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

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

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

YANGON, 26 March — Chairman of State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe received Indian External Affairs Minister Mr K Natwar Singh and party at Credentials Hall in the Pyithu Hluttaw building on Pyay road at 9.30 am today.

Also present at the call were Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence, Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win, State Peace and Development Council Secretary-Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Director-General of the State Peace and Development Council Office Lt-Col Pe Nyein, Director-General of Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Rajiv Kumar Bhatia.—MNA

Senior General Than Shwe and party pose for documentary photo with Indian External Affairs Minister Mr K Natwar Singh and party at the Credentials Hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw Building on Pyay Road.—MNA

60th ANNIVERSARY ARMED FORCES DAY
Upgrading of Yangon City inspected

YANGON, 26 March — Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, together with Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and officials, this morning inspected upgrading of Yangon City and sanitation tasks being carried out in it.

First, they oversaw tarmacking Banyadala Road in Tamway Township and dredging of ditches on both sides of the road. Next they inspected sanitation tasks being implemented dredging of ditches on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Yankin Township, tarmacking Strand Road in Kyimyindine Township and sanitation tasks near Thakhin Mya Park. During inspections, the commander and the mayor urged officials to cooperate with the public in carrying out the upgrading of the city.

Literary and arts competition & exhibition packed with visitors

YANGON, 26 March — A total of 1,129 persons including monks and students of BEHS Nos 1 & 2 visited today the literary and arts competition and exhibition in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day at the Defence Services Museum on U Wisara Road here.

The exhibition remains open till 4 April from 9 am to 5 pm daily.

Myanmar Wushu players in training

YANGON, 26 March — The Myanmar Wushu Federation has hired coaches from the People’s Republic of China to train Myanmar Wushu athletes win more medals in the world wushu events to take place this year.

Some 50 national Wushu athletes are undergoing training from the five Chinese Wushu coaches.

Doh Kyeywa journal in circulation

YANGON, 26 March — With the passage of time, the world is changing. Rural areas have become booming towns like urban areas.

Doh Kyeywa (Our Village) journal, volume-2 No. 7, has now come out with a fragrance of Padauk (gumkino flowers) to improve the life of rural people and to widen their scope of knowledge.

The journal invites manuscripts and advertisements, which can be sent to No 30-32, 10th Street, Lanmadaw Township, Yangon, at phone numbers 371342, 252452 and 379768.
Asian airports rated world's best by int'l passengers

GENEVA, 25 March — Asian airports are rated the world's best by international passengers, with Hong Kong in top place and Seoul's Incheon and Singapore's Changi just behind, an air travel industry survey released on Wednesday showed.

In the Americas, Canada's Halifax hub in Nova Scotia was preferred, followed by Minneapolis and San Diego. In Europe, the three traveller favorites were Copenhagen, Helsinki and the new Athens Airport, opened for last summer's Olympic Games.

Previous winner Dubai was top among airports in the Middle East and Africa, followed by Cape Town and Durban.

The surveys, covering 40 major airports around the globe in 2004, were issued by the Airports Council International (ACI) and the airlines' body, the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

They said the travels were based on responses to 65,000 questionnaires under the two bodies' recently launched Customer Satisfaction and Benchmarking Programme, dubbed AETRA from a Latin word meaning the upper air. ACI and IATA said 55 airports had now joined AETRA, which aims to measure customer satisfaction and find ways to improve. — MNA/Reuters

23 are killed in series of attacks across Iraq

BAGHDAD, 25 March — A string of suicide bombings and armed attacks across central and northern Iraq on Thursday and Friday left at least 23 people dead, officials said.

The attacks, ending a week of relative quiet, included three suicide car bombings, the assassination of a high-ranking police official, and the killing of five Iraqi women who did cleaning for the American military.

In Ramadi, west of the capital, a suicide bomber drove a sedan packed with explosives into a checkpoint at the city's eastern border on Thursday evening, killing 9 Iraqi police commandos and wounding 16, Interior Ministry officials said. American military officials later said 11 Iraqi soldiers were killed, according to Reuters.

Two American soldiers and two Iraqi civilians were also wounded, the Americans said.

The Islamic Army of Iraq, a militant group, posted a statement on Islamist Web sites on Friday claiming responsibility for the attack.

In southern Baghdad, the five cleaning women were shot dead on Thursday afternoon as they drove home together, Interior Ministry officials said. The attackers drove up in an Opel sedan and opened fire on the group, made up of three sisters and two friends. — Internet

Oil pipeline to traverse the Yangtze River

NANCHANG, 25 March — An oil pipeline will travel beneath the Yangtze River for 2.32 kilometres in Jiangxi, east China's Jiangxi Province.

The pipeline section will be the world's longest underneath a river and will be built by the Sinopec Pipeline Transport & Storage Company. It will travel about 60 metres below the river bed. The company has laid 2.32 kilometres of optical fibre cable under the Yangtze and began laying an oil pipeline of the same length under the river this week.

The section is a part of the crude oil pipeline connecting Yixing and Changting. It is expected to relieve the oil transport pressure in the oil refining plants in cities along the Yangtze River including Anqing, Huijiang, Wuhan, Jingmen and Changting. — MNA/Xinhua

Chinese Vice-Premier meets Nigerian FM

BEIJING, 25 March — Chinese Vice-Premier Huang Ju met here on Thursday with Nigerian Foreign Minister Oluyemi Adeniji, promoting economic ties and vowing to enhance cooperation on regional and international affairs.

Adeniji spoke highly of Chinese-Nigerian ties, saying their relations have maintained fast growth since they established diplomatic ties on 1st February 1971, especially in the last five years.

"Nigeria attaches im-

China to build first state aviation high-tech base

XI'AN, 25 March — China's first state aviation high-tech base broke ground Thursday in Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province.

Xi'an Yuliang State Aviation High-tech Industry Base was authorized by the State Development and Reform Commission in August 2004. The base is expected to develop aviation technology, train professionals, produce equipment and provide aviation services. — MNA/Xinhua

People wait in line next to Toyota's pavilion at the Expo in Aichi prefecture on 25 March, 2005. — Internet

1,524 of US troops killed since beginning of Iraq war

BAGHDAD, 25 March — As of Friday, 25 March, 2005, at least 1,524 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 1,164 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department. The figures include four military civilians. The AP count is four higher than the Defence Department's tally, last updated at 10 am EST on Friday.

The British military has reported 86 deaths: Italy, 21; 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 death each.

Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,386 US military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 1,055 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers. — Internet

Trucks pass through a mustard field along a highway in Pampore on the outskirts of Srinagar on 25 March, 2005. — Internet

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
Laos attaches importance to party role in nat’l development

HANOI, 24 March — The establishment of the Lao People’s Revolutionary Party (LPRP), a culmination of the deep patriotism, heroism and determination of Lao people, is to lead them toward national liberation, and build Laos into a peaceful, and prosperous nation.

Lao President and LPRP Chairman Khamtay Siphandone made the statement when addressing a grand ceremony on 22 March in Laos’ capital city of Vientiane to mark the party’s 50th anniversary, which was attended by over 1,000 delegates, according to Laos news agency KPL on Wednesday.

Laos will keep on centering on further tapping its internal sources, seeking closer international cooperation, pursuing a foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation, expanding its ties with neighbours, especially Vietnam and other members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, and improving Laos’ role at regional and international forums. Steady socio-economic development of Laos, which has posted average gross domestic product (GDP) of over 6 per cent in recent years, is attributed to the country’s firm adherence to the principle of practical experience and lessons drawn from brotherly countries, as well as that of tapping internal potentials, and support and assistance from the international community, the President stressed.

