Senior General Than Shwe sends felicitations to Ireland

YANGON, 17 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 Her Excellency Dr Mary McAleese, President of Ireland, on the occasion of the National Day of Ireland, which falls on 17 March 2005. — MNA

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

NC delegates, wellwishers donate K 14.3m hailing 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

YANGON, 16 March — As a gesture of hailing the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, the cash donation ceremony of delegates to the National Convention and wellwishers was held at Nyaunghnapi Camp in Hmaubwy Township at 2 pm today, attended by Chairman of the National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

Also present on the occasion were Secretary of the Commission Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and members, members of the

Meetings of NC delegate groups held

YANGON, 16 March — Delegate groups of political parties and peasants held their meetings to compile the proposals to be submitted to the NCC Work Committee at designated meeting halls in Nyaunghnapi Camp, Hmaubwy in the morning and afternoon today. Present at the meetings were group-wise members of panel of chairmen and NC delegates.

Delegate group of Political Parties
A meeting of delegate group of Political Parties was held at meeting hall-1 at 9 am. U Phillip Sam of Wa National Development Party presided over the meeting. Deputy Director U Khin Maung Phyu acted as MC and Assistant Director Daw Yin Yin Than, co-MC.

First, the master of ceremonies declared the start of the meeting with the permission of the meeting chairman as 28 delegates out of 29 attended the meeting, accounting for 96.55 per cent. Next, U Phillip Sam of Wa National Development Party made an opening speech.

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
**PEOPLE'S DESIRE**

- Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
- Oppose those trying to jeopardize the 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

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**Commander, USDA Secretariat Member tour Kachin State**

YANGON, 16 March — Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Commander of Northern Command Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe and Member of the Secretariat of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Brig-Gen Thein Zaw on 11 March delivered addresses at the opening of Executive Management Course No 2 of Kachin State USDA and other summer courses at the city hall in Myitkyina. Altogether 150 executives, organizers and members of township associations are attending the four-week management course and over 100,000 trainees, the summer courses.

The Kachin State USDA Secretary presented 2,791 permanent blood donor membership applications to Chairman of the Blood Bank Medical Superintendent Dr Ko Ko Lay. The Commander, the secretariat member and officials comforted 50 blood donors at Myitkyina General Hospital.

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**Armed Forces Day commemorative booths inspected**

YANGON, 16 March — Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein together with Managing Director of News and Periodicals Enterprise Col Soe Win and officials of the Ministry of Information checked booths of the Ministry and those of nation-building endeavours to be displayed at Defence Services Museum to mark the 66th Anniversary Armed Forces Day this year.

First, the deputy minister looked into documentary photos of the Head of State, those of present development of the Union, media performances, sector-wise tasks of the departments and enterprises, books of winners of National Literary Award, books on historical records to represent the State’s policy published by the NPE in the booth of the Ministry and attended to the needs.

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**Task for sufficient supply of drinking water inspected**

YANGON, 16 March — Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, accompanied by Head of Engineering Department (Water and Sanitation) U Thaung Yin and officials concerned inspected measures being taken for providing assistance to ensure sufficient drinking water for Yangonites yesterday morning.

During their inspection tour, they looked into installation of 24-inch diameter concrete water pipeline from Thanthuma to Upper Pazaungaung Streets with the use of machinery and manpower, tasks to be carried out for water supply to Thawunna and Thakayta Townships through the suspension bridge crossing Ngamoeycik River, arrangements to be made for water supply to Dawbon Township by means of connecting water pipeline through the old steel bridge linking Mingala Taungnyunt and Dawbon.

Next, the mayor instructed the officials concerned to systematically carry out the tasks as it is a giant project, to step up measures for timely completion of the project in the open season and to constantly supervise and inspect the project tasks phase by phase. — MNA

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**27th Inter-State/Division Golf Championship continues**

YANGON, 16 March — Yangon Division team stood first by firing 456 strokes in total gross at the top of the leader board after the second round of the team scratch event in the 27th Inter-State/Division Golf Championship being held at Danyingon Golf Club, here, this morning.

Sagaying Division team was so close to the leader, standing at the second position with 469 in total gross. Bago Division team put its position behind the leaders with 470 in total gross.

In the team handicap event, Bago Division led with 417 strokes in total nett, followed by Yangon Division 421 and Taninthyai Division 422.

Naing Naing Lin (Yangon Division) cruised into the first place of the individual scratch by firing 144 strokes. Thant Zaw (Bago Division) and Than Naing Oo (Sagaying Division) shared third place with 153 in total gross.

In the individual handicap event, Tun Myat Oo (Taninthyai Division) fired 137 strokes in total nett. His runners-up were Kar Let (Kayah State) with 140 and Thura Kyaw (Shan State-South) with 141.

The championship continues tomorrow morning at the same venue. — MNA

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**REFEREELLEAFES: Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs’ Association Chairperson Daw Khin Myint Myint to serve as referee for Miss ASEAN 2005 to be held from 5 to 19 March in Jakarta, left here by air for Indonesia on 15-3-2005. She was accompanied by May Nan Oo (observer) and Aung Kyi Tun (beautician).**
Hun Sen calls for creating better investment climate

PHNOM PENH, 15 March — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on Monday calls on the ministries and relevant agencies to create better investment climate to attract more foreign investors.

At Monday’s 8th Government-Private Sector Forum, Hun Sen put forward three practical recommendations for the further improvement of investment climate. He asked all relevant ministries and agencies to set a transparent service fees; to create a single window in all cases related to investment; and to impose discipline and take strict sanction on those officials who solicit or impose unofficial fees on the private sector.

The Premier called for improving investment climate and ensuring favourable environment for the private sector as an important issue for Cambodia.

“Cambodia’s development in international trade in 2004 showed that exports increased by 23.4 per cent, in which garment export increased by 24.6 per cent. Imports also increased by 17.2 per cent compared to last year. In 2004, approximately one million tourists visited Cambodia,” the Prime Minister said.

“While Cambodia has made some progress in improving investment climate, the rest of the world is also proactive. Therefore, Cambodia must show tremendous improvements in order to become attractive to investors,” he said.

Cambodia’s development in international trade in 2004 showed that exports increased by 23.4 per cent, in which garment export increased by 24.6 per cent. Imports also increased by 17.2 per cent compared to last year. In 2004, approximately one million tourists visited Cambodia.

Though there are concerns over Cambodia’s garment industry in the aftermath of the Multi-Fibre Agreement expiration at the end of 2004, the figure provided by Council of the Development of Cambodia (CDC) shows that 27 garment manufacturers are expanding their production base in the past 19 months, which is worth about 40 million US dollars in investments and creates 42,000 more jobs. MNA/Xinhua

Chinese Vice-FM meets Nauru President

BEIJING, 15 March — Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi met with visiting Nauru President Ludwig Scotty in Guangzhou on Sunday, with their discussion focusing on bilateral ties, economic and technological cooperation, sources from the Chinese Foreign Ministry said here Monday.

After conveying to Scotty regards of Chinese President Hu Jintao, Yang reviewed the development of China-Nauru diplomatic relations.

Yang lauded efforts Scotty has made to promote the friendship between the two countries and expressed the appreciation for the adherence of the Nauru Government to one-China policy.

Chinese Government values China-Nauru friendship and backs Nauru’s drive to improve the people’s livelihood and achieve the sound development of economy,” said Yang.

China would like to join hands with Nauru to advance bilateral relations, Yang said.

Noting that he was deeply impressed by the development of Guangdong and China as a whole, Scotty said Nauru’s new administration is making active efforts for the economic and social development.

Chinese visitors look at an artificial flower displayed at a souvenirs and crafts exhibition in Beijing on 16 March, 2005.—INTERNET

Italy says will start withdrawing troops from Iraq

Rome, 15 March—Leading US ally Italy said on Tuesday it would start withdrawing its soldiers from Iraq in September, in a fresh blow to President Bush shrinking coalition.

Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, one of Bush’s most vocal supporters, said he was in talks with British Prime Minister Tony Blair about a total exit strategy from Iraq, adding people in both countries wanted their troops to return home.

“We will begin to reduce our contingent even before the end of the year, starting in September, in agreement with our allies,” said Berlusconi, who faces an election next year and went against public opinion to deploy troops in Iraq.

Referring to the rebels who attack US soldiers, Berlusconi said: “It will depend on the capacity of the Iraqi government to provide adequate security.”

Despite strong opposition at home, Berlusconi sent some 3,000 troops to Iraq -- the fourth largest foreign contingent after US, British and South Korean forces.

But pressure has mounted on him to withdraw the troops since intelligence agent Nicola Calpari was killed earlier this month by US soldiers shortly after rescuing an Italian hostage.

The incident has strained Italy’s relations with the United States and Bush has promised an investigation.

“(Bush) knows that he can’t let down a loyal ally,” said Berlusconi, adding that the killing was a “serious mistake.”

“T’ve spoken at length about a total exit strategy personally with Tony Blair, saying that we should make a precise exit strategy because the public opinion of our countries expects this information,” said Berlusconi.

Internet

Wen Jiabao urges high-level visits between China, Japan

BEIJING, 15 March — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Monday said China and Japan should make joint efforts to create conditions for high-level exchanges of visits in a bid to improve bilateral relations.

He also suggested the foreign affairs departments of the two countries should begin strategic study and research on strengthening and improving China-Japan relations.

Wen said since the normalization of bilateral relations, the China-Japan relations have made great progress. Last year, bilateral trade approached to 170 billion US dollars and the number of bilateral personnel visits exceeded four million. — MNA/Xinhua
ADB to finance Vietnamese water supply programme

MANILA, 15 March — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will prepare a project to improve water supply and sanitation in areas of the southern central region of Vietnam through a technical assistance grant of 950,000 US dollars, ADB said in a news release on Monday.

The assistance, which comes from the Japan Special Fund and is financed by the government of Japan, will prepare a feasibility study and design for the project, which would improve water supply and sanitation in 10-20 small and medium towns.

The region is one of the poorest areas of Vietnam with poverty levels higher than the national average. Inadequate water supply and sanitation is one of the most pressing issues facing the area’s small and medium-sized towns, said ADB.

“Lack of investments and deteriorated urban water supply and sanitation facilities have heightened environmental and health risks in several towns,” says Januar Hakim, an ADB urban development specialist.

Most towns in the region have either inadequate or no water supply system at all and a large proportion of the population uses water from contaminated or saline wells and surface sources, said ADB.

A severe lack of drainage is also evident in the towns, while waste collection and sanitation facilities are lacking.

ADB has actively assisted Vietnam’s urban and water supply and sanitation sectors since 1993, with five loans approved totalling 304 million US dollars.

The Vietnamese Government will contribute 250,000 US dollars toward the programme’s total cost of 1.2 million US dollars.— MNA/Xinhua

Kathmandu-Lhasa bus service to start in May

KATHMANDU, 15 March — More than 200 people plan to enjoy the first operation of bus service between Nepal’s capital Kathmandu and Lhasa of China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, which will start between Nepal’s capital Kathmandu and Lhasa, the fare is fixed at 70 dollars, and for the process for the operation of straight bus service.

The delegation will come to Nepal within one month to finalize the currency of either side can be used on another side.

Under the banner of Nepal’s state-owned transport company Sajha Yatayat, executive chief of Sajha Yatayat.

The essential process has been finalized at the Nepali Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Department of Transport Management of Nepal, Satyal noted, adding that a Chinese delegation will come to Nepal within one month to finalize the process for the operation of straight bus service.

For the 955-kilometre long route between Kathmandu and Lhasa, the fare is fixed at 70 dollars, and the currency of either side can be used on another side.

Highly facilitated bus service will have comfortable seats, telephone, first aid service, toilet, fooding and lodging services as well, he revealed. — MNA/Xinhua

Thai authorities urge strict enforcement of labelling regulations

BANGKOK, 15 March — Thai authorities have been urged to enforce labelling rules on food products containing genetically modified ingredients, local newspaper reported on Tuesday.

Food manufacturers were trying to infringe the regulations on genetically modified organism labelling by printing very small label on their products to make them go unnoticed or difficult to read, said Saree Ongsomwang, president of the Consumer Federation of Thailand.

“The GMO labels on food products in the market are so tiny that you need a magnifying glass to read them,” she was quoted by Bangkok Post newspaper as saying.

A regulation issued by the Food and Drug Administration required GMO labelling for products containing GM corn and soybean of more than 5 per cent in three main ingredients.

However, consumer groups claimed it was not enough to safeguard consumer rights.

1,516 US soldiers killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 18 March—As of Tuesday, 15 March, 2005, at least 1,516 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,156 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department. The figures include four military civilians.

The AP count is five higher than the Defence Department’s tally, last updated at 10 am EST Tuesday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths; Italy, 20; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, eight; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Latvia, one each.

Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,378 US military members have died, according to AP’s count. That includes at least 1,047 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military’s numbers.

Internet

Americans worry about casualties, costs on second anniversary of Iraq war, says poll

WASHINGTON, 18 March—Americans have conflicting views about the costs and benefits of the US-led war on Iraq nearly two years after its launch, according to a poll released.

Iraq benefits more from the war than the United States, according to those surveyed in the ABC News/Washington Post poll, many of whom believed the benefits were not enough to justify the costs.

Seventy percent of those polled said the level of US casualties in Iraq was “unacceptable.” Fifty-three percent believe the war was not worth fighting, compared to 45 percent who believe the war was justified. Support for the war ran at 70 percent while US troops were engaged in active combat, according to earlier polls.—Internet

More Singapore travellers use electronic air tickets

SINGAPORE, 15 March — Almost half of Singapore travellers use electronic air tickets (e-tickets), according to Channel NewsAsia (CNA) report on Monday. Cheaper, secure and time-saving, e-ticketing frees passengers from the hassle of purchasing and keeping physical air tickets, said Abacus, a leading travel facilitator based in Singapore. As e-ticketing is heating up here, local travel agencies found that business travellers are ready to accept e-tickets while leisure travellers held complicated attitude towards this latest service.— MNA/Xinhua
**New Zealand, Norway agree on Working Holiday Scheme**

**WELLINGTON, 15 March —** New Zealand and Norway have agreed on a Working Holiday Scheme enabling young people to work and holiday in each other’s countries, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said on Monday.

The agreement was signed on Monday by New Zealand Foreign Minister Phil Goff and Norwegian Ambassador to New Zealand Lars Wensell in the presence of Prime Minister Clark and her Norwegian counterpart Kjell Magne Bondevik, who is visiting New Zealand.

“This scheme will enable young New Zealanders and Norwegians to get to know each other’s countries and cultures, and build stronger people-to-people links for the future,” Clark said. “We have working holiday schemes with 13 European countries now. They open doors for New Zealanders to travel and work for a generally a year at a time in the countries involved,” she said.

**Nine men die mysteriously in southern Vietnam**

**HANOI, 15 March —** Nine men from Vietnam’s southern An Giang Province died of unidentified reasons within one week, local newspaper Youth reported Monday.

From March 6-11, the men aged between 24 and 50 from Phu Tan District died after showing symptoms of dizziness, headache, vomiting and convulsion. The deaths might have resulted from alcohol poisoning, since all the victims drank frequently, the paper said. Local authorities have collected samples from alcohol produced and sold in the district as well as from the victims for investigation.

**Syrian official says Iraq may be spiralling toward civil war**

**WASHINGTON, 18 March —** Syria’s US ambassador said on Tuesday that Iraq may be spiralling toward a civil war “that will have a domino effect on the whole region,” and he urged the Bush administration to stop accusing his country of harbouring infiltrators.

In an Associated Press interview, Ambassador Imad Moustapha said “we are really not allowing people to infiltrate” into Iraq. He invited the United States to help secure the border.

