**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

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**Prime Minister inspects development work in Mon State**

The Prime Minister, Lt-Gen Soe Win, yesterday morning arrived by helicopter at the project site for construction of Yin Nyein Sluice Gate being implemented by the Construction-6 of the Irrigation Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation near Yin Nyein Creek near Kyonhtaw Village, Paung Township, Thaton District, Mon State. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Myint, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental officials.

At the briefing hall, Director of Construction-6 U Hla Myint reported on facts about the project, construction progress up to 31 March and future work and Deputy Minister U Ohn Myint on conditions of Zokkaye Sluice Gate that benefits 20,000 acres of farmland and Kyonhtaw Sluice Gate that benefits 22,000 acres of farmland and construction of Kataik Dam that will benefit 20,000 acres of farmland and implementation of Yin Nyein Sluice Gate project including construction of canals. (See page 8)
Exhibitios to mark Armed Forces Day continue

YANGON, 2 April — The 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Commemorative Exhibition continued at the Defence Services Museum on Shwedagon Pagoda Road today.

In the exhibition on nation-building endeavours, a computer quiz is being held from noon to 2 pm and prizes are presented to winners.

People and foreigners visited the exhibition and it will be kept on 4 April.

Similarly, Literary & Arts Competitions honouring the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day continued at Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road from 9 am to 5 pm today, and members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association, students, monks and people visited the competitions.

Literary & Arts Competitions and 3Q contest are also being held and cash prizes are awarded to the winners. The competitions continue till 4 April.

MNA

Rain in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions

YANGON, 2 April — The Hydrology and Meteorology Department announced that light rain had been isolated in Kachin State and upper Sagaing Division last two days. During the past 24 hours, light rain or thundershowers have been isolated in upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions, and partly cloudy in Kachin and Rakhine States, Mandalay and Yangon Divisions.

The remaining areas were mostly pleasant. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded was 0.12 inch in Myeik. Weather is partly cloudy in the south of the Bay of Bengal and generally fair elsewhere of the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid on 3 April evening, isolated light rain or thundershowers are possible in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions. Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining area.

Degree of certainty is 60 per cent. Outlooks for subsequent two days are possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers in southern part of the country.

MNA

NZ, Malaysia to launch FTA Negotiations

WELLINGTON, 2 April — New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark announced recently that the country and Malaysia have agreed to begin negotiations on a free trade agreement (FTA) as soon as possible.

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi, who is visiting New Zealand, met Helen Clark and the New Zealand Cabinet on Thursday.

The announcement follows studies in both New Zealand and Malaysia on the benefits of an FTA. New Zealand’s study concluded that the two economies are complementary and that such an agreement would benefit the people and economies of both countries.

Helen Clark said the FTA process was an exciting development in the two countries’ bilateral relationship. It is expected that negotiations should be completed in 2006.

“We both have strong and relatively open economies, but there is scope for improvement particularly in the services sector and with investment flows,” said Helen Clark.

Malaysia is New Zealand’s tenth largest trading partner globally. The pair’s two-way trade in goods is worth over $850 million US dollars a year.

Badawi arrived in New Zealand Wednesday and was formally welcomed to Parliament Thursday by Helen Clark. He will travel to Auckland Friday where he will visit Auckland University before leaving New Zealand in the evening.

MNA/Xinhua

All this needs to be known

- Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
- Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
- Do not be softened whenever appeased
Indonesia to increase quake monitoring stations

JAKARTA, 1 April — The Indonesian Government said on Thursday it plans to increase the number of earthquake monitoring stations to 160 from the current 31 following two massive earthquakes off Sumatra Islands that claimed over 200,000 lives.

With more quake monitoring stations, the government expects to detect tremors faster and more accurate, said Gunawan Ibrahim, head of the Jakarta-based meteorology and geophysics agency.

“The BMG has 31 seismological stations at present, dispersed from Banda Aceh to Jayapura. It takes us 30 to 60 minutes to detect an earthquake because of the limited quake monitoring stations,” he said.

With 160 quake stations, he said the detection period can be reduced to 15 minutes. He said an immediate knowledge about earthquake would give time to officials to issue warning of possible tsunami. To build the targeted 160 quake stations, Indonesia will seek assistance from other countries, such as China, Germany and Japan, he added. — MNA/Xinhua

India ratifies nuclear safety convention

NEW DELHI, 2 April — India has ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety and submitted to the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency at Vienna on Thursday, a statement issued by the Ministry of External Affairs said.

The convention was adopted in Vienna on 17 June, 1994 and entered into force on 24 October, 1996.

“Fully conscious of the responsibilities arising from the possession of advanced and comprehensive capabilities in the entire gamut of nuclear fuel cycle operations, India attaches great importance to the issue of nuclear safety,” the statement said.

“India shares the objective of the convention of maintaining a high level of nuclear safety worldwide through the enhancement of national measures and international cooperation, including in safety-related technical cooperation.”

India hopes to make peaceful use of the nuclear energy to meet the demand of the growing economy. “Nuclear power, as a safe and secure energy source, is an indispensable component for meeting the developmental needs of a large and growing economy like India,” the statement added. “In exploring its full potential for peaceful purposes to which India is committed, the importance of international cooperation including in the field of safety-related technologies cannot be over-emphasized,” it said. — MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia to establish national guard for disaster relief

JAKARTA, 1 April — The Indonesian Government said on Thursday it plans to establish the National Guard for Disaster Relief following two unprecedented disasters within just three months that claimed more than 200,000 lives.

The national guard is expected to reduce government’s reliance on the military when dealing with natural disasters, Coordinating Minister for People’s Welfare Alwi Shihab told reporters here.

“We should stop ‘disturbing’ the military when a disaster occurred,” he said.

The national guard will become part of the existing National Coordination Board for Disaster Relief and Refugee Resettlement.

Shihab said the government would recruit well-trained people to join the national guard, adding that he would soon embark to the United States and Europe to learn about similar organizations there. — MNA/Xinhua

Singapore PM visits Cambodia

PINOM PENH, 1 April — Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong arrived here on Thursday to pay an official visit to Cambodia at the invitation of Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Prime Minister Hun Sen welcomed Lee and his delegation at the Phnom Penh International Airport.

During his one-day visit, Lee will hold a meeting with his Cambodian counterpart Prime Minister Hun Sen. On Thursday afternoon, Lee will have a royal audience with Cambodia’s King Norodom Sihanouk.

It is Lee Hsien Loong’s first visit to Cambodia. — MNA/Xinhua

E-N China province works to balance environment, development

BEIJING, 1 April — Northeast China’s Liaoning Province is to launch a 10-billion-yuan (1.2-billion-US-dollar) environmental protection plan to fight river pollution with the idea being that polluters will foot the bill, according to Friday’s China Daily.

The three-year plan will focus on controlling and reducing industrial pollutants along the Liaohe River, said Hou Yongshun, a senior engineer from the local environmental protection bureau responsible for the project.

The plan is to try to control the establishment of new potential polluters including paper-making, pharmaceutical and chemical plants. The local authorities will also tighten up the monitoring of existing heavy polluters such as iron, steel and cement plants.

All such plants along the river will be told to meet the protection standards within three years.

In relation to drinking water, new poultry farms will not be allowed to be located around the river or reservoirs. Those existing there will be moved or closed down.

An environmental report earlier this year showed that the Liaohe River was at the top of the list of the nation’s most heavily polluted rivers.

Another survey by the local Liaoning Environment Monitor Centre said five out of six major rivers in Liaoning are in a bad way. — MNA/Xinhua

Suicide car bomb hits US checkpoint in western Iraq

TALUQAH, 1 April — A suicide car bomb hit a US checkpoint at the entrance of a US military base west of the restive city of Ramadi on Friday, witnesses said.

The explosion took place when a suicide bomber drove a booby-trapped truck into the US military checkpoint around midday. Casualties were not known as the US troops sealed off the area, the witnesses said.

