Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.

Four political objectives

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

Four economic objectives

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

Four social objectives

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

YANGON, 2 March — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing bid farewell to President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati at Yangon International Airport. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing bid farewell to Indonesian President and party

YANGON, 2 March — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing bade farewell to the Indonesian goodwill delegation led by President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati at Yangon International Airport this afternoon.

(See page 16)
Towards closer friendship and increased bilateral cooperation

At the invitation of Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyai ng Kyai ng, the goodwill delegation headed by President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati on 1 March arrived in Myanmar on a two-day State visit.

Head of State Senior General Than Shwe welcomed President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati at the Yangon International Airport.

The Union of Myanmar has always practised an independent and active foreign policy and been on friendly terms with other nations in the world, actively cooperating with international organizations including the UN, non-governmental organizations, her neighbouring nations and ASEAN members. And she has always placed special emphasis on friendly relations with her neighbours and ASEAN nations. Leaders of Myanmar, her neighbours and ASEAN members have often exchanged goodwill visits with a view to enhancing bilateral relations and economic cooperation.

President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono paid a courtesy call on Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe at the Pyithu Hluttaw building on the afternoon of 1 March. Together with the Indonesian President at the meeting were the Indonesian Foreign Minister and high-ranking officials. After the meeting, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe and Indonesian President Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono attended the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding at the Pyithu Hluttaw building. The MoU was on the establishment of a Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation.

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyai ng Kyai ng hosted a dinner in honour of the goodwill delegation headed by President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati at the Reception Hall of the Pyithu Hluttaw building.

Being an ASEAN member nation, Myanmar is translating into action one of the goals of the ASEAN — economic, social and cultural development through cooperation. And we believe the goodwill visit of President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will further cement mutual friendship and help boost cooperation between Myanmar and Indonesia.

A&I Minister inspects summer paddy field of Zaungtu Diversion Dam

Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo inspects Tanaw Dam Project in Kyakhto Township, Mon State. — MNA

YANGON, 1 March — Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo together with officials inspected the thriving summer paddy plantations in the irrigated area of Zaungtu Diversion Dam in Bago Township.

On arrival at Tanaw Dam Project in Kyakhto Township, Mon State, the minister heard reports on progress of the construction of the dam and gave instructions on timely completion.

Afterwards, the minister inspected the tasks being carried out at the worksite and progress of the spillway with the 447 feet in length and 50 feet in width. In the evening, the minister inspected the nurturing of physic nut saplings of Myanmar Perennial Crops Enterprise (research) in Kyakhto Township.

On 27 February, the minister met with teachers and students at Agricultural Institute in Thaton and attended to the needs. — MNA

Danubyu gets new tarred road

Minister Col Thein Nyunt attends opening of the tarred road in Danubyu. — MNA

YANGON, 2 March — As a gesture of hailing the 61st Anniversary Armed Forces Day, a tarred road in Danubyu, Ayeyawady Division, was opened today in the presence of Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt.

The road is 1.925 feet long and 12 feet wide.

It was constructed at a cost of over K 8.9 million. Danubyu Township Development Affairs Department contributed over K 5.2 million and local people over K 3.7 million to the construction fund.

During his tour, the minister met with officials of Danubyu Township DAD and discussed development tasks to be carried out in the township in 2006-2007 fiscal year. At the meeting, officials reported on tasks that have been carried out in the region in 2005-2006 fiscal year. Central Executive Committee Member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Minister Col Thein Nyunt went to Nyaungdon and met with Ayeyawady Division USDA members.

At the meeting, he attended to the needs for development in the region.

In-patients can take exam at hospitals

Daw Pu Pu and Daw Mya Mya and family of 160, 35th Street, Kyauktada Township, in memory of late Ko Thaung Tun of IM1 present K 150,000 to Hinzigon Home for the Aged recently. — MNA

YANGON, 1 March — Students who are receiving medical treatment at hospitals can sit the matriculation exam at designated hospitals.

The designated hospitals are Yangon General Hospital, Central Women’s Hospital and Waibargi Hospital.

The examination will be held from 14 to 23 March. More information is available at the hospitals. — MNA

Winners of Armed Forces Day literary contest announced

YANGON, 2 March — The organizing committee for the 61st Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative literary and photo contests today announced the winners of the literary contest.

Tin Aung Soe (Pammywójow) took the first prize; Soe Paing Yun of Botahtaung the second and Ye Ye Tun (Hinthada) the third in the novel contest.

They will be awarded at the 61st Anniversary Armed Forces Day commemorative ceremony on 27 March. — MNA
Russian President calls for world energy security architecture

NEW YORK, 1 March—Russian President Vladimir Putin Tuesday called on wealthy countries to establish an international “energy security system” to avoid conflicts over the supply.

In his article published in the Wall Street Journal, Putin said it is essential in the supply. “Energy egotism in a modern and highly interdependent world is a road to nowhere,” he said. The Russian President said in order to fight the “lack of stability in the hydrocarbon market”, coordinated activities of the entire world community are needed”.

Putin called on the G-8 to focus on energy security as a strategic goal and “an engine of social and economic progress” while he suggested that non-G-8 countries should be engaged in the international initiatives aimed at promoting “innovation, energy saving and environmental protection”.

Dodik becomes new PM of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Serb Republic

BELGRADE, 1 March — Milorad Dodik has been approved as the new Prime Minister of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s Serb Republic, and his Cabinet also received the endorsement of lawmakers on Tuesday.

In the 83-seat Parliament, 46 deputies voted for Dodik, five were against and four abstained.

Chinese unmanned flying saucer to take to sky in two years

BEIJING, 27 Feb — A Chinese unmanned flying saucer, the first of the kind in the country, will take to the sky within two years, said a Chinese scientist announced in Beijing on Monday.

Professor Yan Lei with the School of Earth and Space Sciences of the elite Beihang University said the so-called flying saucer is actually an analogue simulation model on a solar-energy-powered stratosphere, also known as ozone layer, a flight system widely used in fields such as telecommunications, meteorology and the earth monitoring.

The Chinese scientist said that he is applying for a state patent for the creation.

The model was developed by a research team consisting of scientists from Professor Yan’s school and technological workers from two private companies of technologies in Beijing.

The analogue simulation model is a five-pointed star shaped platform capable of adjusting itself in the atmosphere so that the amount of electricity generated by the solar panels attached to the top of the platform keeps rising.

“Unlike conventional aerocraft which rely on high-speed movement for lifting force and the fuel-powered engine for dynamics, the newly-developed model employs propellers activated by machinery without bearings,” Professor Yan explained.

So the model, which is said to contain more than a score of inventions, is also capable of operating noiseless flights, making vertical takeoffs and landings, remaining in suspension for a long-time in the air.

US criticism is aggression against Venezuela

CARACAS, 1 March — Venezuelan Vice-President Jose Vicente Rangel said that the critical remarks made by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) director represented “another aggression” launched by the United States against the South American country.

Earlier on Tuesday, CIA director John Negroponte told the US Senate that Chavez “is spending hundreds of millions of dollars in an extravagant foreign policy” instead of fighting poverty. He also said that were Chavez reelected this year, he would stifle Venezuelan democracy.

Rangel denied the claims, saying Venezuela is spending petrol company profits to lift the country out of poverty and is having “unquestionable success that is noted all over the world”.

US military death toll rises to 2,295

WASHINGTON, 1 March — As of Wednesday, 1 March, 2006, at least 2,295 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. The figure includes seven military civilians. At least 1,800 died as a result of hostile action, according to the military’s numbers.