The Syrian diplomat said his government had taken unprecedented steps to seal its border with Iraq, and that even the United States had problems guarding its border with Mexico.

Moustapha said his government “has been very sure to not allow anyone to act from inside Syria to create any violence in Iraq.” He said he knew that if Syria helped guerrillas, “we will be put in direct confrontation with the United States, which I don’t believe any country wants to be.”

Outsiders are responsible for about 5 per cent of the anti-US attacks in Iraq, he said. “There are politicians in the United States who find it politically useful to say the balance is in the hands of outsiders, and that Syria and Iran are allowing them to do this job.”

“If you believe you can help us improve security on our borders, we are willing to enhance the quality of cooperation,” he said. “But it takes two to tango, and we cannot do this by ourselves while you continue to bash Syria through the media.”

**Iran offers Afghanistan support in fighting drug traffickers**

**KABUL, 16 March —** Iran offered Afghanistan support in fighting drug traffickers training Afghan border police, tightening borders with Iran.

Savvi-Lari met Afghan counterpart Ali Ahmad Jalali in Kabul on Monday to discuss joint efforts in the war against drugs and common security issues.

Afghanistan has become the world’s number one producer of opium in little more than three years since US-backed forces ousted the Taliban militia from power in late 2001.

Nearly 90 per cent of heroin sold worldwide comes from Afghanistan and, with the opium economy accounting for up to 60 per cent of GDP, there are growing fears that the country could end up being run by narco-mafia.

**Earthquake jolts Koyna in W India**

**MUMBAI, 16 March —** A moderate earthquake with a magnitude of 5.1 shook the town of Koyna in western India and was also felt in India’s financial capital Mumbai on Monday, the Indian weather office said.

Police in Koyna and in Mumbai said there were no reports of damage.

The earthquake occurred at 3.14 pm (0944 GMT), said R S Duttagrayam, director of seismology in the Indian Meteorological Department in New Delhi.

Mumbai’s Sensex stock index fell on news of the earthquake, extending an earlier loss to close 0.8 per cent lower on the day.

Koyna is about 200 kilometres (120 miles) south of Bombay and has a population of about 2,500. The Koyna region has a population of approximately 20,000.

**Anti-war groups plan to mark second anniversary of US invasion of Iraq**

**NEW YORK, 18 March —** Anti-war groups say they are gearing up for a series of national demonstrations, including acts of civil disobedience, to mark the second anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq, spokespeople said.

In New York, protesters are planning to march to Times Square and also have plans to picket and bar entry to three army recruitment centres, according to the War Resisters League.

The planned events will also call on Washington to pull US troops out of Iraq.

“[We don’t expect a huge] big city protest, but rather some visible activity, in all 50 states,” said Bill Dobbs, a spokesman for the United For Peace and Justice coalition which has organized other large anti-war protests. Other events being planned include beach parties, theatre and multi-religious gatherings, all of which will mark the second anniversary of the US move against Baghdad and also call for American troops to be brought home immediately.

In Fayetteville, North Carolina, demonstrators are planning to turn out on the streets of a town which is home to the vast Fort Bragg military base and thousands of US troops and their families.

**Zambian First Lady visits China**

**BEIJING, 15 March —** Zambia and China, both developing countries, should strengthen exchanges in poverty reduction and education popularization, said visiting Zambian First Lady Maureen Mwanawasa on Monday.

Mwanawasa arrived here on Monday morning on an eight-day visit to China as guest of the Soong Ching Ling Foundation.

The Soong Ching Ling Foundation was set up in Beijing in 1982 as a non-governmental organization to promote welfare of youth and children.

Mwanawasa said Zambia was willing to learn from China in such experiences as youth development, in a bid to help Zambia’s young generation, which accounted for 75 per cent of Zambia’s total population, to make more contribution to Zambia’s economic construction.

Zambia and China should further enhance cooperation in such fields as economy, trade, science and information technology, in a bid to get improvement in poverty reduction and education popularization, which were important for every country, she noted.

Hu Qili, chairman of the foundation, expressed his hope to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the Maureen Mwanawasa Community Initiative, a non-governmental organization personally run by the First Lady to address the plight of the vulnerable in society.

Mwanawasa paid the visit with a purpose to acquaint herself with China’s non-governmental organization in promoting welfare of women and children and helping the poor and the weak, especially in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.

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India’s first Formula One driver, Narain Karthikeyan of the Jordan F1 Grand Prix Team, poses inside his team’s paddock at Sepang International Circuit in Sepang outside Kuala Lumpur on 15 March, 2005. Malaysia will host the second race of the 2005 Formula One Grand Prix on Sunday.
Government and KNU in direct contact
Progress has been made in the discussions between officials concerned and KNU delegates

YANGON, 16 March — The Information Committee of the State Peace and Development Council held the press conference No 2/2005 yesterday afternoon at the Ministry of Information.

Present were U Sein Win of Kyodo news agency, President of Myanmar Foreign Correspondents Club U Sao Kai Hpa, Secretary U Nyunt Tin and members, editors of local periodicals and guests.

Minister for Science and Technology
U Thaung.
MNA

At the question and answer session, U Aung Shwe Oo of NTV said that concerning the ILO, there are conventions and suggestions. The number of conventions observed by some nations is less than ten. As for Myanmar it has accepted and approved a number of conventions. The press meet already explained with firm evidence the cooperation of Myanmar in enacting laws concerning the conventions and formation of committees to materialize them. If we study the explanations, we can see that the ILO’s actions are above its principles and rules.

I have known at the press conference that Myanmar has already defended herself with solid clarifications. First, I would like to know whether Myanmar has responded to the ILO with the firm explanations. Second, as there were accusations on Myanmar, using the ILO Convention No 29 as a tool, I would like to know whether Myanmar can resign from such conventions.

Concerning the ILO Convention No 29 on forced labour, Minister for Labour U Thaung said that Myanmar has already distributed the copies of the paper under the title — Cooperation with the ILO — to the ILO, the ILO delegation that visited Myanmar and representatives of the member countries of the ILO Governing Body. In the paper, it is mentioned that Myanmar has already taken action against the matters concerning the 48 accusations of the total of 50 made by the ILO resident representative. The country is still looking into the matter concerning the remaining two accusations.

In connection with the second question, the minister said that a member nation of the ILO Convention No 29 can resign from it after signing the convention for 15 years. But Myanmar is still cooperating with the ILO to practically prove her tradition of cooperating with the body since the past. When all the ILO accusations are studied, they cannot be consummated forced labour. The people of Myanmar has an age-old tradition of working collectively as a family. They have the thousand-year-old tradition of helping to repair a house in a community and contributing labour in a reciprocal basis in farm works. They have the communal system of carrying out rural development undertakings covering the work of building rural roads and village-to-town roads. Every one of the national races of Myanmar takes part in the collective voluntary services of own volition and goodwill in accord with the religion and culture. Poor public relations and inefficiency of some village authorities in conducting community welfare services in a handful of villages, from among the total number over 60,000 in the whole nation, is the excuse the ILO has used in launching the accusation under the heading “forced labour”. The matters concerning the accusation are all at village levels. The matters originate from a handful of villages of the over 60,000 throughout the country. But the ILO is applying pressure on Myanmar, making accusations till the problems become the State’s concern.

Daw Nwe Nwe Aye of The Myanmar Times pointed out that she has heard the taking of actions against authorities of the villages where the alleged cases of forced labour occurred. She said that she would like to know about some of the cases.

Minister U Thaung replied to her question, saying that action has already been taken against six cases under section 374 of the Penal Code. For example, a mini dam was build in Bushwemaw vil-

Director-General U Sit Myaing of Social Welfare Department.
MNA

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Government and KNU in...

(from page 6)

Development Council, instead of hiring workers, used the funds for self-interest. Thus, there arose complaints. Action has already been taken against the two.

The minister said, in another case, the department concerned hired workers of six or seven nearby villages including the Kundaung and the Nantphalon to set up a teak plantation in Tamu Township. The forester who hired workers paid only a portion of the wages to the workers during the process of establishing the plantation, when he was transferred to another region. A complaint was filed against him, as he failed to pay the full amount of wages to the workers before he left the place. As there was firm evidence that the forester had misused the funds, action was taken against him.

