005. — MNA**

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**8th National Sanitation Week activities launched**

**YANGON, 2 March — Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, accompanied by officials at division/district/township levels, attended the ceremony to mark the eighth National Sanitation Week 2005 at the meeting hall of Monywa Hospital yesterday morning. The commander extended greetings and heard reports on sanitation tasks in Sagaing Division. Next, U Than Nyunt, owner of ShweU-daung Brokerage and U Thaung (Chindwin Sunflower Blanket Factory) donated 50 commodes each worth K 80,000 each and Head of the Division Health Department Dr Kyaw Shein accepted the donations. Later, the commander and party viewed the books, papers, and scale models of fly-proof latrine and documentary photos displayed in the meeting hall. — MNA**

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**Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint watches competition of Myanmar-Japan Friendly Volleyball Match at National Indoor Stadium-1 in Thuwunna.**

**YANGON, 2 March — Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaung and local national race leaders U Lwe Maung and U Kuang Taing inspected plantation of honey orange of regional battalion and bee-keeping in Lashio Township on 28 February. The commander and party inspected progress of work of the pagoda. They went to Thathana- Aye Kyauktai and presented offerings to Sayadaw U Tejaniya. The commander and party oversaw soybean, summer paddy, lychee plantations and their products. The commander also presented K 500,000 for construction of Yamaungtan monastery in Hsaungkye Village, Mongyai Township to the Shan national race leaders. — MNA**

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**North-East Command Commander inspects plantations in Lashio**

**YANGON, 2 March — Under the arrangements of the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare of the Ministry of Defence, vocalists to the accompaniment of Tatmadaw TV Broadcasting Unit’s Music Troupe performed entertainment to Tatmadawmen of Anawrahta Column, Bayinnaung Column and Aungzeya Column which will take part in the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade at No 1 Transit Centre yesterday evening. Similarly, No 1 and No 2 Mobile Public Relations Units entertained Anyeint, dance and songs to Tatmadawmen of Aung San Column at the local battalion in South Okkalapa Township and Hsinbyushin Column at the local battalion in Mingaladon Township. Likewise, Tatmadawmen of Nawade Column were entertained with the film titled “Hsan-yay”. The entertainment were enjoyed by column commanders, commanding officers, officers and Tatmadawmen of the respective columns. — MNA**

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**60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day parade columns entertained**

**YANGON, 2 March — Under the arrangements of the Directorate of Public Relations and Psychological Warfare of the Ministry of Defence, vocalists to the accompaniment of Tatmadaw TV Broadcasting Unit’s Music Troupe performed entertainment to Tatmadawmen of Anawrahta Column, Bayinnaung Column and Aungzeya Column which will take part in the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade at No 1 Transit Centre yesterday evening. Similarly, No 1 and No 2 Mobile Public Relations Units entertained Anyeint, dance and songs to Tatmadawmen of Aung San Column at the local battalion in South Okkalapa Township and Hsinbyushin Column at the local battalion in Mingaladon Township. Likewise, Tatmadawmen of Nawade Column were entertained with the film titled “Hsan-yay”. The entertainment were enjoyed by column commanders, commanding officers, officers and Tatmadawmen of the respective columns. — MNA**

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**Inside**

The representatives of the Pyithu Hluttaw will be elected by the people across the nation. Furthermore, the delegates representing all the national races will be elected to the Pyithu Hluttaw. And 12 delegates from each Division or State will be elected to the National Hluttaw.

**Perspectives**

While working for all-round development of the nation, the government is translating into reality the seven-point policy programme for the future of the State so that a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation will emerge. **(Page 2)**

**Chingya (Maunir)**

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