The AP count is three lower than the Defence Department’s tally, last updated Tuesday at 10 am EST. The British military has reported 103 deaths; Italy, 27; Ukraine, 19; Poland, 17; Bulgaria, 13; Spain, 11; Slovakia, three; Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Netherlands, Thailand, two each; Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, one death each.
Swiss official voices support for one-China policy

BEIJING, 1 March — Switzerland supports the one-China policy and regrets for the current situation across Taiwan Straits, visiting Swiss Defence Minister Samuel Schmid said here on Tuesday.

“I hope the two sides across the Straits can conduct dialogues and resolve the Taiwan question through political means,” Schmid told reporters at a news briefing in the Swiss Embassy to China.

Schmid also briefed reporters on talks with his Chinese counterpart Cao Gangchuan held on Monday afternoon.

He said the two countries intended to carry out a military strategic dialogue including regular exchange of visits and contacts, and that some preparatory work is going on.

Schmid will visit South Korea after concluding his China tour. When talking about the nuclear issue in the Korean Peninsula, he said China has played a vital role in pushing forward the nuclear talks.

“I hope the six-party talks can resume at an early date with efforts from China,” Schmid added.

“China has a bright prospect of development in the future. Switzerland will further promote the mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries in various fields,” Schmid said.

Vietnam to produce human-use H5N1 vaccines late this year

HANOI, 1 March— Vietnam will start manufacturing human-use vaccines against bird flu virus strain H5N1 in late 2006 with initial annual capacity of 2-3 million doses, an official in charge of hygiene and epidemiology told Xinhua on Tuesday.

A human-use H5N1 vaccination production line has already been installed at the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, the official from the institute said on a condition of anonymity.

A dose of locally-made H5N1 vaccines is estimated to cost around 30,000 Vietnamese dong (nearly 1.9 US dollars). The institute’s initial vaccine production capacity is able to serve some one million people.

Hundreds flee wildfires in US’ Oklahoma State

WASHINGTON, 2 March — More than 500 people were forced to evacuate Wednesday after a spate of grassland wildfires sprang up and spread on the prairie in the southwestern US state of Oklahoma.

The situation in the state’s southern prairie was worsened with winds at some 50 kilometres per hour and temperatures above 30 degrees Celsius, CNN reported.

Two firefighters were injured while fighting one of the fires in Stephens County, in southwestern Oklahoma, which destroyed homes and forced the evacuations of schools and businesses, authorities said.

The cause of the fires was not known. In December, a string of brush fires in the same region burned thousands of acres and destroyed dozens of homes.

Many people lost power supply in the city of Duncan, as the fires affected electricity transfer centres.

Also on Wednesday, a fire burned on parched grassland in northeast New Mexico, forcing some 100 people to evacuate.

Egyptian trains collide, 17 injured

CAIRO, 1 March— Two Egyptian trains collided in the Nile Delta on Tuesday and about 17 people were injured, the state news agency MENA said.

The accident took place near the town of Abu Himmus, which lies on the main line between Cairo and Alexandria and about 95 miles northwest of the capital, it said.

The governor of Beertha Province, Adel Labib, said that a train bound for Cairo ran into the back of a train going to Port Said during a morning mist which reduced visibility. The trains had left the previous station five minutes apart.

The injuries were in the two rear carriages of the Port Said train and have already left hospital after treatment, added the governor, quoted by MENA.—MENA/Reuters

Two British soldiers killed in Iraq attack

AMARA (Iraq), 1 March— Two British soldiers were killed and a third was wounded in an attack on a patrol in Amara, 230 miles southeast of Baghdad on Tuesday, the British military said.

British troops in armoured personnel carriers in the area of the first attack were later shot by about 20 youths. The second incident was also confirmed by a British spokesman.

“There were no further incidents and members of the multi-national force were back at camp and the incident closed at 16.15 pm (1315 GMT),” the spokesman said. The third soldier’s injuries were not life threatening, the spokesman added, declining to give further details.

Local residents said a roadside bomb had exploded.—MENA/Reuters

12% of Iraq vets have mental problems

CHICAGO, 1 March — Thirty-five percent of Iraq veterans received mental health care during their first year home, according to a new Pentagon study.

The findings, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, are part of a larger study co-author Dr Charles Hoge, a colonel at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

Because of the new screening program, the findings cannot be compared to those from previous wars, Hoge said.

“There are psychological consequences of war and we want to address those up front,” Hoge said. “The hope is we won’t have as high rates of mental health consequences as we’ve seen in prior wars.”

Nineteen percent of those back from Iraq reported mental health concerns, compared with 11 percent of those back from Afghanistan and 8.5 percent of those returning from other places, such as Bosnia.

The study appears in the Wednesday Journal of the American Medical Association.—Internet

1.5-year-old male white lion

BEIJING, 2 March — Veterinarians nip out tumor from the front left leg’s elbow of a white lion during an operation at a pet veterinary hospital in Hangzhou, capital of east China’s Zhejiang Province, on 28 Feb, 2006.

The 1.5-year-old male white lion with a weight of over 100 kilograms below its average weight due to out of chromosome mutation, and was bred by the Hangzhou Wild Animals World. The veterinarians succeeded in taking out tumor from the lion’s front legs’ elbow during the operation.—Internet

Surgery for white lion

BEIJING, 2 March — Veterinarians nip out tumor from the front left leg’s elbow of a white lion during an operation at a pet veterinary hospital in Hangzhou, capital of east China’s Zhejiang Province, on 28 Feb, 2006.
China, Japan join in training specialists for ancient Silk Road

BEIJING, 1 March—China and Japan will cooperate in training 100 specialists for protecting the cultural heritage along the Silk Road in the coming five years. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) of China and the Foundation for Cultural Heritage and Art Research, a non-governmental organization of Japan, signed an agreement here on Monday.

According to the agreement, the Japanese side will invest 150 million Japanese yen (about 1.28 million US dollars) in the joint training project. “The special training programme for protecting the Silk Road is the first of its kind in China, and will be carried out by state-level research institutes of the two countries,” said Zhang Tinghao, head of China Cultural Relics Research Institute.

Those working in the cultural heritage protection organizations along the Silk Road in Xinjiang, Qinghai, Ningxia, Gansu, Shaanxi and Henan, especially young and middle-aged specialists, will be chosen to join the project.

The training will include classes of cultural heritage protection theory, experiments in labs and field teaching in the protection of earth relics, ancient buildings, archaeological sites, pottery and porcelain, metal objects, murals, textiles and paper relics. MNA/Xinhua

Look who’s buying girdles

TOKYO, 1 March—As Japanese waistlines expand, so is the market for girdles—for men.

A new line of male underwear that flattens the stomach and lifts the hips proved so popular when introduced on a trial basis last month that some stores quickly sold out.

“Men are getting so much more fashion conscious these days that they’re starting to pay attention to the lines of their body and their silhouette, just like women,” said a spokeswoman at Triumph International Japan, a leading underwear firm.

Triumph marketed two different types of “long girdle”—one from the navel to the knees, and the other a “hip hugger” version to be worn with low-waisted pants. Both sold so well that it plans to raise production and develop new variations, including a version for summer wear.

Other firms intend to launch similar products, according to business daily Nikkoh Keizai Shimbun. One even plans to start selling underwear that lifts and shapes the upper body as well.

One factor behind the boom, which has made the girdles popular not only among middle-aged men but also those in their 20s and 30s, is likely to be a growing weight problem among once slim Japanese.

According to a Health Ministry report issued last month, some 29 percent of men aged 20-60 are overweight compared with 24 percent in 2000.