They said the US troops blocked two main bridges of Ramadi as they surrounded the city, some 100 km west of Baghdad. The US military did not confirm the incident.

Ramadi has long been a hotbed of insurgency against the US troops.

Police chief killed in northern Iraq

BAQUBAD, 1 April — The police chief in Balad, Ruiz and his driver were shot and killed Friday, and an Interior Ministry commander was killed during a raid, police said.

The police chief, Col Hatem Rashid Mohammed, was getting into his car when gunmen opened fire in the town about 30 miles (48 kilometers) north of Baghdad, police in Diyala province said.

An aide was critically wounded, police said.

In the Damiya section of the city, an Interior Ministry officer was killed during a commando raid on a house. — Internet
China, Germany to promote parliamentary exchanges

BEIJING, 1 April — Chinese top legislator, Wu Bangguo, said that the National People's Congress would like to further the relationship with the Federal Council of the German Parliament.

He told visiting Mattias Platzeck, president of the German Federal Council, that China and Germany have enjoyed sound relationship, and the two countries have the similar view on major international issues.

“The development of sino-German relations benefits the peoples of the two countries,” he said.

He said China and Germany are economically complementary and have great potential for trade cooperation. The two sides should enhance the cooperation on energy resources and environmental protection.

Wu expressed appreciation for Germany's adherence of the one-China policy.

Platzeck, who is also governor of Brandenburg, said that the relations between Germany and China have entered a new stage, and he is visiting China to promote the cooperation between the parliamentary organs as well as the exchanges between local provinces of the two countries.

He said Germany will continue to adhere to the one-China policy.

Online signatures take effect in China on 1 April

BEIJING, 1 April — Online signatures will become valid in China as of 1 April to facilitate the country's growing e-commerce.

The law grants electronic signatures the same legal effect as handwritten signatures and seals for business transactions, said Liu, China will provide seismic equipment worth 27 million yuan (about 3.26 million US dollars). China and Indonesia will have regular meetings on the early warning network project and cooperation. Liu added.

The unnamed BND source said it has been involved in the surveillance of Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, an al Qaeda leader. He said ABW engineers performed a chemical attack in Iraq.

German Press says Zarqawi plans chemical attack in Europe

BERLIN, 1 April — Top Iraqi terrorist Abu Musab al Zarqawi is planning to launch chemical weapons attacks in Europe, a German magazine reported on Wednesday.

“Somewhere in Europe there's going to be a big bang and it will have been organized by Zarqawi,” said German Federal Intelligence Service (BND) spokesperson quoted by the political magazine Cicero.

The unnamed BND source said it was unclear how far Zarqawi's agents had gone to prepare for a chemical attack. “We just know that he's working on it,” a BND agent told the magazine.

The magazine said Zarqawi's men, closely linked to Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda network, is producing chemical weapons in Georgia and North Caucasus region of Russia. Zarqawi is believed to have at least 150 potential terrorists based in Berlin, Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg states, said the BND agents in the Cicero report.

Blast in Iraq kills Marine from Orlando

BAGHDAD, 1 April — Marine reservist Charles G Wells Jr could have come home from Iraq when his second tour of duty ended a few weeks ago. Instead, he opted to stay. That decision cost him his life.

Wells, 32, of Orlando was killed Wednesday when his vehicle struck a land mine en route to Qaim, Iraq.

He is survived by his wife, Nicole, 33, and a 4-year-old daughter.
China boasts standardized plantation of medicinal herbs

MACAU, 2 April — China has cultivated 920,000 hectares standardized plantation of medicinal herbs, said Liu Yanhua, Vice-Minister of Science and Technology at the International Conference on Chinese Medicine opened here on Friday.

China has set up 448 production bases in 18 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities for cultivating standard Chinese medicine, which are shaping up a complete production and commercial chain for developing modern Chinese medicine, Liu said.

The ministry supervised a panel consisting of some 100 experts nationwide to draft out a guideline for boosting the modernization of the Chinese medicine industry in 1997, which was passed by China’s State Council in 2002 as a state circular.

Liu said that with the attachment given to the sector, China has substantially improved the research and development level as well as production ability of Chinese medicine.

He pointed out in particular that when the epidemic of SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) post a threat to the world in 2003, Chinese medicine has played an important role in the prevention against the disease, which has won a high commendation from the World Health Organization.

Megawati reelected as PDI-P leader

JAKARTA, 1 April — Former Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri won the bid to retain her chairwomanship in the Indonesian Democratic Party-Struggle (PDI-P) for the 2005-2010 period in the party’s second Congress concluded in Bali on Thursday.

Megawati’s re-election also gave her a full mandate to choose members of the party’s central executive board for the next five years.

According to the official Antara news agency, she was reelected by acclamation in the Congress led by chief of the party’s East Nusatenggara provincial executive board Frans Leburaya.

Tsunami causes limited soil salinity problems

BANGKOK, 1 April — Soil salinity problems caused by last year’s tsunami are less severe than previously expected, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said in a statement on Thursday.

A total of 47,000 hectares of agricultural land had been damaged by tsunami waves in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, India and Thailand, Daniel Renault, the FAO coordinator for agriculture in tsunami affected countries, was quoted as saying.

“Around 38,000 hectares of that land can be used for cultivation this year, while the remaining 9,000 hectares, mainly in the worst hit Indonesian Province of Aceh, have been lost to the sea or can no longer be used for farming,” he said. “This lost amount is small compared to the 300,000 hectares of rice fields in Aceh,” he added.

It was initially feared that agricultural land flooded with salt water in coastal areas hit by the tsunami would lose its soil fertility making it unsuitable for cultivation for a long time.

“Fortunately, due to the humid conditions in most of the Indian Ocean countries, salt-polluted arable land has been cleaned by rainfall and irrigation,” Renault said.

Recent surveys carried out by FAO and others show that salt deposited in more than two thirds of the affected agricultural land has been leached out already allowing planting to resume with the beginning of the cropping season in April and May.

However, the disaster did affect farming activities of hundreds of thousands of farmers and their families in the region, who depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

HKSAR Govt to help disabled job seekers

HONG KONG, 2 April — Hong Kong Labour Department will launch a Work Orientation & Placement Scheme to help 1,000 people with disabilities find jobs with an estimated investment of about 8 million HK dollars (102,564 US dollars).

The scheme is aimed at encouraging employers to better understand the working abilities of people with disabilities, according to a government Press release on Thursday.

Under the scheme, a two-day pre-employment training programme will be offered to each participating disabled job-seeker, covering the latest job market information, job-search skills, interviewing techniques, work ethics and communication/interpersonal skills.

The participating employer will offer a three-month work placement to the disabled job-seeker and will be free to decide whether to continue the employment upon completion of the work orientation period.

Announcing details of the scheme Thursday, Assistant Commissioner for Labour Tsang Kin-woo said the department’s placement officer will follow up the performance of the disabled employee during the three-month period.

The participating employer will receive a financial incentive equal to 50 per cent of the actual wages paid to the employee during the three-month work period, with a ceiling of 3,000 HK dollars per month.

Earthquake jolts Sumatra again

HONG KONG, 2 April — An earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter Scale rocked the sea waters west of Sumatra, Indonesia, at 3:29 pm (Hong Kong Time) on Thursday, the Hong Kong Observatory reported.

According to the observatory, the epicenter was initially determined to be 1.8 degrees of North Latitude and 97.1 degrees of East Longitude, about 260 kilometres south of Medan.

Earlier in the day, an quake measuring 6.3 on the Richter Scale rocked the sea waters west of northern Sumatra, Indonesia, at 0:25 am (Hong Kong Time).

The epicenter was initially determined to be 3.0 North Latitude and 95.4 East Longitude, about 280 kilometres south of Banda Aceh.

Thai Airways’ fares to increase

BANGKOK, 1 April — Thailand’s national flag carrier, Thai Airways International Public Company Limited (THAI), will increase its air fares through a five-US-dollar fuel surcharge per ticket, taking effect from 1 May.