Laos has targeted to GDP growth of 7 per cent in the 2004-2005 fiscal year ending in November 2005. The country has made annual import-export turnovers of nearly one billion US dollars in recent years, with key exports being electricity, garments, woodworks and coffee.

China supports Brazilian candidate to run for WTO chief

BEIJING, 24 March — China supports Brazil’s Ambassador to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Luiz Felipe Seixas Correa to run for director-general of the trade body, Chong Quan, China’s Commerce Ministry spokesman said here on Wednesday.

It is the first time that China expresses its support for a candidate to WTO director-general. According to Chong, China has informed the decision when Commerce Minister Bo Xilai’s met with visiting Brazilian Vice-Foreign Minister Clodovaldo Hugueny on Monday in Beijing.

Bo said China believes Corais capable of making contribution to the common interests of all WTO members while safeguarding the interests of the developing members for the realization of the goals set in the Doha Development Agenda.

Correa is one of four candidates competing to succeed current WTO Director-General Supachai Panitphakdi of Thailand, whose term expires on 31 August.

The other three are former European Union trade chief Pascal Lamy, Mauritian Foreign Minister Java Krishna Cuttare, and Uruguayan former chairman of the WTO’s Executive General Council Carlos Perez del Castillo.

The WTO has laid out a clear timetable which it hopes will eventually throw up a consensus candidate without any need to go to a vote. On 31 May, the WTO General Council will choose by consensus a successor. A disagreement about the appointment of the last director-general pitted developing members against developed members and caused deep animosity in the WTO leaving it without a chair for months.

Indonesia’s electronic sales down in February

JAKARTA, 24 March — The number of electronic products sold in Indonesia in February decreased by 10 per cent compared to January, according to the Electronic Marketers’ Club here on Tuesday.

"Consumers limit their spending on basic need products, such as electronics, so the demand for the electronics decreased in February," Stafanus Indrayana, club spokesman, was quoted by the Bisnis Indonesia as saying.

Based on the data of the club, the sales of television declined to 305,749 units or 8 per cent lower than the previous month; refrigerators 123,069 units or 9 per cent lower; air conditioners 55,737 units or 10 per cent lower and washing machines 61,422 units or 7 per cent lower.

In addition, the shortening of working days and some natural disasters also contributed to the decline, said Stafanus.

Meanwhile, General Manager of the Marketing and Sales of the PT LG Electronics Indonesia Sung Khiun said that the decrease was temporary and businessmen were optimistic to reach the target of 15-per-cent growth this year over last year.

Large amount of drugs seized in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 24 March — Police arrested three persons in possession of a total of 1,185 kilos of white and brown heroin in Nepal’s capital Kathmandu, a police officer said on Wednesday.

Imika Sawasian Ozoko, a Nigerian national was arrested Tuesday evening by the police at the Tribhuvan International Airport as he was about to fly to Uganda via Abu Dhabi through Gulf Air flight, the officer told reporters on condition of anonymity.

Ozoko was found to have possessed white heroin in the form of capsurber which he had hid in two speakers of Stereo sound system.

Meanwhile, a police team of the Drug Law Implementation Unit arrested two Indian nationals in possession of 585 grammes of Indian brown sugar in front of Bir Hospital in Kathmandu.

Those arrested were 21-year-old Jitendra Kumar Nayak and 30-year-old Udaya Kumar Shah.

The police is investigating the two cases.

Iraq militants say they kidnap Iraqi-German man

BAGHDAD, 24 March — Iraqi militants said they had kidnapped an Iraqi man who holds German citizenship and demanded in a videotape released on Thursday that Germany free Muslim prisoners and cut all ties with the Iraqi government.

The videotape, obtained by Reuters, showed a man kneeling between two gunmen with automatic weapons, their faces covered with coloured scarves. Documents and plastic cards were filmed, and a press card gave the name of Abdul Husin al-Zaidi above an adress in Bremen, Germany.

But a German government source in Berlin questioned the report. "Everything so far suggests that the kidnapping victim is not a German citizen," the source said.

The man called on German Chancelor Gerhard Schroeder to help obtain his release.

"I hold a German passport. I call on the German government, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and the German union of journalists to intervene in this matter to get my release," he said.

A Foreign Ministry spokeswoman in Berlin said the German embassy in Baghdad was involved in the case.

Most Germans were staunchly opposed to the 2003 US-led war on Iraq. More than 150 foreigners have been seized in Iraq over the past year. Most have been freed after negotiations or the payment of a ransom, but about a third of them have been killed.

Documents and plastic cards were filmed, and a press card gave the name of Abdul Husin al-Zaidi above an adress in Bremen, Germany.
China to provide safe drinking water for another 20m farmers

BEIJING, 24 March — China will provide another 20 million people in its rural areas with safe drinking water by the end of 2006, according to an annual plan for building emergency water supply projects.

The plan was approved in principal by the State Council’s executive meeting, which Premier Wen Jiabao president over Wednesday.

“Solving farmers’ difficulties in accessing safe drinking water is vital for improving their living standard and promoting economic and social development in the rural areas,” said a statement released by the meeting.

The statement requires “relevant departments” to jointly facilitate the smooth implementation of the plan, priority setting of the most serious drinking water problems and ensure full and timely delivery of funds.

The meeting stressed the importance of strict monitoring of chemical fertilizer and pesticide usage and the prevention factory construction near water sources.

Since China set a five-year target to tackle the water supply problem in the countryside in 2000, the government has invested more than 18 billion yuan (some 2.2 billion US dollars) in the construction of more than 800,000 water supply projects for 57 million rural residents across the country.

According to an official with the Ministry of Water Resources, however, more than 300 million rural residents still do not have access to safe drinking water, and 190 million others have to drink water with excessive hazardous substances. Thirty-four per cent of the country’s rural population has to drink water that does not meet state standards.

Todeal with the problem, the State Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Health have worked out a plan to reduce the number of rural residents without safe water by one-third by 2010, and to guarantee clean, safe water to the 300 million rural residents by 2020.

S Korea’s economy grew 4.6% in 2004

SEOUL, 24 March — South Korea’s real gross domestic product (GDP) grew 4.6 per cent in 2004, slightly lower than previous estimation, according to a preliminary report of Bank of Korea (BOK) on Tuesday.

The central bank attributed the rise to strong growth of exports and investment in machinery and equipment in the whole year of 2004.

The 2004 GDP gain was up from a 3.1-per cent increase in 2003 but lower than the central bank’s estimate of 4.7 per cent and private economists’ 4.8-per cent forecast. Private consumption fell 0.5 per cent in 2004 from the previous year, due to weak household spending on durables and semi-durables as well as a slowdown in the manufacturing industry.

The construction sector grew a mere 1.7 per cent in 2004 from a year earlier, compared with a 8.6-per cent increase in 2003.

The country’s exports showed strong performance by increasing 19.7 per cent in 2004, helped by sharp rises in telecommunication, semiconductor and electronics exports. In comparison, imports rose 13.8 per cent in 2004.

Singapore Airlines to add 40 Boeing planes for lease

SINGAPORE, 24 March — Singapore Airlines leasing operation Tuesday announced its shopping list of up to 40 Boeing 737-800 planes, according to a Channel NewsAsia report at night.