The Triumph spokeswoman, however, said most of the demand is due to new styles in pants that are cut to emphasize the hips. “It’s really more about style,” she said. “After all, there aren’t that many men in their 20s and 30s whose figures are giving way.”—Internet

Microsoft portable gadget comes to light

BEIJING, 28 Feb.—Microsoft has reportedly designed a new portable consumer gadget that will offer entertainment—video, games and music—in addition to basic Windows-based functions like e-mail, Web surfing and word processing.

Redmond, Wash.-based Microsoft is developing an “ultra-portable PC,” the Wall Street Journal reported on Monday, citing a person familiar with work going on at the world’s largest software firm. Codenamed “Origami,” the computer is a handheld PC that is smaller and lighter than most laptops on the market today. But it includes the full Windows XP operating system and could run Windows Vista. Microsoft’s successor operating system coming out this fall, according to a person familiar with the product.

The handheld is a slate with a 7-inch diagonal touch screen, about the size of portable DVD players. Users can touch the screen with their fingers or use a stylus to initiate programs.—Internet

Earth, Mars in close encounter once in 60,000 years

WASHINGTON, 28 Feb.—Scientists say the Mars will move to its nearest position to Earth on 28 August, providing local stargazers with a terrific opportunity to watch the occurrence. The planet will be only 55.7566 million kilometres away from Earth, about 30 million millimetres nearer than in normal days. The last occurrence took place some 57,000 years ago. Astronomers say the next will be due 25,000 years later.—Internet

Two powerful quakes hit southeastern Iran

TEHRAN, 1 March—Two powerful earthquakes, measuring 5.8 and 5.6 on the Richter Scale respectively, jolted two cities in the southeastern province of Kerman on Tuesday morning, the official IRNA news agency reported.

The first quake occurred at 11:01 am (0731 GMT), hitting Ormuzehy, a city 900 kilometres southeast to Teheran, IRNA quoted the seismological base of the Geophysics Institute of Teheran University as saying. —MNA/Xinhua

At least 13 killed, 40 wounded in three blasts in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 1 March—At least 13 Iraqi civilians were killed and 40 others wounded in three explosions that hit Baghdad on Tuesday, an Interior Ministry source told Xinhua.

“A car bomb went off in a busy area in Karrada district, killing at least four people and wounding up to 18 others,” the source said on condition of anonymity.—MNA/Xinhua

Paraguayan police destroy five marijuana plantations

BUIEN AIRES, 1 March—Paraguayan police have destroyed 37 hectares of marijuana plantations, capable of producing 111 tons, in northeastern Paraguay.

On the first day of a new anti-marijuana operation in Amambay, close to the Brazilian border, the National Anti-Drug Agency (SENAD) destroyed five plantations, seized 80 kilos of chopped marijuana, 90 kilos of hashish and 20 kilos of seeds, reports from Asuncion, the Paraguayan capital, quoted authorities as saying on Tuesday.—MNA/Xinhua

Bomb explodes in Basque country northern Spain

MAKIN, 1 March—A bomb exploded on Tuesday night in the town of Maria de Utriku, the second such explosion in 24 hours in the northern Spanish Basque Country, the local Interior Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

An anonymous informant, identifying himself as a member of ETA, the Basque separatist group, warned the local highway rescue organization and the Gara daily paper of explosives in the social security offices at 8.30 pm local time. Police then rushed to the scene and set up a security cordon, evacuating the residents of nearby homes. —MNA/Xinhua
Iranian President starts visit to Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, 2 March — Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad arrived here Wednesday evening to start his three-day state visit.

Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar met Ahmadinejad at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Ahmadinejad’s visit aims to strengthen the existing bilateral relations and cooperation between Malaysia and Iran in all fields, said Malaysian Foreign Ministry.

He will meet Malaysian Supreme Head of State Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin and hold talks with Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the ministry said in a statement released earlier. Apart from exchanging views on the present regional and international issues, Ahmadinejad is expected to brief Badawi on Iran’s nuclear programme.

This is Ahmadinejad’s first ever visit to this Southeast Asian nation since he was elected as Iranian President in August of last year. MNA/Xinhua

Four dead, dozens wounded in Karachi blast

KARACHI, 2 March — At least one car bomb exploded Thursday outside the US Consulate and a luxury hotel in Pakistan’s largest city, killing at least four people and wounding dozens just days ahead of a visit to Pakistan by President Bush.

Two blasts ripped through vehicles in the parking lot of the Marriott Hotel, about 20 yards from the consulate gate, shattering windows at both locations and other nearby buildings. Ten cars were destroyed, casting clouds of thick black smoke over the scene.

Police initially said two car bombs had gone off, but provincial police chief Jahangir Mirza said a single bomb by a suspected suicide attacker may have triggered a second explosion when a burning car’s fuel tank caught fire.

“There is a possibility that this could be a suicide attack but we are still investigating,” Mirza said. Shabbir Qamkhani, the provincial health minister, said four people were killed, including a woman who died of her injuries in the hospital, and 49 others were wounded. MNA/Reuters

Pakistanis firemen trying to put off fire caused by bomb blasts outside the US Consulate in Karachi.

Pakistan, on 2 March, 2006. Internet

China to survey hepatitis B epidemic situation

XINING, 1 March — China’s Ministry of Health is going to launch a nationwide survey on the current epidemic situation of hepatitis B in a bid to give scientific support to the country’s prevention of the disease.

The control of hepatitis B has been listed on the 11th national five-year programme (2006-2010) and is one of the priorities of the ministry on its infectious disease control agenda, said Qi Xiaoguo, director of the Department of Disease Control under the ministry.

The survey will focus on the current epidemic situation, changing trends, transmission elements, financial burdens and immunization evaluation of hepatitis B, noted Qi at a national conference on the immunization plan of 2006 held on Tuesday.

“The control of hepatitis B is a crucial task of the ministry this year. We are organizing experts to assess the survey and will work out a detailed plan soon,” said Qi.

Hepatitis B is one of the major infectious diseases in China, which carried out nationwide surveys about the epidemic situation of hepatitis on 1979 and 1992. According to experts, the country currently has 20 million people infected with chronic hepatitis B.

On 28 January, the government issued a national conference of hepatitis B for the next five years, which set a goal of significant decrease in the incidence of hepatitis B and deaths caused by hepatocirrhosis and liver cancer by 2010. MNA/Xinhua

About 70 dolphins washed ashore on Japanese beach

TOYKO, 2 March — Scores of dolphins washed onto a beach on Japan’s Pacific Coast on Tuesday, and surfers joined local officials in a struggle to push them back into the sea.

About 70 dolphins came ashore in the fishing town of Ichinomiya, about 40 miles southeast of Tokyo, local officials said.

Dozens of surfers, officials and residents rushed to the scene and tried to help the mammals swim back into the water, they said.

Most of the dolphins had returned to the water by sundown, they said.

“We have never seen such a large number of dolphins washed ashore in this town before,” one official said. “We have no idea why this happened.”

Some of the dolphins may have died, he said. MNA/Reuters

A Kenyan worker prepares coffee beans before storage at the Kiamariga coffee factory in Karatina, Nyeri, 100km northwest of the Kenyan capital Nairobi, on 24 Feb, 2006. — Internet

Expert says bird flu could last five years in Britain

LONDON, 1 March — Bird flu could become endemic in Britain and last up to five years, the government’s chief scientific adviser said on Tuesday.

“I would anticipate that avian flu will arrive at some point in the Britain,” Professor David King told BBC news. “We also have to anticipate that it will be here for five years-plus. We are talking about the possibility of this disease becoming endemic here in Britain,” he said.