THAI’s top executives expect the increased surcharge to generate a 100 million baht (2.56 million US dollars) to help the company cushion the impact of the rising cost of jet fuel.

Nearly all international carriers have already levied fuel surcharges, THAI’s President Kanok Abbiiradee was quoted by the state-run Thai News Agency as saying on Wednesday.

Apart from the surcharge, THAI plans other measures to reduce its operating costs and increase revenues. The pay rise had been pending for three years, he said.

Workers demolish an old brick wall on the construction site of a new office building in Beijing on 2 April 2005 — INTERNET

A Vietnamese farmer walks past a rice field outside Hanoi on 30 March, 2005. — INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR  Sunday, 3 April, 2005  5
China sees most trade barrier cases in 2004

BEIJING, 1 April — China had 1.26 billion US dollars’ worth of trade barrier cases in 2004, more than any other country, according to an annual report issued by the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) on Thursday.

“The Foreign Market Access Report 2005” covers 22 trade partners of China, including Egypt, South Africa, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, India, South Korea, Japan, Russia, the European Union, Canada, the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand.

China’s exports to these countries accounted for about 68 per cent of China’s total exports in 2004. The report introduces the trade and investment regulatory policies of each country, barriers to trade and investment, the barriers Chinese companies come across in foreign markets, China’s concern over these barriers and its efforts to eliminate them.

Trade barriers were classified into 14 categories, such as tariffs and tariff administrative measures, import restrictions, Customs duties and trade remedy measures. Investment barriers have three categories: barriers to investment access, barriers to operation and barriers to withdrawal of investment.

With the fast development of Chinese foreign trade and investment, some trade partners set up barriers to trade and investment to protect their domestic industries and home markets.

According to the WTO, a total of 16 countries and regions initiated 57 anti-dumping, countervailing, product-specific safeguard investigations against Chinese exporters.

Emergency help for quake affected people enhanced in Indonesia

SIBOLGA (Indonesia), 2 April — Three days after the great earthquake that hit Indonesia’s Sumatra, the local government and people in the port city of Sibolga, one of the worst affected places, are beefing up efforts to cope with the disaster.

Three destroyers from the Indonesian Navy have been mobilized to transport emergency goods to the Nias Island — the epicenter. The warships are being quickly loaded Friday morning to start the journey in the evening. Information from the island, some 120 kilometres off coast, said after repeated searches, rescue efforts will not go on for long as “there could be hardly any people alive under the rubble”.

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Clean-up ends two odd days after China chlorine spill

NANJING, 2 April — Clean-up work has basically ended Friday morning, 63 hours after the liquefied chlorine leak in Huai’an City, east China’s Jiangsu Province, an official with the General Administration of Work Safety confirmed.

Sun Huashan, vice-director of the administration, announced rescuers had finished counteracting the chlorine by 3.00 am Friday and the nearly empty tank was trucked to a local chemical plant at 10.00 am for disposal.

Deputy Governor Li Quanlin of Jiangsu Province said the local environment watchdog is still closely monitoring the area.

“Widely different,” a police source was quoted by The Nation newspaper as saying Friday.

The chlorine leak, caused by a truck collision late Tuesday afternoon, has killed 28, hospitalized 350 and forced nearly 10,000 residents to evacuate.

New measures to cut down road accidents in Thailand

BANGKOK, 2 April — Thai police will implement new measures to reduce drink-related road accident at the upcoming Songkran Festival, officials have said.

Under the new rule, drunk drivers will have their vehicles impounded for up to three months once they were caught by police. Currently, most offenders are only fined and ordered to carry out relatively light community service, although the existing law prescribes imprisonment.

“Knowing you will have to pay a fine and do some community work for a day or two is one thing, facing the threat of losing your car up to three months is another,” a police source was quoted by The Nation newspaper as saying Friday.

The new measures will come into effect from the Songkran Festival in April as the government hopes to bring down the high death tolls during the period.

Together with the threat of jail, the new rule is expected to deter car owner’s temptation to drive while drunk or give the key to a drunken friend, said police.

Hong Kong Disneyland appoints “Visa” as official card

Hong Kong, 1 April — Hong Kong Disneyland announced on Wednesday that Visa will be the official card of the theme park, which is due to open in September, Visa International and Hong Kong Disneyland said they will form an alliance, an extension of the existing global alliance between Disney and Visa, which is commenced in 2002.

Under the alliance, the two parts will launch integrated marketing arrangement for Hong Kong Disneyland in the Asia Pacific Region and provide joint marketing opportunities that will bring unique benefits to consumers, merchants and Visa’s member financial institutions throughout the region.

“Our vision, to enhance Hong Kong’s reputation as a family vacation destination, will be strengthened by working closely with Visa International in the Asia Pacific Region,” said Don Robinson, managing director of Hong Kong Disneyland group.

A Vietnamese woman holds a chicken at a wholesale poultry market in Hanoi on 1 April, 2005. Internet
The Tatmadaw was born of the anti-colonialist and national liberation struggles. Relying on their guns and military power, the colonialists and Fascists enslaved Myanmar. Thus, the Myanmar Tatmadaw, with the participation of young patriotic politicians, was formed to launch the anti-colonialist and anti-Fascist struggles.

When Myanmar was about to regain independence, she needed a government. During the time, the Tatmadaw discharged only the national defence duty then.

Stated in the electoral list of hluttaw dated 7 April 1947 were 255 members — 182 members in general (not of any specific national race) from various walks of life, four Anglo-Myanmars, 24 Kayins, 23 Shans, seven Kachins, seven Chins, two Kayins (Kayahs), and six other nationalities of hill regions. Of the 255 seats, 210 members were elected, and 45 seats were reserved for the nationalities. The AFPFL won 95.3 per cent of the votes. The Tatmadaw was discharging only the national defence and security duty then.

The Communist Party (Burma) led by Thakin Soe of the Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League went underground in January 1947. In 1948, the Burma Secretariat led by Thakin Thakin Tin started to form the armed struggle line together with Yebawyu (PVO), the sympathizers of the BCP.

When independence was regained there appeared antagonism between the ruling AFPFL and Communist (White Flag) and Communist (Red Flag) political parties, and the government and political parties of the nationalities, resulting from disagreements.

As there was instability in the nation then, the ruling AFPFL requested the Tatmadaw, which was discharging only the national defence duty at that time, to take over the task of ensuring community peace and the rule of law, and regional security. Thus, the Tatmadaw had to discharge the national security for perpetuation of the nation’s independence and sovereignty. A large number of Tatmadaw members sacrificed their lives, blood and sweat in discharging the duties.

Then came the problem of Kuomintang that intruded into Myanmar territory with the assistance of various nations. The Myanmar Tatmadaw crushed the Kuomintang intruders with military offensives from 1950 to 1961. Thanks to the efforts of the Tatmadaw, formed with various nationalities, the AFPFL government was able to control the major towns facing instability and national liberation struggles. Relying on their guns and military power, the colonialists and Fascists were unable to gain the nation’s independence and sovereign power into the hands of aliens. The trouble-makers distributed the copies of the letter “The 24-hour advance warning” to the public. In the letter, the signatories of the then Deputy Commander-in-Chief (Navy) and the then Deputy Commander-in-Chief (Air) with their names respectively.

The future role of the Tatmadaw is not one which the Tatmadaw asked for, but bequeathed by events in history. Hence, the duty of the Tatmadaw to be able to participate in the national political leadership role of the future State — included in the six objectives of the National Convention, is bequeathed by the State itself.

The Pyithu Hluttaw elected U Nu as the prime minister on 4 April 1960. The AFPFL (Clean) was reorganized as the Pa-hita-sa party, and a committee comprising various political parties was also organized for flourishing of the parliamentary democracy. However, the Pa-hita-sa was divided itself into “U”, “Bo”, and “Thakin” factions.

The Bo group comprised some who participated in the anti-Fascist struggles, the U group was founded by former government officers and lawyers, and the “Thakin” group was formed with persons who took part in the political struggle since they called themselves Thakin.