Singapore Aircraft Leasing Enterprise (SALE) chalked up the deal of 20 firm orders and 20 purchase rights worth more than 2.6 billion US dollars at current price. As SALE’s first direct order with Boeing for the Next-Generation 737 product line, the planes will be delivered between the fourth quarter of 2006 and the end of 2009.

SALE said that the purchase will help diversify its portfolio to meet the increasing demand for leased aircraft and strengthen its global business.

Apart from the Boeing deal, 11 Airbus A320s are scheduled to join SALE’s fleet by the second quarter of 2006, the company’s statement added.

Vietnam to establish wood material importers

HANOI, 24 March — Vietnam will set up some companies which specialize in importing logs and timber.

This year, local wood processors and exporters plan to establish two or three joint stock companies to be funded by enterprises locating in the same region and having the same kind of materials to cope with the fact that they, with limited capital, find it difficult to import logs, timbers and plywood with increasing prices from distant countries, according to the Vietnam Association for Wood and Forest Products on Wednesday.

Vietnam, with 75 per cent of its demand for wood materials being met by imports, has recently imported wood materials from some African nations and Russia instead of from such neighbouring countries as Laos, Cambodia and Malaysia as before, since the neighbours as well as Australia and New Zealand have either banned or limited log export. Local firms are also eyeing wood imports from Brazil, Chile and Argen-
tina, the association said.

Vietnam spent 82 million US dollars importing wood material in the first two months of this year, posting a year-on-year rise of 63.6 per cent, while earning 165 million US dollars from exporting wooden products including tables, chairs, beds and wardrobes, mostly to the European Union, Japan and the United States, up 28.5 per cent last year.

To this end, it is boosting exports to the United States and new markets as South Africa, Kuwait, Chile and Peru.

As of late 2004, Vietnam housed over 1,200 local woodwork businesses, including more than 300 exporters, and 49 foreign-invested projects valued at 105 million US dollars.

They are expected to process two million cubic metres of wood materials this year.

HK digital entertainment professionals awarded

HONG KONG, 26 March — Local professionals with outstanding achievements in digital entertainment were recognized here Thursday at the presentation ceremony of the 3rd Hong Kong Digital Entertainment Excellence Awards.

The awards were presented by Langham Place Launch by Menfond Electronic Art and Computer Design Co., Ltd. and Medull, Prince de la Bun by Bliss Pictures Ltd.

The competition was jointly organized by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC), Hong Kong Digital Entertainment Association (HKDEA) and Hong Kong Wireless Technology Industry Association (WTIA).

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Dickson said that the Hong Kong Government had spared no efforts in supporting the development of the digital entertainment industry in the past two years.

The OGCIO will, in conjunction with other strategic partners such as the Cyberport and the HKPC, continue to launch new and innovative initiatives to support the digital entertainment industry and our creative talents.

These include the setting up of an industry support centre, an incubation cum-training centre and a local internship programme.

We will maintain a close dialogue and working relationship with the industry to understand and meet their needs,” Dickson said.

Executive Director of HKPC KK Yeung said, “the entertainment and digital games sectors have emerged in the global market as fast growing industries.
Philippines regrets detention of its senator in US

MANILA, 24 March — The Philippine Government on Wednesday expressed regret over an incident in which a Filipino senator was briefly detained by US immigration officials at the San Francisco Airport on Sunday.

Senator Luisa Ejercito, wife of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada, was detained for more than one hour by US immigration personnel during her visit to San Francisco on 20 March.

“Philippine lawmakers deserve some respect in foreign soil in the same manner that all foreign government officials and diplomats enjoy the respect and courtesies due them in our country,” the presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said.

Bunye said that while the government had accepted US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone’s apology, it expected the incident to be investigated.

Philippine Senate President Franklin Drilon on Tuesday said that Ricciardone had called him up to apologize and assured him that they would get to the bottom of the case.

Drilon said Mr. Estrada called him and complained about the incident.

The US immigration officials asked her questions which had nothing to do with immigration, such as whether she thought her husband would be convicted for plundering, he said.

Two Philippine lawmakers at the House of Representatives condemned the detention of Mrs Estrada.

House Majority Floor Leader Prospero Nogales of Davao Province said the incident showed that “Americans were getting arrogant, as if they ruled the world and we must all pay homage to them”.

“It’s time to remind them that if we want to win against terrorism, we must work as a team,” Nogales said in a test message.

“They can’t dictate or show disrespect to other democratic sovereign nations, especially public officials who represent their country,” he said. “Who do they think they are? Americans want support but they abuse their allies.”

China to shoot its first mobile phone TV play

BEIJING, 24 March — China’s first TV drama to be shown exclusively on mobile phones will begin shooting on 27 March, reported the Beijing Daily on Wednesday.

The TV opera titled “Appointment,” will have five parts, with each only lasting five minutes. The length was said to be determined according to the cognitive limitations of subscribers.

The Beijing-based Leshi Media Group, the play’s investor, found a market survey that mobile phone users feel tired if they stare at small cell-phone screens for too long. A 25-minute TV drama with five parts was found to be optimal.

Catering to the interest of young people, who are more likely to watch TV plays on mobile phones, the drama is a romantic love story between a beautiful girl and two motorcycle riders, revealed Li Huan, an official of the media group.

A recently released report by IMS Research estimates that by 2010 there will be 120 million subscribers viewing TV programs on mobile phones. Analysts also say Asian subscribers purchase new mobile phones more frequently than other users.

Setting up two bus links between Pakistan, Afghanistan agreed

ISLAMABAD, 24 March — Pakistan and Afghanistan agreed on Wednesday to set up two bus links between their countries in what Afghan President Hamid Karzai said was an illustration of their rapidly warming ties. The neighbours, also signed agreements to cooperate in culture, media and tourism.

“The pace of this movement towards prosperity and closer relations between the two countries is moving at a speed that the government can not catch up with,” Karzai told reporters after the signing ceremony.

Bus services will be launched to link the north-western Pakistani city of Peshawar with Jalalabad in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s Quetta with the southern Afghan city of Kandahar.

“The people of the two countries are making the strides and we should do everything to facilitate these strides to the benefit of the two nations,” he said.

Heilongjiang officials urged to improve governance by education drive

HARBIN, 24 March — A senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC) told members in northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province on Wednesday to learn from the dismissal of corrupt officials and incorporate those lessons in the Party’s internal education drive.

The education drive, which is currently underway throughout the country, aims at maintaining the “advanced nature” of Party members.

“Only when the drive achieves practical results can it enhance the Party’s ruling capability,” said Zeng Qinghong, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee during his inspection tour of the province on March 20-23.

Nepal’s meat production increases

KATHMANDU, 24 March — The meat production at present in Nepal is 197,000 tons every year, which is higher by 2.2 per cent compared to the production a decade before.

According to a study report released Wednesday by a local non-governmental organization, a Nepali consumes 9.4 kilos of meat per year in average, and the major sources of meat in the Hindu kingdom are buffaloes, goats, fowls, pigs and sheep.

About 11,300 tons of buffalo meat, 35,000 tons of mutton, 21,200 tons of chicken, 12,000 tons of pork and 3,000 tons of mutton (sheep) is produced yearly in the country at present, the study shows.

Apart from the meat produced domestically in Nepal, about 230 tons of meat and meat products are imported from different countries.

