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

Senior General Than Shwe bids farewell to Dr APJ Abdul Kalam

YANGON, 11 March — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Senior General Than Shwe bade farewell to the goodwill delegation led by President of the Republic of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who had completed his State visit, at Yangon International Airport this morning.

Present at the airport together with Senior General Than Shwe were Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence, Prime Minister General Soe Win, Secretary-I of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, the Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command, the ministers, the Myanmar Ambassador to India, the Director-General of the Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, departmental heads, Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Bhaskar Kumar Mitra and embassy staff.

At 10.30 am, the goodwill delegation led by President of the Republic of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam arrived at the VIP Lounge of (See page 16)
Sixth meeting of Fifth State Central Working Committee of Sangha ends

YANGON, 11 March — The sixth meeting of the Fifth State Central Working Committee of the Sangha continued for the final day at Mahā Pasana Cave on Kaba Aye Hill here this morning.


SCWCS Joint-Secr tary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Dwpitaka Kovida Bhaddanta Jagarabhivamsa of Kalewatawya Monastery in Mayagony Township, assessed the comments on tasks carried out last year. The meeting chairman sought the approval of the Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jayikadhaja Bhaddanta Vissuta of Nigyawdayon Nayungbintha Monastery in Pathein reported on the methods for the upgrading of State Pariyatti Sasana universities and its divisions signed the Sasana record book regarding the election of new members, resolutions, approvals and records.

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kumara read out Nigamaṇa Ovadakathā, and the meeting ended later in the afternoon.

U Hla Aye and Kobsay traditional medicine house family of No 177, Wadan Street, Lamdagaw Township, Yangon Division, offered alms food to the Sayadaws this morning. — MNA

Cash and kind for triplets

YANGON, 11 March — A ceremony to present cash and kind to parents of the triplets was held at North Okkalapa Hospital yesterday morning.

Central Executive Committee members of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and the Executive Director presented K 50,000, medicines, clothes, blankets and bottles of toilet powder to Ko Kyaw Htay Khang and Ma Hla Hla Win, parents of the triplets.

They viewed the babies and spoke words of encouragement to the parents. — MNA

PERSPECTIVES

Sunday, 12 March, 2006

Tatmadaw shouldering national defence and nation-building tasks

The Tatmadaw, which is leading the State, came into being during the independence struggle. Together with the people it restored the independence. From the period of independence struggles to date, the young men who joined the Tatmadaw did not seek any privileges for personal gain and joined only with the spirit of serving the State and the people.

Since its birth, the Tatmadaw has extraordinary significance. Being a capable and well-disciplined Tatmadaw, it won the love of the national people in successive eras.

Myanna Tatmadaw is equipped with the twelve noble traditions—a patriotic Tatmadaw, a united Tatmadaw, a loyal Tatmadaw, a united Tatmadaw, a capable Tatmadaw, a Tatmadaw which makes heroic sacrifices, a Tatmadaw which does not seek personal gain, a Tatmadaw of noble spirit and high morale, a Tatmadaw which possesses true quality of overcoming obstacles, a Tatmadaw which can endure hardships, a tenacious and persevering Tatmadaw, and a Tatmadaw which always upholds Our Three Main National Causes.

At present, the government hand in hand with the people is making all-out efforts for the country to keep abreast of the global nations. In the meantime, the seven-step Road Map has been laid and is being implemented for the emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation.

The Tatmadaw in the best interest of the State and the people has turned nearly 61 years, while safeguarding independence and sovereignty. Engaged in nation-building endeavours, the Tatmadaw is giving priority to national defence duty, the main duty.

The Tatmadaw members are not only safeguarding the life and property of the people but also participating in the national development tasks. Together with the people, they are taking part in the construction of motor roads, railroads and bridges and building dams and reservoirs across the nation. This highlights an innate sense of the Tatmadaw members, which is based on nationalist spirit and Union Spirit.

We firmly believe that the Tatmadaw together with the people will be able to shoulder the responsibilities in building a modern and developed nation, while safeguarding independence and sovereignty.

MMAW personnel present cash and kind to parents of triplets at North Okkalapa General Hospital. — MNA
China slams US human rights report as mistaken, hypocritical

BEIJING, 10 March — China on Thursday voiced its strong dissatisfaction with the United States after the State Department issued a report condemning China’s human rights record. The “Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2005” is untruthful and crude, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said at a regular Press conference.

