### 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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**Diplomats, journalists participate in physic nut plantation ceremony in Lashio**

**YANGON, 23 Feb** — Diplomats, officials of UN agencies and journalists, together with Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu, on 21 February afternoon participated in the Physic nut plantation ceremony of the North-East Command in Lashio, Shan State (North).

At the tree planting ceremony held at the model 100-acre farm of the command, they sow the seeds and planted the grafts of the physic nut together with local national races and members of social organizations.

When they arrived at the farm, Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of the North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Information Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and officials welcomed them.

After the ceremony, they observed the test run of generators and grinding machines run on physic nut oil.

Shan State (North) set its target of over 500,000 acres of physic nut and so far, 13,600 acres have been put under the physic nut.

Over 50,000 pine apple, 50,000 physic nut, 1,000 lychee and 1,800 honey orange are grown in the model farm of the command.

Moreover, total of 2,040,000 physic nut seeds had been sown and 120,000 grafts had been planted in the farm.

**MNA**

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Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Exposé and crush terrorists and safeguard national interests

The Press Conference No 2/2006 of the Information Committee of the State Peace and Development Council was held at the town hall in Lashio, Shan State (North), on 21 February. The conference dwelt on the atrocities and murders committed by Thangyaung (a) Myint Soe (a) Sao Khun Kyaw of All Burma Students’ Democratic Front, formerly of SSA (South), and terrorist acts by ABSDF.

Now is the time when the government is implementing the seven-point Road Map for the emergence of a peaceful, developed and discipline-flourishing democracy and, due to the correct leadership of the government and the active participation of the entire national people, considerable progress has been made. However, pessimists within and without the nation, turning a blind eye to the foundations being laid down by the Tatmadaw government for the emergence of a peaceful, developed and discipline-flourishing democracy, are using foul means to jeopardize the stability of the nation. Moreover, destructive elements are plotting to launch underground and above-ground attacks, using the funds provided by some foreign powers.

The purpose of ABSDF insurgent group is to stage terrorist acts against the government in cahoots with other insurgent and anti-government groups. It is obvious from the clarifications made at the press conference that ABSDF and N-DLA, in collusion with other insurgent groups, are committing atrocious crimes against the nation and the people. Thangyaung (a) Myint Soe (a) Sao Khun Kyaw, military operations incharge of ABSDF (North), will be known as the most notorious criminal in the history of internal insurgency. He, alone or in group, tortured 13 people to death and inhumanely made away with 19 others. This has proved him to be a terrorist. Destructionists and terrorists are constantly plotting to create unrest not only in rural and border areas but also in towns and cities. Not only that, they are committing sabotage acts to harm the life and property of people. It does not matter how they are scheming to destroy the peace and stability of the nation, we believe that the government, the people and the Tatmadaw will always unitedly expose and crush terrorists and destructionists and safeguard the national interests.

**Kyunsu Township MCWA gets new building**

YANGON, 23 Feb — Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Coastal Region Command Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe attended the ceremony to open the building of Kyunsu Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association in Kyunsu on 16 February.

The building is 36 feet long, 28 feet wide and 22 feet high. It is a two-storey building constructed at a cost of K 7.9 million. Next, the cash donation ceremony for the Township MCWA followed.

The commander also attended the physic nut sapling planting ceremony at the nursery in Kyunsu Township. Commodore Win Shein of the local station explained planting of physic nut saplings in the station. At the ceremony, the commander viewed sowing 192,000 physic nut seeds and 37,000 cuttings.

Afterwards, the commander inspected Kyunsu Township Hospital and attended to the needs. He also oversaw BEHS in Kyunsu and the pepper farm of the local station.

**Commerce, Banner end in 3-3 draw**

YANGON, 23 Feb — Myanmar League Football Tournament 2005-2006 football season continued at Aung San Stadium and Youth Training Centre (Thuwunna) this morning.

YTC (Thuwunna) Commerce team: 3
Banner team: 3
The Commerce kept staying at the second place with 30 points and the Banner was at the fifth place with 21 points at the league standings.

Aung San Stadium Forestry team: 4
Defence team: 0
The Forestry was at the seventh place with 16 points and the Defence at 12th place with 10 points.

YTC (Thuwunna) Energy Vs Rail Transportation.
Presidents of China, Pakistan vow to develop stronger ties

Beijing, 22 Feb—Chinese President Hu Jintao and visiting Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf vowed to build stronger ties between the two countries in their talks here on Monday. “China-Pakistan relations have stood the test of time and international ups-and-downs since the two countries forged diplomatic ties 55 years ago,” Hu said. As close neighbours, China and Pakistan enjoy “an all-weather friendship”, Hu said, adding that the friendship serves as a paradigm of peaceful coexistence and sincere cooperation between countries of different social systems and cultures. “We appreciate the support Pakistan has given China on Taiwan and other issues,” Hu said. “We will, as always, back the efforts Pakistan has made to safeguard state independence and sovereignty.” Hu said that the Chinese Government and people value the traditional friendship with Pakistan and would like to take the 55th anniversary of the bilateral ties as an opportunity to raise the strategic partnership to another height.

Two Canadian tourists killed in Mexico

Ottawa, 22 Feb—Two Canadian tourists, who were reportedly in Mexico for their daughter’s wedding, have been found dead in their hotel room, Canadian Foreign Affairs Ministry confirmed on Tuesday.

A sea otter looks out from behind a rock in its exhibit at the New York Aquarium at Coney Island, in the Brooklyn borough of New York, on 16 Feb, 2006.—INTERNET

Would-be rock star plunges from bed to death

Singapore, 22 Feb—A teenage guitarist got so carried away while bouncing up and down on his bed mimicking a rock star that he flew out of a third floor window to his death, a Singapore newspaper reported on Wednesday.

The Straits Times said Li Xiao Meng, a 16-year-old from China who was studying at Singapore’s Hua Business School, was a keen musician who liked to jump up and down while playing his guitar in his hostel room.

“But on 17 November he took things a bit too far,” the newspaper said, reporting on a coroner’s court findings. Ruling death by misadventure, the court said evidence “points to the deceased unintentionally falling out of the window to his death when he was hyped up with exhilaration, jumping up and down on the bed placed against an open window while mimicking a rock guitarist.”

Normally the windows were locked, the newspaper said, but students sometimes forced them open so they could smoke, something prohibited by the hostel.—INTERNET

Armed gang steals at least 44 million dollars in British depot raid

London, 22 Feb—An armed gang disguised as police stole more than 25 million pounds (44 million dollars, 37 million euros) from a security depot after abducting its manager and his family, the Bank of England said.

Police said the gang were highly sophisticated and had planned the raid in detail, while the hostages were subjected to a “terrifying ordeal”.

“Unconfirmed reports that the final figure could be up to 40 million pounds, which would make it the biggest heist in British nuclear power stations, Kiriyenko said, adding that these stations will still be state-owned.

Currently, Russia has ten nuclear power stations and 31 sets of nuclear electricity generators, which produce 16 percent of the country’s electricity.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said at the end of January that the country’s nuclear electricity production capacity should reach a quarter of the country’s total by 2030, which is considered feasible by experts. With the implementation of the plan, Russia is expected to be able to save 70 billion cubic metres of natural gas annually by 2010, 105 billion by 2020 and 150 billion by 2030. The cost-effective plan is also conducive to Russia’s implementation of the Kyoto Protocol which aims to reduce global greenhouse emissions.—MNA/Xinhua

A man is seen cleaning the windscreens of a Beechcraft T-6, Raytheon Aircraft’s primary training plane, on display, on 23 Feb, 2006 during the Asian Aerospace exhibition in Singapore.—INTERNET

Russia to build two nuke electricity generators each year before 2030

Moscow, 22 Feb—Russia plans to build two sets of nuclear electricity generators each year to bring its nuclear electricity production capacity to 25 per cent of the country’s total electricity output by 2030, head of Russia’s Atomic Energy Agency Sergei Kiriyenko said on Tuesday. The Atomic Energy Agency is negotiating with private investors in the hope of engaging them in the planned construction of nuclear power stations.