U Khin Maung Myint of NHK said he would like to ask an encouraging news story. Some did not understand the arrest of some people from Shan State at the time of the National Convention in session. Owing to the clarifications by the Information Minister he realized why and he also learnt their intentions. The clarifications were very useful to the country, and the entire people would understand. Chairman of National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein had said recently that discussions and plenary sessions at the national convention are being held with greater momentum. It was learnt that the KNU left for Mawlamyine for talks with the government. He would like to know whether it is true or not and the developments regarding the ceasefire and talks between KNU and the government.

In his reply to the question, Director-General of Myanmar Police Force Brig-Gen Khin Yi said U Khun Tun Oo hired two advocates. If the client could not do so, the government can hire a lawyer under the arrangement of the Bar Council in accord with the procedures. There are documentary photos of U Khun Tun Oo talking to his two advocates on 1 March 2005, the case was heard. He was allowed to talk with them to his heart’s content. The client had to sign himself whether he would like to hire an advocate or not.

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NC delegates, wellwishers donate...

(from page 1)

National Convention Convening Work Committee, Chairman of the NCC Management Committee Auditor-General Maj-Gen Lu Min Maung and committee members, Chairman of the Invitation and Reception Subcommittee of the NCCMC Brig-Gen Myo Myint, members of the panel of chairmen and wellwishers.

Joint-Secretary 1 of the Management Committee Lt-Gen Maung Maung Shein acted as master of ceremonies.

Chairman of the Parade Working Group for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Maj-Gen Aung Aung Kyi accepted K 2 million donated by Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry; K 1 million each by NC delegates through NC delegate Dr Khin Thi Gyi of Shwe Gabar Co, NC delegate U Htay Myint of Yuzana Construction and NC delegate U Win Aung of Dagon International Ltd.

Maj-Gen Aung Aung Kyi, Parade Commander Gen Nyi Tun, member of the Parade Working Group Brig-Gen Aung Khin Soe accepted K 500,000 each donated by U Zaw Win of Ayeon Construction, U Sein Tha of Tosta Group Construction, U Tin Hsein of ACE Construction Co, Dr Zaw Tun and U Kyaw Nee Aung of Shwekyarbyan Construction, U Ko Ko Htwe of Tawin Co, U Maung Maung of Shwe Gabar Construction, U Yan Win of Shwe Gabar Construction, U Win Thein of Phwint Phyo Aung Co and U Aung Zaw Win of Winck Construction Co; K 300,000 each by U Maung Maung and U Win Sein of Asia Express, U Soe Myint of U Min Win of Shwe Shwe Yi Co, U Kyaw Nee Oo of Naing Group, U Kyaw Win of Shwe Than Win Co Ltd, U Ba Tun of City Time and U Kyaw Min of MMM Construction;

K 200,000 each by U Than Myint (Ayeekinson) of Ayeekinson Co, U Mya Han of Fortune International Ltd and U Than Myint of High Rife Construction; K 100,000 each by U Mya Kyaw Min of Myamma Ahla Construction, U Maung Maung Gyi of MMG Construction and U Khin Maung Aye of Khin Maung Aye Construction.

Certificates of honour were presented to the donors.

Dr Khin Shwe of Zay Gabar Co explained the purpose of the donations. On behalf of the committee and the Leading Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniverary Armed Forces Day Maj-Gen Aung Aung Kyi expressed gratitude.

After the ceremony, Secretary 1 Lt-Gen Then Sein and party cordially greeted the wellwishers.

Today’s donations by 30 wellwishers amounted to K 14.3 million. — MNA

Lt-Gen Maung Bo tours...

(from page 16)

Some extent due to cooperation among authorities, departments concerned and local people.

Departmental personnel are to go field trips down to grassroots level.

As Taninthayi Division is rich in land and water resources, the division must be State’s reliable division on which the Head of State focuses.

Therefore, all are to try their best to make development of the division. In the past, the division lagged behind development of transport.

As the whole division have been facilitated with better transport, all-out efforts can be invested at regional development tasks. And then, departmental personnel are to organize local people by showing good evidences of development in order to participate in the regional development tasks.

Construction, Maung Bo and party proceeded to Kyunsu at Katan Island. At the jetty, they were welcomed by Commander of Taninthayi Naval Regional Command Head- quarters Captain Win Shein, departmental officials, members of social organizations and local people.

In meeting with the local people, Lt-Gen Maung Bo heard reports on matters related to Kyunsu Township and gave necessary instructions.

After that, he inspected development of Kyunsu and attended the opening ceremony of Katan Island circular road.

Meetings of NC delegate...

(from page 1)

Afterwards, U Khin Maung Gyi of National Unity Party, U Aung Khin of Union Party, O National Organization, U Maung Kyaw Oo of Mro (a) Khami National Solidarity Organization, U Kyar Hla Shall of Lahu National Development Party and U Yan Kyin Kan of Kokang Democracy and Unity Party read out the proposals of delegate group of political parties concerning the NCC Work Committee chairmen’s clarifications on detailed basic principles for distribution of the executive and judicial power to be included in the framing of the State Constitution. After the alternate chairman had ended the meeting with concluding remarks, the meeting went into recess at 11.20 am.

Delegate group of peasants

A meeting of delegate group of peasants was held at the meeting hall at 9 am in Nyaungghapin Camp. U Mya Aye of Yangon Division presided over the meeting together with U Sai Tin Tun of Shan State (North) and U Kan Nyunt of Sagaing Division. Deputy Director U Myint Kyaw acted as MC and Assistant Director Daw Myint Sein co-MC.

First, the master of ceremonies declared the validity of the meeting under the permission of the meeting chairman as there had been attendance of 97.85 per cent. U Mya Aye of Yangon Division made an opening speech.

After that, U Tun Aye Han of Kayah State, U Min Thu of Sagaing Division and U Aung Thein Tun of Ayeyawady Division read the proposals to be submitted to NC plenary session concerning the detailed basic principles for distribution of the executive and judicial power to be laid down in the framing of the State Constitution.

Afterwards, alternate chairman U Mya Aye of Yangon Division declared to approve the proposals and ended the meeting with concluding remarks and the meeting went into recess at 10.40 am.

Tatmadawmen of parade columns entertained

YANGON, 16 March — Under the arrangement of Directorate of Pubic Relations and Psychological Warfare, No 1 and No 2 Mobile Public Relations Units entertained Tatmadawmen of various columns with films at different camps yesterday evening.

Voicasts to the accommodation of Myanmar Music Troupe of Myawady TV Broadcasting Unit entertained the Tatmadawmen of Nawade Column in Ayeyawady Naval Regional Command Head-quarters; No 1 Mobile Public Relations Unit presented songs and dances and Anyeint to the Tatmadawmen of Anawrahta, Bayintnaung and Aungzeya Columns at No 1 Transit Centre (Bayintnaung). Similarly, the Aung San Column at the local battalion in South Okkalapa Township were entertained with film entitled “Yin-De-Ka-Saung-Ya-Thi”, the Tatmadawmen of Hsinphyushin Column at the local battalion in Mingaladon Township with the film titled “Myint-Myat-Hna-Lon-Tha” and the Tatmadawmen of Bandoola Column at Defence Services Orthopaedic Hospital (500-bed) with “Hsan-Yay”.

Column commanders, commanding officers, officers and Tatmadawmen who will take part in the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Parade enjoyed the entertainment.
Alleged forced recruitment...

(from page 16)

A person was not in the military service. Six persons remain in the military service of their own volition. Three persons were absent without leave and action is taken against two persons. According to the investigations, action was taken against the responsible persons for forced recruiting of new members. Those included 17 in 2002 and five in 2003 totalling 22. In order not to recruit minors, the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Thein Sein and members are the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, the Minister for Labour, the Judge Advocate-General, the Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training, the Director of Recruitment, the Deputy Chief Justice, the Deputy Attorney-General and the Deputy Director of Directorate of Recruitment as Secretary.