The report, issued Wednesday, criticized the political system of Hong Kong and its restrictions on journalism. Qin said that China’s Constitution respects and safeguards human rights. The Chinese Government adheres to a policy it calls “putting people above everything else,” he said, and has made many efforts toward building a democratic country under the rule of law. Human rights in China have kept improving, he added. China’s progress in this regard have been recognized and welcomed by the whole world, and the Chinese people are satisfied with the progress,” said Qin. The spokesman said the Chinese Government has not deviated from its policy of “one country, two systems” in Hong Kong and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), and supports democratic development in the HKSAR in accordance with its unique circumstances.

Hong Kong citizens have enjoyed their full legal rights and basic freedom, Qin added. “We disagree of any foreign governments or organizations making wanton comments on the issue,” Qin said.

Qin urged the US government to stop interfering in the internal affairs of other countries, yet said “The US side should focus more on its own human rights problems.” “Its various human rights violations and double standards on the issue have drawn increasingly strong criticism from its own people and the international society,” the spokesman said.

Ecuadoreans protest against proposed trade pact with US

QUITO, 10 March — Ecuadoreans on Wednesday staged strikes against a proposed trade deal with the United States and demanded cancellation of an oil contract with a US company.

Demonstrators, including workers, students, peasants and members of indigenous groups, blocked main roads through central Quito Wednesday morning. They protested against the government’s trade talks next Monday with US representatives on a possible free trade agreement, which has been passed by Colombia and Peru. They also asked the government to scrap a contract with Occidental, a US oil company.

Ecuador’s Civil Defence forces dispersed the crowds with tear gas and surrounded marchers who came within two blocks of the presidential palace. — MNA/Xinhua

Flooding in Malawi leaves 6,000 homeless

LILONGWE, 10 March — Floods in Malawi’s southern lakeshore district of Mangochi have left over 6,000 people homeless, forcing local authorities to close schools and use them as shelter camps for the displaced.

The floods, caused by persistent heavy rains in the past three days, have also swept away staple maize gardens and destroyed roads that link up one of the country’s prime tourist areas.

“These are the worst floods in 28 years to hit Mangochi District. Houses have collapsed, villages have been submerged in water, while crops, livestock and several bridges have been swept away,” the district’s Director of Planning and Development, Harry Chipeni, told Xinhua Wednesday.

Suicide bomber in Fallujah kills at least 11

FAULUJAH, 11 March — A suicide truck bomb struck a checkpoint manned by US soldiers and Iraqi security forces in the former Sunni stronghold of Fallujah on Friday, killing at least 11, including five police, police said.

There was no immediate word from the US military on the blast in eastern Fallujah, 30 miles west of Baghdad. — AP/Reuters

Rat-squirrel not extinct after all

WASHINGTON, 10 March — It has been extinct for 11 million years. It’s a species believed to have collapsed, villages have been submerged in water, while crops, livestock and several bridges have been swept away.”

This image provided by the Journal of Natural History.

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Sunday, 12 March, 2006

US military troop death toll rises to 2,306

WASHINGTON, 10 March—As of Friday, 10 March, 2006, at least 2,306 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 1,807 died as a result of hostile action, according to the military’s numbers.

The AP count is two lower than the Defence Department’s tally, last updated Friday at 10 am EST.

The British military has reported 103 deaths; Italy, 27; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Bulgaria, 13; Spain, 11; Slovakia, three; Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Netherlands, Thailand, two each; and Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, one death each. — Internet

Visitors crowd the Deutsche Telecom booth, where a giant pink football has been installed during the 2006 CeBIT information and telecommunication technology fair in Hanover. This year’s soccer World Cup in Germany is firing up the consumer electronics market as new generation televisions offer fans the next best thing to the live experience. — Internet

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Iran vows to resist pressure on nuclear issue

TEHRAN, 10 March — Iranian Supreme Leader Seyed Ali Ali Khameini vowed here on Thursday that Iran is fixed to resist any pressure and conspiracy imposed on the country’s nuclear programme.

“During the past 27 years, we have experienced such situations for many times. Now, the Iranian nation is determined to resist any pressure or conspiracy,” Khameini was quoted by state television as saying.

“We will forge ahead with the work toward mastery of nuclear technology,” Khameini said.

Earlier in the day, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Iran would never give in to bullies on its nuclear issue, for nuclear energy is an undeniable right of the country.