Vietnam willing to cooperate in dioxin research

HANOI, 24 March — Vietnam is always willing to cooperate with scientists in the world, including those from the United States, to research the damage of Agent Orange in the country, Vietnam News Agency quoted the Foreign Ministry’s spokesman Le Dung as saying on Tuesday.

Le Dung made the speech on Monday when answering a local newspaper’s question about Vietnam’s reaction to the US cancellation of a joint US-Vietnam cooperation program to study the effects of Agent Orange. He stressed that solving the consequences of the effects on Vietnam’s people and environment of Agent Orange, which the US military used during the war, is an urgent humanitarian issue.

During the scientific study process, Dung said, it is an urgent task to give relief aid to the victims and help them overcome the consequences of Agent Orange.

Vietnam always welcomes any research project aimed at detoxifying the victims, diagnosing and treating their diseases, the official said.
YANGON, 26 March —

The prize-giving cer-

Li-Gen Kyaw Win attends prize-distribution ceremony for exhibition and booths in commemoration of Armed Forces Day

mony for exhibition and

booths in commemoration of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day was held at the Defence Services Museum on Shwedagon Pagoda Road this morning.

Present on the occa-

sion were Chairman of Leading Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, Chairman of Management Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Chief of Staff (Navy) Commodore Nyan Tun, Judge Advocate-General Maj-Gen Soe Maung, Vice Ad-

Li-Gen Kyaw Win presents second prize for display of booths at the Armed Forces Day Commemorative Exhibition to an official of Ministry of Rail Transportation. — MNA

junt-General Maj-Gen Hla Shwe, the deputy ministers, senior military officers, heads of departments, those who are in charge of booths and guests.

Deputy Director of Defence Services Museum and Historical Research Institute Lt-Col Zaw Win announced the list of the booths that won the prizes.

Next, Chairman of Leading Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day member of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win presented prizes for the booths of the Ministry of Industry-1 which stood first, Ministry of Rail Transportation which stood second, Ministry of Construction which stood third, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and Ministry of Transport to officials concerned.

Chairman of Committee for display of nation-building tasks Minister Brig-Gen Pyi Sone presented consolation prizes for the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and Ministry of Science and Technology to officials concerned.

Chairman of Management Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe presented prizes for the booths of the Ministry of Industry-1 which stood first, Ministry of Construction which stood second, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Rail Transportation which stood third, Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telecommunications to officials concerned.


Chairman of Prize-presentation and Scrutiny Committee Judge Advocate-General Maj-Gen Soe Maung presented prizes for the booths of Yangon Command which stood first, Northern Command which stood second, North-West Command which stood third and consolation prizes for the booths of Coastal Region Command, Eastern Command and Western Command to officials concerned.

Chairman of Exhibition Committee Vice Ad-junt-General Maj-Gen Hla Shwe presented prizes for the booths of Directorate of Signals which stood first, Directorate of Ordnance Services which stood second, Directorate of Artillery Force which stood third and consolation prizes to Directorate of Armour Force, Directorate of Electrical and Mechanical Engineers and Directorate of Supply and Transport.

Next, Chairman of Leading Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day member of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win spoke on the occasion. — MNA

Channel construction tasks in Bida Diversion

Weir inspected

YANGON, 26 March —

Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo, together with officials, inspected the progress in channel construction tasks in Bida Dam irrigated region in Bago Township.

Channel construction tasks in Bida Diversion were inspected. — MNA

Afterwards, the minister looked into Bida Diversion Weir near Hlawine village. At the briefing hall, the minister heard reports by the officials on the measures being taken for water supply.

Next, the minister gave instructions on early completion of the tasks, minimizing the loss and wastage of fuel oil and long term durability of intake channels.

Minister inspects construction of roads and bridges

YANGON, 26 March —

Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, accompanied by officials of Public Works, inspected the repaving tasks being carried out by Tiddim Township Public Works on 19 March.

After inspecting the construction of Tiddim-Reed road section being extended into 40-foot wide one, he attended to the needs of the tasks.

On 21 March, the minister looked into the tarmacking of the road section of Kalay-Gangaw road. On arrival at the construction site near Panmon Creek Bridge, the minister heard reports on the progress of constructing Kalay-Gangaw road section and future work plans and he left necessary instructions. Later, the minister and party inspected Hnanga Creek and Pane Creek Bridge being constructed by Pakokka District Public Works.

The minister and party also inspected the construction tasks of road sections and bridges along Gangaw-Htilin-Kyangku-Mindat Road. — MNA
The Tatmadaw managed to help regain independence in collaboration with the people and has been making unremitting efforts to maintain the independence and sovereignty. The Tatmadaw crushes all the dangers and threats to the nation and people at risk to lives, blood and sweat of its members. Simultaneously, the Tatmadaw is making arduous endeavours day in, day out to implement nation-building tasks.

When anarchy and undisciplined acts reigned the length and breadth of the nation in 1988, the nation was on the brink of disintegration and collapse. So, the Tatmadaw had to restore the entire nation to its former position and safeguard and defend the mother country, and then gave the top priority to ensuring community peace and tranquillity and prevalence of law and order that the people had inspired a long time.

If one takes a glance at the nation in 1988 when the Tatmadaw assumed the State’s responsibilities, one will learn that the entire nation and all the sectors were in complete disorder due to the anarchy, unrest and the ravages done by the saboteurs. However, the Tatmadaw has enabled the nation to rise from general deterioration to all-round development.

Since the time in development. That was why the Tatmadaw Government placed emphasis on national reconsolidation. In the process, the Tatmadaw built mutual trust, forbearance and understanding with the groups of national races.

From the time the Tatmadaw managed to make peace with national races armed groups in 1989, it has been implementing the projects for development of the border areas and national races that have lagged behind in development in the successive eras. Now, the national reconsolidation has been built firmly, resulting in the return of the 17 national races armed groups to the legal fold. The harmonious cooperation of the Tatmadaw and the national races has yielded unprecedented progress throughout the border areas.

Now, the national races have realized the genuine goodwill of the Tatmadaw Government that has managed to bring significant progress and peace and stability to the border areas for the national brethren in the hills after tackling and surmounting a wide range of great difficulties.

Indeed, it is the result of making united and combined efforts in all the spheres, and that depicts the sermon of the Lord Buddha “Samagganam Tapo Sukho” which means unity brings prospects and progress.

If a garden is nursed well, it can boast of its variety of flowers in full bloom. The Tatmadaw government carried out agricultural tasks all over the country while implementing border area development tasks. At the same time, a network of roads and bridges are being built to ensure frequent contacts and relation among national brethren and smooth and easy transport of commodities.

As regards the participation of Tatmadaw members in the public welfare tasks, Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council and also Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, gave
Tatmadaw’s goodwill flowers that will be in full bloom for ever

(from page 8)

The Tatmadaw’s goodwill flowers that will be in full bloom for ever. They endure all the obstacles. It is because they are the parents of the Tatmadawmen. As they are good sons, they look after their parents. Border areas have become developed on a gradual basis from the time when the Tatmadaw government assumed the responsibility of the State. Narcotic drugs are making their departure from these areas. Small villages have risen to urban cities in appearance. Dispensaries have become hospitals. Schools have changed from thatch-roofed to zinc-roofed ones. Bridges have spanned the rivers, in which ferry boats were unsafe to cross in the past. After designating the 24-zone special development project to bring progress to every part of the country, universities and colleges including technological and computer colleges and 200-bed hospitals were constructed. The Tatmadaw is making continued efforts to develop rural areas where a majority of people reside.