The bird flu virus has spread from Asia to Africa and Europe and caused the deaths of millions of birds and more than 90 people.

It reached France earlier this month and experts said that the British Government had not done more to tackle the threat and demands for poultry either to be kept indoors or vaccinated.

Britain’s Farm Minister Margaret Beckett said on Monday that the country is well prepared to react swiftly to any outbreak of bird flu.

Britain has questioned the benefits of vaccination and Beckett reiterated fears that vaccines might mask rather than eradicate the disease although she said the government’s policy was under review. “We are very conscious it is a changing situation,” she told reports. MNA/Reuters

US soldier killed, two injured in Afghanistan

KABUL, 1 March — One US soldier was killed, two others were injured Tuesday in a firefight with Taliban militants in Afghan southern province of Uruzgan, US military said.

“Coalition forces conducting offensive operations in Uruzgan Province captured seven suspected Taliban fighters today in an engagement in which two US service members were wounded and one US service member was killed,” US military said in a Press release. “One Coalition vehicle was damaged by an improvised explosive device during the engagement, in the vicinity of Tarin Kowt. Coalition forces attacked the enemy with small-arms fire,” it added.

The wounded service members, acco- rding to US military, were evacuated for medical treatment at a nearby facility, and they are in stable condition.

About 19,000 strong US-led Coalition troops stayed in Afghanistan since the collapse of Taliban in late 2001 for further cleanup operations.

Till now, more than 200 US soldiers have been killed in and around Afghanistan since the Operation Enduring Freedom since 2001. — MNA/Xinhua

Donate blood
Mubarak warns US against hitting Iran

CAIRO, 2 March— Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said he had advised the United States against attacking Iran, predicting that Tehran would react through its influence over Shiite Muslim communities in Arab countries in the Gulf.

In remarks to Egyptian newspaper editors published on Wednesday, Mubarak also said an Israeli attack on Iran was most unlikely because Tehran would respond by launching ballistic missiles into Israeli ports.

The United States has declined to rule out military force against Iran, which it says it suspects of working on nuclear weapons under the cover of its civilian national programme.

Mubarak, speaking on board a flight back from the Gulf on Monday, said he discussed the consequences of a US attack on Iran with US Vice-President Dick Cheney, who visited Egypt in January.

He said, “I said to him word for word: Listen to my advice for once,” Mubarak said, speaking the phrase in English. The remark was published in the state-owned daily al-Gomhuria.


“If an airstrike (against Iran) took place, Iran will turn into terrorist groups more than it is already. The Gulf area has Shi'ite majorities in many of the states and America is linked to vital interests in this area and has naval facilities,” Mubarak said. “Iran spends generously on the Shi'a in every country and these people are prepared to do anything if Iran is hit.”

The newspaper continued: “The President said that he ruled out completely Israel carrying out this strike (on Iran) because Iran possesses ballistic missiles which it would launch at Israel and which would cause great damage.”

Since the post-independence period, Myanmar has been regenerating its education and the drive has now reached its peak with the participation of the people and members of the Sangha.

Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council in his speech at the opening of the basic education high school of War Veterans model village in Laydaungkan, Dagon Myothit (South), on 28 January 2006 said the government had been taking measures for enlarging the horizon of knowledge of the people to be able to further distinguish constructive efforts and destructive acts. Then, more than 40,000 high, middle and primary schools had been opened with over 25,000 teachers in over 60,000 villages across the nation.

At the Sayawun Tin Shwe literary awards ceremony held on 28 January 2006, Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan said the Ministry of Information had paid serious attention to the opening of self-reliant libraries in every village to improve the intellectual power of rural people who had been unable to facilitate more than 48,880 villages with a self-reliant library each out of more than 60,000 villages. It was pursuing the target of opening a library each in more than 60,000 villages by 2006. Eventually, Myanmar would become a nation where every village had a library in the world, he said. Today is knowledge age. So, world nations are vying one another to their utmost so as to get in the forefront in the global village.

Now, in Myanmar, the school enrolment rate of school age children and adult literacy rate are close to 100 percent. In the process, the Pariyatti educational and monastic education are contributing towards such a prudent drive.

Myanmar has witnessed many Pariyatti monasteries, each of which can accommodate one thousand to two thousand members of the Sangha to pursue Pariyatti education. For instance, in 2005-2006 academic year, altogether 1,334 novices and boy students of various national races are studying under Dhamma Kathika Sayadaws, Maha Dhamma Kathika Sayadaws, Kammathana Carita Sayadaws and Maha Kammathana Carita Sayadaws in Nga Cave Kalaywa Tawya monastic education school.

The awarding of national literary awards, Sarpey Bekman manuscript prizes, the prizes to moral significant days (for instance Armed Forces Day), Pakokku U Ohn Pe awards, general knowledge awards, and Sayawun Tin Shwe awards are the steps for raising the education standard of Myanmar.

Apart from the Ministry of Education, the government has established the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affair and the Ministry of Science and Technology for the development of human resources. At the same time, the Ministry of Information is exerting efforts with added momentum to enable every village to get a self-reliant library by 2006.

Chinese journalists, scholars to start cultural trip to Arab nations

BEIJING, 2 March — Some 60 Chinese journalists and scholars will travel overland on a cultural expedition to 20 Arab countries, according to a Press conference held here Wednesday. Chen Haosu, President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), said the participants of the expedition will bring Chinese friendship and good wishes to those they meet. This year marks the 50 anniversary of the China-Arabic friendly cooperation, said Chen. The expedition, sponsored by CPAFFC and China-Arab Friendship Association, will help promote the China-Arab non-government exchange activities and exert positive influence on the cooperation in the fields of culture, tourism, and economic trade, he said.

The participants are expected to kick off the travel from the Chinese capital in mid October and arrive in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum in November 2006.

Blizzard hits N-W China prefecture

CHENGDU, 2 March — The worst blizzard in the past five decades hit the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Garze in northwest China's Sichuan Province since Monday, said Chen. The blizzard coincides with the Tibetan New Year, which fell on Tuesday, causing much inconvenience for local residents. The local government is arranging relief work and distributing relief materials to the affected people.

The heavy snowfall will continue on Wednesday and Thursday, the local meteorological observatory said.
Minister inspects road extension work

YANGON, 2 March — Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Say Tun observed upgrading work at a section of Bayintnaung-Pathein Road on 28 February.

Accompanied by officials, the minister inspected road extension, rock laying, drainage digging and conduit building on Pathein-Thalatkhwa-Mawtinsoo road.

The minister spoke of the need to complete rock laying work before the arrival of monsoon, to stockpile rocks and to extend the road according to schedule.

Under the guidance of the Head of State, the 102-mile Pathein-Thalatkhwa-Mawtinsoo road has been upgraded into a 30-foot wide facility.

The project covers, road extension, laterite laying and conduit building. The road ensures road transport for the locals who were mainly relying on water transport.

NPC Standing Committee of PRC donates computers and accessories to USDA

YANGON, 2 March— The National People’s Congress Standing Committee of the People’s Republic of China donated computers and accessories to the Union Solidarity and Development Association at the USDA Headquarters on University Avenue here this morning.

Concerning the donation, Chinese Ambassador Mr Guan Mu said that China and Myanmar are friendly and good neighbouring countries sharing the same border. From time immemorial, the two peoples have harmoniously dealt with each other as Paukphaw relatives. The bilateral friendly cooperation has been flourishing due to the care and nurture given by the leaders of the two sides. The two countries have been mutually cooperating in the political, economic, trade, cultural, education and health sectors. It can be said the friendly relations between the two countries have reached their peak.