In 1961, chieftains of Shan State issued the federal paper demanding secession from the Union and total autonomy. The chieftains who did not want to relinquish power led in writing the federal policy. But it was an act to weaken the ruling Pa-hita-sa and to break up the Union, taking advantage of internal insurgency.

The then government and the nationality leaders held the state conference at the radio station in Yangon on 24 February 1961, and the conference, Shan State stuck to the federal policy.

U Kyaw Nyein on 28 February that year, handed over a paper featuring the clandestine plot of a certain state to secede from the Union whether or not the government was divided into the federal policy, and to join the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). The SEATO was founded under the auspices of the US in September 1954 with the aim of containing the People’s Republic of China where communists gained power.

During the time, Myanmar practised the neutral state to secede from the Union whether or not the government was divided into the federal policy. The SEATO cannot be drawn by a single legal expert, a group, a political party or political parties alone. It can be written only at the National Convention which is the meeting point of the delegates from all walks of life of the people’s majority, after making all discussions and suggestions.

Thus, the Tatmadaw started its nation-building endeavours with the national reconsolidation. It has launched the border area development drive, and halted its military offensives against the border. Of the inmates serving jail terms for their wrong doings, the Tatmadaw released all those who were not in a harmful position to national security.

The Tatmadaw issued the Notification No 9/92 on 28 May 1992 to call the National Convention. It held meetings of 15 government representatives (See page 11)
Departmental officials to...

(from page 1)

The Prime Minister, after fulfilling the needs regarding the reports, gave instructions on timely completion of the project meeting the set standard and minimizing loss and wastage in the project. Next, the Prime Minister inspected the construction of the canals.

The aim of the construction of Yin Nyein Sluice Gate is to carry out the double and mixed cropping and to boost crops cultivation in the region, to prevent 20,000 acres of wet land from floods and sea water in the rainy season and to keep fresh water in late monsoon.

After inspecting the construction of Kataik Dam, the Prime Minister and party proceeded to Ye. They were welcomed there by Col Than Toe of Ye Station and officials. The Prime Minister and party inspected the developing Ye town and Ye river-crossing bridge by car. On arrival at new Ye Railway Station, the Prime Minister oversaw greening tasks and greeted passengers. Afterwards, the Prime Minister and party visited the site for extended construction of wards of township People’s Hospital (50-bed). At the briefing hall, Medical Superintendent Dr Daw Saw Myat Oo reported on health care services for local people and requirements. Construction in charge U Chan Sein reported on extended construction tasks, 34 percent of which have been completed and completion of the project in April 2006. Deputy Minister Dr Mya Oo and Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung also gave supplementary reports. After giving necessary instructions, the Prime Minister inspected the construction work. Later, the Prime Minister met departmental staff at the office of Ye Township PDC. Also present were Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, the ministers, officials, local authorities and local people.

First, Ye Township PDC Chairman U Thein Zaw, Executive Officer of Lamang General Administration Department U Kyaw Myint Hlaing and Khawza GAD Executive Officer U Tin Naing reported on data of the township, land utilization, yield of monsoon paddy, cultivation of summer paddy and winter crops, agricultural and livestock breeding tasks, health and education sectors, regional self-sufficiency of food, development tasks and requirements. Next, the Prime Minister delivered a speech. He said the ministers and the deputy ministers led by himself inspected development of Ye. He said he was glad to witness the progress in Ye including Ye River Bridge and Ye Railway Station, peace and stability and improvement of living standard of people. He said such progress was made because local people could do their commercial undertakings peacefully. That is why per capita income of the people in Ye is the highest in Mon State. He said Ye is a fertile region for agriculture and fish and meat sectors. Agriculture, cultivation of rubber and production of fresh and sea water fish and prawns increased year after year along with the annual income of the local people. There is local rice sufficiency and its percentage is 102.64. Rapid development was made in the regions as people could do their economic undertakings peacefully.

Ye is a fertile region for agriculture and fish and meat sectors. Agriculture, cultivation of rubber and production of fresh and sea water fish and prawns increased year after year along with the annual income of the local people. There is local rice sufficiency and its percentage is 102.64. Rapid development was made in the regions as people could do their economic undertakings peacefully.

Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung also gave supplementary reports. After giving necessary instructions, the Prime Minister inspected the construction work. Later, the Prime Minister met departmental staff at the office of Ye Township PDC. Also present were Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, the ministers, officials, local authorities and local people.

First, Ye Township PDC Chairman U Thein Zaw, Executive Officer of Lamang General Administration Department U Kyaw Myint Hlaing and Khawza GAD Executive Officer U Tin Naing reported on data of the township, land utilization, yield of monsoon paddy, cultivation of summer paddy and winter crops, agricultural and livestock breeding tasks, health and education sectors, regional self-sufficiency of food, development tasks and requirements. Next, the Prime Minister delivered a speech. He said the ministers and the deputy ministers led by himself inspected development of Ye. He said he was glad to witness the progress in Ye including Ye River Bridge and Ye Railway Station, peace and stability and improvement of living standard of people. He said such progress was made because local people could do their commercial undertakings peacefully. That is why per capita income of the people in Ye is the highest in Mon State. He said Ye is a fertile region for agriculture and fish and meat sectors. Agriculture, cultivation of rubber and production of fresh and sea water fish and prawns increased year after year along with the annual income of the local people. He found that there is local rice sufficiency and its percentage is 102.64. Rapid development was made in the regions as people could do their economic undertakings peacefully. They can now enjoy the results of peace and stability in the country.

Better foundations on administration, economy, education and transport have already been laid in the State and national solidarity have been consolidated. In the region intellectuals and entrepreneurs turned out, he said. With better conditions and opportunities, the National Convention is in session for emergence of a genuine, discipline-flourishing democratic nation after laying down the seven-point Road Map. According to the motto — strength of the nation lies within, he spoke of the need to make concerted efforts for emergence of a new discipline-flourishing democratic nation based on better foundations achieved due to the cooperation of the government, the people and social organizations.

The Prime Minister and party arrived in Mawlamyine by helicopter. They were welcomed by Deputy Commander of South East Command Brig-Gen Myo Hla, senior military officers and officials.

The Prime Minister met departmental officials and members of social organizations at Mon State Hall in Mawlamyine. Present were Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of South East Command Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, Chairman of Mawlamyine (See page 9)
Departmental officials to…

(from page 8)

and Thaton District and Township Peace and Development Councils and members and departmental officials.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Aung reported on location and data of Mon State, utilization of land, cultivation of 701,600 acres of monsoon paddy in 2004, harvesting of 21,266 acres, sufficiency of kets of paddy, cultivation of 60,150 acres of summer paddy and harvesting of 21,266 acres, sufficiency of rice, cultivation of over 25,000 acres of groundnut, sesame and sunflower and 63,807 acres of beans and pulses, cultivation of 14,862 acres of pepper and arrangements for cultivation of another 5,000 acres in 2005-2006, cultivation of 245,805 acres of rubber, production of 33,965 tons of rubber and others.

The commander also reported on dams and sluice gates in Mon State, benefited areas, breeding of fish, production of meat, economic growth and arrangements for cultivation of another 5,000 acres in 2005-2006, cultivation of 245,805 acres of rubber, production of 33,965 tons of rubber and others.

for realization the projects.

Minister for Education U Than Aung reported on measures undertaken for uplift of education, human resource development and learning of basic and higher education in the whole country.

Next, Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt spoke at length on rural development tasks and tasks for ensuring smooth and secure transport.

In response, the Prime Minister said that thanks to the harmonious efforts of the entire people for the national economic development, the first four-year economic plan (1992-93 to 1995-96) achieved annual development by 7.5 per cent, and the second five-year economic plan, by 8.5 per cent.

Similarly, the third five-year economic plan is targeted to achieve progress of 11.3 per cent, and up to the end of the fourth year, the annual growth has been 12.4 per cent. Efforts are to be made with added momentum to increase the development rate up to 12.6 per cent in the last year of the plan. The per capita income of the nation was K 1,940 in 1988-89, K 13,515 in 1995-96, K 50,927 in 2000-2002 and K 165,729 in 2004-2005. The target of the per capita income for this fiscal year has been set to reach K 180,000.