“The Iranian nation will never give in to bullies, and all of them are announcing that nuclear energy is an undeniable right,” Ahmadinejad was quoted by the official IRNA news agency as saying in the western province of Lorestan.

Ahmadinejad said the time of bullying over the Iranian nuclear issue had come to an end, and Iran would never be forced to do anything.—INTERNET

New HIV/AIDS cases on the rise in women, girls in US

NEW YORK, 10 March — Women and girls — get out your red ribbons — March 10th is National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. As of 2004, 27 percent of new AIDS cases in the United States were in women — and women of colour, especially African American women, made up the majority of these new cases, according to the US Centers for Disease and Prevention.

To raise awareness of this growing problem in the US and globally, March 10th will mark the first National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, Dr. Anthony S Fauci announced in a statement. In the early days of the AIDS pandemic, fewer women were infected with HIV, Fauci, Director of the National Institutes of Allergy and Infectious Diseases continued. However, as of 2005, 46 per cent of adults living with HIV/AIDS throughout the world were women. These 17.5 million women represent 1 million more cases than reported in 2003.

And, according to the World Health Organization’s UNAIDS, the “vase majority” of women become infected through heterosexual intercourse. — MNA/Reuters

4 Iraqi soldiers killed, injured in car bomb in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 11 March — A car bomb went off in southwestern Baghdad near an Iraqi Army patrol on Friday, killing a soldier and wounding three others, an Interior Ministry source said.

“A car bomb detonated around midnight near an Iraqi Army patrol in the Radhwanyah area, killing a soldier and wounding three others,” the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity. Iraqi security forces cordoned off the area searching for attackers, added the source.

Earlier in the day, a roadside bomb hit a US convoy setting a tank on fire in eastern Baghdad, according to a source from the same ministry. — MNA/Xinhua

Peru museum has diseases on the brain

LIMA, 10 March — Thousands of human brains float in jars of formaldehyde at a unique museum that gives visitors to Lima an up-close view of brain diseases, from trichinosis to stroke.

More than 2,500 brains are on display in a modest museum in Lima sponsored by the National Institute of Neurological Sciences (INCN). Visitors can see brains of persons felled by AIDS, Alzheimers, clots, hemorrhages, heart attacks, and a myriad of tumours. The museum is the proud owner of a brain that died of Creutzfeld-Jacob disease, the human variant of “mad cow,” which results in progressive dementia and loss of muscle control.

Also on exhibit: the brains of people who died of trichinosis, the most common brain disease in Peru, caused by eating undercooked meat, usually pork. One brain, donated by US physicians, is sliced in half and the right hemisphere dissected to show the skin, bone, arteries and veins.

The brains, collected through the years, are displayed in a four-meter (13-foot) high cabinet. A nearby autopsy room holds only a concrete table, a hose, and a 30-centimetre (12-inch)-long knife for slicing open skulls.

Meanwhile, in eastern Baghdad, forces cordoned off the area searching for attackers, added the source.

Earlier in the day, a roadside bomb hit a US convoy setting a tank on fire in eastern Baghdad, according to a source from the same ministry. — MNA/Xinhua
Chinese expert says Indo-China cooperation benefits Asia

NEW DELHI, 10 March — Sino-India cooperation will lead Asia to a new century of peace, stability and prosperity, said Liu Jingqin, vice-president of Chinese People’s Association for Peace and Disarmament, here Thursday. The rapid economic growth of China and India will support the sustainable and steady economic growth in Asia, Liu said at the Seminar on China-India Relations held here Thursday, one of the functions for “China-India Friendship Year”.

“As the two largest developing countries in Asia, the development of China and India is vital for the development of Asia,” he said. Both China and India have reported remarkable economic growth in the past few years, which helped make Asia the most active years, which helped make growth in the past two decades. The two countries enjoy great potential in economic cooperation, he said, adding that working together instead of competition will benefit the two.

MNA/Xinhua

Three sailors missing after ship sinks off Egypt

VALLETTA, 10 March — Three sailors were missing on Thursday but 12 were rescued after a Maltese-flagged cargo ship sank off the Egyptian coast, Maltese officials said.

The Malta Maritime Authority said it was investigating the sinking of the Teklikva, which Lloyds Casualty Reporting identified as a 4,168 deadweight tonne general cargo ship.

Its cargo was not known, Lloyds said in London. Earlier, Egyptian port officials said one sailor was lost, presumed drowned, but that 15 crew were rescued after the ship sank in strong winds and high waves 75 miles from Port Said in northern Egypt.

