Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law takes into consideration gender sensitivities and child friendly approaches

National Seminar on Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law held

YANGON, 28 Feb — A ceremony to open the National Seminar on the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law sponsored by the Ministry of Home Affairs and UNIAP was held at the Sedona Hotel on Kaba Aye Pagoda road here this morning with an address 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 Brig-Gen Hla Htay Win, ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, deputy ministers and members of the Central Committee for Prevention against Trafficking in Persons, presidents of Myanmar Women Affairs Federation and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and members, diplomats of foreign missions led by Dean of Diplomatic Corps Philippine Ambassador Mme Phoebe A Gomez, resident representatives of UN agencies led by UN Coordinator Mr Charles James Petric, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department, officials of social organizations at home and abroad and the respective sub-committees, resource persons and guests.

In his address, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein said: I will not hesitate to express my full satisfaction by the measures, our country has taken over the past several years in our consistent and persistent efforts to fight the crime of human trafficking both within our country and in the region. Today, indeed, is a day that Myanmar can be proud of, for the efforts we have put in, to create an enabling legal environment to fight the crime of human trafficking both within the country and with other States. (See page 8)

Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein addresses National Seminar on the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. — MNA

The issue of human trafficking, the abuse of individuals, deserve the best, the law can give. We have the law in our hands. Now we need to deliver it effectively.

Curriculum Vitae of His Excellency

Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono,
President of the Republic of Indonesia

Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono was born on 9 September 1949 at Pacitan, East Java, Indonesia. He graduated from Infantry Military Academy of Indonesia in 1973 and from 1982 to 1983 he attended the Infantry Officers Advanced Course in USA. He was at the School of Infantry Military Command from 1988 to 1989 and from 1990 to 1991 he attended the Command and General Staff College in USA. Also from 1990 to 1991, he studied a postgraduate course leading to a Master of Arts degree in Management at Webster University, USA.

Then from 2001 to 2004, he attended a postgraduate course leading to a Doctorate in Agricultural Economics at Bogor Institute of Agriculture, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia.

He was commissioned as Second Lieutenant (Infantry) in 1973. From then he had 27 years of service in the military, combined with service in governmental institutions, trainings, visitations, and assignments in 28 countries including USA, Russia, Germany, UK, Panama, Belgium, and Australia. He served in various posts as Commander of Infantry, Staff Officer, Territorial Commander, Trainer and Lecturer in Operational Zones, Bases, and Overseas Posts. In 2000, he was promoted to a General in the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI).

He had also served as Minister of Mining and Energy, Coordinating Minister for Political, Social and Security Affairs in the National Union Cabinet, and Coordinating Minister for Political and Security Affairs in the Gotong Royong Cabinet. In the country’s first direct presidential election in 2004, he was elected as President of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2004-2009 period.

Dr Susilo is married to Madame Kristiani Herrawati and they have two children.—MNA

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Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Actively take part in national sanitation work

It would not be wrong to say that health plays the most fundamental role in the development of a society. As good health contributes to higher intelligence, it is essential that we should keep ourselves fit. The government is implementing the national health projects in order that people can live long and healthily.

Nowadays, the government is building new hospitals and clinics and upgrading the old ones to length and breadth of the nation, fully staffing and equipping them and providing wider public health care by forming health committees at all levels.

Both prevention and cure are given first priority in carrying out public health care service. And it is necessary for the people to give full cooperation to Health Department for the uplift of health and fitness of the entire nation.

A ceremony to launch the 9th National Sanitation Week (2006) jointly organized by the Ministry of Health and UNICEF was opened at the International Business Centre in Yangon on 27 February and it was attended by Chairman of the National Health Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

On the occasion, the Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council said that related organizations such as Yangon City Development Committee, Mandalay City Development Committee and Development Affairs Department should urge the systematic disposal of garbage and sanitation of toilets at markets and the use of fly-proof toilets and supply of clean water at schools.

Myanmar has held National Sanitation Week every year since 1998 to accelerate the national sanitation work. As a result, outbreak of contagious diseases related with unclean water and environment has dropped to a considerable extent.

Health work is a public concern and therefore people themselves are required to take part in sanitation work to make sure that food and water for public consumption are hygienic.

We would like to call on the entire people to constantly participate in the national sanitation work while the Ministry of Health is providing wider health care in order that people can live long and healthily.

Information Minister receives guests

Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan this afternoon received Managing Director of Negator Pte Ltd of Singapore Mr Jimmy Chang and Deputy General Manager Mr Jason Leong at the Traders Hotel here today. Present at the call were departmental officials of the Ministry of Information.

Country Coordination Mechanism Meeting held

Yangon, 28 Feb — Country Coordination Mechanism Meeting on anti-AIDS, TB and malaria was held at the Traders Hotel here today, with an address by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint.

Resident Representative of UNDP Mr Charles Petrie explained the different stages of the project of the global anti-AIDS, TB and malaria body, the sponsor of the meeting. A total of US$ 11.8 million received in aid will be shared among the Health Ministry and local and foreign NGOs to launch the anti-AIDS, TB and malaria campaign.

Assistant Resident Representative U Tin Maung Cho explained the method of sharing the aid among the respective bodies, accomplishments and future programmes.

Officials of the Ministry of Health and NGOs took part in the discussions.

Road upgrading work inspected

Yangon, 28 Feb — Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Major Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspected measures being taken by Engineers Department (Road & Bridge) of YCDC for proper drainage and smooth transport in the city this morning.

The mayor inspected widening of ditches and tarmacking of the road at the corner of U Chit Maung Street and Kyaung Street in Bahan Township, widening of Myayagon Street between Bo Min Yaung Street and Theingyi Street in Bago today.

He was followed by Aung San Win (Srixon) with 218 strokes and Myint Thaung (Bridgestone), Nay Linn Tun and Soe Kyaw Naing with 219 strokes each.

Bo Bo and Naing Naing Linn led the men’s amateur level with 223 strokes each ahead of Aung Win (Forestry) and Hlaung Aung Hlay with 225 strokes each.

Road upgrading work

Under the aegis of Father U Thaung Nyunt, family members of No-50, 130th Street, Mingalar Taungnyunt Township recently donated K 100,000 to Hninzigon Home for the Aged in memory of their mother Daw Khin Na.— MNA

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appeased
Iranian First Vice-President terms visit to Syria as useful

TEHERAN, 27 Feb—Iranian First Vice-President Parviz Davoudi described his three-day official visit to Syria as “useful and valuable” on Saturday as he returned from Damascus, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Davoudi attended the Iran-Syria Joint High Committee session, during which the two sides discussed expansion of cooperation and signed eight documents. Davoudi also said that he met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Vice-President Farouq Shara and Prime Minister Muhammad Naji Otri, adding that the two sides “agreed to adopt common stances on economic and political issues taking into account the current sensitive situation in the region”.