The government laid down the five-point rural development plan. The State, the people and the Tatmadaw made combined efforts to successfully carry out this plan.

Owing to these endeavours, rural as well as urban areas have enjoyed tangible progress. Rural and urban development, a product of the Tatmadaw’s goodwill efforts, is shown in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>March 2005</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sown acreage (million)</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Water pumping station</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>213</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Paddy output (million basket)</td>
<td>653.5</td>
<td>1195.2</td>
<td>541.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Forest plantation (acre)</td>
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<td>130148</td>
<td>1222343</td>
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<td>Transport</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Railroad (mile)</td>
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<td>- Airport (large)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Road (mile)</td>
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<td>5005/3</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Hydropower plant</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<td>- Projects under way</td>
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<td>- Private-run factory</td>
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<tr>
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<td>- University, college</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Technological university</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>- Hospital</td>
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<td>- TV retransmission station</td>
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<td>- Information and Public Relation Office</td>
<td>373</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Sub-printing house</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The government technological college in Panglong, Shan State, where the Union was conceived.

Magway-Taungdwingyi Railroad Project in Taungdwingyi Township, Magway Division, being implemented with the efforts of the Tatmadaw members.

After laying down political, economic and social objectives, the Tatmadaw government is making all-out efforts to strengthen the nationalist spirit and Union Spirit, which are pillars for peace and stability, prosperity and development as well as for the perpetual existence of the Union, in the march to wards a peaceful, modern and developed nation, which is a national goal.

After assuming the responsibility of the State, the Tatmadaw therefore put first national reconsolidation, regional stability and peace, and the prevalence of law and order, while implementing national plans that will give rise to economic and social infrastructures needed for the emergence of a modern and prosperous nation with robust economy.

By enlisting the strength of national forces, the Tatmadaw government worked hard with the participation of the national people. The Union of Myanmar has now been on the track of development. There in the nation have emerged fruitful results in the establishment of such infrastructures as national solidarity, national socio-economic life, national development, so that of their own.

The Tatmadaw will also continue to serve the public interest in future. The prosperity of the country is resulted from solidarity and unity, stability and peace, and genuine goodwill the Tatmadaw has for the people and its correct endeavours. Absolutely essential is the leadership role of the efficient Tatmadaw for the maintenance of stability and peace and that of development momentum in the long run.

In other words, stability, peace and prosperity are the strength of unity flourishing between the Tatmadaw and the people as well as the flowers of goodwill the Tatmadaw has for national people.
Lt-Gen Aung Htwe inspects development tasks in Taunggyi, Nyaunghshe

YANGON, 26 March — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint and officials, arrived at Nanthida Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Farm No 2 of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe presented best Dot’s provider award to an official at the ceremony to mark World Stop TB Day. — YANGON COMMAND

Farm in-charge Lt-Col Myo Win reported on poultry farming tasks. Lt-Gen Aung Htwe gave necessary instructions and inspected fish ponds. Nanthida Farm plans to distribute 1 million fingerlings to the local fish farmers this year. Next, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and party oversaw poultry farming tasks.

Afterwards, they attended the ceremony to put land under summer paddies in Shweyanbyaw Village of Tilaw Village-tract in Nyaunghshe Township. They also inspected thriving garlic and sunflower miscropping farm in Tilaw Village. At the local battalion, they looked into raising of layer. On arrival at Government Technological College in Ayethaya Myothit, they heard reports on construction of buildings at the college. The three-storey building measuring 513 feet and 357 feet is under construction for 3,040 students. At the site of the Shan State War Veterans Organization Office, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe gave instructions on timely completion of the tasks and inspected the worksite. — MNA

Researchers grow adult stem cells harvested from nose

SYDNEY, 25 March — With the help of the Catholic Church, Australian researchers have successfully grown adult stem cells harvested from the human nose, avoiding the ethical and legal problems associated with embryonic stem cells.

Australia bans creating human embryos to harvest stem cells but scientists may use embryos left over from IVF (in-vitro fertility) treatment. Stem cells harvested through other means, such as from the nose, is legal.

Head researcher Alan Mackay-Sim of Griffith University said the adult stem cells taken from inside the nose could potentially be used to grow nerve, heart, liver, kidney and muscle cells. “We have got an adult stem cell which is accessible in everybody and we can grow lots of these cells and turn them into many other cell types,” Mackay-Sim told Reuters.

“Apart from neural and brain cells, they look like they can turn into blood cells, heart muscle and to skeletal muscle,” he said in an interview. Scientists believe stem cell research could eventually lead to cures for a range of serious ailments, including Parkinson’s disease and spinal cord injuries. — MNA/Reuters

Chinese filmmakers seek cooperation with French counterpart

HONG KONG, 25 March — Chinese filmmakers considered France as an ideal partner in film making at the Franco-Chinese Cinema Partnerships Seminar recently.

Filmmakers from Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong as well as representatives from French Government and film production organizations attended the seminar.

HONG KONG film director Yu Li Wai said that France always does a good job at promotion and marketing its films in the world. Of the French experience, Yu stressed “We have to know the upper limit of the fund and clear about what we want to do so as to have the best result.”

Xiaomei Yue, producer of film “My Life in France” said he got much help from the French partner and most of the problems he encountered in France were solved when making films there.

She believed that the basic element of perfect partnership between China and France was that both countries have got long standing culture and history.

Yue said Chinese producers had also learnt the organized and systematic way of French people in dealing with props and costumes and their serious working attitude. Producer of Basber in “Love in France” Li Xiaowen was amazed by the intelligence of the French crew who were able to grab accurately what the director needed. — MNA/Reuters

Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha presents completion certificate to a trainee in GDP Calculation Course No 4/2005 on 26 March. — MNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win and wife being welcomed by Charge d’Affaires ai of Bangladeshi Embassy Mr Md Afhazzaman and wife Saturday at the reception to mark National and Independence Day of the Republic of Bangladesh. — MNA/Reuters
Indonesia's mily opens major aid lifeline for Aceh Province

LHOKNGA (Indonesia), 26 March—Indonesia’s military opened a major aid lifeline for the tsunami-shattered western coast of Aceh Province on Friday, three months after giant waves wiped towns off the map and swept away roads.

Large parts of the 170 miles coast road linking the provincial capital Banda Aceh and the city of Meulaboh were destroyed, leaving aid agencies and foreign militaries to fly in or ship by sea all supplies to survivors.

Reopening it means trucks can bring in basic supplies to people who lost everything in the disaster, triggered by a magnitude 9.0 undersea quake on December 26 off Aceh.

At a ceremony in the west coast town of Lhoknga, military chief General Endriarto Saturo praised the thousands of soldiers who rebuilt large sections of the road.

The tsunami left more than 220,000 people dead or missing in Aceh alone—bodies are still washed up on beaches, and survivors have told of an estimated 40,000 missing.

The tsunami left more than 220,000 people dead or missing in Aceh alone—bodies are still washed up on beaches, and survivors have told of an estimated 40,000 missing.

Meulaboh's pre-tsunami population of 120,000 are thought to have died in the disaster.

The soldiers had to build more than 80 kilometres of road from scratch. Large parts had either vanished or were blocked by debris or the remains of trawlers carried inland by the waves.