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A general view of the Securitas depot in Tonbridge, Kent, on 22 Feb, 2006, where armed robbers impersonating police officers stole some 25 million pounds (US$43.5 million) from a security company south of London early Wednesday in one of the largest robberies in British history. The manager of the Securitas main cash depot in Tonbridge, south of London, was pulled over while driving on Tuesday evening when what he believed was an unmarked police car, Kent Police said.

They said a man wearing a high visibility jacket and a police-style hat got out of the vehicle, which had blue lights on it. The manager, believing they were genuine police officers, got into their car, was handcuffed, threatened at gunpoint and told to cooperate or his family would be hurt.

Two other robbers disguised as police abducting his wife and son from their home, telling them the manager had been involved in an accident. Six men, some armed with handguns, then threatened and tied up around 15 staff at the depot of Securitas, a company providing security guards, alarm systems, and cash transportation services.

The gang loaded the stolen money into a white lorry before driving off in the early hours of Wednesday morning.

INTERNET
Chemical spill disrupts water supply in S-W China town

BEIJING, 21 Feb.— A chemical spill has contaminated a river in a southwestern China town since last Wednesday, disrupting water supply for some 20,000 people.

A power plant on the upper reaches of the Yuexi River in Guanyin Town of Sichuan Province polluted the water at the intake point, discharging much-than-permitted toxic pollutants into the 100-kilometre stretch around the city of Yibin, Monday’s China Daily reported.

An official surnamed Liu from the environmental protection bureau of Yibin said the amount of fluoride in Yuexi River is double the standard level at present, and there are excessive levels of nitrogen and phenol in the water.

The spill was discovered on Tuesday when an employee of the local water supply company noticed water at the intake point turning yellow.

Residents have been relying on water trucked in from a town 23 kilometres away. And although the local government pressed six fire trucks into service, the supply has not been able to meet demand.

The local government activated an emergency plan— suspending water supply in Guanyin and trucking in 20 tons of water from another town on Wednesday to provide temporary relief.

Liu could not say how much of the pollutants had flown into the river. The power plant is being investigated for the pollution. —MNA/Xinhua

Off-course runners rewarded for going the distance

LONDON, 21 Feb.— Three women in the Dubai marathon had their prize money increased after running four kilometres further than anyone else because they were given wrong directions.

Luminata Talpos of Romania and Ethiopians Hirut Abar and Driibe Hunde complained they were led off course when in third, fourth and fifth place respectively in Friday’s race.

The trio eventually finished fourth, fifth and sixth. A review of the race tapes backed up their complaints and as a gesture of goodwill the race director agreed to pay them for the positions they were in when they went off course.

Accordingly, the athletes received $8,000, $6,000 and $4,000 respectively, a statement from the organizers said on Tuesday. —Internet

Eight Neb Co workers share $365m jackpot

LINCOLN, 23 Feb.— Eight workers at a Nebraska meatpacking plant are really bringing home the bacon now. They stepped forward Wednesday to claim the biggest lottery jackpot in US history — $365 million.

The seven men and one woman bought the winning Powerball ticket at a convenience store near the ConAgra ham processing plant where they worked. At least three of the winners are immigrants — two from Vietnam and one from the Republic of Congo.

“This is great country!” said Quang Dan, 56, who came to the United States in 1988. He still has family in Vietnam and said he plans to help them financially with his winnings.

The previous US jackpot record was $363 million, won by two ticket holders in Illinois and Michigan in 2000. The Nebraska workers had the option of taking the money in one lump sum or 30 annual installments. They chose the lump sum and will get $15.5 million each after taxes.

Three of the group quit their jobs when they hit the jackpot. “I’ve been retired for about four days now,” said Eric Zornes, 40.

Alain Maboussou, 26, said he fled the Congo in 1999 to escape unrest after the civil war there. He said he plans to quit work and return to school for a degree in business administration. The money will provide for his wife and baby daughter.

“She’s going to be happy for the rest of her life,” he said of the 3-month-old girl. —Internet

Five killed in shell explosion in Kazakhstan

ALMA-ATA, 21 Feb.— Five workers were killed in an explosion of a military shell in central Kazakhstan at the weekend, regional emergencies agency said on Monday.

The shell, which was sold as scrap metal, went off when the workers were cutting it at a workshop in the central town of Balkhash, about 550 kilometres southeast of the capital Astana, the emergencies agency said. The agency said the shell could have come from some abandoned military facility, adding that several more shells were found at the site of the explosion. —MNA/Xinhua

Spain seizes 2.5 tons of cocaine off Canaries

MADRID, 22 Feb.— Spanish police said on Tuesday they had seized 2.5 tons of cocaine hidden on a fishing boat near Tenerife and arrested four Russians and Ukrainian crew members.

Police said that the drugs were so well hidden on the Panamanian-registered fishing boat Maris, that it took them several hours to find the contraband in a false bottom. Fourteen other people, of various nationalities, were arrested in different parts of Spain as part of the operation, it said. —MNA/Reuters

Car bomb hits US military in western Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 22 Feb.— A car bomb struck a US military patrol in western Baghdad on Tuesday, wounding a civilian, a police source said.

“A booby-trapped car parking on the side of a main road in the Kadhbra District, detonated when a US military patrol was passing by,” Captain Ahmed Abdullah told Xinhua.

The powerful blast wounded an Iraqi civilian and caused unknown casualties among the US troops which cordoned off the area, preventing the Iraqi police from approaching the scene. —MNA/Xinhua

Cholera epidemic kills 8 from 40 cases recorded in Luanda

LUANDA, 22 Feb.— An Angolan health official has said that an outbreak of cholera in one of the most impoverished areas of the capital of Luanda has caused eight deaths from the 40 cases already registered.

Briefing reporters on the epidemic declared Sunday by the World Health Organization and the Angolan authorities, Health Minister Sebastian Veloso said here on Monday cholera was confined to the Bauvisa area of the capital overlooking Luanda Bay. —MNA/Xinhua
Vietnamese President, Spanish King hold talks

HANOI, 21 Feb — Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong and visiting Spanish King Juan Carlos met here on Monday, seeking ways of boosting bilateral relations and other issues of common concern.

The ongoing official visit of Juan Carlos will contribute to beefing up the ties between the two countries, Luong said while meeting with the Spanish King, who started his two-day trip to Vietnam on Monday.

According to an announcement of the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry prior to the visit, the King and accompanied government officials are to discuss with some Vietnamese leaders and senior officials about measures to strengthen friendly and cooperative relations, especially those in economy, trade, culture and tourism.

After the meeting, the King and the President witnessed ceremonies of signing four cooperative deals, including a cooperation agreement on investment promotion and protection. Other deals involve the two countries’ sports, culture and news agencies.

Indian Airlines finalizes deal with Airbus

NEW DELHI, 21 Feb — Indian Airlines, the state-owned domestic carrier, signed a final pact on Monday with French aircraft manufacturer Airbus Industries to buy 43 planes with 2 billion US dollars.

Kiran Rao, Airbus vice president (marketing and contracts), and Indian Airlines chairman V Trivedi signed the agreement while French President Chirac and Indian Prime Minister Mammoohan Singh met here Monday.

According to the agreement, Indian Airlines will buy 19 A-319 planes, four A-320s and 20 A-321s. The first aircraft will be delivered in October or early November this year and all the order will be completed by 2010.

Iraq provincial governor suspends US cooperation

KERBALA, 21 Feb — The governor of Iraq’s Kerbala province, Aqil al-Khazali, said on Tuesday he had suspended all cooperation with US forces because US security staff last week used police dogs to search government buildings.

The incident occurred before a meeting between officials from the US regional embassy in Al-Hilla and local officials at government offices in the city of Kerbala, 110 km (70 miles) south of Baghdad.

US security staff ignored Iraqi personnel and angered local guards by using dogs to search the buildings where the talks were to take place, showing a lack of respect, Khazali said in a statement. The use of dogs "created a situation of discontentment and anger from these acts so we decided to suspend the cooperation with them and we will not let them interfere in the future," Khazali said.