The ship was travelling from Turkey to Port Said with a cargo of containers, they said.

The Egyptian officials said they had also received a distress signal from a Syrian ship they named as the Rafiq but when a Coast Guard vessel went out to investigate they found it was a false alarm.

The Coast Guard found the Rafiq 12 miles from the port of Damietta in the Nile Delta and brought it safely into port.

MNA/Reuters

At least 26 killed in Ugandan church collapse

KAMPALA, 10 March — At least 26 people were killed in a church collapse accident overnight in a downpour in the northern suburb of Kampala, hospital officials said Thursday.

“Six people died after they were rushed in among 89 injured last night,” Sekabiraj Elishay, the official of Mulago Hospital told Xinhua, bringing the death toll to at least 26, including 20 victims, on the site. “The remaining 83 injured were still under treatment, most of them in severe conditions,” the official of the biggest and best equipped hospital of the capital added. Plain clothed police restrained access to the clinic section while dozens of families waited in the hallway in anxiety.

Another hospital official said the wounds seemed not serious, but they were deep cuts in most cases.

MNA/Reuters

Mass. bottle message ends up in Africa

LYNN, 11 March — A message in a bottle launched in Massachusetts two years ago has travelled halfway around the world. In a letter postmarked from Morocco, 26-year-old Assila Ahmed wrote that he’d found a bottle thrown into the water by Genevieve Hernandez of Lynn.

Hernandez, now a 13-year-old seventh grader, was among group of fifth-graders who on 20 Nov. 2003 put messages in bottles and cast them off from Lynn’s shores that stormy day.

Hernandez said she’s amazed that her green Sprite bottle made it as far as it did since most of them either bounced right back to shore or ended up only as far as the Cape.

“I thought it wasn’t going anywhere,” said Hernandez. “Mine was stuck on the seaweed.”

Students received replies from 14 people before Hernandez received hers. Most were from the Cape Cod area. One made it as far as England. But Hernandez’s bottle had, by far, the longest journey, travelling 3,500 miles.

In the letter to Hernandez, Ahmed said he found the bottle about 10:30am on 18 Dec. 2005. Hernandez’ bright orange card wrapped in plastic bore the address the Brickett School in Lynn, where she attended classes two years ago.

The only request from the African man: a letter back from Hernandez.

Hernandez’s teacher, fifth-grade teacher at Brickett, Sheila Thomas, said he will get one.

INTERNET

Giant trade gap: no end in sight

WASHINGTON, 10 March — America’s trade deficit has been setting records with such frequency that it seems almost tiresome to hear it again: Another month, another $68.5 billion. But the gap between what America imports and what it exports is growing so rapidly and relentlessly that it is provoking new concern about how long the world’s largest economy can play borrower and consumer to the world.

The issue may take on new urgency in a congressional election year, stoked by news Thursday that the trade deficit hit a new high in January.

The monthly record is attributed to a surge in goods from fast-rising China, a tide of imports affecting the beleaguered US auto industry, and an exodus of dollars going to pay for OPEC oil.

The huge trade imbalance was top of mind with US lawmakers recently, when they quizzed incoming Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke about their economic concerns.

Even if a soft landing were to eventually occur, the trade deficit would be likely to remain an important issue.

The change, when it comes, could bring a weaker dollar and higher interest rates for US borrowers as foreign willingness to lend dollars to the US ebbs. Moreover, the longer it takes for “global imbalances” to begin a correction, the tougher the adjustment could be.

INTERNET
Minister warns companies not to miss business opportunities in China, India

BERLIN, 10 March — German Economics and Technology Minister Michael Glos warned here Thursday German companies not to miss opportunities in China and India.

“...”

very successful so far, but “looking towards the medium term this is probably not enough”.

He added that German companies need to invest in both China and India in their infrastructure development and specific sectors such as engineering and environmental technology.

DIHK president Ludwig Georg Braun echoed him by saying that corporate Germany needed to be careful that it did lose its position at the top of international investors in research and development in China and India.

The German DIHK has been pushing for stronger business role in the two Asian countries, where economic growth has been rapid.

India, Chile sign Free Trade Agreement

NEW DELHI, 10 March — India has signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) with Chile, Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry said here on Wednesday.

Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Kamal Nath said the agreement marks a “watershed in ties between the two countries as it will impart a new dimension to our trade relations in the times to come”.