In respect of the GDP, the nation’s agricultural sector represents 50.5 per cent, the industrial sector, 14.6 per cent and the service sector, 34.9 per cent. So, endeavours are to be particularly exerted to ensure significant progress of the industrial sector.

Being convinced that the nation will be an industrialized one only with the industrial development, the government has placed emphasis on further development of the industrial sector. The government will continue to make efforts to achieve greater progress of the electricity sector and the electric power sector needed for better living standard of the people.

Now, all necessary measures have been taken for ensuring food sufficiency for the posterity. So it has achieved 12.1 per cent growth and accomplished 104.6 per cent performance in implementing the 2004-2005 economic development plan. Mon State stands fourth among the states and divisions in the nation’s GDP.

Mon State is blessed with favourable conditions for economic progress. So it has achieved 12.1 per cent growth and accomplished 104.6 per cent performance in implementing the 2004-2005 economic development plan. Mon State stands fourth among the states and divisions in the nation’s GDP. Such dramatic progress has resulted from the efforts made by those responsible at all levels to accomplish the objectives laid down for states and divisions by the government since its assumption of the State duties.

In such a time when the government and the people are making combined and harmonious endeavours to ensure national progress, the officials responsible for the administrative and management fields in the interests of the nation and the people are to help the people realize the government’s genuine goodwill and efforts.

Departmental officials are to carry out their tasks with great care in order not to have adverse effect on the government’s goodwill and loving kindness to the people. The departmental officials are to try their best to become ones who win the trust and respect of the people.

National solidarity is indeed the fundamental requirement for the Union. In conclusion, the Prime Minister exhorted the officials concerned to pay special attention...
March.
ployees under the minis-
Creek Bridge after leav-
ion, proceeded to Pun
ister for Rail Transporta-
Railroad sections, bridges inspected
Washington absconds with family
sector. Being an agricul-
tural country, the role of
uplift of agricultural sector
and increase of agricultural
produce is very important.
As the government is fa-
cilitating construction of
cluster of dams and river
water pumping projects
across the country for en-
suring development of the
agricultural sector, local
farmers, on their part,
should make utmost efforts
for meeting the set target
and boosting per-acre
yield. Not only for ensur-
ning local food sufficiency
but also for exporting sur-
plus food, it is necessary to
cultivate high yield paddy
strains and use chemical
and natural fertilizers with
the use of correct methods.
Furthermore, emphasis is to
be placed on use of pesti-
cide in their farms for boost-
ning per-acre yield. As the
land of Myanmar is a fertile
region, efforts are to be made
for improvement of indi-
vidual living standard of lo-
cal farmers by utilizing pre-
cious land for agricultural
purpose so as to contribute
towards emergence of a modern
and developed na-
tion in the future.
— MNA

Upgrading tasks in Yangon City

YANGON, 2 April — Upgrading of Yangon City and sanitation activities were carried out in all parts of Yangon, throughout this morning.
The upgrading tasks were placing of concrete at Botataung Container Yard, repaving of Banyadala Road in Tamway Township, construction of 6,430 feet long Maungmaung Kantha Road linking northern and southern parts of Dagon Myothit Townships, building of Kyaukdwein Overpass in North Okkalapa Town-
ship and dredging of drains for proper flow of water.
Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Devel-
opment Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-
Gen Myint Lin inspected upgrading of a road. — YANGON COMMAND

A Myanmar embassy staff in Washington absconds with family

YANGON, 2 April — U Aung Lin Htut, a retired major, attached to Myanmar Embassy in Washington, the USA, absconded with his wife Daw Tin Lay Nwe, one son and two daughters and a maid, in an act of betrayal to the State on 1 April 2005.
Daw Tin Lay Nwe, wife of U Aung Lin Htut, is said to have been summoned to appear before a court in connection with settlement of bad debt for the lease of a building in a commercial case. — MNA

Railroad sections, bridges inspected

YANGON, 2 April — U Pe Than, Deputy Minis-
ter for Rail Transporta-
tion, proceeded to Pun
Creek Bridge after leav-
ing instructions to em-
ployees under the minis-
try in Taunggyi on 30 March.
He inspected comple-
tion of station building,
railroad sections and
bridges on Saikhaung-
Punchaung Railroad.
On 31 March, the
deputy minister oversaw
construction tasks along
Punchaung-Bankaung-
Taunggyi-Htilbin-
Namahleu-Kainghsarail-
road.
In Taunggyi on 1 April, he met with Shan
state level officials of the
Ministry of Rail Transporta-
tion and gave necessary
instructions. On 2 April, the
department minister arrived
back here. — MNA

Workshop on development…

MMPE Chairman U Sein Tin presided over the afternoon session. Secret-
ty of Myanmar Video Cen-
sor Board Director of
MMPE U Thein Tun Aung
and Director U Myint Lin
of MMPE reported on
income and profits of the
video enterprise, censor-
ship of pictures, and meas-
ures to be taken by direc-
tors and producers for en-
hancing the role of the na-
tion’s video enterprise.
Next, the workshop went
into recess. Member of the
Myanmar Motion Picture
and Video Censor Board
Managing Director (Retd)
of the MMPE U Maung
Maung Khin chaired the
evening session. It was fol-
lowed by a general round
of discussions and sugges-
tions for the development of
the film industry.
Afterwards, the chair-
man delivered concluding
remarks. — MNA

Development tasks in
Kyaukgyi, Pyu inspected

YANGON, 2 April — Chairman of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Commander of West-
ern Command Brig-Gen Min Aung Hlaing on 31 March inspected construction of bridges along Maung Kyaukpyu section of An-Maei Road.
He also oversaw construction of Thazinthaung and Minkyaung Creek Bridges. At Hsahyin Bridge construction site on Maung Kyaukpyu section, he heard reports on construction matters by Engi-
neer in-charge U Thit Lin. The bridge will be 160 feet long and 24 feet wide. It is of reinforced concrete type.
In Maei, he met with departmental officials and heard reports on matters concerning the township. The
commander explained regional development. — MNA

Construction tasks on An-Maei-
Kyaukpyu Road inspected

YANGON, 2 April — Chairman of Bago Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Southern
Command Maj-Gen Ko Ko inspected facilities of Mone Station Hospital in Kyaukgyi Township on 30 March. The commander viewed round Mone BEHS and gave necessary instructions to officials.
At Marlarmyaing Monastery in Mone, the com-
mander paid homage to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Naginda. At the monastery, he met with local people and explained rural development tasks. On arrival at Okphyat Village in
Pyu Township, he left instructions to officials on mainte-
nance of bridges on Pyu-Okphyat-Mone Road and
Okphyat-Mone Road. — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein speaks at the harvesting ceremony of monsoon paddy in Hlegu Township. — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein speaks at the harvesting ceremony of monsoon paddy in Hlegu Township. — MNA

Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspect upgrading of a road. — YANGON COMMAND

Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsuan greets those present at the workshop on development of Myanmar film industry. — MNA

MNA
**Chinese Vice-Premier meets with Antarctic expedition team**

**BEIJING, 2 April — Chinese Vice-Premier Zeng Peiyan met with the members of the country’s 21st Antarctic expedition team on Thursday to congratulate them on their successful journey and encouraged them to work harder still.**

Vice-Premier Zeng, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, viewed a video of the research expedition, during which the Chinese scientists arrived at the inland ice cover of the Antarctic and erected the national flag.

Zeng also heard a report about the trek by Li Yuan sheng, head of the expedition team. While talking with the researchers, the Vice-Premier spoke highly of the achievements they had attained in Antarctic research. In only 20 years, he acknowledged, China has made major strides in the field and won a say in the international arena of polar research.

China will be able to scale new heights, explore into broader fields and play a still greater role in the peaceful utilization of Antarctica, Zeng said.