US authorities said security staff had taken the normal precautions. "We regret these procedures often cause inconvenience to Iraqi citizens and officials," said John Roberts, an information officer at the US Embassy in Baghdad.

Trapped miners all rescued in N-E China coal mine cave-in

FUXIN (Liaoning), 21 Feb — All seven miners who were trapped in a coal mine cave-in in northeast China’s Liaoning Province on 18 February were rescued and hoisted to the ground early on Tuesday.

They were hurried into the ambulances parking near the entrance of the coal mine and will receive further health checkups at a local hospital, an official in charge of the rescue operation told Xinhua.

A cave-in occurred at around 7:45 pm on 18 February in Aiyou Coal Mine affiliated to Fuxin Mining Group Co Ltd of Liaoning Province, trapping seven miners who were working at the underground passage.

Rescuers dug a separate tunnel to facilitate the rescue operation. With the help of a newly installed conveyer belt, the rescue workers built a 29-metre-long tunnel connecting to the location where the trapped miners stayed and eventually found the miners around 3:50 am on Tuesday.

Cause of the accident is under further investigation.

Five objectives raised for new countryside development

BEIJING, 22 Feb — China raised five specific objectives in building “a new socialist countryside”, a senior official told a new conference here on Wednesday.

China would boost rural productivity, improve rural infrastructure construction, promote social development and deepen democracy in the countryside as well as increase the living standards of farmers, Chen Xwen, deputy director of the Office of the Central Financial Work Leading Group said.

China’s central authorities released Tuesday its first major document of the year calling for the construction of a “new socialist countryside” as the foremost task facing China in the 2006-2010 period.

It’s the third consecutive time since 2004 that agriculture, farmers and countryside development have become topics of the first documents of the year issued by the central authorities.

Building a socialist new countryside should not be interpreted as merely constructing new villages, Chen said.

China should focus on efficiency and actual effects instead of spiciness. Central and local governments should support the development through democratic negotiation instead of commanding, he said.

Also, rural areas should develop themselves according to their abilities and carry forward their own characteristics while governments should provide proper support.

A Vietnamese farmer works on a rice field outside Hanoi on 22 Feb, 2006. Vietnam’s agricultural exports are expected to rise 7.1 percent to $7.3 billion in 2006, led by higher sales of coffee, rubber and black pepper but rice exports will ease, the Trade Ministry said. — INTERNET

A worker at a construction site in China’s Shaanxi Province. The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) teamed up with several large construction companies to unveil an initiative aimed at “greening” the building business. — INTERNET

A Vietnamese farmer working on a rice field outside Hanoi on 22 Feb, 2006. Vietnam’s agricultural exports are expected to rise 7.1 percent to $7.3 billion in 2006, led by higher sales of coffee, rubber and black pepper but rice exports will ease, the Trade Ministry said. — INTERNET

A miner surviving the cave-in is carried out of the mine in Fuxin, northeast China’s Liaoning Province, on 21 Feb, 2006. — INTERNET
India, France sign defence cooperation agreement

NEW DELHI 22 Feb—France and India on Monday signed a comprehensive defence agreement that will pave the way for transfer of advanced armament technologies, giving a major boost to strategic bilateral ties.

The Defence cooperation agreement was signed by visiting French Defence Minister Michele Alliot-Marie and her Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee after a summit-level meeting between French President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

France is the third country after Russia and United States with which India has signed such a defence cooperation agreement, with the military sales from Paris averaging 300 million to two billion euro’s a year, for the past few years. Under the agreement, the two countries announced setting up of joint committee which would be responsible for defining, organizing and coordinating bilateral cooperation agreements in defence sector. The committee on the Indian side would be headed by Defence Secretary and by a representative of the French Defence Minister. After inking the agreement, the defence ministers from the two countries held a nearly 45-minute one-to-one meeting which was followed by delegation level talks.

Vitamin C helps preserve Vitamin E in smokers

NEW YORK, 22 Feb—Vitamin C supplements can help reduce the high rate of Vitamin E depletion that occurs in smokers, according to the findings of a small study published in the journal Free Radical Biology and Medicine.

As senior investigator Dr Maret G Traber told Reuters Health, “if you are under oxidative stress, have low Vitamin C intakes, then Vitamin E doesn’t do its job as well as it should and gets destroyed.”

Vitamin C supplements appear to reduce this tendency in smokers, Traber of Oregon State University, Corvallis and colleagues report, based on the findings of a study with 11 smokers and 13 nonsmokers.

“We studied college-age people who smoked a half a pack to a pack of cigarettes per day,” she said. The subjects were randomly assigned to receive Vitamin C supplements at 500 milligrams twice daily for 2 weeks or placebo. After two weeks, the study participants switched over to the other treatment.

In both phases of the study, the subjects did not know if they were receiving a supplement or placebo.

The researchers found that during the placebo phase, tocopherols, the active form of Vitamin E, disappeared significantly faster in smokers than in non-smokers. The disappearance rates of blood levels of alpha-tocopherol in smokers were inversely correlated with blood levels of Vitamin C.

Vitamin C supplements in both groups slowed the disappearance rate of alpha-tocopherol by 25 percent and blood levels of gamma-tocopherol by 45 percent.

“Vitamin E and Vitamin C have been predicted to interact based on more than 50 years of test tube studies,” Traber continued. “This is the first demonstration that Vitamin E reacts with Vitamin C in the human body.”

Floods, landslides kill 24 in eastern Indonesia

JAKARTA, 22 Feb—Landslides and floods triggered by torrential rain have killed at least 24 people in Indonesia’s eastern city of Manado, search and rescue officials said on Wednesday.

The disaster occurred on Tuesday in the North Sulawesi provincial capital, where parts of the city were inundated with one-metre (three foot) high floodwaters after hours of rain. Most of the dead were buried by mud from landslides in hilly parts of the city.

“Today we found four bodies so the toll is now 24,” said Rinaldi, a search and rescue official in Manado, about 2,200 kilometres (1,365 miles) northeast of Jakarta.

Another search and rescue official on the scene in the seaside city said rescuers were still searching for survivors.

Floods and landslides are common in Indonesia, especially during the wet season. Many landslides are caused by illegal logging or the clearing of farmland that strips away natural barriers to such disasters.

Landslides killed at least 130 people on Java island last month.

Bird flu kills two more swans in Hungary

BUDAPEST, 22 Feb—Two more swans were killed by bird flu in Hungary where three swans had previously died from the deadly disease, Hungarian Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany said on Monday.

Further laboratory tests would be carried out in Britain in order to verify whether the swans were killed by the HSNI strain, Gyurcsany said.

The two dead birds were found on February 13 near Nagybaracska in the south of the country, the same area where the three previous swans were found. — MNA/Xinhua

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ASEAN central role highlighted in meeting

HANOI, 22 Feb—The ASEAN Special Senior Officials Meeting concluding here Tuesday stressed the current and future central role of the 10-member Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Vietnam News Agency reported.

Delegates to the two-day meeting analyzed challenges ASEAN is facing in maintaining its central role and resolving regional issues, especially in the context of rapid changes in the region and the world as well as emerging problems, including natural disasters, epidemics, terrorism and transnational crimes.

The officials stressed ASEAN needs to continue maintaining and reinforcing its role in the regional cooperative structure in order to ensure peace, stability and development in the region.

They agreed that ASEAN has played an important role in promoting peace, stability and development not only in Southeast Asia but also the Asia-Pacific region.

They also affirmed ASEAN has constantly expanded and deepened cooperative ties with dialogue partners, as well as successfully initiated and played vital part in many regional dialogues and cooperation forums such as ASEAN + 3, ASEAN + 1, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the East Asia Summit (EAS).

ASEAN comprises of Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

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Doctors may offer heart ops without missing a beat

LONDON, February 23 — Surgeons may soon be able to operate on a beating heart using software that synchronizes its pumping action with the movement of robotic surgical tools, New Scientist magazine reported on Wednesday. Special motion software, developed at Imperial College London, has been designed for use with a surgical robot to perform procedures such as bypass surgery, the magazine said.