Iran and Syria have maintained close ties since the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, during which Syria sided with Tehran against Iraq under the former Saddam Hussein’s regime. The two states are both under US economic sanctions for sponsoring terrorism.

Last month, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad paid an official visit to Syria and met with his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad. — MNA/IRNA

Two boys shot dead while playing football in Iraq’s Baquba

BAQUBA (Iraq), 27 Feb—Gunmen opened fire at a crowd of teenage boys in a football game on Sunday in Baquba, some 65 kilometres northeast of Baghdad, killing two and injuring six others, police said.

“Unknown armed men in a car opened fire at about 5:30 pm (1430 GMT) on a crowd of boys playing football in the al-Mafraq area in Baquba,” the Joint Coordination Centre of Diyala said in a statement obtained by Xinhua.

Death toll of building collapse rises to 18 in Bangladesh

DHAKA, 27 Feb — Rescuers have pulled 18 bodies from the debris of a collapsed building in Dhaka and the death toll is expected to rise as rescue operations resumed on Sunday morning.

Private television channel ATN Bangla said on Sunday that over 50 wounded workers have been rescued so far during the operations.

The building collapsed around 11 am (0500 GMT) Saturday when tiles and sanitary workers, masons and electricians were working inside. It housed the factory of Phoenix Fabrics a year ago and was being converted into a 500-bed hospital.

A rescue team chief told reporters that 20 per cent of the total rescue work of the five-storey building was completed late Saturday. It would take at least four or five days to complete the whole job, he said.

Scientists claim to find lost civilization

NARAGANSETT, 27 Feb—Scientists have found what they believe are traces of the lost Indonesian civilization of Tambora, which was wiped out in 1815 by the biggest volcanic eruption in recorded history.

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NARAGANSETT, 27 Feb—Scientists have found what they believe are traces of the lost Indonesian civilization of Tambora, which was wiped out in 1815 by the biggest volcanic eruption in recorded history. The eruption shot 400 million tons of sulfuric gases into the atmosphere, causing global cooling and creating what historians call “The Year Without a Summer.” Farms in Maine suffered crop-killing frosts in June, July and August. In France and Germany, grape and corn crops died, or the harvests were delayed.

The civilization on Sumbawa Island has intrigued researchers ever since Dutch and British explorers visited in the early 1800s and were surprised to hear a language that did not sound like any other spoken in Indonesia, Sigurdsson said. Some scholars believe the language more closely resembled those spoken in Indochina. But not long after Westerners first encountered Tambora, the society was destroyed.

Egypt announces discovery of Ramses II statues

CAIRO, 27 Feb — Statues weighing up to five tonnes and thought to be of one of ancient Egypt’s greatest pharaohs, Ramses II, have been found northeast of Cairo, Egypt’s Supreme Antiquities Council said in a statement on Sunday.

Ramses II ruled Egypt from 1304 to 1237 BC, and presided over an era of great military expansion, erecting statues and temples to himself all over Egypt. He is traditionally believed to be the pharaoh mentioned in the biblical story of Moses.

“Many parts of red granite statues were found, the most important of which had features close to Ramses II... The statue needs some restoration and weighs between four and five tonnes”, the statement quoted the Council’s Zahi Hawass as saying.

A royal head weighing two to three tons and a seated 5.1 metre (16.7 foot) statue were also found, with cartouches, or royal name signs, of Ramses II on the side of the sealed statue.

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Mountain lion turns up in Los Angeles suburb

A mountain lion is seen in an undated photo. A mountain lion was found wandering through a Los Angeles suburb on Monday. — Internet

Quake-zone landslide in Pakistan kills at least 15

ISLAMABAD, 27 Feb — At least 15 people were killed after their coach was swept off by a landslide triggered by heavy rain in Pakistan’s North West Frontier Province on Sunday, a senior police officer said.

The coach was going from the quake-devastated city of Balakot in North West Frontier province to Mansehra, a major town in the region, when hit by the landslide at Kharian locality, some 140 kilometres northeast of Islamabad, District Police Officer Yameen Khan said.

The coach fell down in a river and local police joined the police to pull out bodies from the river.

Collective food poisoning in Vietnam rises


The 26 cases affected nearly 2,200 people, mostly workers, but none of them died, newspaper Youth said. In southern Ho Chi Minh City alone, there were 16 cases with 1,217 affected people.

Bad weather affects air traffic at Cairo Airport

CAIRO, 27 Feb — A sandstorm shrouding Cairo since Saturday had affected air traffic at the Cairo International Airport, forcing some flights to divert and others to delay take-off, the official MENA news agency reported on Sunday.

At least six incoming flights operated by EgyptAir, the largest national carrier in Egypt, were diverted to other airports in the country, including three to the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, according to the report.

Another nine incoming international and domestic flights were delayed while four outgoing international flights had to wait longer than usual to take off, said MENA.

Many passengers have been stranded at the airport. Visibility was reduced to less than 200 metres on Sunday and weather forecasters expect no change for the next 48 hours.

Black cat credited with saving owner

MCKENZIE, 26 Feb — Bernice McDowall says she never thought black cats were unlucky. Now her own black cat, Joey, is her hero. McDowall, 87, said she was taking a nap when Joey woke her up early Friday afternoon and probably saved her life.

“He was having a fit, running around the bedroom,” she said. Then she saw smoke in the bed, got up and saw smoke coming from the basement.

She and Joey got out safely. Joey had found a home with the McDowalls after he was dumped off at a nearby mailbox awhile back. On Friday, he “really came in and sent the alarm,” Bernice said.

Later, the black cat was rolling and romping in the yard near smoldering mattresses that fire-fighters had dragged up from the basement while his owner stayed in the warmth of a vehicle.

Sterling Fire Chief Dwayne Frederick said firefighters contained the blaze to the basement, but there was smoke damage throughout the ranch-style home. He said the cause likely was electrical.

Iraqi policemen inspect a damaged vehicle in Basra, 550 kilometres (340 miles) southeast of Baghdad, Iraq, on 27 Feb, 2006. — Internet
Japanese researchers develop chemical-compound Tamiflu

Tokyo, 27 Feb—A Japanese research team has succeeded in producing Tamiflu, an antiviral drug considered the best defence against bird flu, from a chemical compound instead of the botanical ingredient used by the Swiss manufacturer Hoffmann-La Roche Ltd, Japanese media reported by the Swiss manufacturer on Saturday.