At the invitation of the USDA secretary-general, Vice-Chairman of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee Mr Wang Zhaoguo paid a goodwill visit to Myanmar in November 2005, and held a meeting with the Secretary-General. He paid courtesy calls on SPDC Chairman Senior General Than Shwe and Vice-Chairman Vice-Senior General Maung Aye. So, his visit was successful. The Chinese ambassador expressed thanks to the secretary-general and responsible personnel who contributed to the visit to be successful.

The National People’s Congress and the Chinese government placed emphasis on further improvement of the China-Myanmar friendly relations and mutual cooperation and are willing to help Myanmar government and people for national economic development of Myanmar and for raising the standard of living of the people. In conclusion, he said the two sides have to make collaborative efforts to deepen the China-Myanmar Paukphaw relations and to accelerate the exchange programmes and cooperation in various fields.

After the ceremony, the Chinese ambassador and the secretary-general discussed friendly cooperation between the youth of the two sides. Also present were USDA Joint Secretary-General U Zaw Min, CEC Member U’ Tin Naing, and officials of the USDA Headquarters.

MNA

Computers and accessories and DVD players presented by China to USDA.

MNA

Diplomats see off Indonesian
President Dr Susilo Bambang
Yudhoyono and
Madame Kristiani Herrawati and
goodwill delegation at Yangon International Airport.
(News on page 1) MNA
**Indonesian President visits Shwedagon Pagoda**

**YANGON,** 2 March — The Indonesian goodwill delegation led by Indonesian President Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati today visited Shwedagon Pagoda and National Museum here.

When they arrived at Shwedagon Pagoda, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko and members of the pagoda board of trustees welcomed them.

At the pagoda, Dr Susilo Bambang signed in the visitors’ book and donated cash to the pagoda funds through Deputy Minister Thura Aung Ko.

Afterwards, they viewed the jade Buddha Image, the great bell donated by King Thayawady and the old hitdaw (umbrella) of the pagoda donated by King Mindon in 1871.

At 9 am, the delegation arrived at the People’s Square where Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Linn and wife welcomed them.

Dr Susilo Bambang and Madame Kristiani Herrawati planted the star flowers tree at the People’s Square to mark the goodwill visit.

Afterwards, they visited National Museum where Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung and officials welcomed them. President Dr Susilo Bambang signed in the visitors’ book of the museum.

President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani arrived here yesterday to pay a State visit to Myanmar at the invitation of Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyang Kyang.

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**Establishments at Thagara Industrial Region inspected**

**YANGON,** 2 March — Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin made an inspection tour of Thagara Industrial Region of the Ministry of Industry-2 in Yedashe Township on 26 February.

At the Multi-purpose Diesel Engine Factory Project of Myanmar Automobile and Diesel Engine Industries, the minister heard reports on construction of the foundry shop. The minister oversaw storage of construction materials at the warehouse.

On 27 February, the minister proceeded to Htonbo of Padaung Township. He inspected manufacturing of plastic battery containers and parts, and its production process. Officials of Directorate of Myanmar Industrial Planning conducted the minister round the production site.

On his inspection tour, Minister Maj-Gen Saw Lwin instructed officials to complete construction of the factories in time, to beautify the project site and its environs, and to meet the set standard.

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**Rail Transportation Minister looks into Pyinmana-Taungdwingyi railroad section, holds discussions about rural development tasks**

**YANGON,** 1 March — CEC Member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association, Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min went on an inspection tour of Pyinmana Railway Station yesterday morning.

Upon arrival at the station, the Minister gave instructions on enabling the station and its environs to be clean and pleasant and the travelers to be comfortable with peace of mind.

Accompanied by officials of Myanma Railways, the minister inspected steel beam bridge No 44 with 180 feet long between mile post Nos 236/16 and 236/17 and steel beam bridge No 57 with 180 feet long between mile post Nos 240/6 and 240/7 on Pyinmana-Taungdwingyi railway line and gave instructions on measures to be taken for durability of the bridges before the rainy season and controlling waterways not to erode approach structures away.

Upon arrival at Lewe, the minister met with townselders, members of USDA and social organizations and locals at No 28 Saw Mill in Minpyin village and held discussions about harmonious efforts in rural development tasks and cordially greeted them.

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**Indonesian President Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati visit the National Museum. — MNA**

**Indonesian President Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati plant a commemorative star flower tree. — MNA**

**The Indonesian goodwill delegation seen at the Shwedagon Pagoda. — MNA**

**Minister Maj-Gen Aung Min inspects a bridge on Pyinmana-Taungdwingyi railroad section. — MNA**
Yangon, 2 March — A nurturing ceremony of physic nut, organized by Yangon East District Women’s Affairs Organization and Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee, took place at District Peace and Development Council Office in Thingangyun Township this morning.

Daw Mar Mar Wai, Patron of Yangon Division Women’s Affairs Organization, made a speech. Division Manager of Myanmar Agriculture Service U Aung San explained growing methods of physic nut.

Later, Patron Daw Mar Mar Wai presented physic nut seeds and grafts to Yangon East District WAO for organizing the seminar. Local authorities, the President of the Leading Committee of Myanmar in narcotic drugs elimination, officers of South-West Command Headquarters, the chairman and members of the Leading Committee of Myanmar, police, representatives of social organizations and guests attended the ceremony.

In the opening address, Director-General U Aye Kyaw of Energy Planning Department held discussions on energy cooperation in ASEAN; Director Daw Yin Kyaw Min Tun of Yangon Institute of Economic the topic on economic cooperation in ASEAN; and Director (Management) U Phone Myint of MRTV the topic on ASEAN-COCI and plans of ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information implemented by Myanmar.

In the afternoon session, Director-General U Aung Bwa of ASEAN Affairs Department presided over the seminar. Director U Aye Kyaw of Energy Planning Department held discussions on energy cooperation in ASEAN; Director Daw Yin Kyaw of Transport Department on current status of ASEAN cooperation in transport; Professor Dr Daw Myint Kyi of International Relations Department of Myanmar.

In conclusion, the commander said that fruits of the seminar will contribute toward implementation of the ASEAN Vision 2020. Myanmar, being an ASEAN member country, is actively participating in the respective sector of realizing the three pillars of the ASEAN Vision 2020.

In doing so, ASEAN member countries are to disseminate knowledge on the ASEAN Vision to the people residing in the region. Hence, the holding of the seminar organized by ASEAN-COCI is one of the functional roles of ASEAN. In conclusion, the commander said that fruits of the seminar will contribute toward implementation of the ASEAN Vision 2020.

Chairman of the Supervisory Committee for Organizing ASEAN Information Seminar Series (FY 2005-2006) Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein delivered an opening address.

In the morning session of the seminar presided over by Director U Aye Kyaw of Energy Planning Department, Director-General U Aung Bwa of ASEAN Affairs Department discussed the topic on Overview on ASEAN; Director U Win Thein of ASEAN Affairs Department the topic on Bali Concord II and Vientiane Action Plan; Adviser to the Ministry for National Planning and Economic Development U Maung Maung Yi the topic on ASEAN economic cooperation; Pro-Rector U Kyaw Min Tun of Yangon Institute of Economic the topic on economic cooperation in ASEAN region; and Director (Management) U Phone Myint of MRTV the topic on ASEAN-COCI and plans of ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information implemented by Myanmar.

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China to further improve rural teachers’ quality, payment

BEIJING, 2 March—Chinese Minister of Education Zhou Ji said here Tuesday that concrete measures will be taken to improve rural teacher’s quality and payment, with a specific fund to be launched in the near future.

At a press conference held at the Information Office of the State Council, Zhou told reporters that large disparity still exists in the educational sector between rural and urban areas in China. To improve rural teacher’s quality is key to solving the problem.