The committee is carrying out the tasks with the objectives of preventing forced recruiting of minors for military service, safeguarding their interest and ensuring observance of the prescribed orders and directives precisely. In order to realize the objectives, a working committee consisting of the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Labour was formed.

To witness how the young men between the ages of 18 and 25 of their own volition are recruited for military service, UNICEF Resident Representative Ms Carroll C Long visited No 1 recruitment unit in Yangon on 3 March 2004. Ms Long and UN Coordina- tor Mr Charles Petrie visited No 2 recruitment unit in Mandalay. They were briefed on systematic recruitment in accord with law and directives, sending of those who were disqualified to their respective parents, action taken against those who recruited new members without observing the directives by officials of the Ministry of Defence. The two UN officials had a chance to interview three new recruits freely. They learnt that the three had already attained the required age as evidenced by their national registration cards and they joined military service of their own volition.

To study about the issuance of national registration cards concerning with evidence for age, UN Coordina- tor Mr Charles Petrie and UNICEF Resident Repre- sentative Ms Carroll C Long visited Thaungkwin Vil- lage in Thanlyin Township and Myaingtheaya model village in Kyauktan Township on 10 March. They observed the registration of births and deaths as well as issuance of age-wise citizenship cards. They observed the process of issuing birth / death certificates by the Health Department; birth certifi- cates (1, 2 and 3) and death certificates (1, 2 and 3) by ward/village-tract peace and development council; enrollment of households on the basis of those certifi- cates, issuance of temporary citizenship cards to those who have reached the age of 10 and issuance of citizenship cards to those who have reached the age of 18. They observed the procedures and asked officials and the villagers on relevant information.

So, it can vividly be seen that the alleged forced recruitment especially child conscriptions are based on false information. In Myanmar only those who have reached the age of 18 are recruited for military service. They have to show citizenship cards as evidence for age attainment.

In connection with the forced recruitment of chil- dren for military service, Myanmar signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 and became a signatory. Although it is mentioned in the convention that those who are between the age of 15 and 18 can be recruited for military service, only those who are between the age of 18 and 25 are recruited of their own volition as prescribed in the paragraph 2 (b) of the Directive No 13/73 of the Defence Council. If there were under-age persons in military service who are not in accord with the above-mentioned directive, they were permitted to resign from military service.

The clarifications show that Myanmar is observing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has promulgated the Child Law and has been safeguarding the interests of the children. The Ministry of Defence has also issued rules, procedures, notifications and directives to prohibit the recruitment of those who are under 18.

If lower level organizations recruit new members by mistake, the persons in question are sent back to their parents. Action is being taken against those who fail to observe the prescribed rules and regulations in connec- tion with the recruitment. Next, Brig-Gen Khin Yi made clarifications. He said:

I will now deal with the matter in which some unscrupulous businessmen have published micro-books containing all the matriculation subjects for students to cheat at the matriculation examination.

Matriculation examination is an important qualifi- cation test for the youths who will take over the State duties in the future. Thus, the State has placed special emphasis on the examination. But greedy businessmen took advantage of the matriculation examination as a lucrative market, and published various kinds of books without permission featuring special issues for the examination, tips and spots, and answers for the possi- ble examination questions to make profit. The worst is that they are distributing and selling computer-printed books small enough to hide on the body of students sitting for the examination in major towns and small towns.

Their greedy acts amount to breaching the education policy of the State and ruining the moral character of the new generation youths. Thus, effective action had been taken against the persons who made the micro- books and who copied or printed them, the owners of copiers and printing machines that were being used in duplicating copies of the books, and the distributors.

The authorities arrested Win Thein, 30, of third floor, room 6, building No 1, Ward 3, Kamayut Town- ship on 13 March 2005, while he was selling the micro- books. He was caught at Hledan traffic point junction in Kamayut together with 138 copies of the books containing all the matriculation subjects. Further inter- rogation had led to the arrest of Myat Thu (a) Htoo Ein Thin of room 62/B, building No 1, Ward 3, Kamayut Township, together with 447 micro-books containing all matriculation subjects.

The authorities exposed more links, arresting Po- Tok and wife Ma Thida of 541, Nwethaki 4th Street, Ka gyi Ward, North Okkalapa. Further information led to the arrest of Ma Yin Yin (a) Ma Yin, 55, daughter of U Tha Gya, of 530, Kanoung Street, 35th Ward, Dagon Myothit (North) on 9 March 2005. She was arrested together with 1,357 sheets of 7.5-cm by 4-cm films used in printing the books. Ma Yin Yin bought the special issues for the matriculation examination and placed an order with May Offset in Sanyangoum Town- ship to print the reduced size copies of the books. She kept the films and used them every academic year to print the books again and again.

Thus, the authorities also took action against the owner, U Lahya Nawlon, and sealed the Japanese-made Oliver printing machine of the May Offset at No 8, Ingpau Street, North Linlun Ward, Sanyangoum Town- ship. He had been doing the illegal job since 2000 and making profit out of it.

Action will be taken against the culprits exploiting students under sections 17 and 20 of the Printing Act. According to the section 17 of the Act of 1962, the punishment for unauthorized printing and publishing is from one year to seven years’ imprisonment and a fine ranging from K 3,000 to K 30,000. The offenders will face the punishment and fine separately or both. The section 20 also states that the offender will face punishment from one year to seven years’ imprison- ment and a fine from K 3,000 to K 30,000 separately or both.

Thus, I would like to warn the greedy businessmen through the journalists to stay away from committing such crimes that will ruin the students, who are the nation’s future, and also the education system.

Next, officials concerned replied queries raised those present. —MNA
Lieutenant General Maung Bo attends opening of multimedia classrooms of BEMS in Myeik

Yangon, 16 March — A ceremony to open renovated and modernized multimedia classrooms of Basic Education Primary School (BEMS) in Myeik Township, Taninthayi Division, was held on 11 March. Present on the occasion were Member of the State Peace and Development Council, Lt-Gen Maung Bo; Brigade Commander of Myeik, Brig-Gen Hong Myint; Deputy Commander of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Department U Hla Than; and Lt-Gen Taung Maung Bo of the Military Command Peace and Development Department Department U Ba Ba and 19 wellwishers presented $2.95 million to school funds through the schoolhead.

After the ceremony, Lt-Gen Maung Bo delivered an address on the occasion. In his speech he said enhancement of education is the most important of national goal for all citizens. Measures are being taken for coming out education opportunities not only in cities but also in villages at border areas. New generation youths are to be trained to become reliable citizens of the State.

After the ceremony, Lt-Gen Maung Bo cordially greeted those present. — MNA

An evidence of Ywet Sit’s SURA insurgent group on producing and trafficking narcotic drugs

Opinion & Analysis

Drug bust deals blow to guerrillas

The Shan State Army was dealt a heavy blow on Saturday when Tun Wiwattragun, a close ally of SSA leader Col Ywet Sit, was arrested in Mae Hong Son, allegedly in possession of 174 bars of heroin weighing 82 kg.

The Shan State Army was dealt a heavy blow on Saturday when Tun Wiwattragun, a close ally of SSA leader Col Ywet Sit, was arrested in Mae Hong Son, allegedly in possession of 174 bars of heroin weighing 82 kg.

He said the translated version of the news entitled “Drug bust deals blow to guerrillas” carried in the Opinion & Analysis section of Section 1 at page 11 of Bangkok Post issued on 10 March was posted on the board in the hall for the journalists. In addition, the newspapers issued yesterday inserted documentary photos of

Myanmar players in action to kick the ball into the net of Brunei. — MNA

Yangon, 16 March — Selected Myanmar youth team, as its second match in the Group B trounced host Brunei youth team 6-0 by retaining its capability of goal score at the Hassanal Bolkiah Trophy Under-21 Invitational Football Tournament today.