The team, led by Professor Masakatsu Shibasaki from University of Tokyo, used 1,4-cyclohexadiene to make the drug through the so-called asymmetrical catalysis, thus producing a better way to stabilize the Tamiflu supply because chemicals are less affected by climate conditions than botanical ingredients, researchers said. The university has applied for a patent on the method and the research team has expressed its willingness to cooperate with Roche for commercialization of their study fruit.

For fear of a pandemic sparked by bird flu, many countries have been trying recently to stockpile Tamiflu, currently made from shikimic acid, which is found in a fruit named star anise often used as a spice in Chinese cuisine.—MNA/Xinhua

Bomb kills four at Baghdad bus station

HILLA (Iraq), 27 Feb—A minibus exploded in a large bus station south of Baghdad on Sunday killing at least four people and wounding six, police said.

They said the minibus blew up in the crowded station in the centre of Hilla, part of a cluster of towns in a area south of the capital where guerrillas are active. MNA/Reuters

Russia to maintain contacts with Iran over nuclear crisis

MOSCOW, 27 Feb—Russia will maintain contacts with Iran over its nuclear issue until a planned meeting of the UN’s nuclear watchdog in early March, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Sunday.

“On Saturday, consultations were held in Teheran on all aspects of bilateral trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation,” Lavrov said, quoted by the ITAR-TASS news agency.

Sergei Kiriyenko, head of Russia’s atomic energy agency Rosatom, is in Iran for talks with Iranian officials. ITAR-TASS quoted him as saying in Teheran that he was satisfied the progress of the talks, including negotiations on Moscow’s proposal to create a joint venture to enrich Iran’s uranium on Russian territory.

“I would not say the talks have been simple and easy, but interest is unmistakably felt,” Kiriyenko said.

Iranian Vice-President Gholamreza Aghazadeh, who is also the country’s nuclear chief, said on Sunday Iran and Russia have agreed in principle on setting up a uranium enrichment joint venture and negotiations on the issue will continue.

The Russian plan, backed by Western countries, is seen as a crucial attempt to resolve the dispute over Iran’s nuclear programme before the March 6 meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which reports say could start a process leading to UN punishment against Iran. A delegation of the State Duma, Russia’s Lower House of Parliament, is due to leave for Teheran on Sunday for more talks on Iran’s nuclear dossier.—MNA/Xinhua

Yemeni, Palestinian presidents meet in Sanaa

SANA, 27 Feb—Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and his visiting Palestinian counterpart Mahmoud Abbas met here on Sunday in enhancing bilateral ties along with latest developments on the Palestinian arena.

During the meeting, Abbas, who arrived here on Saturday night for a two-day visit, briefed Saleh on current developments on the Palestinian arena in light of Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas)’s landslide victory in the 25 January parliamentary election.

The two sides also examined Yemeni-Palestinian ties, developments in the region and Arab issues.

Earlier on Sunday, Abbas met with Yemeni Foreign Minister Abu Bakr al-Qerbi, Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies Yahia al-Rai and leaders of the Parliament blocs. Abbas underlined the necessity of continued Arab support to the Palestinian cause and highlighted the importance to maintain the Middle East peace process with a view to establishing an independent state of Palestine with al-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capital.

He also expounded at the meetings the recent developments on the Palestinian arena with emphasis on the current state of affairs after Hamas’ winning of the 25 January parliamentary election.—MNA/Xinhua

Nanoelectronics centres to be set up at India’s IIT and IISC

MUMBAI, 27 Feb—India’s two vanguard scientific bodies, the Indian Institute of Technology here and the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore, will collaborate to set up a centre of excellence in nanoelectronics research.

The government-financed project at a cost of nearly a billion rupees will be spread over five years and the funds will be shared equally by the two institutes, Chief Investigator Prof Ramgopal Rao said.

“Though both the centres will have some areas in common, the team at IISc will focus more on the materials aspects of nanoelectronics devices, and the team at IIT Mumbai will focus more on the devices and circuits aspects of nanoelectronics,” Rao said. This project also represents first collaborative effort between two leading academic institutes in the country, to carry out a joint programme in an emerging area. Over 20 faculty members from six different departments/schools are involved in the execution of this project at IIT here, he said.—MNA/PTI
World’s biggest airline company to fly into China

BEIJING, 28 Feb—American Airlines, the world’s biggest airline company, will begin from early April this year to launch daily nonstop service to China, one of the world’s fastest growing aviation markets.

The first flight, A328, will depart Chicago O’Hare International Airport at 11:05 am on 2 April and arrive at Shanghai Pudong International Airport at 2:15 pm on April 3. The return flight of this route, A328, will depart Shanghai at 4:25 pm on April 3 and arrive in Chicago at 5:00 pm on the same date.

In 2004, the governments of the United States and the People’s Republic of China signed an expanded air services agreement that doubled the number of airlines that can fly between the two countries. American Airlines is one of two that have been authorized to fly to China since then and will become the fourth US passenger carrier to fly to China. Shanghai will be the 23rd international destination served by the American company from its Chicago hub. The new international service to the Asia Pacific Region will complement American’s seven routes between the United States and Asian cities. “We have been anticipating the opportunity to participate in the growing China market for five years,” said Aftab Khan, managing director for Asia, Pacific Region of American Airlines.

Chicago will become a primary gateway to Asia for American Airlines. More than 300,000 companies are based in the Chicago area, including 34 Fortune 500 companies.

A Chow Chow exercises on a treadmill while a passer-by looking at its meter on a side road in Nanjing, China’s Jiangsu Province on 27 Feb, 2006. —INTERNET

Two-thirds of Katrina donations disbursed

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb —Six months after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast, two-thirds of the 3 billion US dollars raised by charities to aid storm victims has already been disbursed, The Washington Post reported on Monday. According to a survey by the newspaper, more than 2 billion US dollars of the record sums raised by private nonprofit organizations went to help Katrina victims with immediate needs, such as cash, food, temporary shelter and medical care. That leaves less than 1 billion US dollars to help hundreds of thousands of storm victims cover long-term needs ranging from rebuilding homes, job training and mental health counseling, the newspaper said. — MNA/Reuters

Russia, Turkey stage military manoeuvres in Black Sea

MOSCOW, 28 Feb —Russian naval ships, including missile cruiser, started a joint military exercise with Turkish ships on Monday in the Black Sea, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

The missile cruiser Mosva, a landing ship and support ship of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet left the Turkish port of Istanbul for the manoeuvres after concluding their visit on Monday. Two frigates and two missile motor boats from Turkey will take part in the exercise.