“Therefore, the Chinese Government will set up specific funds to support outstanding young teachers to work in outlying rural areas,” Zhou said.

China has drawn a clear blueprint to promote rural education, Zhou said. In the next two years, it will make rural students exempt of all education tuition fees during the period of compulsory education and provide free textbooks and boarding subsidies for school kids from needy families. And in the next five years, the country will spend 218.2 billion yuan (around 27 billion US dollars) to help improve education in its rural areas.

In addition, he said, the State Council has made a draft amendment to China’s Law on Compulsory Education and tabled it to lawmakers on 4 February.

S Korea cargo ship hit by storm in E China

SHANGHAI, 2 March—A cargo ship from South Korea encountered heavy storms in the East China Sea on Monday and as of 3:40 pm Tuesday, all the 16 crew members were rescued.

The source with Donghai Rescue Bureau, subordinated to the Ministry of Communications, said the ship loaded with 6,100 tons of coal, named MV.CHUNYEON, was hit by the storms at 10:40 am Monday near the estuary of Minjiang River.

The discovery is rare because of its bird-shape and numerous openings indicate that it belonged to a historical period from 3000 BC to 2050 BC. Usually these types of jars were made only one opening on the top, said Wang Haidong, president of the Gansu Provincial Majiayao Culture Society.

The jar is 32 centimetres high and 40 centimetres in diameter. There are two openings which are eight centimetres and three centimetres in diameter respectively at the top of the jar, according to local archaeologist. There is also a large opening located on the side of the jar and small one in the middle on the jar’s, they said.

The experts said the painted jar unearthed in Lintao belongs to late period of the Majiayao culture. Designs on ancient vessels often reflect the lives and environment of their makers, so the jar will help historians who study the culture.

Laurent Guittard, chief steward on an airliner between the French Ocean Indian island of Reunion and Paris sprays an organic product inside the cabin to eradicate all insects, on Monday, 27 Feb, 2006. —INTERNET

Philippine President announces new appointments in Cabinet

MNL, 2 March—Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo made adjustment to her Cabinet on Wednesday with new appointments.

Cabinet Officer for Presidential Engagements Conrado Limcaoco was named as Philippine Information Agency Director-General. The announcement was made by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita on Wednesday. Limcaoco would replace Renato Velasco who meanwhile was named chief of the Presidential Management Staff.

Velasco replaced Rigoberto Tiglao, who had been confirmed as Philippine Ambassador to Greece. Ermita said one of his undersecretaries Gamaliel Cordoba would take over Limcaoco’s position.

The new appointments were part of the on-going changes in the Cabinet started by President Arroyo since February, Ermita added. —MNA/Xinhua

A Fiat Grande Punto is shown together with Microsoft equipment during the Press days of the 76th Geneva International Motor Show, on Wednesday, 1 March, 2006, in Geneva, Switzerland. —INTERNET

Security Forces discover large quantity of explosives in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 2 March—Nepal’s Joint Security Forces have seized a large quantity of explosives in a western city, Ministry of Defence (MoD) said here Wednesday.

“The explosives were seized Tuesday from a truck with Indian registration number at Bhairahawa City in Rupandehi District, some 300 kilometres west of Kathmandu,” MoD said in a Press statement.

The explosives seized include 2,500 kilos of Gelatin, 475 kilos of Neo gel-90 (Emulsion Explosive Class-2), 7,500 metres of safety fuse, 29,000 No. 27 detonators and 10,200 pieces of No 33 detonators, the statement said.

The materials were discovered during a regular police check at Bhairahawa City, a southern area bordering India. They were found concealed under a heap of charcoal loaded on the truck.

The anti-government guerrillas of Nepal been successful in smuggling into the country explosives and the damage they might have caused to public life and property cannot even be imagined, the statement added.

It was the largest quantity of such materials ever seized in the country, Bishwa JB Rana, superintendent of Nepali police, told reporters.

MNA/Xinhua

29 Taleban militants join Afghan Government

KABUL, 2 March—Twenty-nine more anti-government militants laid down their arms and joined the Afghan Government on Tuesday, the head of Commission for Strengthening Peace (CSP) said.

“Around 29 dissident brothers from Taleban today joined the peace process and vowed to help build their country,” Sibghatullah Mujadadi told journalists at a ceremony held in connection with former militants’ surrender.

Over 1,100 militants, according to officials, have laid down their arms and joined the government over the past nine months since the establishment of CSP.

Terming militancy as un-Islamic, Mujadadi called on other anti-government militias to give up insurgency and join the peace process.

“If the government ensures security of Taleban members and provides job to them, more Taleban operatives will give up resistance and join the government,” former militant Mohammad Hashim of northwest Faryab province told Xinhua.

MNA/Xinhua
Portuguese police seize two tons of marijuana

LISBON, 1 March — Portuguese police seized two tons of marijuana and killed one suspected drug trafficker on Tuesday in a raid in southern Portugal, said the police on Tuesday.

The suspected drug dealers opened fire when they were surprised by the police, triggering a shootout during which a 20-year-old trafficker was killed. The police arrested eight Portuguese — six men and two women — all of whom have criminal records including drug trafficking, robbery and document forgery.

The suspects, aged between 20 to 25, will appear before a bail judge on Wednesday morning.

The drugs, divided into 70 packets, were loaded onto some small vehicles from a boat on the Albufeira Beach in Algarve, southern Portugal.

Another dozen of suspects had possibly escaped, according to the police. — MNA/Xinhua

HIV infections on rise in Belgium

BRUSSELS, 1 March — An average of three people are diagnosed HIV positive in Belgium everyday, while the rate recorded in the 1980s was two people a day, the Scientific Institute for Public Health and the College of AIDS Reference Laboratories said on Tuesday.

Between 1997 and 2004, the number of HIV infections in Belgium rose by 43 percent, the institutes said. The increase occurred among both immigrant and native Belgian communities. Figures also showed that 66 percent of HIV-positive men were infected after having gay or bis-sexual sex, while 87 percent of women were infected via heterosexual sex.

Since the start of the HIV epidemic in the 1980s and up until 2004, some 17,968 people have been diagnosed with HIV in Belgium. Among them, 1,763 people have died. — MNA/Xinhua

China warns foreigners who break law to be deported

BEIJING, 1 March — As a new law on public order comes into effect, China’s Public Security Bureau is warning that foreigners who break the law can be and will be deported.

The Law on Penalties for Offenses against Public Order, which comes into being on 1 March, provides guidelines on how to punish violators of 238 different offenses, said Wu Heping, spokesman of Public Security Ministry. The previous law listed 73 offenses.

“The Ministry of Public Security will be granted more authority in disciplining offenders, including deporting foreigners who break the law,” said Ke Liangdong, director of the legal affairs office of the ministry.

This is the first update of law in two decades and was required because of the dramatic rise in the number of foreigners in China and changes in Chinese society. New offenses include extreme cases of undermining social order under cover of religion, prostitution, living off the avails of prostitution and buying sex.

“It is possible for foreigners to be deported for any wrongful act named in the law,” said Ke, adding that there is some flexibility and the circumstances of the incident will be taken into account.

He said, a foreign offender can also be fined or detained.

Chinese local police can not deport anyone without the approval from the Ministry of Public Security or local governments which are authorized by the ministry.

There are “many cases” of foreigners committing offenses, said Wu Mingshan, an official with the Public Security Ministry. “The most common offenses involve prostitution, theft, and assault.”

Wu said people with diplomatic privilege are exempted from the penalties of the law as they are in most countries.