In traditional bypass surgery, the heart is usually stopped and an artificial pump used to keep the blood flowing around the body. But this is traumatic as it involves opening up the heart and means the blood must be rerouted through a machine.

The new software, called da Vinci, uses a two-camera endoscope that feeds images into a viewer. The software models the heart and creates a three-dimensional image which appears to the surgeon to be stationary.

At the same time, the software tracks the beating of the heart and instructs the robot's instruments to move back and forth in time with the movement.

The software has so far only been tested on artificial silicone hearts using a robotic arm.

Translation: MS

The billboard to mark achievement in supply of sufficient clean water to all the villages in Yesagyo Township.

Fruits of development on west bank of Ayeyawady River

The opening of The-inn-ga self-reliant tarred road in progress on 1-1-2000.

The government has been laying down and putting into action the projects for equitable development of all parts of the Union, bridging the development gap between one region and another and raising the standard of living of the people. In the process, the government is putting its energies into the harmonious implementation of the border areas and national races development project, the 24-special development regions project and the rural development project.

It has built bridges one after another across the Ayeyawady River, which flows from north to south, with the aim of ensuring smooth transport between the regions on the east bank and those on the west bank of the river. It is also constructing bridges and roads with added momentum for equitable progress of the regions on the west bank of the Ayeyawady River.

Now, the project for the progress of Yinnabhin, Pale and Salinigi in Sagaing Division and Pakokku, Yesagyo, Myaing, Pauk and Seikpyu in Magway Division has taken shape.

Thanks to the measures taken under the guidance of the Head of State, the regions on the west bank of the Ayeyawady River have witnessed remarkable development. The purpose of the rural development project is to narrow the development gap between urban and rural areas as much as possible.

The harmonious cooperation of the government, the Tatmadaw and the people has yielded the fruit of the high standard of living of local people in almost all the villages with the development in the economic, education and social sectors.

The Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs has inaugurated clean water supply facilities in Yinnabhin, Pale and Salinigi in Sagaing Division. Now, households in rural areas have access to clean water through a water meter system or through the public concrete water tank. The government spent K 10.8 million in Yinnabhin, K 13.6 million in Pale and K 20.5 million in Salinigi under the extended water supply project. Moreover, it has constructed tarred roads and upgraded the existing roads in these towns.

Since 1992, the government has established 34 vocational training centres for women under the regional development drive with the objectives to enable young women to run their own businesses after completing respective courses; for the trainees to become ones with good morality who preserve national prestige and integrity; to uplift dynamism of patriotic spirit; and to further flourish traditional culture and vocational sciences. Vocational training centres for women have been set up in Yinnabhin, Pale and Salinigi that prescribe subjects on tailoring (basic) and (advanced), knitting, weaving wool, making snacks and cooking meals. The centres open 14-week courses for local young women. During the training term, the centres stand for all the expenses for the trainees and help them run private businesses through the vocations they pursued after the courses.

Now, local people in Yinnabhin, Pale and Salinigi in Sagaing Division have enjoyed the fruits of the goodwill of the government.

In compliance with the guidance of the Head of State on the progress of the regions on the west bank of the Ayeyawady River in Magway Division, the projects for supply of clean water to rural areas and to urban areas, upgrading of the roads to tarred ones in urban areas, and establishment of vocational training centres for women in Pakokku, Yesagyo, Pauk and Seikpyu townships have been implemented.

The 10-year project for supply of clean water to rural areas will have to cover 335 villages. Of 1,209 villages in Pakokku, Yesagyo, Myaing, Pauk and Seikpyu in Pakokku District, up to 2004-2005 fiscal year, 216 villages have enjoyed sufficient clean water. The government has spent K 228.60 million on the clean water supply project for the remaining 119 villages. So, the entire Pakokku District has now got sufficient clean water.

Regarding the urban water supply programme, the government has spent K 75.9 million in Pakokku, K 58.1 million in Yesagyo, K 51.575 million in Myaing, K 23.2 million in Pauk, and K 20.83 million in Seikpyu.

The government has been taking necessary measures for sustainable progress of all states and divisions including border areas and urban and rural areas. Now, rural areas are enjoying fruitful results of development in parallel with urban areas.

The development projects for the regions on the west bank of the Ayeyawady River have taken shape owing to the goodwill of the government and concerted participation of local people. All are therefore duty-bound to maintain the facilities collaboratively for their durability.
YANGON, 23 Feb — Wellwishers on 17 February donated cash to Ayeyawady Division Maternal and Child Welfare Association to provide treatment to cleft lip and palate patients in the division.

At the cash donation ceremony held at the meeting hall of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council, wellwisher presented K 3 million to Chairman of Ayeyawady Division MCWA Supervisory Committee Daw Than Than Nwe. Myanmar Trading Co Ltd also contributed K 1.5 million to the fund of the committee and donated food.

Chairman of Ayeyawady Division PDC Commander South-West Command Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung also attended the cash donation ceremony.

Wellwishers fund to cleft lips and palate treatment

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Work coordination meeting of Yangon Division and District WAOs

YANGON, 23 Feb — Patron of Yangon Division Women’s Affairs Organization and Yangon North District Women’s Affairs Organization held work coordination meeting at District Peace and Development Council Office this afternoon.

First, the patron of District WAO and CEC members and group leaders explained the activities of WAOs.

Next, charipersons of Township WAOs reported the respective works carried out and those present took part in the discussions.

Patron of Yangon Division WAO Daw Mar Mar Wai gave conclusion remarks and presented K 250,000 as a capital for the tasks of promoting the family incomes of women through Patron of District WAO Daw Saw Shwe and Chairperson Daw San San Huay and the meeting ended.

Daw Mar Mar Wai presents cash assistance to Patron of Yangon North District WAO Daw Saw Shwe.

Shwehtidaw hoisted atop eight encircling zedis of Yantaingaung Pagoda in Lashio

YANGON, 23 Feb — A ceremony to hoist Shwehtidaw atop encircling zedis of Yantaingaung MyoU Pagoda was held at the pagoda in Lashio on 21 February.

First, Chairman of Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and party offered “dawn soon” to members of the Sangha.

Kanmein Monastery Sayadaw State Ovadaçariya Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Muninda of Lashio administered the Nine Precepts. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing and wife Daw Khin Thant Sin offered Seinbudaw (diamond bud) and Hngetmyatnadaw for the pagoda and alms to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Muninda.

Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Hla Myint and party of ministers and officials hoisted diamond buds, Hngetmyatnadaw and tiers of the Htidaws atop the encircled zedis of the pagoda. They sprinkled scented water on them. They poured water to a Bo tree near the platform of the pagoda. Afterwards, the commander and wife and the minister planted coconut palms near the entrance road to the pagoda.

At the briefing hall near the construction site of Thukha Mingala Hsinshweli Sasana Beikman, Director U Maung Kyay of Asia World Co Ltd reported on construction matters of the Beikmandaw that will be 140 feet long, 60 feet wide and 36 feet high. The commander, the minister and officials laid cornerstone of the Beikmandaw.

The ceremony ended with three-time recitation of Buddha Sasanam Ciram Titthatu.

Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing fixes shwehtidaw atop one of the encircled zedis of the Yantaingaung MyoU Pagoda.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing and wife offer Seinbudaw (diamond bud) and Hngetmyatnadaw for the pagoda and alms to a sayadaw. — MNA

Patron of Yangon Division WAO Daw Mar Mar Wai presents cash assistance to Patron of Yangon North District WAO Daw Saw Shwe. — MNA

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing, Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and congregation receive the Nine-Precepts from Sayadaws. — MNA
Functions of MRTV must serve interest of the nation

60th founding anniversary of MRTV observed

Yangon, 23 Feb — Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan attended the ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of Myanmar Radio and Television of the Ministry of Information at Studio-A on Pyay Road, here, yesterday morning.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan said that today’s 60th anniversary of MRTV was held with the aims of reviewing strong and weak points in order to achieve optimum success in the staff, the ministry places emphasis on development of human resources. Hence, all the staff are to try their best to have more efficiency. MRTV is a department that is carrying out its heavy functions in time. He praised that the department could perform media functions with success due to concerted efforts of all the staff. The department will have to strive to obtain improvement in both form and essence to capture the hearts of audience all over the nation.