The tournament is being held in Brunei from 12 to 26 March. The Myanmar youth team won over the Brunei youth by shooting an opening goal of Yan Paing in the 23rd minute in first half.

In the second half, Zaw Zaw kicked second goal into the net for his team at 1st minute. Yan Paing added his second goal at 22nd minute and Mar L, fourth at 31st minute. At 35th and four minute ahead full time, Hsan Day Then scored two goals to his rival’s net.

On 18 March, the Myanmar youth team meets with Laos youth team. — MNA

Sai Tun (a) Tun Wiwattragun, with the rank of captain, of SURA insurgent group, a close ally of SSA leader Col Ywet Sit, arrested with 174 bars of heroin weighing 82 kilos by the Thai anti-drug squad in Pan Ma Pha, Mae Hong Son District of other country near the border area. — MNA

Leader of SURA insurgent group Ywet Sit seen together with his close ally Sai Tun (a) Tun Wiwattragun with the rank of captain, seized with 82 kilos of heroine by Thai anti-drug squad. — MNA

Sai Tun (a) Tun Wiwattragun, close ally of SURA leader Col Ywet Sit, arrested with 174 bars of heroin weighing 82 kilos by the Thai anti-drug squad in Pan Ma Pha, Mae Hong Son District of other country near the border area. — MNA
Lt-Gen Maung Bo inspects regional development tasks in Bokpyin, Taninthayi Division

Yangon, 16 March
—Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of the Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Coastal Region Command Maj-General Ohn Myint, officials of the SPDC Office, heads of department, Chairman of Kawhthoung District PDC Lt-Col Tin Soe, on 9 March morning, arrived at the Bankachon Palm Oil Mill of Golden Oil Palm Co Ltd 18 miles of Kawhthoung-Bokpyin Union Highway and inspected oil palm plantations, bunches of oil palm and running of the oil palm mill.

On arrival at the oil palm plantation and palm oil mill of Services International Co Ltd in Khamakkyi Region, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party were briefed on instillation of palm oil mill, arrival of equipment and future tasks.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected construction of Modha Creek Bridge and extension of Kawhthoung-Bokpyin Union Highway.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo gave instructions on timely completion of the task and meeting the set standard.

In meeting with the Tatmadawmen and their families of local battalion near Hankadine Village, Lt-Gen Maung Bo called on them to ensure regional security and serve the national interest.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party looked into measures being taken at Annawa Tun Oil Palm Plantation, construction of a concrete bridge near Hankaphyu Village and gave necessary instructions.

Later, Lt-Gen Maung Bo met Tatmadawmen and their families of Kyauktanaung Station and presented clothes and cash to them. Next, they inspected construction of Chaungnyinaung Bridge and Annawa Tun Oil Palm Plantation near Chaungshiptyphar Village.

At the office of General Administration Department in Kayahthuri, Lt-Gen Maung Bo met with departmental officials, social organizations and townswomen and made a speech.

After the meeting, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected the GAD Office and its compound.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected land reclamation and oil palm plantations of Shewmyay Yadana Co Ltd in Tapat Village and gave instructions to officials.

On arrival at Hankaphyu Basic Education Primary School, Lt-Gen Maung Bo presented clothes and cash for local battalion of Bokpyin Station.

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected crude edible oil mill of Taungdagon Oil Palm Co Ltd and arrived at Bokpyin Airport.

At the office of Bokpyin Township Peace and Development Council, Lt-Gen Maung Bo met departmental officials, social organizations and townswomen and gave instructions.

Cash and kind donated to MMCWA

Yangon, 16 March—As a gesture of hailings on the annual meeting of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, wellwishers donated cash and kind to MMCWA at its association building at the corner of Thantha and Para streets yesterday afternoon.

Present on the occasion were President of MMCWA Daw Khin Khin Win, CEC members, Singapore Ambassador to Myanmar Mr T Jasudasen, guests and wellwishers.

Today’s donation to the association were K 4.5 million by Singapore Association of Myanmar, K 2 million by U Tin Sein and Thirthidhama Theingi Daw Nan Khan family of Danalin Company, K 500,000 each by U Naw Aung and Daw Nan Phaung Hlaing family, U Kyi Oo (a) Mudon, Maung Maung and Daw Than Thao Lo family, U Yom Mu and Daw Pe Nan of Green Light Company, U Sai Toi Aung and Daw Nan Yon family of Naungton Company and MO Asia Company Ltd-Dumex and 40 VCDs on tailoring by New Fashion Designer Group.

President Daw Khin Khin Win accepted the donations and presented certificates of honour to the wellwishers.

Chairman of Singapore Association of Myanmar Mr Teddy Chia explained the purpose of the donations and President Daw Khin Khin Win expressed gratitude.

After the ceremony President of MMCWA Daw Khin Khin Win, CEC members and wellwishers viewed photos on movements of the association displayed at the hall. — MNA

Minister meets Singaporean Sayadaw

Yangon, 16 March—Sayadaw of Buddhist Golden Temple Monastery in Singapore, Ven Shi Fa Zhao, and representative of the Religious Affairs Division at Bokpyin Station. — MNA

Next, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected 50-bed Bokpyin Hospital and Manaung Township Hospital.

Inter-State/Division Golf Championship 2005 opens

Yangon, 15 March—The opening of the 27th Inter-State/Division Golf Team Championship 2005, mainly sponsored by Isuzu Motor Ltd, took place at Yangon Golf Club in Danyingon this morning.

Chairman of the Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint delivered an address.

The minister and President of the Myanmar PGA, the Myanmar Golf Federation and resident representative of Isuzu Motor Ltd U Aye Cho led off the balls to open the tournament. After the 18-hole event, Yangon Division leads at 224 strokes, followed by Sagaing Division on 233 and Mandalay Division on 234. In individual scratch event, Naing Naing Lin of Yangon Division lies in the first place on 70 strokes. Aye Min Cho (Mandalay Division) puts his place behind the leader on 74, while Than Naing Oo of Sagaing Division follows them on 76 strokes. The 18-hole event continues tomorrow. — MNA

Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint delivers an opening speech at opening of golf tournament.—mna

Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint delivers an opening speech at opening of golf tournament.—mna
THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR   Thursday, 17 March, 2005

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INSPIRE THE NEW LIGHT

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In respect of "Chemicals in used in industry, science and photography, photographic film, photographic negatives, photographic prints, unprocessed artificial resins, unprocessed plastics; machines, fire extinguishing compositions; tempering and soldering preparations for preventives of tarnishing; substances; adhesives used in industry; carbon, charcoal; fertilizer, oil; oil distillation, agriculture, horticulture, forestry; acetone; hydrazine; monohydrate; polyhydric alcohol; packed column; ceramic in Class 1." "Chemical for such materials as: adhesives, metal building structures, transportable buildings of metal; materials of metal for railway tracks; non-electric cables and wires of common metal; non-ferrous metals; plies and sheets of metal; metal foils; metal paper; metal sheet; metal wire; metal rods; metal; metal wire; metal; met
British women voters chastise Blair

LONDON, 14 March — A group of British women chastised Tony Blair on issues from the Iraq war to dirty hospitals and youth crime on Sunday as the Prime Minister seeks to woo female voters at May’s expected election.

Blair, helped by youthful looks and a down-to-earth style, transformed Labour in the mid-1990s into a party that appealed to women and the middle classes, carrying it to a landslide victory in 1997.

But polls show Britons feel he has lost touch with ordinary people and neglected schools and hospitals for the war in Iraq. Women are particularly disillusioned. “You heralded a new breed of politician and gave me a great deal of hope for the future... today you’ve lost my respect and I need a reason to vote for you,” Katherine Moss said in an all-female audience with Blair on ITV’s Jonathan Dimbleby show.

An ICM poll in Sunday’s News of the World showed only 28 per cent of women described Blair as honest, down from 54 per cent in 1997. One third said he should quit immediately.— MNA/Reuters

Elephant tramples three to death in N-E India

NEW DELHI, 15 March — Three people were trampled to death and seven more wounded by a wild Asiatic elephant in India’s northeastern province of Assam, Indo-Asian News Service reported.