Gansu Province to invest $620m in treating Yellow River pollution

LANZHOU, 28 Feb —Northwest China’s Gansu Province has planned to invest nearly $5 billion yuan ($620 million US dollars) by 2010 to treat water pollution of the Yellow River’s section in the province.

The province has mapped out a five-year plan for water pollution prevention and treatment, said a source with the provincial environment bureau. From 2006 to 2010, the province will carry out 199 projects with a total investment of 4.97 billion yuan, involving treatment of industrial and domestic sewage, and the enhancement of environmental monitoring, the plan said. Statistics from the bureau show that 237 million tons of waste water, including both industrial and domestic sewage, flows into the river in Gansu every year.

Explosion in Spain’s Basque region injures two

MADRID, 28 Feb —An explosion occurred on Saturday night in the doorway of a bank in Spain’s Basque County, injuring two passers-by, local media reported on Sunday.

According to the radio station Cadena Ser, police found a camping gas bottle near the bank and believed that it had been the source of the midnight blast.

Iraqi Special Police Commandos from the 2nd Battalion 2nd Brigade, also widely known as the “Wolf Brigade”, maintain security around a house while it is searched by other commandos from the unit, in the restive city of Ramadi, west of Baghdad. —INTERNET
Myanmar is an agro-based nation. Agriculture plays a pivotal role in economic development of the State. In the agricultural sector, conventional farming has changed into mechanized one, thereby contributing to development of national economy.

This being so, one of the four economic objectives—development of agriculture as the base and round development of other sectors of the economy as well—has been laid down and is being implemented.

Local people from Shan State (North) are engaged in agricultural tasks in accordance with the economic objectives of the State. In the process, they extend growing of paddy, maize, common millet, buckwheat, groundnut, sesame, sunflower, mustard, Tithonia, rubber, beans and pulses, chili, potato, sugarcane, tea, coffee, banana, coconut, toddy palm, and betel nut wherever opportunity.

In Shan State (North), 25,000 acres were put under Hsinshweli special high yield paddy in 2002-2003 monsoon paddy cultivation season, and altogether 3,386,107 baskets of paddy were produced. And 1,1618 acres under paddy, and a total of 14,392,968 baskets of paddy were produced.

In Shan State (North) cultivated 13,679 acres of Hsinyadana paddy in 2005-2006 monsoon paddy cultivation season, 120,659 acres were put under Hsinshweli paddy, exceeding the target of 109,728 acres.

With a view to enjoying self-sufficiency in rice, Shan State (North) cultivated 13,679 acres of Hsinyadana paddy in 2005-2006 monsoon paddy cultivation season, and altogether 3,386,107 baskets of paddy were produced.

In 2005-2006, total acreage of summer paddy reached 17,746 — 5,822 acres in Lashio District, 6,604 acres in Muse District, 4,728 acres in Kyaukme District, and eight acres in Laikhu District. Moreover, 7,390 acres of coffee, 123,779 acres of tea and 21 acres of pepper have been cultivated in 2005-2006.

Myanma Perennial Crops Enterprise has cultivated 12,997 acres of rubber for the year 2005-2006. In addition, opium substitute cold season crops such as wheat, buckwheat, soy bean, beans and pulses, sunflower and potato on 96,426 acres of land. A total of 53831 acres of land have been put under perennial crops like tea, coffee, mango, lemon, lime, grape fruit, orange, honey orange, pineapple, lychee, pear, damson and others.

In order to do highland farming, 2,992 acres were reclaimed in 2004-2005 and arrangements are being made for reclamation of 5000 acres of land in 2005-2006. Agricultural tasks are being carried out with great difficulty owing to geographical conditions of Shan State (North) with mountains and cliffs in abundance.

However, under the leadership of officials from Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council and departments concerned, local people are striving to develop their region as well as to boost their economy through agriculture.

* * * * *

(Translation: TS+ST)  
Myanmar Alin:  
28-2-2006

A hsinshweli honey orange plantation owned by North East Command in Naungmon village in Lashio Township.—Photo Maung Maung Than (Kawhmu)
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law takes into consideration...

(from page 1)

Before I go any further, let me congratulate the law review and drafting team on a job well done!

I am aware of the numerous meetings, the numerous review sessions and the often animated discussions you had throughout the long process of drafting the new law. The Ministry of Home Affairs, as the key Ministry to combat human trafficking has indeed done a good job of taking its responsibility seriously through initiating and providing supporting services to the law review and drafting process. I am also aware that the Attorney-General’s Office, as the key ministry responsible for drafting law, has also provided collaboration and invaluable technical advice and support to this process. Contribution from other ministries that have been involved in the whole drafting process, such as the Ministry of Labour, Justice, Immigration and Population and National Registration, Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Foreign Affairs, National Planning as well as the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation should also be acknowledged.

I am pleased to note that the law you have before you is the result of inter-sector involvement, which as we all know, is the only way to truly combat this unacceptable human rights abuse called trafficking.

The whole law drafting process, in fact, should also be commended for the active participation and involvement by all the technically relevant ministries as well as our international partners. You may be aware that the process of drafting the new anti-human trafficking law is unprecedented in the history of Myanmar. While still in the draft stage, the law was put up for debate, discussion and consultation that brought in internal and external experts.

The consultation workshop on the Draft Law took place more than a year ago, in September 2004 with active support from the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region, the UNIAP together with UNODC and the ARCPPT. It will not be incorrect to say that the law that you have in front of you is very much a result of internal and external consultation, striving to ensure internationally recognized norms and standards.

While we stand proud with the enactment of the new Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. We also took into account the recommendations of the first National Seminar on Trafficking conducted in 2003 and our regional and international commitments.

The COMMIT MoU signed by the Ministers from the six GMS countries, here in Yangon in October 2004 pledged to adopt and enforce appropriate Legislation against trafficking and the Vientiane of ASEAN Declaration Against Trafficking in Persons adopted by the Heads of States of the ASEAN countries in November 2004 pledged to establish a regional focal network to prevent and combat trafficking. The law also stands as a testament to our commitment to the UN Convention to the Transnational Organized Crime and its accompanying Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

The participatory process through which the law was drafted has been rewarding. The law, its very much centered in the best interest of the victims and promotes a victim-centric and rights-based approach in combating trafficking. I also see that the law takes into consideration gender sensitivities and child friendly approaches. It also provides for an effective protection of trafficked victims and safeguarding of their individual rights including providing medical support and medical examination only with the consent of the victim.

While the enactment of the law provides a much needed legal tool to combat trafficking, as the next two days discussions on the law will reveal, the implementation of this highly comprehensive law on trafficking if not going to be an easy undertaking. The challenge now is to successfully and effectively implement the law. The whole law enforcement sector and the criminal justice system including everyone from all walks of life will have to cooperate and work together to ensure its effective implementation. Lessons learnt from looking at countries, who have before us, enacted anti-trafficking laws reveal that we have many challenges ahead.