Bodies were also among the debris of boats and smashed houses.

Dozens of bridges along the highway, which runs like a snake between the blue Indian Ocean and the lush Aceh hills, were also destroyed.

Soldiers have built 64 temporary bridges but the surface remains rough, the military said, with rocks and gravel covering large parts. The process of pouring asphalt will be the responsibility of the local government. MNA/Reuters

Tokyo gives S Korean Cos to launch marketing campaigns for products

SEOUL, 26 March—A territorial dispute with Tokyo has given some South Korean companies an opportunity to launch marketing campaigns for their products with hints of Japan bashing and a whole lot of chest-thumping national pride.

The islands at the centre of the dispute, called Tokto in Korea and Takeshima in Japan, are claimed by both countries and lie about 140 miles from their shores.

South Korean banks, telecommunications companies, audio makers and credit card firms with a national reach, as well as a host of smaller local companies, have rolled out advertisements and marketing campaigns in recent weeks as tensions have flared.

Mobile carrier KTF—affiliated with South Korea’s top phone and Internet provider, KT Corp.—has launched a national print and TV advertising campaign that shows the desolate islands, and uses computer graphics to show a South Korean flag flying high over one of the rocky outcrops.

“The land where Japanese mobile phones work is Japanese territory, and the land where South Korean mobile phones work is Korean territory,” the ads say, noting KTF set up communications equipment in 2002 that allows its users to make calls from the disputed islands.

“We want to make sure that Tokyo is a part of Korean territory, even if it is just a rocky outcrop,” said Kwon Young-woong, a public relations manager with KTF.

Analysts said there is lingering animosity in South Korea toward Japan for its 1910-1945 colonization of the Korean Peninsula and distrust of Tokyo for statements and actions by some of its leaders that seem to undercut an official apology Japan made in 1998.

S Korea to sign free trade pact with Singapore

SEOUL, 26 March—South Korea will sign a free trade pact with Singapore next month that will cut tariffs on growing trade between the rival Asian manufacturers of high-end electronics, the Finance Ministry said on Friday.

It will be the second such deal for South Korea following one sealed in April last year with Chile, despite protests then by farmers and labour unions who feared it would run their livelihoods.

A deal with Singapore, however, has not been as controversial as the city-state has only a tiny agricultural sector.

South Korea has said it hoped the deal would help speed up free trade talks with Japan, along with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) that groups Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and tiny Liechtenstein.

Trade-reliant Singapore, the first South-East Asian nation to sign a free trade pact with the United States, has led its neighbours in tearing down trade barriers.

A bilateral trade between Singapore and South Korea has doubled in a decade to 11.6 billion US dollars in 2003, but the pact only covers a fraction of this, removing barriers on 75 per cent of Singapore’s 1.8 billion US dollars of “domestic exports”.

Beijing hopes to be world renowned fashion centre

BEIJING, 26 March —The China National Federation of Textiles Industry and the Beijing municipal government are making joint efforts to turn Beijing into a fashion centre on par with Paris, Milan, London, New York and Tokyo, a government source announced here on Tuesday.

The city will raise funds for building six garment production centres in outskirts counties as Pinggu, Miyun, Shunyi and Yanqing. Construction on some fashion show centres are underway. The New China International Exhibition Centre is expected to open in 2006. Construction on the Beijing International Light Textile Trading Centre will begin soon.

The local municipal government is striving to set up centres for fashion design, exhibitions, public relations, garment production and top brands, according to a building plan unveiled Wednesday.

The eight-hectare fashion design centre is located at the Beijing Economic and Technological Development Zone at Yizhuang of Daxing District in southern Beijing. Work on the design or building is expected to finish in May and open within the year. It will house 200 computer assistant design (CAD)
ARRIVAL/CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV “MANDALAY” VOY NO. 150/N

Consignees of cargo carried on MV “MANDALAY” Voy No. 150/N are hereby notified that the vessel has arrived at Yangon port on 28-3-2005 and will be berthing on about 29-3-2005 and cargoes will be discharged into the premises of Myanmar Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.30 am and 12 noon to 4 pm and Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

CONTAINER FEEDER SERVICE
MYANMA FIVE STAR LINE
Phone: 293147, 296807, 295754

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV MAGWAY VOY NO. (9)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV MAGWAY Voy No (9) arrived on 27-3-05 are hereby notified that their cargo will be discharged into the premises of Myanmar Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA FIVE STAR LINE
Phone: 295279, 295280, 295281, 295658, 295659

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV SAGAING VOY NO. (24)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SAGAING Voy No. (24) arrived on 27-3-05 are hereby notified that their cargo will be discharged into the premises of Myanmar Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA FIVE STAR LINE
Phone: 295279, 295280, 295281, 295658, 295659

On-line services usage up in Singapore in 2004

SINGAPORE, 25 March — Up to 65 per cent of households in Singapore had Internet access, according to a survey released by the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore (IDA) on Wednesday. Out of the country’s four million population, 2.65 million were computer users and 2.42 million Internet users last year, which saw an increase of 6 percentage points over 2003, according to the survey.

And 95 per cent of the 1.72 million Internet users aged 15 and above used email for communication, while 56 per cent of them engaged in on-line government related transactions in 2004. It shows that 82 per cent and 62 per cent of this group used more sophisticated applications like on-line information retrieval/search and download software, up by 18 and 19 percentage points, respectively.

ACF

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
Second best time is now.
Scientists say sun rays can cause skin cancer

LONDON, 24 March — Rates of the deadliest form of skin cancer could treble in the next 30 years if Britons do not protect themselves from the sun’s harmful rays, scientists said on Wednesday.

More than 7,300 cases of malignant melanoma are diagnosed each year in Britain and 1,700 people die of the disease but Professor Brian Diffey, of Newcastle General Hospital in northern England, said many cases could be prevented.

“If present rates of melanoma continue, as they have done in the last 25 years, then in 30 years time the rates are predicted to be three times what we see today,” Diffey told Reuters.

“We’re seeing an ever-upward rise.” He said it is essential that people monitor moles and skin blemishes and report any changes in them because detecting the disease early is vital.

Malignant melanoma accounts for roughly 10 per cent of reported cases of the illness. About 133,000 new cases of the disease are diagnosed worldwide each year. It usually develops in the skin but can spread to other parts of the body, forming secondary tumours.

Melanoma is the second most common cancer among people aged 15-34. Researchers say sunburn in childhood can double the risk of melanoma in later life.

People are advised to stay out of the midday sun, avoid sunburns and wear sunscreen, wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses.

“Reducing the risk of skin cancer is something most of us can do,” he added in a statement. MNA/Reuters

Patients with sleep apnea likely to die from heart attacks at night

BOSTON, 24 March — Patients with sleep apnea are more likely to die from heart attacks at night, while sleeping, than in the day, which is the time when everyone else is most vulnerable, US researchers reported on Wednesday.

Most heart attacks take place between dawn and noon in the United States but sleep apnea — marked by a tendency to snore, stop breathing and then stirle awake — changes this pattern, the researchers found.

What is still not clear is how much sleep apnea raises the risk of premature death overall, the researchers wrote in this week’s issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

“Our study cannot address the question of whether obstructive sleep apnea increases the overall risk of sudden death from cardiac causes,” Dr. Virend Somers of the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine in Rochester, Minnesota and colleagues wrote.