A forest official said the tusker strayed away from a big herd and entered a village, about 70 kilometers west of Assam’s main city of Guwahati, early Sunday morning.

“The elephant went on a rampage tearing apart huts and attacking sleeping villagers. It killed three and seriously injured seven,” the official said. The injured villagers were shifted to a local hospital with multiple wounds.

“The elephant herd probably came near the village looking for home brewed rice beer. One of the animals strayed away from the herd and did the damage.”

During the past fortnight, herds of wild elephants have been wreaking havoc in several parts of Assam with the pachyderms harvesting rice stalks known as paddy and the paint-peeking moonshine that many of the villagers brew from fermented rice.

MNA/Excour

Clinton released from hospital after surgery

NEW YORK, 15 March — Former US President Bill Clinton was released from the hospital on Monday, four days after surgery to remove fluid and scarring tissue that accumulated in his chest after his heart-bypass operation last year.

Clinton, 58, left New York-Presbyterian Hospital. He had checked in on Thursday for a follow-up procedure to repair a leaky valve in his chest that many of the villagers had checked in on Thursday for a follow-up procedure to repair a leaky valve in his chest.

The operation went well and all the surgery to repair the leaky valve in his chest went well,” a hospital spokesman said.

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MNA/Excour

Iran will never give up N-fuel programme

TEHERAN, 14 March — Iran defiantly insisted on Saturday it would never give up its nuclear fuel programme despite a new united policy of incentives and threats from Washington and the European Union.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran is determined to use peaceful nuclear technology and no pressure, intimidation or threat can make Iran give up its right,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said.

Theeran says its nuclear facilities will only be used to generate electricity and never diverted to weapons production.

MNA/Excour

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
Second best time is now.
Juventus beat Chievo Verona 1-0

MILAN, 14 March— A late strike from Uruguayan Ruben Olivera gave Juventus a controversial 1-0 win at Chievo Verona on Sunday to leave them level with Serie A leader AC Milan, who hung on for a 1-0 win over Sampdoria. A 65th-minute header from the Pellissier Kaka left Milan level with Juventus on 63 points, while third-placed Inter Milan trailed 16 behind following a 1-1 at Lazio on Saturday. David Di Michele scored a hat-trick for Udinese as they enjoyed a shock 5-1 win at Palermo while Gianfranco Zola inspired Cagliari to a 3-0 victory over AS Roma scoring his side's opener and creating the second. Juve's victory was hotly disputed with Chievo having a 'goal' ruled out and substitute Olivera and Chievo defender Alessandro Potenza both sent off two minutes from the end.

Following a poor first half, Chieve felt they should have had the lead five minutes after the restart when Sergio Pellissier rattled a shot against the underside of the cross-bar. Although television replays showed the ball had clearly crossed the line, the referee and linesman ignored Chievos's demands for a goal. Three minutes from the end, substitute Olivera, on for Alessandro Del Piero, pounced after poor Chievo defending to first home a left-foot shot and give Juventus the lead.

Olivera's celebrations were cut short though a minute later when he clashed with Potenza, twice grabbing his head, and both players were sent off.

The Pellissier shot is bound to re-open the debate about the use of electronic detectors in Italian football where there have been calls to introduce 'tennis style' line sensors. —MNA/Reuters

Beckham tips either AC Milan or Chelsea to win UEFA C'ships

LONDON, 15 March— David Beckham, whose Real Madrid side were knocked out of the Champions League last week after losing to Juventus, has tipped either AC Milan or Chelsea to go on and win this season's competition in Istanbul in May.

"AC Milan especially have really caught my eye, they cause a lot of problems for the opposition, they are strong in every part of the field and they are so good defensively with (Paolo) Maldini and (Luca) Potenza. They cause a lot of problems for the opposition, they are strong in every part of the field and they are so good defensively with (Paolo) Maldini and (Luca) Potenza," said Beckham.

The England skipper was speaking to journalists on a visit to London to launch the David Beckham soccer Academy. "Chelsea, though, are also a major contender. They have Roman Abramovich's money, a new young manager who is full of confidence and keeps the pressure off his team, some very, very, very good young English players there. They will take some beating too."

The draw for the Champions League quarterfinals takes place on Friday at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon.

After losing 2-1 to Getafe on Sunday, Real are also 1 points behind Barcelona in La Liga with virtually no chance of catching their arch-rivals in the Spanish title race. "Of course, it is incredibly frustrating because I want to win trophies with Real Madrid but, unless something happens to Barcelona's form, we won't win La Liga and we are out of Europe. A club like Real Madrid needs to win trophies but that is not going to happen this season. There may be a number of reasons why it has happened, we have to accept it, look at it, but I don't like it."

Despite the lack of silverware at Real, the England captain confirmed he is happy at the club and has no intention of returning home for the foreseeable future. He is also certain about what he wants to do once his playing days are over.

Juventus forward Ruben Olivera is congratulated by teammates after scoring against Chievo in an Italian Serie A match. —INTERNET

River Plate beat Racing Club 1-0

BUENOS AIRES, 15 March— River Plate beat derby rivals Racing Club 1-0 on Sunday to go top of the Argentine Clausura Championship in place of Rosario Central, who were held 3-3 at home by Lanus.

River Plate's Carlos Diego, right, battles for the ball with Sebastian Romero of Racing Club on, 13 March, 2005, during their Argentine first division soccer match in Buenos Aires. River won 1-0. —INTERNET

Central, coached by 76-year-old Angel Zof, twice led but the visitors were lifted by a hat-trick from striker Claudio Graf.

River, who have 82 wins in the derby series against Racing's 34, continued their historic dominance thanks to a goal by Argentine midfielder Luis Gonzalez immediately after halftime.

Gonzalez latched on to an incisive pass from former Racing midfielder Gaston Fernandez and smashed a first-time shot under the arms of goalkeeper Cristian Luchetti.

Unbeaten River lead the table with 13 points from five games, two more than second-placed Central. Central received the perfect start when Emiliano Papa scored after two minutes, only for Graf to open his account in the 20th. Graf put Lanus in front early in the second half and also snatched a 72nd-minute equalizer after Marco Ruben and a Paulo Ferrari penalty had put the home side 2-2 ahead.

Champions Newell's Old Boys went fourth with a 1-0 triumph at Banfield, despite another lacklustre performance from experienced forwared Ariel Ortega.

Fernando Belluschi finished off a quick counter-attack with a superb left-foot drive in the 18th minute for unbeaten Newell's.

Independiente, 13th in the table with six points, continued their indifferent form under Argenti- na's 1978 World Cup winning coach Cesar Luis Menotti when they were held 1-1 at home by Olimpo.

Sebastian Carrizo gave the Red Devils a 25th-minute lead with a swerving 25-metre drive but Olimpo always looked more dangerous and Urug- uay striker Alvaro Mello grabbed a deserved equaliser midway through the second half.

Rolando Zarate, who netted for Argentina in their 1-1 friendly draw with Mexico in Los An- geles last Wednesday, was on target again, scoring from a free kick as Velez Sarsfield won 2-0 to hand San Lorenzo their fourth defeat in five matches.

Leandro Gracian had put Velez ahead after two minutes. —MNA/Reuters

Anja Paerson clinches women’s World Cup ski title

LENZERHEIDE (Switzerland), 15 March— Sweden’s Anja Paerson clinched the women’s overall World Cup title on Sunday after one of the most dramatic finishes in the history of ski racing.

Finishing Sunday’s season-ending giant slalom in 17th place after an unusually nervy second run, the 23-year-old defending champion was unable to pick up any points of her own and was instead forced to rely on the performances of her fellow skiers. Only the top 15 finishers in the finals earn points.

With four racers remaining, Paerson’s Croatian rival Janica Kostelic was lying fourth and needed only a seventh-place finish to snatch the title. But Nicole Hosp, Tanja Poutiainen, Elisabeth Goergl and Maria Jose Rienda Contrares all managed to better Kostelic’s time, handing the title back to Paerson by a winning margin of just three points.