The drafting of the law in itself has not been easy. The law you have in front of us was not drafted overnight. We took a good few years to first debate on the need for a specific anti-trafficking law. We reviewed existing legal provisions; the Penal Code, the Criminal Law, the Civil Law, the Anti-Prostitution Act among others. Only after a thorough review, did we proceed to draft a new Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. We also took into account the recommendations of the first National Seminar on Trafficking conducted in 2003 and our regional and international commitments.

The drafting process was facilitated by the law review and drafting team including everyone from all walks of life, Ministries and external experts.

We have the law in our hands. Now we need to deliver it effectively. We have the law in our hands. Now we need to deliver it effectively.

This National Seminar is the first among many steps to ensure that this happens. We have gathered here today some of the best expertise in the country on the issue. Let there be no wavering about our commitment to ensure justice for the victims and proportional punishment of the perpetrators of the crime.
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law takes into consideration…

(from page 8) crime and the prevalence of the due process of the law. I have no doubt that the two days’ discussions will yield rich and fruitful discussions that will strengthen the implementation of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law that this Seminar sets out to do.

Next, Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Maung Oo made a speech. He said: The Seminar on the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law was conducted for the relevant authorities to have a better understanding of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, which was promulgated on 13 September, and to enhance the cooperation among the law enforcement agencies, social organizations, government departments, NGOs and NGOs.

Nowadays, the problem of trafficking in persons has become one of the top priorities on the international agenda. Hence, the issue has to be handled by every nation of the world at all levels. In fact, the clandestine nature of the crime makes it extremely difficult to give estimates about the number of victims and according to the estimation of researchers, 1 million to 2 millions people have been trafficked each year. It also estimates that 300,000 women and children are being trafficked within the Mekong Sub-Region. If we study the statistics on trafficking, we can comprehend that the situation is most alarming. Not only the victims but also their families have to face great hardships. Therefore, Myanmar, therefore, has designated combating of trafficking in persons as a national duty. The implementation of the relevant tasks has been carried out not only in the country but also in cooperation with the neighbouring countries, regional countries as well as with the international organizations.

In December 2003, the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation representing the women mass, who are more than half of the population of Myanmar, was established and tasks to ensure the development and security of the women’s lives were implemented. Under the federal, the Working Committee for Prevention of Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons was formed and tasks on prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons have been carried out with commitment. Moreover, also in December 2003, the MoU on Asia Regional Cooperation to Prevent People Trafficking- ARCPII Project was signed by Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos together with Australia and in accord with the project Task Force for combating trafficking in persons have been formed and tasks are being implemented effectively.

In March 2004, Myanmar acceded to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the protocols on combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants. Myanmar became a member to demonstrate its resolve on trafficking in persons and it reflects the fact that it is in cooperation with the international community.

As the Mekong Sub-Region is designated as an area where trafficking in persons is rampant, in October 2004, at the COMMIT MoU the first of its kind in the world concerning regional agreement to cooperate on the Mekong Basin Region Countries namely Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam signed together the MoU. The signatory countries pledged to the elimination of the problem and laid down future work programs which are being implemented.

As the follow-up activity the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law was promulgated in 2005, which is indeed complete and adequate.

If we study the said law, we will find the law contains provisions not only for taking of action against the offenders to be prosecuted and punished but also includes provisions that value and respect human rights. At this seminar, the experts on the subjects will submit papers and hold discussions which the participants will better understand the provisions of the law and thus will be able to lay down future work programs, and also find important details that can be incorporated into the Rules which will be promulgated in the near future. This seminar, therefore, will be an important milestone in the history of Myanmar on Combating Trafficking in Persons.

The seminar continues tomorrow. — MNA

National Seminar on Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law commences

YANGON, 28 Feb — National Seminar on the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law took place at the Sedona Hotel, this morning, which was co-organized by Ministry of Home Affairs and United Nations Inter Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

It was attended by Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Phone Swe, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Brig-Gen Kyaw Myint, Deputy Attorneys General Dr Tun Shin and U Myint Naing, departmental heads, officials of local and international organizations and UNIAP.

Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Phone Swe chaired the first session at which papers on the background history of anti-trafficking in persons law were presented. Next, Head of Transnational Crime Department Police Col Sit Aye, UNIAP Regional Programme Manager Dr Su Su Tha Tun and Col Khin Maung Si of the Ministry of Home Affairs read out their respective papers. Next, the resource persons answered the queries raised by those present.

Then followed the second session of the seminar at which papers on enacting of Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law were presented. Deputy Attorney General U Myint Naing presided over the seminar.

Director General of the Attorney-General’s Office U Mya Nyein, Directors Daw Kyin San and Daw Khin Myo Myint and Director U Htin Zaw of Supreme Court read their respective papers. Next, they replied to the questions raised by those present. The aim of the seminar is to disseminate the knowledge of anti-trafficking in persons law to the public and officials, to effectively enact the law and to bring together judicial organizations, government departments and non-governmental organizations to the seminar. The seminar continues tomorrow. — MNA
Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects Ayeyawady …

Sagang Division sets its target of growing 500,000 physic nut plants and so far 76,162 acres have been put under physic nut plants. Moreover, residents sow physic nut seeds on 60 acres. The division is expected to meet its target of growing 500,000 physic nut plants in 2006.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint said the government set the target of 7 million of physic nut plants across the country. The soil and weather conditions of Myanmar is favorable for growing of physic nut plants. As the physic nut oil can be used as fuel in engines, cultivation of physic nut plants can lead to prosperity of farmers.

During inspection of Kyauknaga Dam, they observed physic nut fields. Physic nut oil can be used as biodiesel and the cake of milled physic nut can be used as natural fertilizer.

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Minister meets USDA members

Yangon, 28 Feb — Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung met with USDA secretaries and executives of Bahan, Tarmway and Pabedan Townships at his ministry this afternoon.

Afterwards, they inspected summer paddy fields at between Myinmu and Myaung Townships.

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Chinese scientists make “artificial skin” from silk fibrorin

Hangzhou, 28 Feb — China, a nation with a long history of silk utilization, has recently developed a new use for the material.

Scientists from east China’s Zhejiang Province have used silk to create a new type of “artificial skin” which is expected to help treat skin defects and reduce scars.

Min Sijia, major developer of the new material and associate professor with the Animal Science Institute of the Zhejiang University based in the provincial capital of Hangzhou, has named the new technology pure silk fiborin biodressing.