As many as one in four Americans suffer from some degree of apnea, where the throat repeatedly closes during sleep, causing breathing to stop for 10 to 30 seconds during sleep and oxygen levels to fall dramatically.

The condition, more common in men and the obese, causes stress on the heart and makes people tired during the day.

The study of 112 Minnesota residents with diagnosed sleep apnea who died suddenly from cardiac causes found they were far more likely to die between midnight and 6 a.m.

More than half died between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. — usually the time when people are the least likely to die of heart problems. However, apnea sufferers were only half as likely to suffer a fatal heart attack between 6 a.m. and noon, the time when everyone else is most vulnerable.

And from noon to 6 p.m., the risk of sudden death from heart attack was only 30 per cent of what it was for people without apnea.

“We didn’t show that sleep apnea increases the risk of sudden death all the time,” Somers, a cardiologist, said in a telephone interview.

A much larger study of about 12,000 people now underway may reveal if death is more common among apnea sufferers. “In 18 months or so we should have an answer,” he said.

The new study raises several questions.

Many of the people with apnea had been given machines that use air forced through a face mask to keep the throat open. Although the death rate was higher during sleep, that does not mean the machines were not effective, Somers said.

The researchers had no way of knowing how many patients were actually using the devices, especially on the morning they died. MNA/Reuters

VISA spending in HK reaches four-year high

HONG KONG, 24 March — Visa International announced here on Tuesday that Visa card spending in Hong Kong reached a four-year record high of 16.4 billion US dollars for 2004, representing a 22-per-cent increase year-on-year.

This strong growth in retail sales volume, or spending at the points of sale, is credited to healthier consumer sentiment in Hong Kong, as well as higher consumer usage of credit cards for everyday transactions and bill payments, Visa International said.

According to Prudence Chan, manager for Hong Kong/Macao of Visa International, “now more than ever, people are using their credit cards in instances where they previously would have only considered using cash.”

Visa card penetration in personal consumption expenditure rose to 16.1 per cent in 2004, continuing the upward trend and demonstrating wider card acceptance.

Visa International said it maintains a positive outlook for 2005. Hong Kong’s economy is projected to continue to grow in the coming year, and together with record tourist arrivals in 2004, these figures are likely to result in higher consumer confidence and increased card spending.

Visa Asia Pacific on Tuesday also announced a 12.7-per-cent growth in retail sales volume for the whole of Asia Pacific market for 2004 totaling 326 billion US dollars.

40 Nepali kids die daily of water borne diseases

KATHMANDU, 24 March — Some 40 children die each day of diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases in Nepal, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) said here on Tuesday.

“In Nepal, access to clean water and sanitation are also critically important to the health of children,” UNICEF Representative to Nepal Dr. Suomi Sakai said.

In a statement to mark the World Water Day, Sakai said that the diseases also weaken thousands of children in the country.

According to a UNICEF report “State of the World’s Children 2005,” 21 per cent of children in developing countries are severely water deprived living without a safe water source within a 15-minute walk of their homes.

The United Nations General Assembly at its 58th session in December 2003 had agreed to promote the years decade 2005-2015 as the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life” and beginning with the World Water Day on March 22, 2005. MNA/Xinhua

Jaguar mother ‘Sally’ takes her offspring by the scruff of the neck and carries it away at the zoo in Munich, southern Germany, on 24 March, 2005. Two jaguar kittens were born on 20 Jan, 2005. —INTERNET

Dai Yuejin shows her 4.2-metre-long (about 15 feet) hair in Tongxiang, east China’s Zhejiang Province on 24 March, 2005. —INTERNET

Drive safely

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Sunday, 27 March, 2005 13
German players will each receive $392,000 if they win 2006 World Cup

FRANKFURT, 25 March—Germany's players will each receive a record 300,000 euros ($392,000 US dollars) if they win the 2006 World Cup. The German football association (DFB) agreed to the figure demanded by the players late on Wednesday after months of negotiations. The DFB had first offered 150,000, then 250,000.

The amount is more than triple the 90,000 euros Germany's players would have won had they beaten Brazil in the 2002 final.

The squad will receive 50,000 euros each for reaching the 2006 quarterfinals, 100,000 for the semifinals and 150,000 if they reach the final, the DFB said.

The players argued for the larger sum because they missed out on bonuses which they would have been paid for reaching the 2006 finals. As hosts, Germany automatically qualified for the World Cup.

At the 2004 European championship Germany players would have won 100,000 euros if they had the title, but they were knocked out in the group stage and got nothing. —MNA/Reuters

Reyes admits setting heart on move to Real

MADRID, 25 March—Arsenal forward Jose Antonio Reyes has admitted that he has set his heart on a move to Real Madrid and wants the Spanish side to open negotiations with his club as soon as possible.

"I hope that Real Madrid are making an effort to sign me, that they are watching me, that they are talking to Arsenal and that there aren't any problems," the 21-year-old Spanish international was quoted as saying by sports daily Marca on Thursday.

"It's clear that when Real Madrid want a player, no matter what team he is in, they get him." Reyes, who joined Arsenal from Sevilla for a club record fee of 17 million pounds ($31.99 million US dollars) in January 2004, said that one of the key reasons why he wanted to return was his failure to adapt to life in England.

"It's not a question of being unhappy with the team or the people, because it is great to play football there," he said. "I've had no problem whatsoever with the people.

"But the truth is I haven't managed to adapt to the climate, nor to the language and these things are very important to me." Reyes, who is in Madrid preparing for Spain's forthcoming friendly against China and a World Cup qualifier against Serbia & Montenegro, said that he had made his feelings clear to Arsenal.

"I've spoken to the chairman and the boss and told them everything," he said. "If Real Madrid are interested it is important that they now talk with the club. If they do open negotiations with Arsenal then they will reach an agreement."

The player, who first revealed his desire to sign for Real Madrid in a hoax radio interview last month, said that he hoped that his declarations would prompt club president Florentino Perez to push to sign him.

"After the joke they played on me everyone knows that I would love to play for Real Madrid. Maybe what I said will help the Real Madrid president make a little more effort to sign me," MNA/Reuters

Guadalajara beat San Lorenzo 2-1 in Libertadores Cup

RED DE JANEIRO, 25 March—Guadalajara beat San Lorenzo 2-1 in a match of three penalties and three red cards to go top of their group in the South American Libertadores Cup.

Midfielder Ramon Morales converted two penalties as Mexico's most popular team remained unbeaten at the group's halfway mark following a controversial match at the Jalisco stadium in Guadalajara on Wednesday night.

The first was awarded in the 49th minute when Pablo Zabaleta appeared to pull back Omar Bravo while the second came on the hour after Juan Francisco Palencia was tripped by goalkeeper Agustin Orion. The Argentine visitors pulled one back from another spot kick converted by Walter Garcia in the 66th minute following a handball by defender Manuel Sol which television replays suggested was accidental.

One minute later, Guadalajara's Cristian Ramirez was sent off for a lunging tackle on Eduardo Coudet, who was also dismissed for kicking his opponent in retaliation.

San Lorenzo were reduced to nine men in the 79th minute when Garcia was sent off for headbutting Omar Bravo.

In between, San Lorenzo nearly equalized as Alfredo Talavera turned away Garcia's 25-metre volley and Zabaleta hit the crossbar.