**MNA/Xinhua**

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**Tatmadaw’s future role**

(from page 7)

and 29 representatives of the then-existing political parties. The arrangements for holding the National Convention were made according to the discussions at the meetings.

Moreover, six objectives have been laid down as a guideline in convening the National Convention. The National Convention began on 9 January 1993, with the participation of all the NC delegates. Even the representatives of the armed groups that returned to the legal fold had been permitted to attend the Convention.

After the National Convention has laid down the 103 basic principles to be stipulated in the constitution, it temporarily suspended due to the instigation of an individual and a single political party. But the Tatmadaw has never stopped its nation-building endeavours. It never loses sight of the national goal, the entire people have desired. It continued to fulfill the basic needs for the future nation during the time. And till now, it has been launching the rural development drive covering the border areas and implementing the 24-development zone project, with national reconsolidation as the base. The Tatmadaw has been building infrastructures all over the nation for material development.

After building all the infrastructures necessary for transition to democracy, the Tatmadaw has laid down the seven-point Road Map or the future policy programme to reach a modern and future policy programme to reach a modern and

**Departmental officials to...**

(from page 9)

to the national unity on the basis of the fact that only when the entire national people are one, can peace and stability be restored well in the nation and will a discipline-flourishing democratic nation emerge.

On arrival at Mawlamyine University, the Prime Minister and party were welcomed by the pro-rector, professors/heads of departments, lecturers and officials of the university.

Later, Pro-rector U Tun Sein reported on the salient points of the university and management on the academic affairs of the training opening at the university, and Minister for Education U Than Aung on discussions of the university, research works and construction of the convocation hall.

After hearing the reports, the Prime Minister attended to the needs and cordially greeted the teachers.

Next, the Prime Minister proceeded to the construction site of the convocation hall of Mawlamyine University and heard the reports on the progress of the construction and measures to be taken, followed by the supplementary reports by Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung and officials.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister looked into the scale model of the convocation hall and progress of constructing the university and gave necessary instructions to the officials. — MNA

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**Vietnam’s steel billet import to slightly rise in 2005**

HANOI, 2 April — Vietnam is estimated to consume 3.5 million tons of steel billets this year, 71.4 per cent of which will come from export, according to the Vietnam Steel Association (VSA) on Friday.

Vietnam’s seven steel billet makers with designed annual capacity of some 1.5 million tons are facing material shortage, so the country will have to import up to 2.5 million tons of the product, mainly China, Russia, Ukraine and Malaysia, this year, up 8.7 per cent over last year.

Now, the Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Company and the Southern Steel Company, which hold a combined local market share of around 40 per cent for steel products, can make most of their billets from domestic materials: iron ores and scraps. The five other makers have to heavily rely on imported scraps with higher prices.

Supplies of steel scraps in both Vietnam and other countries are becoming thinner and thinner, the VSA said, noting that many local billet producers are turning to domestic iron ores.

According to experts of Vietnam’s Industry Ministry, the country has yet to exploit the Thach Khe iron ore mine with a reserve of 540 million tons in central Ha Tinh Province, since investment for a metallurgy complex to fully tap the mine is too big: up to three billion US dollars.

Vietnam, which spent 869.7 million US dollars importing nearly 2.3 million tons of steel billets last year, imported 467,000 tons of the product valued at 180 million dollars in the first quarter of this year, posting year-on-year respective decreases of 7.6 per cent in volume and 0.7 per cent.

The VSA estimated that Vietnam recorded sales of around 55,000 tons of finished steel of all kinds in the first three months of this year, similar to the average amount of the products consumed in a quarter last year.

Local steel makers now can export their products to South Asian countries which need huge amounts of the material to overcome tsunamis’ aftermath, the association stated.

**MNA/Xinhua**

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**Commander inspects agriculture, construction tasks**

YANGON, 2 April —Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing inspected 5 acres of Hsinshweli paddy plantation near Humon Village of Lashio on 31 March morning.

The commander made inspection tour of preparations for fish breeding works and the land reclamation area.

He also oversaw storage of water at Humon Dam. At the battalion, he looked into sample sunflower plantation and sample sofa-bean plantation. Similarly, 10-acre Hsinya da na paddies plot and the construction of office of Shan State (North) Organization for Women’s Affairs and Maternal and Child Welfare Association.

**47th PyinOoLwin Gold Cup Golf Tournament to be held**

YANGON, 2 April — Organized by Myanmar Golf Federation, Myanmar PGA and PyinOoLwin Golf Club, the 47th PyinOoLwin Gold Cup Golf Tournament will be held from 12 to 15 April in PyinOoLwin Golf Course on a grand scale.

Handicap 0-12 professional and amateur golfers event, the team event, individual amateur event, elder and women’s events will take place. The

handsome prizes will be awarded to the winners.

Those wishing to participate in the tournaments and elder golfers are to contact PyinOoLwin Golf Club (Tel: 085-22383) and Han Event Management (Tel: 09-99-72554) and enlist not later than 4 pm on 10 April. Further information can be available.

The tournaments will be held by Han Event Management. — MNA
Poland, Azerbaijan to strengthen ties

WARSAW, 1 April — Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski and visiting Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev discussed bilateral political, economic and trade issues on Wednesday and signed three cooperation documents.

During the talks, Kwasniewski expressed great interest in Azerbaijan’s proposal to the European Union (EU) on transporting oil and natural gas from the Caspian Sea to Europe through pipelines.

The two presidents discussed the possibility to extend the pipelines from Ukraine’s Odessa to Azerbaijan’s Gadzak so that it can serve Azerbaijan’s oil transportation proposal. Kwasniewski said this plan is of great importance to Poland as it can effectively reduce Poland’s heavy reliance on Russian oil and gas. Aliyev expressed support for the plan.

The two leaders also exchanged views on how to strengthen Azerbaijan’s cooperation with the EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the World Trade Organization. Kwasniewski said Poland understands and supports Azerbaijan’s wish for closer ties with these international organizations and is ready to offer help.

After the meeting, the two presidents signed a series of agreements on economic and trade cooperation.

Azerbaijan Defence Minister Safar Abiyev, who was accompanying the President on the visit, also held talks with his Polish counterpart Jerzy Szmajdzinski on Wednesday. The two signed a defence cooperation treaty after the meeting, under which the two countries will expand military cooperation, especially in jointly developing up-to-date military technologies.

Aliyev arrived in Warsaw on Wednesday for a two-day visit to Poland.

Nigeria strengthens anti-craft campaign to facilitate debt relief

LAGOS, 1 April — The Nigerian Government is strengthening its anti-graft campaign to meet the requirements for achieving debt forgiveness from creditor nations, a government official said here on Wednesday.

Otumba Segun Runsewe, executive director of Nigeria’s National Orientation Commission, said “some members of the Paris and London club of creditor nations have said openly that unless Nigeria fights corruption and wants to do more with the economy it is not fit for debt relief or forgiveness.”

Nigeria is one of the heavily indebted countries of sub-Saharan Africa with a total debt portfolio of $32 billion US dollars. However, the country is not included among the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) that are considered for debt relief or forgiveness by the creditor nations.

Runsewe said Nigeria has not been able to achieve debt forgiveness or any other form of debt relief because of indiscriminate embezzlement of public funds, which gives the impression that the country is suffering amidst plenty.

Nigeria has been declared twice as one of the most corrupt countries of the world by global anti-graft watchdog, Transparency International (TI) based in Berlin, Germany.

To give the country a good image among the community of nations and also secure debt forgive-

Azerbaijan’s proposal to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations security Council (UNSC) for the automation of the country’s external debts under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs) that are considered for debt relief or forgiveness by the creditor nations.

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Global air traffic growth slows down in February

GENEVA, 2 April—The global air traffic growth slows down in February but Asia has recovered from the 26 December tsunami impact, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said on Thursday.

“February traffic growth gave mixed signals. A slowing of global economic activity saw passenger traffic fall to 6.6-per-cent-year-on-year from the 7.9 per cent reported in January,” IATA Director-General and CEO Giovanni Bisignani said in a statement.