Min said as a pure biological product, silk is soft and pliable, blessed with good permeability and natural affinity with human skin. She said some dermatologists even suggest that their patients should wear silk underwear, which is conducive to skin health.

Fascinated by silk’s quality and function, Min began to study the possible medical uses of the material in 1996, when she worked for her PhD in Japan.

After 10 years of research, Min succeeded in creating pure silk fibroin material with no chemical residues.

At her lab in Zhejiang University, Min showed the new material to a Xinhua journalist. She put a white, round piece of “artificial skin” on the back of her hand. Then the biodressing quickly connected with her skin in a seamless way.

“It can be made into any shape with a thickness of only half a millimetre. Its softness is similar to that of human skin, with good tenacity and absorption,” said Min.

The biodressing is easy to preserve. It can be stored in regular refrigerators and be used after thawing, she added.

Animal tests found that the “artificial skin” could enable an opening of wound with a diameter of three centimetres to heal up in less than 20 days.

It is reported that in China there are 3.2 million patients suffering from skin defects.

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Minister inspects bridge construction

Yangon, 28 Feb — Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun and Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Ye Myint went to Sittaung Bridge (Moppalin) on Yangon-Mawlamyine Road and gave instructions.

Sittaung Bridge is 1,365 feet in length. Its motorway is 28 ft wide, with 6-foot-wide walkways on each side of it. The bridge can withstand 60-tons loads.

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Government has so far spent more than …

(from page 16)

development. Now, the dreams of emergence of such magnificent roads, bridges and irrigation facilities the length and breadth of the nation have come true.

He cited the speech delivered by Head of State Senior General Than Shwe at the opening of Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine), saying that it was important to enhance the strength of national unity and to ensure community peace and tranquillity and prevalence of law and order in the nation. Any kinds of hindrances the nation was facing could be surmounted through these two factors. In order to cover the requirements of the growing population of the nation, the nation must be transformed from an agro-based system into mechanized one. In this regard, fuel becomes fundamental to achieving the goal.

He called for putting seven million acres all over the nation under physic nut in three years. In conclusion, he urged local administrative bodies at all levels, department personnel and local farmers to imbue themselves with Union Spirit and to make collaborative efforts for ensuring durability of the irrigation facilities in Mon State and greenining of the region.

Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo also gave a speech. On behalf of local people, U Ba Htauk of Thabyu Chaung Village in Yinnyein Village-tract, Paung Township, Thaton District, expressed thanks to the government for building the sluice gate.

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Pakistan to import 50,000 tons of sugar from India

Latur (Maharashtra), 27 Feb—The Pakistan Government has requested India to supply 50,000 tons of sugar to Pakistan every two months, Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar said here on Sunday.

"This request by the Pakistani government followed a meeting I had with President General Pervez Musharraf recently," Pawar said while addressing a farmers’ convention here on the occasion of the All-India Agri, Cattle and Dairy Expo, which began here on Sunday.

MNA/PTI
African ADB President lauds Ethiopia’s eco growth

Addis Ababa, 27 Feb — African Development Bank (ADB) President Donald Kaberuka said here on Sunday Ethiopia is remarkably performing in the economic sector.

At a Press briefing, Kaberuka said Ethiopia ranks among the leading countries in the portfolio of the bank, as it is registering a remarkable economic growth in recent years.

Ethiopia registered an 8.9 per cent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) during the previous budget year that ended on July 7, 2005, according to official data. He said Ethiopia is one of the major operations of the bank for many years.

He added the country is in many ways the test to evaluate the operations of the bank in attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa.

The MDGs, adopted in the Millennium UN Summit, include a series of concrete objectives in fighting poverty, reducing hunger, expanding primary education, and containing the spread of HIV/AIDS, among others.

The ADB has signed with the Ethiopian Government a grant agreement amounting to 62 million US dollars to co-finance a rural water supply and sanitation programme in Ethiopia, he said. The grant, which is part of the bank’s Rural Water Supply Initiative, reflects the commitment of the bank and the Ethiopian Government to the attainment of the MDGs in the areas of water and sanitation.

Kaberuka reaffirmed the commitment of the bank to continue supporting Ethiopia’s economic development and poverty eradication efforts.

Inner Mongolia reports 18 HIV positive foreign entries in 5 years

Hohhot, 27 Feb — North China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region reported 18 HIV-positive cases from foreign countries from 2001 to 2005, according to the regional administration for entry-exit inspection and quarantine.

“We carried out physical examinations of 176,000 people crossing the region’s borders in the past five years,” said Li Hong, an official with the regional administration.

“The among the 18 cases, one is a citizen of Thailand and has been sent back to his homeland. The rest were Chinese who returned from foreign countries and they have been hospitalized,” added Li. The northern autonomous region has a 4221-kilometre frontier line with its neighbours Russia and Mongolia.

With the development of foreign exchanges, the region has imposed strict controls on AIDS prevention as more and more foreigners flood into the country.

According to Chinese law, foreign citizens who want to study or work in China and Chinese citizens who have stayed overseas for one year or more must offer official AIDS quarantine documents on entering the country. HIV carriers from foreign countries will be sent back to their homelands and Chinese HIV carriers will be put under quarantine by state health departments.

Vietnam gains bigger export earnings in first two months

Hanoi, 27 Feb — Vietnam is estimated to reap export revenues of nearly 5.6 billion US dollars in the first two months of this year, posting a year-on-year surge of 28.3 per cent, according to a local trade information agency on Sunday.

Items recording high export growths include rubber, up 81.7 per cent to 156 million dollars; textiles and garments, up 45.5 per cent to 867 million dollars; and footwear, up 30.8 per cent to 382 million dollars, said the Trade Ministry’s Trade Information Centre.

In the two-month period, the country is expected to earn 137 million dollars from shipping abroad 300,000 tons of rice, slightly rise in value over the same period last year, said the centre.

A Victor Company of Japan (JVC) showroom in Tokyo. Japanese plants and factories boosted production for a sixth straight month in January, lifting industrial output to record high levels—INTERNET

Mubarak kicks off Mideast tour on regional situation

CAIRO, 27 Feb — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Sunday kicked off his Middle East tour with the first stop in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to discuss with Gulf leaders on the current Arab situation and the Arab summit slated for March in Khartoum, Sudan.

Mubarak is accompanied by Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul-Gheit, Minister of Information Anas el-Fiqi and Minister of Foreign Trade and Industry Rashid Mohammed Rashid. They will also visit Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Egyptian Ambassador to the UAE Mohamed Saad Ebeid told the Cairo-based radio the Voice of Arabs that the tour acquires its importance from challenges witnessed by the Arab world.