TV stations of other countries. Hence, efforts are to be made for making more and more achievements.

Upholding the work policy, innovative measure is to be taken in carrying out the tasks, and functions of the department must serve the interest of the nation.

In conclusion, the minister pointed out the aims of the department for 2006. They were to strive for realization of the seven-step Road Map through media, to air quality radio and TV programmes to all over the country, to earn more income for the department, to extend TV stations of other countries.

Upholding the work policy, innovative measure is to be taken in carrying out the tasks, and functions of the department must serve the interest of the nation.

Also present on the occasion were officials of departments and enterprises under the ministry, advisers, those who contributed to the tasks of the department, chairmen of Myanmar Music Asiayon and Myanmar Motion Picture Organization, and staff.

Deputy Minister for Information U Thein Sein presents prize to an outstanding staff. — MNA

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu and wife being welcomed by Charge d’Affaires ai of Brunei Darussalam Mr Haji Aizul Abdul Aziz at the reception to mark 22nd Anniversary National Day of Brunei Darussalam Thursday. — MNA
Trainees of Thai National Defence College conclude visit

YANGON, 23 Feb — The trainees of excursion tour led by Major General Sirichai Ratanavaraha of the National Defence College of Thailand visited the National Races Village in Thakayta Township yesterday morning and viewed round the village.

In the afternoon, they proceeded to Lawka Chantha Abhay Laba Muni Buddha Image on Mindhamma Hill in Insein Township and Yadana White Elephant Park and donated cash for the food of white elephants through Director of Forest Department U Myint Swe. This morning, the trainees led by Major General Sirichai Ratanavaraha of the National Defence College of Thailand left here for home by air and they were seen off at the airport by the National Defence College Deputy Commandant Brig-Gen Than Maung and senior officers, Thai Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Suphot Dhirakasol, Military Attaché Col Prissapa Suvanatat and officials of the embassy. — MNA

Workshop for mid-career level diplomats held

YANGON, 23 Feb — Myanmar Institute of Strategic and International Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the management workshop in connection with international seminar/meeting for mid-career level diplomats at Grand Plaza Park royal Hotel, here, this morning.

It was attended by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu, Japanese Ambassador Mr Nobutake Odano, officials, scholars of International Relations of Yangon University, experts from ASEAN Secretariat, officials of Sasakawa Peace Foundation and guests.

First, the deputy minister gave a speech. Secretary of Myanmar ISIS Ambassador U Nyunt Tin extended greetings and the Joint Project Office of Sasakawa Peace Foundation spoke words of thanks.

Experts from ASEAN Secretariat submitted management subjects concerning international seminar/meeting for mid-career level diplomats.

The workshop continues tomorrow at the same venue. — MNA

Myanmar extracts bio-diesel from physic nut

Researchers have discovered that increase in temperature of the earth’s atmosphere is due to the increase of particular gases. Content rate of the gases that cause greenhouse effect in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide and methane has been much higher than that in the past. The hole of the ozone layer of the earth is getting larger, so the temperature of the earth is increasing.

Seek ways to solve problems

Moreover, the world has seen environmental degradation owing to environmental pollution and deterioration of natural resources. World nations are therefore seeking various ways and means to remedy these problems. In the process, emphasis is placed on establishment of forests and planting trees that can conserve environment, and on extensive use of diesel-substitute fuel that can reduce air pollution.

Diesel-substitute bio-diesel

Now, some nations are using solar power, wind power and bio-diesel extensively in place of nuclear power and oil that call for high technology and heavy expenses and cause air pollution. In so doing, they are extensively producing coal-substitute fuel that can fulfill great requirement of fuel and extracting bio-diesel from such crops as sugarcane, potato, wheat, corn, soya bean and physic nut.

Multi-purpose crop

The crops, from which bio-diesel can be obtained, do not call for much expense to extract bio-diesel. Various types of bio-diesel emit less carbon dioxide. Among them, physic nut is the best to extract bio-diesel and to grow. It costs less, and its fruit yield rate is high and its oil emits less carbon dioxide than other types of bio-diesel. Myanmar has achieved success. The benefits of physic nut are widely known to the people, and its oil can be used in various sectors. Therefore, physic nut is being grown extensively across the nation as a national task. Extensively growing physic nut and extraction of bio-diesel from the crop enhance the interests of the entire national people, cut fuel requirement, and contribute towards environmental conservation.

Home Affairs Minister meets departmental personnel at Lewe Township

YANGON, 23 Feb — Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Maung Oo together with Director-General of Administration Department U Myat Ko, the deputy director-general and directors, met with Ward and Village Tract Peace and Development Council Chairman and members, office staff and departmental officials at Lewe Township Development Affairs Committee Office yesterday morning.

The minister made a speech saying that staff needed to strive for the economic development from all sides, the implementation of five rural development tasks, the manageable scale agricultural and breeding tasks, growing physic nut plants and being good staff who can serve the interest of people.

Workshop on Industrial Training and Technical Internship Program held

YANGON, 23 Feb — Organized by Labour Department of the Ministry of Labour and Japan International Training Cooperation Organization (JITCO), a workshop on Industrial Training and Technical Internship Program in Japan took place at International Business Centre on Pyay Road this afternoon. It was attended by officials of Labour Department, JITCO and others.

Senior Manager Mr Ryosei Suzuki of JITCO made an opening speech.

Acting Director-General U Win Swe of Labour Department and Second Secretary Mr Tomofumi Yokoyama of Japamn Embassy also spoke on the occasion.

JOHO Cooperative, Kantsu Kokuai Koryu Cooperative Association and Tokyo Enterprise Information Management Cooperative Society to the workshop were introduced.

Later, Mr Ryosei Suzuki discussed Industrial Training and Internship Programme and Roles of Sending Organizations.

Director U Khin Maung Lay made supplementary explanations and officials replied to queries raised by those present.

MNA

Physic nut saplings seen in the compound of Kawthoung Township Police Force on 11 Feb 2006.

MNA
Fake drugs, including Tamiflu, thrive on Internet

**Geneva, 23 Feb** — Criminals are using the Internet to sell increasing quantities of counterfeit medicines, including fake versions of bird flu drug Tamiflu, a senior UN health expert said on Tuesday.

Vitamins and health supplements, so-called “lifestyle medications” like erectile dysfunction drugs, and steroids bought over the Internet were especially likely to be false.

Antibiotics, anti-malarials and painkillers were also susceptible to fraud because of the huge demand, while Tamiflu, made by Swiss firm Roche, had also entered the market amid rising avian flu fears.

“Yes, there have been cases reported in counterfeit Tamiflu,” said Howard Zucker, the World Health Organization’s assistant director-general for health technology and pharmaceuticals.

But he declined to give details on the quantity or where the fake drugs had been found.

The WHO has estimated as many as 10 per cent of drugs on the world market been found.

Speaking to reporters after a high-level meeting in Rome, where pharmaceutical industry and health experts agreed to set up a task force to fight the counterfeit drug trade, Zucker said better oversight of online drug sales was essential.

At the meeting, the UN health body said it would help set up an international expert group to raise awareness about fake drugs and to improve cooperation between governments, industry groups and international agencies on the issue.

“Counterfeiting medicines should be distinguished from other types of counterfeiting which do not affect human health and should be combated and punished accordingly,” the conference participants said in a statement at the end of their meeting.

Harvey Bale, director-general of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Associations, said fake medicines remain more prevalent in developing countries than in places like Western Europe.

**Sudan rejects UN troops for Darfur**

**KHARTOUM, 23 Feb** — Sudan rejects US-backed efforts to have UN peacekeeping troops take over from African Union troops in the country’s troubled Darfur.

The United States has urged the African Union (AU) to accept a handover to UN peacekeepers.