Foreigners in China are expected to understand the new laws and the ministry is working on an English-language version of the text, he said. — MNA/Xinhua

Police seize nine kilos of hashish in Kathmandu

KATHMANDU, 1 March — Nepali police seized nine kilos of hashish from a passenger bus in Kathmandu on Tuesday morning. Radio Nepal reported.

The narcotic was seized from a bus belonging to Danphe Travels, which was packed in two big bags, the state-owned radio quoted the Sorakhutte ward police office as saying. Two persons who smuggled the hashish to Bharahawa were arrested, the radio noted. — MNA/Xinhua

Drive with care
Renowned Russian pianist to perform in HK

HONG KONG, 1 March — Russian pianist Evgeny Kissin, who is famous for his understanding and performance of the classics of Beethoven and Chopin, will give a piano recital in Hong Kong in April, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department said here on Tuesday.

Kissin’s “Encore Series” will be staged at 8:00 pm on 4 April at the Concert Hall, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, according to a Press release by the department.

Tickets will be available from 2 March onwards. The department also decided to grant half-price concessions to senior citizens, people with disabilities, full-time students and Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients as normal tickets are priced from 550 to 200 Hong Kong dollars (71 to 26 US dollars).

In the Hong Kong performance, Kissin will perform Beethoven’s and Chopin’s delightful classics, including Beethoven’s piano sonata and Chopin’s scherzo, according to the department.

Kissin entered the Moscow Gnessin school of Music when he was six, where he was a student of Anna Pavlova Kantor. He came to international attention in March, 1984, when then 12-year-old Kissin performed Chopin’s Piano Concertos in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory under Dmitri Kitaenko.

Turkey exports 40 mln flowers to Europe for Women’s Day

ANKARA, 1 March — Forty million flowers have been exported to Europe from Turkey’s Mediterranean Province of Antalya for the upcoming Women’s Day on 8 March, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported on Tuesday.

Osman Bagdatlioglu, Deputy Chairman of Antalya’s Flower Exporters’ Union, was quoted as saying that 80 per cent of these exported flowers would head to Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria.

He said Turkish flower exporters expected a revenue of 5-6 million US dollars, adding that they would increase flower exports to Europe by 30 per cent next year.

More needs to be done to halt Britain’s obesity rise

LONDON, 1 March — The British Government and relevant organizations need to put in more efforts to halt the rapid rise of obesity, especially in children, a report said on Tuesday.

According to the report issued by the National Audit Office, the Healthcare Commission and the Audit Commission, 13.7 per cent of British youngsters were obese in 2003, and the number is still rising. Obesity costs the National Health Service one billion pounds (1.75 billion US dollars) each year, and a further 2.3-billion pound (4 billion dollars) for the economy.

If the trend continues, the cost to the economy would rise to 3.6-billion pounds (6.3 billion dollars) by 2010, the report said.

Childhood obesity “is a causal factor in a number of chronic diseases and conditions including high blood pressure, heart disease and type 2 diabetes”, Healthcare Commission Chief Executive Anna Walker said in the report.

She praised the government for setting tough targets in fighting obesity, but added that more work needed to be done, such as making sure all government agencies and organizations work together more effectively and sending more guidance to local schools, health groups and parents.

Australia to buy Lockheed missiles for fighter jets

CANBERRA, 1 March — Australia announced on Tuesday it will buy long-range missiles from Lockheed Martin Corp for its strike aircraft, but dropped plans to arm its maritime surveillance planes with the missiles.

Defence Minister Brendan Nelson said the contract, worth between 350 million Australian dollars (259 million US dollars) to 450 million Australian dollars, is part of a 28.8-billion Australian-dollar plan to upgrade the country’s defence capability by 2010.

He said the government would buy an undisclosed number of the Joint Air-to-Surface Stand-off Missiles, a stealth missile which can hit targets 250 miles away, for its fleet of 21 F/A-18 Hornets.

Lockheed Martin won the contract beating out Europe’s Taurus Systems GmbH, which makes the KEPD 350 missile, and Boeing Co’s SLAM-ER missile. Nelson said the extra reach of the new missiles, due to enter service by December 2009, did not represent any change to Australia’s strategic defence outlook.

“The acquisition of long-range missiles does not represent a change in Australia’s defence posture and capability planning,” he said in a statement.

Samsung builds largest offshore production, R&D base in N China city

TIANJIN, 1 March — Samsung, from South Korea (ROK), has increased its investment in this north China’s manufacturing base from 29 million US dollars to 197 million US dollars, becoming the largest cell phone maker on the Chinese Mainland.

Company officials said Samsung is building the largest overseas mobile phone production and R&D (Research and Development) base in Tianjin.

According to the local commerce commission, the Samsung Telecommunications Co. in Tianjin will expand its annual production capacity from 24 million GSM (global system for mobile telecommunications) cell phones to 42 million units and its annual sales income to 4.6 billion US dollars. — MNA/Xinhua

A Chinese artist working on restoring a silk mural taken from the 230- year old Qianlong Gardens in the Forbidden City, Beijing, China, Wednesday, on 1 March, 2006. — INTERNET

The view of the scene of a train crash in Buenos Aires, on 27 Feb, 2006. — INTERNET

Brazil’s soccer legend Pele poses with children during a promotional event for the 2006 World Cup in Germany, in Shanghai, east China, on 27 Feb, 2006. — INTERNET

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SPORTS

Federer struggles past Kuwaiti to reach Dubai quarters

DUBAI, 2 March — A passive Roger Federer struggled to defeat Kuwaiti Mohammed Al Ghareeb 7-6, 6-4 at the Dubai Open on Wednesday.

Marat Safin failed to follow up his first round victory over world number five Nikolay Davydenko, losing 7-6, 6-4 to Belgian Olivier Rochus in his first tournament for six months.

Serving well, Al Ghareeb -- ranked 488 in the world -- showed no sign of nerves in the biggest match of his career and after breaking to lead 3-2, he consolidated his

Former Chelsea striker Osgood passes away

LONDON, 2 March — Former Chelsea striker Peter Osgood has died of a heart attack, aged 59, the London club said on Wednesday.

Osgood, who worked behind the scenes at Chelsa until his death, was taken behind the scenes at Chelsea until his death, was taken

Ireland beat Sweden 3-0 win on Staunton debut

DUBLIN, 2 March — Ireland gave new coach Steve Staunton a perfect start with an assured 3-0 victory over World Cup finalists Sweden in a friendly on Wednesday.

The home side, who have not qualified for the finals in Germany, piled on the pressure from the start with Chelsea winger Damien Duff giving Sweden the most trouble early on.

Duff was rewarded with his first goal for Ireland since November 2003, his shot after cutting into the box deflecting in off Sweden's Olof Mellberg in the 36th minute. Ireland dominated throughout, while Sweden, traditionally strong in defence, looked leaden-footed at the back.

Tottenham's Robbie Keane, wearing the captain's armband for the first time, scored two minutes into the second half after being released by Levante's Ian Harte. Liam Miller, currently on loan to Leeds from Manchester United, capped a perfect night for Staunton, dashing through from midfield and blasting into the roof of the net from 20 yards.

Ireland held a lead against the run of play in the 13th minute when striker Abdelkader Keita cracked the ball past Iker Casillas at the far post after the Spanish defence had failed to deal with a cross from midfielder Kanga Akale.

Canadahand returning

Austria coach losing start

VIENNA, 2 March — Josef Hickerson got off to a losing start in his second spell as Austria coach when his team lost 2-0 at home to Canada in a friendly on Wednesday.