He said accomplishments recently achieved by the Egyptian economy will further boost economic cooperation and create new investment chances between the two countries.

Australia and New Zealand will jointly bid to host the cricket World Cup in 2011.—INTERNET

A Victor Company of Japan (JVC) showroom in Tokyo. Japanese plants and factories boosted production for a sixth straight month in January, lifting industrial output to record high levels—INTERNET

Revelers of the Mangueira samba school perform on the top of a carnival float during the second night of the Carnival parade at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro on 27 Feb, 2006.—INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 1 March, 2006 13
Ronaldinho doubts back for Russia

Milan, 28 Feb.—Barcelona forward Ronaldinho has suffered an injury recurrence, becoming doubtful for Brazil's friendly against Russia on Wednesday.

Ronaldinho had not yet returned to the Brazil squad due to the recurrence of a strain in his left ankle during Barcelona's league match against Real Zaragoza on Saturday. "Whether or not Ronaldinho will play for the national team will depend on the result of consultations between Barcelona and the medical staff of the Brazilian Confederation," Barcelona said Monday in a statement on their website. —MNA/Xinhua

Lille sink Monaco 1-0 to move up to third

Paris, 27 Feb.—Lille upset off-form Monaco 1-0 away to move up to third in Ligue 1 on Sunday.

Substitute Peter Odemwingie scored the winner just before the hour when Lille were down to 10 men after striker Jean Makoun was sent off for a dangerous tackle on midfielder Jaroslav Plasil. Lille are one point ahead of AJ Auxerre who beat Toulouse 2-0 on Saturday.

Lille narrowed the gap to six points on Girondins Bordeaux who were held 3-3 at home by bottom side Metz on Saturday while champions Olympique Lyon slumped 4-1 at home to Stade Rennes, only their second defeat of the season.

Despite this mishap Lyon retain the lead on 59 points from 27 matches with Bordeaux six points adrift.

In the last match of the day, Olympique Marseille overcame a tough challenge from Nice to snatch a 1-0 success on their home ground of Stade Velodrome.

Striker Tosifilau Maoulida lofted home a fine pass from Mickael Pagis in the 66th minute to give his side their first league success from three outings.

Marseille who qualified for the UEFA Champions League cup last 16 on Thursday moved from eighth to fifth in the table on 43 points. They trail fourth-placed AJ Auxerre by three points. —MNA/Reuters

Coach Spalletti hails Roma’s historic winning run

Rome, 28 Feb.—Coach Luciano Spalletti was in jubilant mood after his AS Roma team beat city rivals Lazio 2-0 on Sunday to set a Serie A record of 11 successive wins.

"We’ve made history," he told reporters. "In terms of a one-off achievement I’d say it’s the biggest thing I’ve done in my career so far.

"It was a great way to complete this sequence. Lazio was a very tough opponent," added Spalletti, who arrived at Roma in June having guided Udinese to fourth place last season. Rodrigo Taddei and Alberto Aquilani were on target on Sunday as Roma took their run of victories past the previous best of 10 in a row held jointly by Juventus (1931-32), AC Milan (1950-51) and Bologna (1963-64).

"They (Lazio) made us suffer a lot before we scored the first goal, especially on the flanks," said Spalletti. "They maybe deserved more than they got tonight."

Roma broke the record without captain Francesco Totti, who watched the game from the side-lines after fracturing his ankle in last weekend's 1-0 win over Empoli.

"We’ve got a group of players that works. Even when they are missing their captain, these lads have shown they can fill his shoes," said Spalletti.

Roma’s run has turned a team of Serie A also-rans into contenders for a Champions League place.—MNA/Reuters

Crowd violence spoils Olympiakos win over PAOK

Athens, 27 Feb.—Crowd trouble marred Olympiakos' 2-1 win over PAOK Salonica in Thessaloniki on Sunday.

A section of seating was set on fire by PAOK fans shortly after Michalis Konstantinou scored the winner for Olympiakos in the 77th minute.

Missiles were thrown at the firemen attempting to put out the blaze with missiles from the stands. The referee halted the game for several minutes while PAOK captain Thodoros Zagorakis pleaded on the touchline with fans, television coverage of the match showed.

When the fire was put out, the referee resumed the game briefly before blowing the whistle for time.

PAOK, playing their first game under coach Ilias Diamantrescu, had taken the lead in the fifth minute through Egyptian Mahmoud Fadalla Shikabala but Olympiakos levelled when Yiannis Okkas scored from close range. The win, their 19th from 21 games, gave Olympiakos 57 points and kept them nine points clear of AEK Athens, who beat Ionikos 2-1. —MNA/Reuters

Maradona says Brazil to be crowned at World Cup

Brazil, 28 Feb.—Argentine legend Diego Maradona said Sunday that Brazil would be the top favourite to win the World Cup in Germany.

Maradona, who is attending a Carnival parade in Rio de Janeiro, made the comments in an interview with the local media.

"Brazil is the most prepared team, it has a top coach and its players are already used to winning," the former Argentine star said.

Maradona admitted that Argentina also has the chance to win the title, but "a lot has to happen at the right moments for that to happen". —MNA/Xinhua

Zidane says winning back World Cup is a must

Paris, 28 Feb.—France playmaker Zinedine Zidane said Monday that winning back the World Cup this summer is an obligation for les Bleus.

"The World Cup is not an important objective, it’s the greatest objective. We’ll go to Germany to win the World Cup," Zidane was quoted as saying by sports daily L’Equipe.

His remarks came as France were gathering for Wednesday’s international friendly against Slovakia. "I’m 33, I’ll be 34 in Germany. When one has won the World Cup and lost it four years later, winning it back is an magnificent and imperious obligation," he said.

Zidane believed France are good enough to win the World Cup although they have to overcome a major obstacle from Brazil.—MNA/Xinhua

Benfica’s win over Porto keeps title hopes alive

Lisbon, 28 Feb.—Benfica kept their hopes of retaining the Portuguese title alive with a 1-0 win over city rivals Porto on Sunday.

French international Laurent Robert got the winning goal with a low 35-metre free kick five minutes before halftime, his first goal since he joined the Lisbon club in December.

Porto head the table with 51 points after 24 matches followed by Sporting, who beat struggling Academica 3-0 on Saturday, with 49, Benfica are third on 46.

The match was dubbed “the 10th Dutch round”. Both coaches are from the Netherlands and Benfica’s win gave Ronald Koeman his eighth victory over Porto’s Co Adriaanse in 10 league games with the other two matches drawn. —MNA/Reuters

Roma win derby with Lazio to set Serie A record

Rome, 28 Feb.—AS Roma set a record of 11 consecutive Serie A wins when goals by Rodrigo Taddei and Alberto Aquilani secured a 2-0 triumph over city neighbours Lazio to set a Serie A record of 11 successive wins.