“The government has rejected this... We did not hear anybody saying they (the AU) are not doing enough to stop the violence. What we are hearing is that they’re short of funds,” Akol told Reuters.

Sudanese officials had previously shown a softer position towards the deployment of UN troops in Darfur, which the AU says it supports “in principle”.

The United Nations has already begun contingency planning for any takeover.

Sudan has in the past taken a hard public stance, rejecting the deployment of any troops to Darfur. But they eventually reluctantly accepted the AU force.

The AU has said the government has at times cooperated with it, delaying for months the deployment of heavy equipment and placing troops under a night-time curfew in North Darfur. The government denies any obstruction.

**Digging grinds on for survivors of Philippine mudslide**

**GUINSAGON (Philippines), 23 Feb** — Rescue workers kept digging on Wednesday for survivors from a deadly Philippine mudslide, but some officials said the time to call off the search was fast approaching as hopes faded of finding anyone alive.

“It is torturous for the survivors. We need to concentrate on preparing them for the future,” a senior politician, who declined to be named, told Reuters.

Around 1,000 people remain missing after Friday’s landslide obliterated the remote farming community of Guinsagon, about 675 kilometres (420 miles) southeast of Manila.

So far, 107 bodies have been pulled out. No one has been brought out alive from the fetid mud, which is up to 40 metres deep in some places, since hours after the catastrophe struck.

Around 400 people who escaped the deluge of earth and debris, along with around 1,600 people evacuated from neighbouring villages, are sheltering in packed parish churches and schools while make-shift camps dig up and then bury the dead.

The Philippines is usually hit by about 20 typhoons each year, but environmental groups such as Greenpeace blame the government for turning a blind eye to illegal logging and mining, which makes the ground unstable.

**Malaysia says 7 from bird flu area in hospital**

**PUTRAJAYA (Malaysia), 23 Feb** — A Malaysian minister said on Wednesday seven people staying near the site of a bird flu outbreak were in hospital with respiratory problems, but test results would only be available after a day.

Health Minister Cha Soi Lek told a news conference in Malaysia’s administrative capital two adults and five children aged between 2 and 12 staying within 300 metres of the affected area on the edge of the Malaysian capital had been taken to hospital.

“Those warded are the ones exposed to the chickens,” he said, using a common term for hospitalization.

Malaysia on Monday reported its first case of H5N1 bird flu in more than a year, with the death of 40 chickens last week, in what authorities called an isolated event.

**British bar owner murdered in Cambodia**

**PHNOM PENH, 23 Feb** — A British bar owner was stabbed to death by an 18-year-old youth during an apparent botched robbery in the Cambodian capital, police and neighbours said on Wednesday.

The youth, a street kid called Tong Chen, was arrested in a park as he cleaned his knife after stabbing David Mitchell, from Walsall in central England, five times in the chest, police investigator Neang Sophoep said.

New Zealand journalist Jane Nye, who worked as managing editor of Cambodian Scene magazine and who had been staying in the same house, sustained injuries to her neck, hands and head and was evacuated to Thailand for medical treatment.

“The boy could have climbed up the wall to steal their property but woke them up,” Neang Sophoep said after a preliminary investigation of the scene, which still had pools of blood on the floor.

Chhum Sara, who lived next door to Mitchell’s Ginger Monkey bar — a favourite hang-out for Phnom Penh expatriates and tourists — said she heard Nye screaming “Help me! Help me!”, adding that she feared her friend might die of blood loss.

**Smoking wanes in Western countries**

**STOCKHOLM, 23 Feb** — A new Swedish study showed that the number of smokers is shrinking in Western countries, Radio Sweden reported on Wednesday.

The ten-year project by researchers from Uppsala University Hospital surveyed 9000 people in 29 cities in Europe, Australia and the United States. It found that the number of smokers dropped during the period from 34 to 28 per cent.

More dramatic is the decrease in passive smokers.

During the past ten years non-smokers exposed to second hand smoke on a daily basis dropped from 41 to 24 per cent, according to the report.

**A Bosnian pharmacist displays Swiss drug maker Roche’s Tamiflu bird flu anti-viral tablets at a pharmacy in the capital Sarajevo in this 18 Feb, 2006 file photo. Criminals are using the Internet to sell increasing quantities of counterfeit medicines, including fake versions of bird flu drug Tamiflu, a senior UN health expert said on 21 Feb. —INTERNET**

A floral arrangement in the form of a conga drum is delivered to the wake for Ray Barretto in New York on 22 Feb, 2006. Barretto, a Grammy-award musician whose music straddled the worlds of jazz and Latin music for six decades, died last Friday at the age of 76. —INTERNET

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**MNA/Reuters**
INVITATION TO TENDER

SOUTH KOREA AIR FORCE SHOOTS DOWN LOTTE SKY-SCRAPER PLAN

A giraffe is seen at the "Living Desert" zoo in Palm Desert, California on 19 Feb. 2006. The zoo was established in 1970 as a 360 acre wilderness preserve of the deserts of the world and is the only zoological and botanical park specializing in one ecosystem. —INTERNET

China to enhance rail freight transport capacity by 16.7%

BEIJING, Feb. 21 — China is trying to enhance its railway freight transport capacity by 16.7 per cent through upgrading freight trains with 70-ton ones, the Shanghai Securities News reported on Sunday.

From this year, all the newly-built freight trains in China will be 70-ton trains, which will gradually replace the outdated 60-ton trains widely used in China, the Ministry of Railways told the newspaper.

The new-type 70-ton freight trains, designed with China's own intellectual property right, can carry more weight and run at a speed of 120 kilometres per hour. While the 60-ton freight trains speed at about 80 kilometres per hour.

In 2005, about 2,000 70-ton freight trains were expected to further alleviate China's transportation crunch, the Ministry of Railways said.

Ethiopia’s coffee birthplace to host 1st ever beauty contest

ADDIS ABABA, 21 Feb— Ethiopia’s southwestern city of Jimma, commonly known as the birthplace of coffee, is for the first time in its history braced to host a beauty contest, it was learned on Sunday.

Cleopatra Promotion, a private local company, will organize the beauty pageant on March 24, at Jimma’s prestigious Goejeh Minch Hotel.

According to a Press release sent to international media here, the pageant will include beauty contests for Miss Jimma and Mr. Jimma titles.

As criteria for joining the contesting group, girls should be above 1.68 meters, be residents of Jimma but above 1.75 metre, the organizing company said, adding that it expects more contestants to get registered.

In addition, the event will be transmitted to the public with video projectors in different locations outside Goejeh Minch Hotel. The event will also be transmitted live to 10,000 people.

Talking about the judges, Adege Negussie, private local company, will organize the beauty pageant on March 24, at Jimma’s prestigious Goejeh Minch Hotel.

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Talking about the judges, Adege Negussie,
China warns of fresh bird flu outbreaks this spring

BEIJING, 21 Feb— China has warned of fresh outbreaks of bird flu this spring and has banned imports of pet and wild birds from 10 countries recently hit by the disease, state media said on Tuesday.

China has reported more than 30 outbreaks of the H5N1 strain of bird flu in both poultry and wild birds in a dozen provinces in the past year, along with 11 human cases in recent months, eight of whom have died.

“There is still the possibility of bird flu epidemics across a large area (of the country) this spring,” Agriculture Minister Du Qinglin was quoted by the China Youth Daily as telling a conference.

Du cited increased movement of migratory birds after the winter and more shipping of poultry as the new raising season begins, the newspaper said. “The protection given inoculated birds last autumn is waning and vaccination work for family-raised poultry in remote rural areas is difficult,” Du said. “The situation is still very grave.”

A team of scientists in Asia published a paper in 2004 saying that H5N1 virus had been circulating in China since 2001, with winter the peak season.

Bird flu is endemic among China’s estimated 14 billion poultry, many of which are raised in family backyards close to humans. — MNA/Reuters

New drug formulation may help drug addicts quit

NEW YORK, 21 Feb— An injectable, sustained-release formulation of naltrexone is a safe and effective treatment for patients who are addicted to opioid drugs, such as heroin, new research suggests.