“The good news is that the resilience of air travel was once again demonstrated in the aftermath of the Asian Tsunami. Growth for Asian carriers returned to normal levels, partially boosted by Chinese New Year travel,” he added.

All regions reported positive growth in passenger traffic in February, with the Middle East and Latin America being the strongest performers. Asia-Pacific largely recovered from the impacts of tsunami, posting a 7.9-per-cent-year-on-year increase for February.

Cargo slumped by 0.9 per cent in February, although year-to-date figures maintained positive growth of 6.5 per cent. Weaker global economic activity and a slump in Chinese imports during the Chinese New Year period are largely to blame for this, said the IATA.

The cost of fuel continued to rise in February, mitigating the positive impacts of both growth and careful capacity management.

“If the average price of oil settles at 43 US dollars per barrel (Brent) for the year, the total cost of fuel to the industry will exceed 73 billion dollars. Clearly 2005 will be another year of industry losses, despite aggressive airline cost cutting,” said Bisignani. MNA/Xinhua

Five held liable for highway collapse in S’pore

SINGAPORE, 1 April—Four individuals and Nishimatsu, the main contractor of the tunnelling works at Nicoll Highway in downtown Singapore, were recommended to be criminally liable for the collapse of the road happened on 20 April last year.

According to Channel NewsAsia report on Thursday, the four accused included a design consultant and three Nishimatsu staff members.

One of the Nishimatsu staff, Ng Seng Yong, who monitored the excavation and design of the works, was also assumed to be negligent, the report said.

A three-judge panel will submit a report to the Minister of Manpower after assessing these recommendations made by state prosecutors.

Experts alleged in late January this year that there was an original design error in the planning of the construction site, while the reclaimed land around Nicoll Highway made the situation worse. MNA/Xinhua

Israeli Army to use new unmanned planes

GAZA, 1 April—Israel Army will soon use a new type of pilotless planes to watch the activities of Palestinian militants, Israel Radio reported on Thursday.

The new planes will be used in battling against Palestinian military groups as well as arms smuggling from Egypt to the Gaza Strip, said the report citing Israeli Army sources.

“Israeli soldiers could carry the planes on their backs and operate them in the field,” the sources said, adding that the soldiers would be trained on using them.

According to the radio, Israeli Army received Wednesday evening several of these drones which are distinguished by their lightness. The new plane can be operated by a remote control and its low sound could not be heard 10 metres away.

The new planes are produced by an Israeli military producing company, said the report. MNA/Xinhua

Britain sees biggest house price drop in decade

LONDON, 1 April—House prices in Britain fell 0.6 per cent in March, the biggest monthly drop in almost 10 years, the Nationwide building society announced on Thursday.

The biggest fall since 1995 meant house prices in Britain were 7.9 per cent higher in March than a year ago, the first time the annual growth rate has fallen below 10 per cent since 2001.

The building society said the figures confirmed its view that the house market was experiencing a “soft landing” instead of a crash in the country, but they did not prompt it to revise its forecasts of price growth of 0 to 5 per cent in 2005.

Noting that the price drop followed two months of rises, Nationwide said it was consistent with its forecasts that Britain would see a 2005 house price movement “characterized by rises in some months and falls in others”.

The price falls in March were luring more house buyers onto the market, with the number of people on estate agents’ books rising 6.2 per cent, according to property website HomeTrac.

Despite the dip in price growth, house prices grew by almost 1,000 pounds (1,900 US dollars) in March, taking the average price up to 153,876 pounds (300,000 US dollars).

Economists believed that the latest Nationwide figures could raise speculation that the Bank of England, Britain’s central bank, would not raise interest rates.

“There seems to be a little more breathing space on the timing of any change in UK interest rates,” Nationwide economist Alex Bannister was quoted by the BBC as saying. “Evidence of a continuing gentle slowdown in the housing market, as shown by the latest data, is likely to reinforce this view,” he added.

Britain’s economic growth for the first quarter of 2005 meant house prices were 1.2 per cent higher than a year ago. MNA/Xinhua

Greek supports biotechnology but wary of effects

ATHENS, 2 April—Greece supports the development of biotechnology Minister Dimitris Sionfas said here on Thursday.

“The Development Ministry supports the development of the biotechnology sector in our country and encourages related research,” he said while addressing the first national biotechnology and food technology conference held on Thursday.

“However, it also monitors and studies the social, genetic and any other consequences that may result from biological research,” he added.

He said that biotechnology has contributed significantly to improving and producing new ingredients, adding that bio-technological methods in food analysis and management of food by-products have improved both food safety and environmental protection.

The minister called on the industry and universities to make efforts for a closer integration between research, production and economic growth.

He also urged the industry to invest more in research in order to boost product competitiveness, market reach and export value. MNA/Xinhua

Chavez defends arms purchase from Spain

CARACAS, 1 April—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez stressed on Wednesday that his country’s arms purchase from Spain is for peace and security missions.

Visiting Spanish Prime Minister Jose Rodriguez Zapatero signed seven agreements with Chavez on Wednesday, including one on the sale of transport planes, asphalt-transport vessels and patrol boats.

Chavez made clear that the ships will be used in ocean navigation and patrolling, while the planes in carrying cargo and people. The military equipment will help Venezuela strengthen its defence capacity and combat smuggling, drug-trafficking and international crimes, said Chavez at the presidential palace.

His remarks came after the US Government said Venezuela leads its defensive alliance to threaten the Western Hemisphere in the future. MNA/Xinhua

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**Sports**

**Phelps withdraws from 400 IM at US trials**

**WASHINGTON**, 2 April—Six-time Olympic champion Michael Phelps dropped out of the 400-meter individual medley on Friday at the US world swimming trials held in Indianapolis.

Phelps is the world-record holder in the event but pulled out so he could swim the 400 freestyle, an event in which he did not have a qualifying time, according to reports.

Coach Bob Bowman did not want the 19-year-old Phelps pushing himself in too-long-distance events on the same day. Phelps has been rehabilitating a back injury that forced him to withdraw from last October's world short course championships.

He was scheduled to swim seven events at the six-day meet. But Bowman said he had scheduled for this summer's world championships also may have prohibited Phelps from competing in the 400 IM.

Phelps reached the 400 freestyle final by qualifying quickly in 3 minutes, 55.70 seconds. Peter Vanderkaay, one of Phelps' training partners, had the top time of 3:53.06. —MNA/Xinhua

**Ding beats Bingham for quarter berth in China Open snooker**

**BEIJING**, 2 April—Chinese Ding Junhui survives wildcard player Stuart Bingham of England 5-4 with a superb lucky performance in the ninth final frame to reach the last eight in the China Open snooker here on Thursday.

The former world Under-21 champion took a 5-2 lead with a break of 53 before Dave Harold of England tied the frames 3-3 by potting the black. "I was lucky enough today especially for the brown," responds the Chi-

**Tanzania to host IAAF U-17 regional championships**

**DAR ES SALAAM**, 2 April—Eight countries are to take part in this year's IAAF East African Regional Under-17 Track and Field Championships to be held in Arusha of northern Tanzania.

The participating countries are Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Kenya, the Sudan, Uganda and hosts Tanzania.

The track events include races of 100, 200, 400, 800, 3,000 and 5,000 metres while the field events include long jump, high jump, triple jump, discus, javelin and shotput. Each participating country will be allowed to field up to three contestants in each of the events. —MNA/Xinhua

**Crossword puzzle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACROSS</th>
<th>DOWN</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Purchaser</td>
<td>1 Tarmish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Woven picture</td>
<td>2 Convulsive movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 Decretip</td>
<td>3 Devotional song</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Rude</td>
<td>4 Copper alloy</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 Obligedly</td>
<td>6 A revol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 English river</td>
<td>7 Distinction</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 Cured herring</td>
<td>12 Make least of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Insanity</td>
<td>13 False</td>
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<tr>
<td>18 Tropical edible root</td>
<td>14 Not wet</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Aread</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Harshness</td>
<td>19 Respond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Inferior</td>
<td>21 Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Mockery</td>
<td>22 Faint-hearted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Disorderly</td>
<td>23 Scavenging animal</td>
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**Rally champions to attend Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix**

**MANAMA**, 2 April—This weekend's Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix is expected to attract a number of top stars from all over the world including two top Middle East Rally Champions.