"We’ve made history," he told reporters. "In terms of a one-off achievement I’d say it’s the biggest thing I’ve done in my career so far.

"It was a great way to complete this sequence. Lazio was a very tough opponent," added Spalletti, who arrived at Roma in June having guided Udinese to fourth place last season. Rodrigo Taddei and Alberto Aquilani were on target on Sunday as Roma took their run of victories past the previous best of 10 in a row held jointly by Juventus (1931-32), AC Milan (1950-51) and Bologna (1963-64).

"They (Lazio) made us suffer a lot before we scored the first goal, especially on the flanks," said Spalletti. "They maybe deserved more than they got tonight."

Roma broke the record without captain Francesco Totti, who watched the game from the side-lines after fracturing his ankle in last weekend’s 1-0 win over Empoli.

"We’ve got a group of players that works. Even when they are missing their captain, these lads have shown they can fill his shoes," said Spalletti.

Roma’s run has turned a team of Serie A also-rans into contenders for a Champions League place.—MNA/Reuters

Real Madrid French player Zinedine Zidane, left, duels for the ball against Real Mallorca player Angelis Basinas during their Spanish league soccer match at the Son Moix Stadium in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, on Sunday, 26 Feb, 2006. Real Madrid lost 2-1. —INTERNET

Louisiana Tech guard Tasha Williams charges the baseline as Idaho guard Leilani Mitchell defends in the second quarter at the Kibby Dome in Moscow, Idaho, on 27 Feb, 2006. Louisiana Tech won 55-40.—INTERNET

Missiles were thrown at the firemen attempting to put out the blaze with missiles from the stands. The referee halted the game for several minutes while PAOK captain Thodoros Zagorakis pleaded on the touchline with fans, television coverage of the match showed.

When the fire was put out, the referee resumed the game briefly before blowing the whistle for time.

PAOK, playing their first game under coach Ilias Diamantrescu, had taken the lead in the fifth minute through Egyptian Mahmoud Fadalla Shikabala but Olympiakos levelled when Yiannis Okkas scored from close range. The win, their 19th from 21 games, gave Olympiakos 57 points and kept them nine points clear of AEK Athens, who beat Ionikos 2-1. —MNA/Reuters

Maradona, who is attending a Carnival parade in Rio de Janeiro, made the comments in an interview with the local media.

"Brazil is the most prepared team, it has a top coach and its players are already used to winning," the former Argentine star said.

Maradona admitted that Argentina also has the chance to win the title, but "a lot has to happen at the right moments for that to happen". —MNA/Xinhua

Coach Spalletti hails Roma’s historic winning run

Rome, 28 Feb.—Coach Luciano Spalletti was in jubilant mood after his AS Roma team beat city rivals Lazio 2-0 on Sunday to set a Serie A record of 11 successive wins.

"We’ve made history," he told reporters. "In terms of a one-off achievement I’d say it’s the biggest thing I’ve done in my career so far.

"It was a great way to complete this sequence. Lazio was a very tough opponent," added Spalletti, who arrived at Roma in June having guided Udinese to fourth place last season. Rodrigo Taddei and Alberto Aquilani were on target on Sunday as Roma took their run of victories past the previous best of 10 in a row held jointly by Juventus (1931-32), AC Milan (1950-51) and Bologna (1963-64).

"They (Lazio) made us suffer a
Saudi forces kill suspected militants after siege

RIYADH, 28 Feb — Saudi forces on Monday killed about five suspected militants believed to be linked to an Al-Qaeda attack on a major oil facility, security sources said.

A firefight ensued at dawn after security forces besieged the men, who were hiding in a villa in the affluent al-Hamra District of east Riyadh where several Western residential compounds are located.

Witnesses said they heard the sound of heavy gunfire and what appeared to be mortars as security forces surrounded the area and sealed it off before dawn.

The shoot-out ended after two hours with the deaths of all of the men inside the building, believed to number about five, the security sources said.

One source said the men were traced partly through Internet surveillance. An Internet statement was issued at the weekend claiming that Al-Qaeda was behind an attack on the world’s largest oil processing plant in Abqaiq on Friday.

The attempt to storm the site in east Saudi Arabia near the Gulf coast was the first direct strike on a Saudi energy target since the militant group launched attacks aimed attoppling the US-allied monarchy in 2003.

It was also the first major attack by militants opposed to the Saudi monarchy since suicide bombers tried to storm the Interior Ministry in Riyadh in December 2004.

MNA/Reuters

TRAIN DERAILS, CAUSING NO CASUALTIES IN ROMANIA

BUCHEREST, 28 Feb — A Romanian freight train carrying chemical fertilizer derailed on Saturday, causing no casualties but long delays in the northwest Transylvania region, local authorities said on Monday.

The derailed occurred between the cities of Sighisoara and Brasov, blocking railway lines, said Dorel Iosifescu, director of the Brasov branch of the National Romanian Railways.

Some 15 trains travelling between Transylvania and the capital Bucharest were rerouted Sunday and Monday due to the accident.

Workers were running against time to clear lines overnight and move boxcars that had overturned, in a bid to resume the services later Monday, according to Iosifescu.

A preliminary investigation showed the axle of one of the wheels broke, causing the train to derail.

MNA/Xinhua

WEATHER

Tuesday, 28 February, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain have been isolated in Kachin State and Tanintharyi Division and weather has been generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions. Night temperatures were (3°C) below normal in Mon State, (3°C) above normal in Kachin State and Sagaing Division, (5°C) above normal in Chin and Rakhine States, Mandalay and Tanintharyi Divisions and about normal in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant night temperatures were Lashio and Namhsan (7°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 27-2-2006 was 98°F. Minimum temperature on 28-2-2006 was 65°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 28-2-2006 was (80%). Total sunshine hours on 27-2-2006 was (8.2) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 28-2-2006 were nil at Mandaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2006 were nil at Mandaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (9) mph from South at (18:15) hours MST on 27-2-2006.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 1-3-2006: Isolated light rain are likely in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Tanintharyi Divisions and weather will be 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 are likely in extreme Northern and Southern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 1-3-2006: Generally fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 1-3-2006: Fair weather.

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**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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**Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects Ayeyawady Bridge (Yadanabon) Sagaing Division to put 500,000 acres under physic nut plants**

**Government has so far spent more than K 1,200,000 m on 183 irrigation facilities across the nation Yinnyein Sluice Gate in Paung Township, Mon State, opened**