Naltrexone in oral form is very effective in preventing and reversing the effects of opioid drugs. However, it has not been particularly useful because patients often stop taking it, according to the report in the Archives of General Psychiatry.

The development of a longer lasting naltrexone formulation has renewed interest in this drug.

Dr Sandra D Comer, from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in New York, and colleagues assessed the outcome of 60 heroin-dependent adults who were randomly assigned to receive injections of sustained-release naltrexone, at a 192-milligrammes or 384-milligrammes dose, or placebo. This formulation can block the effects of injected drugs for three to five weeks, depending on the dose— MNA/Reuters

Giant panda to return to wild in S-W China this year

CHENGDU, 21 Feb— The first giant panda that has received survival training will be released into the wild this year, sources with the Wolong Giant Panda Research Centre said.

Xiang Xiang, the giant panda bred in captivity, was first released by the centre in July 2003 as part of the training programme. It proved successful as the panda recovered some of its weakened natural instincts.

Xiang Xiang will return to nature in the N-W China province moves to tackle water shortage, pollution

BEIJING, 22 Feb— Northwest China’s Qinghai Province plans to provide cleaner water in the coming years for more than 1.7 million farmers and herdsmen by launching a series of projects. About 1 million farmers and herdsmen who are suffering from water shortages or polluted drinking water will see improvement by the end of 2010, said Xing Lianwen, an official with the provincial water resources bureau.

The official said the remaining 730,000 people will be provided with adequate clean water during the period of 2011-2020. China Daily reported on Tuesday. — MNA/Xinhua

Explosion kills labourer, wounds 22 in central Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 21 Feb— An explosive charge went off in a busy area in central Baghdad early on Monday, killing a labourer and wounding 22 others, a police source told Xinhua.

“An explosive charge detonated at about 7:45 am (0445 GMT) among a crowd of labourers who were waiting for daily work in the al-Tahrir Square in the Bab al-Sharji area,” said Captain Ahmed Abdullah, from Baghdad police.

The blast also damaged several nearby shops. Abdullah said Iraq police rushed to the scene and searched the area immediately for more possible bombs while ambulances evacuated the casualties to nearby hospitals. — MNA/Xinhua

Thousands of birds come to China's new bird sanctuaries

Beijing, 21 Feb—China has set up new sanctuaries for birds to protect them from the winter cold.

Thousands of birds have been seen flying over the new sanctuaries, which were set up in 15 provinces and cities.

Experts said the sanctuaries were an important step in protecting birds from winter temperatures.

Birds can be seen flying over the new sanctuaries, which were set up in 15 provinces and cities. — MNA/Xinhua

Thai officials to visit Australia for export promotion

BANGKOK, 21 Feb— A high level Thai trade delegation will visit Australia next month in a bid to boost export opportunities amid concern that the maximum benefit was not being extracted from the two countries’ free trade pact.

Thai trade negotiator and ministerial advisor Panpree Pahitanukorn was quoted by the Thai News Agency as saying on Sunday that the delegation would leave in mid-March, and comprise a variety of government officials and representatives of the Federation of Thai Industries and Chamber of Commerce.

Bangladesh launches development project

DHAKA, 21 Feb— The government of Bangladesh has launched a development project aimed at improving the agricultural sector.

The project, which was launched by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, aims to increase the agricultural production and improve the living standards of farmers.

The project will focus on the development of new technologies and the promotion of organic farming. — MNA/Xinhua

Japanese F1 driver Takuma Sato drives a new Supra A65 car during training session at Catalunya’s racetrack near Barcelona, on 21 Feb, 2006. Some teams are testing their cars until next Friday. — INTERNET

Explosion kills labourer, wounds 22 in central Baghdad
Beckham dismayed by lacklustre Real Madrid

Madrid, 22 Feb—Real Madrid midfielder David Beckham was dismayed by his team’s lacklustre performance in their 1-0 Champions League defeat by Arsenal on Tuesday.

It was the first time the England captain has faced Premier League opposition since moving to Spain in 2003. "I said before that if we didn’t perform we wouldn’t win the game and we didn’t perform," he told reporters.

"Arsenal played well but we didn’t play like we have done for the last two months. I don’t know what happened. They got the space to enjoy themselves and they did well."

Tonight was a really bad performance from the whole team. The players were not working for each other and were not getting in the box."

Arsenal threw off their poor domestic form as they made an electric start at the Bernabeu, slicing through the Real defence on several occasions in the opening minutes.

"From the first five minutes you could see we weren’t playing with the confidence we’ve been showing," said Beckham. "I knew Arsenal wouldn’t come here and defend."

"I can’t put my finger on it. We’ve got to stay upbeat but it’s hard. To perform like that is disappointing. It’s difficult now, but we have the players to go there and win."

The second leg of the first knockout round tie is at Highbury on 8 March. — MNA/Xinhua

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Woodgate faces month out with suspected thigh muscle tear

Madrid, 22 Feb—Real Madrid defender Jonathan Woodgate faces a month on the sidelines after suffering a suspected muscle tear in his left thigh during his side’s 1-0 defeat at home to Arsenal on Tuesday.

The English centre-back sustained the injury in the opening exchanges of the game at the Bernabeu as he tried to chase down the Arsenal forwards and was forced to leave the pitch after just nine minutes.

Woodgate has been plagued by muscular injuries ever since recovering from a serious thigh problem that kept him on the sidelines for 18 months and the latest setback will jeopardise his chances of winning an international return ahead of this year’s World Cup.

"It’s devastating for him, but I don’t think it’s a major strain, I think it’s his hamstring again," said team mate and England captain David Beckham.

"It must be terrible for him personally."

Woodgate started the match as one of the two English players in the Real team along with England skipper David Beckham. None of the 14 players who appeared for Arsenal on the night — the 11 starters and the three substitutes who came on, were English. — MNA/Reuters

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Henry magic gives Arsenal 1-0 win over Real

Madrid, 22 Feb—Arsenal made a sensational return to form when a virtuoso solo goal from Thierry Henry earned them a 1-0 win over Real Madrid in the first leg of their Champions League knockout tie at the Bernabeu on Tuesday.

The French striker struck off three challenges as he weaved his way into the area from close to the halfway line and steered a shot past Iker Casillas two minutes after halftime to give Arsenal victory in the first ever European meeting between the two sides.

The goal was just reward for the way a largely depleted Arsenal side carried the game to Real in the first half, when they created three scoring chances in the opening 15 minutes, and then defended superbly against an uninspired Real strike force.

It was Real’s first home defeat in the competition since they lost 1-0 to AS Roma in the group stage in October 2002 and the first time in 19 home European games that they have not managed to find the back of the net.

For Arsenal the victory made them the first ever English side to win at the Bernabeu and was their fourth successive away win in the competition, and their fifth without conceding a goal at home or away. More importantly perhaps it left them on the verge of booking their place in the quarterfinals in the second leg at Highbury in two weeks time. — MNA/Reuters

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Liverpool’s Sissoko stays in Lisbon due to eye injury

Lisbon, 22 Feb—Liverpool’s Momo Sissoko has had to stay in Lisbon after hospital treatment for an eye injury suffered in Tuesday’s 1-0 Champions League loss to Benfica.

Sissoko took a kick in the face following a high challenge by midfielder Beto on the half-hour and went off on a stretcher. Beto was booked and Sissoko was replaced by Dietmar Hamann.

After hospital tests the Mali midfielder was told he would not be flying home to Merseyside with the rest of the squad on Tuesday night and would have to remain in Lisbon.

"It is a serious eye injury which means Momo will be staying in hospital overnight for observation and further tests," a Liverpool spokesman said on the club’s website.

"The club doctor and one of the physios is staying in Portugal with the player until he is able to return to England.” — MNA/Reuters

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Santiago Katayama of Japan hits his drive at the par-three second hole during the first round of the WGC Accenture Match Play Championship golf tournament in Carlsbad, California on 22 Feb, 2006. — Internet

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Liverpool’s Dietmar Hamann, right, from Germany clashes with Benfica’s Greek player Giorgios Karagounis at the Luz Stadium during their Champions League first knockout round, first leg soccer match, on 21 Feb, 2006 in Lisbon, Portugal.