Jim Brennan scored both goals for the visitors after coming on as a substitute at the start of the second half. Brennan twice pounced on loose balls the Austrians failed to clear, though he was helped by a deflection for his second goal.

Canada hand returning

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Raul hopes galactico

Disappears with Perez exit

MADRID, 2 March — Real Madrid captain Raul hopes the term galactico disappears from use after Florentino Perez resigned as the club's president on Monday.

"This word has caused the club more damage over the last few years than anything else," Raul told a news conference on Tuesday. "I hope this word will go away now. I hope the people see us from now on as sportsmen and as professionals.

"We are representing an important club with millions of fans and will try to give our all for them.

"Galactico, which loosely means superstar, has been used to describe the high-profile players Perez lured to the club during his six-year reign.

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"Galactico, which loosely means superstar, has been used to describe the high-profile players Perez lured to the club during his six-year reign.

Spain grab rousing 3-2 win over Ivory Coast

VALLADOLID (Spain), 2 March — Spain twice came from behind for a 3-2 victory at home to African Nations Cup runners-up Ivory Coast in a pulsating World Cup warm-up in Valladolid on Wednesday.

Centre back Juanito grabbed the winner five minutes from time when he headed in low past keeper Jean-Jacques Tiemei.

after a corner to help his side extend their unbeaten run to 19 matches under Luís Aragonès.

"People will have enjoyed a game against a very good side," said a satisfied Aragonès. "It was difficult because physically they are very strong, but we created more chances than them and played better too."

Ivory Coast coach Hervé Renard said he was pleased with his side's performance despite the defeat.

"Without playing a great game we got a decent result," said the Frenchman. "We could have prevented their three goals and we didn't have our first-choice defence out. "Spain are a young team who haven't lost for two years and we need to play good sides like this if we are to prepare for the World Cup in the best possible way."

Michel's side took the lead against the run of play in the 13th minute when striker Abdelkader Keita cracked the ball past Iker Casillas at the far post after the Spanish defence had failed to deal with a cross from midfielder Kanga Akale.

Agassi beaten by German Phau in Dubai

DUBAI, 2 March — Andre Agassi slumped to a 7-5, 7-5 defeat against Germany's Bjorn Phau in the second round of the Dubai Open on Wednesday.

Playing only his second tournament of the year after injury, the 35-year-old American looked second best against his 80th-ranked opponent, who played solidly from the baseline and showed astonishing speed at the net.

His aggressive play against an opponent who never really found his rhythm allowed Phau to break for 3-2.

Agassi levelled at 4-4 when Phau netted a forehand, but the German struck a glorious backhand pass on the run to break again for 6-5 and he served out the set to love.

Both players earned break point opportunities in the second set and it was Phau who broke first to love in 4-3.

Azerbaijan hold Ukraine to 0-0 draw in friendly

BAKU, 2 March — Azerbaijan held World Cup finalists Ukraine to a 0-0 draw in a friendly on Tuesday, the first time the teams have met at this level.

An early strike from Ukraine's Maxim Kulpichenko hit the bar, otherwise the team, without top striker Andriy Shevchenko, failed to threaten in the first half.

After 32 minutes Azerbaijan's captain Rasch Sadygov almost opened the score with his right-footed shot into the net. It was ruled out.

Both teams failed to convert a couple of good chances early in the second half of a scrappy game fought out in midfield.

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Britain failed to keep control over tsunami aid

LONDON, 2 March. — Britain should keep close tabs on the more than 50 million pounds (87.35 million dollars) in aid provided to Asian tsunami victims, the country’s spending watchdog, the National Audit Office (NAO) said on Wednesday.

Britain initially offered 75 million pounds (131 million dollars) to the tsunami victim countries after the disaster occurred on 26 December, 2004, but later reduced it to 64.1 million pounds (112 million dollars). Among the aid, more than 50 million pounds (87.5 million dollars) are being paid to third parties as grants to be distributed to the countries later. However, the NAO reported that some projects handled by these third parties, such as United Nations agencies and charity groups, were delayed. As a result, unspent grant money was held by the third parties.

“It remains important to keep control over the 50 million pounds paid in grants to other organizations and to know how it is spent,” John Bourn, the head of the NAO, said. — MNA/Xinhua

Gas pipeline blown up in southwestern Pakistan

QUETTA (Pakistan), 2 March — Militants blew up a gas pipeline in Baluchistan on Wednesday, the latest attack in the South-west province where rebels are fighting for greater autonomy, officials said.

The pipeline feeds gas to Baluchistan and officials of Sui Southern Gas Co. Ltd, which owns the pipeline, said supplies to consumers remained unaffected. The blast occurred in the early hours near Pakistan’s main gas field at Sui and damaged a section of a supply pipeline, Arif Tareen, spokesman for Sui Southern Gas said.

Tareen said supplies to consumers would not be affected. “We have made alternate arrangements to supply gas smoothly to the affected area so there is no disruption in supplies,” Tareen told Reuters. — MNA/Reuters

Grenade accidentally explodes at Russian security office

Moscow, 2 March— A stun grenade on Wednesday exploded as a result of mishandling, leaving two injured, at a regional department of Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB), the Interfax news agency reported.

The blast hit the FSB regional department in Nizhny Novgorod, Northeast of Moscow, at 10:25 am (0725 GMT), the department’s Press service was quoted as saying.

Two employees were injured but their lives were not in danger, the department said.

The military prosecutor’s office of the Nizhny Novgorod Garrison is investigating the incident, according to the department. — MNA/Xinhua

Revellers walk back to their cars and head home after the Mardi Gras celebration ended at 12 am on Bourbon Street in the French Quarter, announcing the official end of Mardi Gras in New Orleans, on 1 March 2006. — INTERNET

WEATHER

Thursday, 2 March, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather have been generally fair in the whole country. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Shan and Chin States, Mandalay, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Divisions, (5°C) to (6°C) above normal in Kayin State, Sagaing and Magway Divisions and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant day temperature was Magway (40°C).

Maximum temperature on 1-3-2006 was 96°F. Minimum temperature on 2-3-2006 was 65°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 2-3-2006 was (87%). Total sunshine hours on 1-3-2006 was (7.3) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 2-3-2006 were nil at Mountaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2006 were nil at Mountaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) mph from Southeast at (12:30) hours MST on 1-3-2006.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the North Bay and Southwest Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 3-3-2006: Possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions, weather will be partly cloudy in Rakhine and Mon States, Ayeyawady and Yangon Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (40%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight increase of day temperatures in the upper Myanmar areas.

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

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 3-3-2006: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 3-3-2006: Generally fair weather.
At 3.50 pm, President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati and party arrived at VIP Lounge of Yangon International Airport. Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing cordially greeted them.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe presented a documentary photo album on the visit and VCD as gifts to the Indonesian President.

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and party bade farewell to the Indonesian President and Madame and party at the special aircraft.

Afterwards, Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing cordially shook hands with the guest President and Madame.

When the special aircraft carrying Indonesian President Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and Madame Kristiani Herrawati and party left here at 4.15 pm, Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and party waved them from the VIP Lounge of Yangon International Airport.

MNA

Myanmar has witnessed many Pariyatti monasteries, each of which can accommodate one thousand to two thousand members of the Sangha to pursue Pariyatti education. For instance, in 2005-2006 academic year, altogether 1,334 novices and boy students of various national races are studying under Dhamma Kathika Sayadaws, Maha Dhamma Kathika Sayadaws, Kammathana Cariya Sayadaws and Maha Kammathana Cariya Sayadaws in Naga Cave Kalaywa Tawya monastic education school.

YADANASHAYADAW (LOILEM)