It was the second smallest margin in World Cup history — beaten only by Annemarie Moser-Proell’s two-point win over Hanni Wenzel in 1979 — and easily the smallest since the introduction of the current scoring system in 1992.

Paerson’s poor second run did cost her a lesser trophy on the overall title, Rienda Contrares securing her victory, storming down as the last racer with a total time of two minutes 20.18 seconds. —0.30 seconds ahead of Poutiainen and 0.31 in front of Hosp.

It was the only second win of the 29-year-old Spaniard’s career and also her second in a row, following her maiden victory at last month’s giant slalom race in Are.

Overall Ski World Cup winner in all disciplines, Anja Paerson from Sweden, kisses her trophy during the Alpine Ski World Cup finals in Lenzerheide, Switzerland, on 13 March, 2005. —INTERNET

Overall standings behind Paerson, Kostelic and the Austrian speed specialists Renate Goetschl and Michaela Dorfmeister.

Almost overshadowed by the effect of her performance on the overall title, Rienda Contrares secured the day’s victory, smashing a first-time shot into the perfect start when Emiliano Papa scored after two minutes, only for Graf to open his account in the 20th. Graf put Lanus in front early in the second half and also snatched a 72nd-minute equalizer after Marco Ruben and a Paulo Ferrari penalty had put the home side 2-2 ahead.

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Exhibition booths inspected

YANGON, 16 March — Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min together with Deputy Minister Thura U Thаung Lwin, this morning, arrived at the Defence Services Museum in which the booths are to be displayed for the 50th Anniversary Armed Forced Day Exhibition.

The minister and party were welcomed by officials of the department under the minister. The minister viewed the booths at arranged for the exhibition.

and left necessary instructions.

MNA

OBITUARY
U Htay Tin (OLD ALBERTIAN) 61 Years
C.E.O. FISCO Enterprises

U Htay Tin, son of the late U Kyaw and Daw Hla Shin, son-in-law of the late Mr and Mrs M.R. Yu, beloved husband of Marianne Yu of 65/B, Kaba Aye Pagoda Road, brother of (Daw Khin Htay), U Thaung Htay, Daw Ni Ni, (U Mg Mg) and Mi Mi Naing, peacefully passed away at 10:30 on 15 March at Thukka Gaba Medical Centre. Cremation will take place at 3:00 pm on Thursday, 17 March 2005 at Yayway Crematorium. Buses will leave the above address at 5:30 pm.


MNA

Foreign Minister sends felicitations to his counterpart of Ireland

YANGON, 16 March — U Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Dermot Ahern, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, on the occasion of the National Day of Ireland, which falls on 17 March 2005 — MNA

Talks on general knowledge of MWAF held

Director-General Daw Myo Nwe of the Foreign Economic Relations Department gave a lecture on the activities of the agencies of the United Nations, Professor Dr Daw Myint Kyi of the Yangon University on that of the UN and Myanmar, and Director of the Department of Cultural Institute Daw Nanda Hmone on the measures being taken between Myanmar and SEAN — MNA

WEATHER

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in lower Sagain Division, scattered in Chin, Mon States and Mandaly Division, isolated in Kachin, Rakihine, Kayin States, upper Sagain, Bago and Taninlh Division and weather has been partly cloudy to cloudy in the remaining areas. The total rainfall amounts of rainfall recorded were Mandalay (1.54) inches, PyinOoLwin, and Mawlamyine (1.34) inches each, Pinlaung (1.26) inches. Day temperatures were 6°C to 7°C above normal in Taninlh Division and Shan State, (3°C) above normal in Kachin State, (6°C) below normal in Bago Division, (3°C) below normal in Mandalay and Upper Sagain Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant day temperatures were Magway and Minbu (38°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 15-3-2005 was 34°C and 93°F. Minimum temperature on 16-3-2005 was 19°C and 66°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 16-3-2005 was 70%. Total sunshine hours on 15-3-2005 was (5.0) hours approx. Rainfalls on 16-3-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were (0.59) inch at Yangon Airport, (1.54) inches at Kaba Aye and nil at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba Aye) was (6) mph south from Southwest at (13:55) hours MST on 15-3-2005.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay and fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 17-3-2005: Isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers are likely in the whole country. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Continuation of rain or thundershowers are likely in Southern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 17-3-2005: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 17-3-2005: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

New Rainfall Record

The amounts of rainfall observed at (09:30) hours M.S.T today at the following stations set the new maximum (24-hours) rainfall records for the month of March.

Station | New rainfall | Previous | Rainfall | Recorded
--------|-------------|----------|----------|--------
1. PyinOoLwin | 10.31 inch | 10.01 inch | 10.31 inch | 2005 |
2. Pinlaung | 10.05 inch | 8.37 inch | 10.05 inch | 2005 |

The NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Thursday, 17 March, 2005

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Lieutenant General Maung Bo tours Myeik, Kyunsu Townships

YANGON, 16 March — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of the Ministry of Defence gave instructions on economic, social, transport and regional development of Taninthayi Division to officials at the hall of Coastal Region Command Headquarters in Myeik on 11 March.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Maj-Gen Ohn Myint, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Hong Ngai, local authorities and departmental officials.

Departmental officials reported on their respective sectors.

Next, the commander submitted a review report based on departmental presentations. After hearing the reports, Lt-Gen Maung Bo delivered an address, saying that Taninthayi Division could make progress to no one under 18 is recruited.

In spite of the regulations on recruitment of soldiers, sometimes some minors were recruited due to inefficiency of recruiting personnel.

When minors were found later, they were sent back home immediately. Altogether 213 such persons were sent home—85 in 2002, 75 in 2003, 50 in 2004 and three in February 2005.

An ILO liaison officer reported 15 accusations on recruitment of minors. All the accusations had been investigated and dealt with. In connection with this, (See page 9)

Alleged forced recruitment of soldiers especially child conscriptions are based on false information

YANGON, 16 March — The Information Committee of the State Peace and Development Council held the press conference (2/2005) yesterday. Matters relating to accusation of Myanmar to be one of the countries conscripting child soldiers were clarified by Director-General U Sit Myaing of Social Welfare Department of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and on exposing of those who published and sold micro-books for some students to cheat at matriculation examination by Director-General Brig-Gen Khan Yi of Myanmar Police Force.

In his clarification, Director-General U Sit Myaung said:

At the press conference, clarifications were made on how the all-round well-being of the entire people including children are brought about in Myanmar. The Government is safeguarding and promoting the rights and interests of the children.

In a report submitted to the UN in February, some points based on false information were mentioned to the effect that in the world some nations were conscripting child soldiers and Myanmar was on the list of such nations.

In Myanmar society, children are highly valued, cherished and brought up properly with loving kindness according to the traditions. Myanmar society is made up of closely-knitted families, where not only the parents but also grandparents and relatives nurture and take care of the children. From birth till death, citizens are registered accordingly and provided with identification certificates by the Ministry of Health, the Immigration and Population Department, and ward/village-tract administrative bodies.

It is prescribed that new soldiers are to be recruited from those who are over 18 years old. Hence, Myanmar signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on 16 July 1991. To safeguard the rights of the children as mentioned in the UN Convention, the Child Law was promulgated on 14 July 1993. The Law stands witness that priority is given to the welfare of children and protection given.

Under the directive No 13/73 of the Defence Council dated 8 April 1974, the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air Force) shall recruit persons who are citizens of Myanmar; are between the ages of 18 and 25; are physically sound for military service; and must have prescribed education qualifications.

It is prescribed that new soldiers are to be recruited from those who are over 18 years old. Hence, according to procedures.

Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan answers the queries raised by journalists.— MNA

The Kanchaung Hydelpower Project is being implemented by Construction Group (3) of Hydroelectric Power Department and construction work of a diversion weir and an irrigation system is being carried out by Irrigation Department. (Page 2)