The drivers, Saudi-born Abdulla Bakhshashab and Abdo Feghali from Lebanon, will be arriving in Bahrain on Friday to attend the high profile motorsport event.

Through their presence at the Bahrain International Circuit, the champions will be extending their backing to the international event and the local Bahrain drivers taking part in the supporting races.

"It gives us great pleasure to welcome Abdulla and Abdo," said General Manager of the BIC Martin Whitaker. "Bahrain International Circuit is widely considered to be the 'Home of Motorsport' in the Middle East and we have enjoyed supporting a variety of sports over the past two years."

"The BIC also hosted the second round of the 2005 Middle East Rally Championship in February. The support during the GP of the two champions will further influence the role of the circuit in the region," he added.

Abdo Feghali has counted a total of 34 rallies in his career, grabbed three wins and enjoyed 15 podium finishes. In 2004, the 27-year-old took part in the Monte Carlo and Greek rallies.

Abdulla Bakhshashab has been ralling since 1991. The 36-year-old is part of the Saudi Marlboro Rally Team. In 2002, he made a comeback to the rally world after taking a year out. —MNA/Xinhua

**Atos Origin ends first round of live testing for 2006 Winter Olympics**

**PARIS**, 2 April—Atos Origin, the Worldwide Information Technology (IT) Partner for the Olympic Games, has successfully completed 10 weeks of live testing of the IT infrastructure in sub-zero temperatures, for the Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games (10th-26th February, 2006).

Held during 13 winter sport competitions (including World and European championships) that took place at the competition venues for the Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games, the process tested the Games Management Systems, Information Diffusion Systems (Info 2006 and Commentator Information System), and the supporting IT infrastructure.

The live tests, part of Atos Origin global IT testing programme initiated two and a half years before the Games, are designed to examine not only the robustness of the IT infrastructure, but also the communications between the nearly 700 Atos Origin, the organizing Committee for the XX Olympic Winter Games (TOROC), technology partners and volunteer teams. Outside of the live Sport Events, Atos Origin also tested how the IT system handles various simulated crisis situations, such as a power outage or network failure.

"The live testing phase is crucial for Atos Origin. We really need to know how the IT systems and the team operate under pressure at real events," commented Claude Philippus, Atos Origin Torino 2006 Olympic Winter Games Programme Director.

The 13 competitions that live testing took place at successfully were the biathlon, Nordic combined, ski jumping, figure skating, bobsleigh, lug, skeleton, alpine skiing, cross country skiing, snowboard, freestyle, short track and curling. —MNA/Xinhua

**Brisbane considers to bid for 2020 Olympic Games**

**CANBERRA**, 2 April—Premier of Australia's south-east state of Queensland Peter Beattie said on Friday that state capital Brisbane will look seriously at a possible bid for the Olympic Games in 2020 or 2024.

His announcement came after International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Jacques Rogge, who is in Brisbane for the Oceania National Olympic Committee Conference, said the IOC would love to see a "major bid for the region," he added.

Abdo Feghali has counted a total of 34 rallies in his career, grabbed three wins and enjoyed 15 podium finishes. In 2004, the 27-year-old took part in the Monte Carlo and Greek rallies.

Abdulla Bakhshashab has been ralling since 1991. The 36-year-old is part of the Saudi Marlboro Rally Team. In 2002, he made a comeback to the rally world after taking a year out. —MNA/Xinhua

**Bolivia's Jose Antonio Revuelta, front, is fouled by Brazil's Keron Moura during their U-17 South American soccer match at Pachucho Romero stadium in Maracaibo, Venezuela, on 1 April, 2005.**
WEATHER

Saturday, 2 April, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain or thundershowers have been isolated in upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions and weather has been partly cloudy in Kachin and Rakhine States, Mandalay and Yangon Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded was Myek (0.12 inch). Day temperatures were (3°) to (4°) above normal in Kachin, Shan, Chin and Mon States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions, (5°C) to (6°C) above normal in Kayin State, Magway and Ayeyawady Divisions and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant day temperatures were Magway (44°C) and Minbu (45°C).

Maximum temperature on 1-4-2005 was 105°F. Minimum temperature on 2-4-2005 was 67°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 2-4-2005 was 68%. Total sunshine hours on 1-4-2005 was (9.3) hours approx. Rainfalls on 2-4-2005 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 (9) mps from Southwest (at 11:20) hours MST on 2-4-2005.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the South Bay and partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 3-4-2005: Likelihood of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of continuation rain or thundershowers in the extreme Southern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 3-4-2005: Partly cloudy. Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 3-4-2005: Partly cloudy.

Rainfall Condition of March 2005

(Issued on 2-4-2005)

During the month of March, the weather is use to be dry-hot with scanty rain in Myanmar. However the rainfall in 2005 March is found to be above normal in many places and it is more than 2004 March in most parts of the country.
Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspects harvesting of summer paddy sample plot at 1,000-acre summer paddy zone in Hlegu Township

**YANGON, 2 April** — The harvesting of sample plot of summer paddy and demonstration of technology for setting target paddy production were held at the 1,000-acre summer paddy zone near Malit Village in Hlegu Township this morning, attended by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, station commander and military region commanders, local authorities, departmental officials and local farmers. Accompanied by the commander and party, the Secretary-1 visited the agricultural education camp of Myanmar Agriculture Service in the zone.

The Secretary-1 and party oversaw thriving of Emahtasaw, Hmawby-3 and Yezin-2 paddy plantations, pilot plot and other sample paddy plots. Managing Director U Ohn Than of MAS and General Manager Dr Min Aung presented reports to them.

(See page 10)

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**YANGON** — The Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise under the Ministry of Information and the Myanmar Motion Picture Asiayon jointly organized the workshop on development of Myanmar film industry at the MMPA on Wingapa Street in Bahan Township here this morning.

It was attended by Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein, directors-general and managing directors of the departments and enterprises under the ministry, officials, artists, observers and guests.

The minister delivered a speech on the occasion. In his speech, the minister called on the producers, film directors, script writers, and officials of the Myanmar Motion Picture Asiayon, Myanmar Film and Video Censor Board and the Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise to coordinate and take a wider view on measures for development of the film industry of the nation. Those responsible are to deal with censorship of scripts and stories and to seek better ways and means in accordance with the policies laid down by the State to achieve the goal. Steps are to be taken in advance through coordination and cooperation based on the prevailing situations of the nation’s film industry and the public’s attitude towards the industry to be able to overcome possible difficulties and antipathies for the progress. The minister urged the businessmen to coordinate and cooperate based on the prevailing situations of the nation’s film industry and the public’s attitude towards the industry to be able to

Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan speaking at Workshop on development of Myanmar film industry. — MNA

(See page 10)

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**YANGON, 2 April** — Chairman of Myanmar Gems Emporium Central Committee Deputy Minister for Mines U Myint Thein this morning inspected the sale of jade lots through tender system at the Myanmar Gems Mart on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road where the 42nd Myanma Gems Emporium is being staged.

The deputy minister was welcomed there by Secretary of the Central Committee Acting Managing Director of Myanma Gems Enterprise U Thein Swe and central committee members.

Under the 42nd Myanma Gems Emporium programme, altogether 270 jade lots were sold today. The sale of jade lots continued this evening. A total of 1,288 local and foreign gem merchants arrived to attend the gems emporium.

The sale of jade lots through tender system continues tomorrow. MNA

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"Our Three Main National Causes" the nation is keeping in the fore at present is not created by the Tamadon. It was defined by the historical trend.

**CHIN GYA (MAUBIN)**

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