Benfica won 1-0. — Internet

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The French striker brushed off three second hole during the first round of the WGC Accenture Match Play Championship golf tournament in Carlsbad, California on 22 Feb, 2006.

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Bolivian senator loses US visa

La Paz (Bolivia), 23 Feb — A Bolivian senator, a close ally of President Evo Morales known for her raucous chanting of “Long live coca, Death to the Yankees!”, said on Wednesday the United States had cancelled her entry visa.

Leonilda Zurita, who is seen as one of the leftist President’s closest confidantes, told local media US consular officials had told her she was considered a terrorist, something she dubbed “an offense against Bolivian women”. Zurita, from the region of Chapare — the focus of US-funded coca eradication programmes — was a prominent figure in the December election that returned Morales, who took power promising to develop his country’s coca crop. Zurita said she realised the visa had been cancelled when she tried to travel to Miami to take part in a meeting organised by a Florida university. No one from the US Embassy in La Paz could immediately be reached for comment. The congresswoman is one of the most prominent advocates of expanding coca production, which has alarmed Washington as it struggles to control flow of its derivative cocaine into the United States.

US small plane crash kills 2

Washington, 23 Feb — A small plane crashed amid a snow shower Wednesday near Washington, DC, leaving two men dead and a woman critically wounded.

US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) said the single-engine Cessna 172 took off from Midland, Virginia, and was heading for Atlantic City, New Jersey. The plane suddenly crashed when it was trying to make a stop at Freeway Airport in the suburbs of Washington DC to pick up a man. According to the FAA, the two men killed in the incident were both pilots of the plane.

The injured woman was sitting in the back at the time. She was found by airport workers who raced to the scene, and was hospitalized with serious upper body injuries. The identities of the dead and injured have not been released immediately. — MNA/Xinhua

Honda Motor Co President Takeshi Fukui (L) examines its new V8 engine for F1, ‘Honda RA806E’, at a news conference in Tokyo on 20 Feb, 2006. Honda announced a new team structure for this season at the conference. —INTERNET

WEATHER

Thursday, 23 February, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain have been isolated in Kachin State and Tanninbwi Division and weather has been generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) below normal in Chin State, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Tanninbwi Divisions, (5°C) above normal in Kayin and Rakhine States and upper Sagaing Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant night temperature was Haka (4°C). The noteworthy amounts of rainfall reported were Putao (0.87) inch, Machanbaw (0.63) inch and Myeik (0.23) inch.

Maximum temperature on 22-2-2006 was 100°F. Minimum temperature on 23-2-2006 was 63°F. Relative humidity at 09-30 hrs MST on 23-2-2006 was (66%). Total sunshine hours on 22-2-2006 was (9.4) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 23-2-2006 were nil at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2006 were nil at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) mph from Southwest at (15-30) hours MST on 22-2-2006.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 24-2-2006: Possibility of isolated rain in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Tanninbwi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in Mon and Kayin States and Yangon Division and generally fair in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Continuation of isolated light rain in Tanninbwi Division.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 24-2-2006: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 24-2-2006: Generally fair.

EARTHQUAKE REPORT

(issued at 06:30 hours MST, today)

A strong earthquake of intensity (7.5) Richter Scale with its epicentre outside of Myanmar about (5000) miles Southwest of Kaba-Aye seismological observatory (140 miles SW of Beira, Mozambique, Africa), was recorded at (05) hrs (00) min (35) sec MST on 23 February 2006.
Commander oversees development of Phakant Township

YANGON, 23 Feb — Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Commander of Northern Command Maj-Gen Ohn Myint paid homage to Saydaw Bhaddanta Paññasami of Thiri Yadanaesin Dhamma Yeiktha in Phakant on 11 February.

Next, the commander and wife donated K 500,000, Brig-Gm Myint Hein of Mongoang Station K 100,000, Tactical Operations Commander Col Hsan Nyunt Oo K 200,000, Secretary of Kachin State PDC Lt-Col Maung Myo K 200,000, Phakant Sta- tion, Mykytina Station, Mohnyin District General Administration Department, senior military officers, and the Phakant Township PDC Chairman K 100,000 each to the fund of the pagoda being built in the precinct of the monastery.

Next, the commander and party participated in the construction of the pagoda.

The commander visited the traditional food festival at the 59th Anniversary Union Day exhibition at the independence monument ground in Mawwan Ward. Local people reported on regional development and gems mining works. The commander explained better transport, local food suffi- ciency and five rural development tasks.

Maj-Gen Ohn Myint inspected Phakant De- vopment Market and cordially conversed with shopkeepers.

In the afternoon, the commander viewed free treatment of specialists at Phakant Township Hos- pital. Chairperson of Kachin State Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee Daw Nu Nu Swe donated medicines and pairs of glass for the eye patients to officials.

Head of Kachin State Health Department Dr Maung Maung Myint and specialists accepted K 2 million to the medical trust-fund of the hospital donated by U In Ban La of Kachin State Special Region-2; K 500,000 by U Yup Zaw Khuang-Daw Sha Dong Khong Taung and family of Jade Land Co; and K 500,000 by entrepreneur U Thein Lwin-Daw Dong Khong Taung and family of Jade Land Co; and K 500,000 by entrepreneur U Thein Lwin-Daw Ar Li and family.

Practice of Solidarity

* No matter who divides, we’re undivided
  * Ever in solidarity, this practice
  * Held to bosom, in our nation
  * We are applying it currently.

* No matter who divides, we’re undivided
  * Ever in solidarity, this practice
  * Held to bosom, our neighbours
  * Are applying it currently.

* No matter who divides, we’re undivided
  * Held to bosom, in the region.
  * One to another, in the ASEAN
  * We are applying it normally.

* This practice throughout Myanmar
  * Will let peace prevail forever.

* This practice
  * In Myanmar’s environment with friends around
  * Will ensure lasting peace.

* This practice
  * In the domain of ASEAN
  * Will forever find peace.

Po Wa (Trs)

Objectives of the 61st Anniversary Armed Forces Day

* To work in concert with the people for emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed, discipline-
flourishing democratic new nation

* To strive for successful realization of the seven-point policy pro- gramme of the State

* To crush every danger posed to the State hand in hand with peo- ple

* To build a strong, capable and modern Tatmadaw to safeguard Our Three Main National Causes

Plans under way to grow 120,000 acres of physic nut plants within three years in Pathein District

YANGON, 23 Feb — Chairman of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Com- mander of South-West Command Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung and departmental officials inspected roads and bridges in Shwethaungyan in Pathein District and met locals in Polaung village on 16 February.

On arrival at Watthay village, the commander met with local people, explained five rural develop- ment tasks and presented publications to the vil- lage library. He also inspected thriving physic nut plantations in the village.

The commander proceeded to the prawn breeding farm of Ayeyawady Fishery Development Ltd in Ohnchaung village and held reports on the farm. Chairman of Pathein District PDC Lt-Col Hla Thwin made a supplementary report. There are 26 prawn breeding ponds in the farm.

He went to Ngwe Hsaung and attended a nur- turing ceremony of physic nut saplings at the township office. Officials explained growing of the physic nut and its usefulness to the farmers. The commander took part in sowing physic nut saplings.

Local farmers at the ceremony observed running of power-tillers and generators with the use of physic nut oil.

Plans are being implemented to grow 120,000 acres of physic nut plants within three years in Pathein District.

The commander viewed round roads and bridges in Shwethaungyan, construction of Town- ship USDA Office and Township Hospital, and at- tended to the needs. While in Shwethaungyan, he also inspected BEHS (Branch) and fulfilled the re- quirements. Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung oversaw 9-mile long Shwethaungyan-Chaungtha road, construction of Grand Hill Villa hotel near Kyauk Maunghnaha village, measures for beautifying Chaungtha village and left instruc- tions.

MNA