Guadalajara, who field only Mexican players, lead the group with seven points from three games while San Lorenzo have two. Their defeat is likely to increase the pressure on veteran coach Hector Veira following their shaky domestic form. —MNA/Reuters

Gerrard looking for revenge

MANCHESTER (England), 25 March—England midfielder Steven Gerrard heads into Saturday's World Cup qualifier looking for revenge on the man who once made him cry as a boy, Northern Ireland boss Lawrie Sanchez.

Bitter memories: Gerrard was left in tears after his FA Cup winner against Northern Ireland in 1999

"I know what it's like to miss out on one so hopefully now I can play a big part in this one," Gerrard welcomed the four-week break, made up of a week's relaxation and three weeks of preparation, that is now available to Steve Gordan Erikssons men before the finals.

"With the amount of games that we play during a season, it's important that, come these tournaments, you are fresh and ready," Gerrard said. "Sven will know how to handle that right and I'm sure that by the time we start the training we'll be really fresh because of the week he'll have given us beforehand."

Liverpool midfielder Steven Gerrard welcomed the four-week break granted to the England squad ahead of the 2006 World Cup. —INTERNET

Liverpool's captain and lifelong fan was seven years old when Sanchez headed Wimbledon's winner against the Reds in a memorable upset at the 1988 FA Cup final.

Gerrard went on to blossom in Liverpool's youth academy, before breaking into the first team, while Sanchez became manager of Wycombe Wanderers and then Northern Ireland coach in January 2004. "The players are aware of Lawrie Sanchez. He obviously had a good career as a player," Gerrard told the FA web site. "I can remember when he ruined one of my days by scoring the winner in the FA Cup final against Liverpool -- I remember crying after that game."

"He's also done really well since taking charge of the Northern Ireland national team... Hopefully on the weekend, though, we'll be able to turn it into a sad day for him."

"That will be the perfect stage for me to show people worldwide that I can dominate at this level. I just feel I can still offer a bit more than I did at international level and German would be the perfect place to prove it."

"Looking back to 2002, when his place in central midfield went to Nicky Butt because of a groin operation, he said: "The last World Cup was a nightmare situation for me."

"I had no choice really other than to decide to have surgery. I knew that if I had decided to go to the World Cup you wouldn't have seen the best of me."

"I know what it's like to miss out on one so hopefully now I can play a big part in this one."

Gerrard welcomed the four-week break, made up of a week's relaxation and three weeks of preparation, that is now available to Steve Gordan Erikssons men before the finals.
Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST. During the past 24 hours, rain or thunder-showers has been widespread in Chin State, scattered in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States, Sagaing, Manda-lay and Tanimthai Divisions and isolated in Mon State, Magway and Bago Divisions and weather has been generally fair in the remaining areas. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded was Putao (0.98) inch. Day temperatures were (13°C) to (14°C) below normal in upper Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions, (11°C) below normal in Kachin and Northern Shan States, (9°C) below normal in Chin State, (6°C) above normal in Rakhine State and (5°C) above normal in Tanimthai Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The signific-
dant day temperatures were Hmawbi (40°C), Phan-an and Bago (39°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 25-3-2005 was 100°F. Minimum temperature on 26-3-2005 was 69°F. Rela-
tive humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 26-3-2005 was 71%. Total sunshine hours on 25-3-2005 was (9.6) hours approx. 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 (14) mph from Northwest at (09.15) hours MST on 26-3-
2005.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and South Bay and generally fair else-
where in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 27-3-2005: Isolated rain or thunder-showers are likely in Rakhine, Northern Shan, Mon and Kayin States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon and Tanimthai Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 27-3-2005: Possibility of isolated rain or thunder-
showers. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 27-3-2005: Possibility of isolated rain or thunder-
showers. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Earthquake Report
(issued at 22:30 hours M.S.T on Today)
An earthquake of moderate intensity (5.3) Rich-
ter Scale with its epicenter outside of Myanmar about (230) miles Northwest of Mandalay seismo-
logically observed was recorded at (20) hrs (05) min (38 sec) M.S.T on 25th March 2005.
Li-Gen Kyaw Win formally opens 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commemorative Literary and Arts Competitions and Exhibition.

YANGON, 26 March — Chairman of the Leading Committee for Observance of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Chairman of the Organizing Committee for 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commemorative Literary and Arts Competitions and Exhibition Member of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win formally opened the Armed Forces Day Literary and Arts Competitions and Exhibition at Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road this morning.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of the Management Committee Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Vice-Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the Literary and Arts Competitions and Exhibition Chief of Staff (Navy) Commodore Nyan Tun, the Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence, chairmen and members of the sub-committees, departmental heads, officials and prize winners.

At the central booth of the hall, the portrait of Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, guidance from the address of the 59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day given by Senior General Than Shwe, Objectives of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day and the picture of 11,575 feet long Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine) which is the longest facility of the country were displayed.

Next, the Chairman of the Leading Committee and party viewed round prize winning works in the photo contest, literary contest, extempore talks contest, TV quiz, painting and sculpture contest, marching and martial songs contest, poem and essay contests and biographies of the winners.

The Literary and Arts Competitions and Exhibition will be kept open up to 4 April from 9 am to 5 pm daily. At the exhibition, the quiz contest will be held daily and handsome prizes will be presented to the winners.

Lately, the commander presented best DOTS provider award to South Okkalapa Township. Daw Khin Thet Htay, Deputy Director-General of Health Department General Than Shwe, Deputy Director-General of Health Department Dr Ye Myint, No 2 Military Region Commander Col Htay, Deputy Director-General of Health Department Dr Ye Myint, No 2 Military Region Commander Col Htay presented prizes to the winners in the general knowledge contest to mark the World Stop TB Day.

Later, the commander, the mayor and party enjoyed the brief DOTS drama play. They also viewed documentary photos of TB control and booths. Later, the commander and wife provided TB medicines to the patients.

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MNA

World Stop TB Day observed in Yangon Division

YANGON, 26 March — Organized by Yangon Division Health Committee, the ceremony to mark the Yangon Division World Stop TB Day was held at the hall of Institute of Nursing on Bogyoke Aung San Street, here, this morning, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin.

First, the commander gave an opening address. Head of Yangon Division Health Department Dr Hla Myint read out the message of the Minister for Health. The commander presented best DOTS provider award to South Okkalapa Township. Daw Khin Thet Htay, Deputy Director-General of Health Department Dr Ye Myint, No 2 Military Region Commander Col Tun Kyi, local authorities, departmental officials and members of the social organizations.

SINGAPOREANS PRIME MINISTER TO PAY GOODWILL VISIT TO MYANMAR

YANGON, 26 March — At the invitation of His Excellency Lt-Gen Soe Win, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, His Excellency Mr Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore will pay an official goodwill visit to the Union of Myanmar in the near future.

MRTV-4 extends entertainment programmes

YANGON, 26 March — Arrangements are under way to broadcast more MRTV-4 programmes in Yangon area with the use of digital system which is of higher quality than the current system. The channel can be received by means of Family Digital Receiver, which is available at an affordable price. Apart from MRTV-4 programmes, MRTV, MRTV-3 and entertainment programmes such as movies and cartoons can be enjoyed with the same receiver. Family Digital Receivers are available at Myanmar Radio and Television and Family Entertainment (Tel: 01-535164 or 01-505736).

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INSIDE

True to being born of the general public, the members of the Tatmadaw serve the public interest. They leave behind their own interest and take great pain and risk for the national people.

(Page 8) MAUNG NYEIN CHAN

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