The agreement was signed by Indian Commerce Secretary SN Menon and Ambassador of Chile to India Jorge Heine on behalf of the Chilean Government.

Kamal Nath said the PTA would take bilateral trade to a higher plan with a substantial growth in two-way trade.

In 2004-05, total trade between India and Chile were valued at 447.54 million US dollars, according to statistics.

Indian products for export include textiles, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, engineering and agricultural machinery, and Chilean products are mainly copper, cellulose, newsprint, jade, fishmeal, wood boards, planks and salmon.

Both sides also discussed the draft reports of the Joint Study Group (JSG) and agreed to submit their findings to their respective governments to consider further action on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries.

Chile is one of India’s major trading partners in Latin America.

Asia Film Festival opens in France

PARIS, 10 March — France’s annual Asian Film Festival opened Wednesday in the chic French resort of Deauville, drawing world attention to Asian film-makers who will present more than 40 movies at the four-day festival.

The eighth edition of the festival, which features films from China, Japan, Thailand, South Korea, Singapore and Indonesia, comprises three separate sections: “Features”, “Action Asia”, and “Panorama”.

In the main competition section of “Features”, four Chinese films— “Dam Street”, “Blue and Cha Cha”, “Falling in Love,” and “AV” — will contend for the most coveted Golden Lotus award.

Death toll rises to 16 in bus accident in Turkey

ANKARA, 10 March — Death toll rose to 16 after a passenger bus plunged into a river in northern Turkey on Thursday, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported.

The bus, which was on route from Istanbul to the eastern province of Van with 39 passengers aboard, drove off a road and plunged into the Kelkit River in Resadiye Town of Black Sea city of Tokat in northern Turkey early Thursday, said the report.

Turkish rescue teams recovered two more bodies, including that of a child, raising the death toll to 16.

An earlier report said that at least 14 people were killed, 11 others wounded and 11 survived in the accident.

“They have been hospitalized in Resadiye, and are in a stable condition,” Resadiye sub-governor Ferhat Kurtoglu was quoted as saying, adding that rescue workers were continuing to search for other missing passengers.

Meanwhile, Tokat Deputy Governor Izzet Erkan, who said that there were two drivers, two stewards and 39 passengers on the bus, speculated that the accident might have happened due to high speed.
Malaysia eyes closer ties with Vietnam

HANOI, 11 March — Malaysia wants to boost cooperation with Vietnam, especially in the fields of oil and gas, energy and education, local newspaper Labour Friday quoted a Malaysian official as saying.

Malaysia, home to many good schools, hopes to receive more Vietnamese students, visiting Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said in an interview with the newspaper.

To promote bilateral multi-faceted cooperation, the two countries should exchange more high-level delegations and strengthen information sharing among enterprises, he said. Malaysian enterprises have done business in Vietnam for a long time and now they want to seek new cooperation opportunities in the country, he noted.

Albar, who arrived here for a three-day visit to Vietnam on Wednesday, met with Vietnamese State President Tran Duc Luong and Prime Minister Phan Van Khai on Thursday.

Malaysia considers Vietnam a long-term partner and hopes for closer ties between the two peoples and a continued boost of two-way trade and investment, said the official.

The trade volume between the two countries stood at 2.2 billion US dollars in 2005. Malaysia now ranks the 9th among countries and regions having investment in Vietnam, with projects mainly in the fields of hotel, service, construction, heavy industry, oil and gas, and banking.— MNA/Xinhua

Isuzu to recall trucks with exhaust pipe defect

TOYKO, 11 March — Isuzu Motors Ltd said on Thursday it will recall about 2,700 set of its trucks made between June 2002 and October 2004, and were sold in 2005 in Japan, due to defective exhaust pipes.

That compares with a total of 32,325 suicides in 2004, the latest year for which figures are available — down from the record-high 34,427 in 2003 but second only to Russia among Group of Eight industrialized nations.

According to World Health Organization data, Japan’s suicide rate was 24.1 per 100,000 people in 2000, compared with 39.4 in Russia and 10.4 in the United States. — MNA/Reuters

9 found dead in Japan in suspected group suicides

Tokyo, 11 March — Japanese police are investigating two separate cases of suspected group suicide after nine people were found dead in parked cars, the latest in a series of such cases.

Five men and one woman were found dead in a station wagon in Saitama Prefecture, just north of Tokyo, a police spokesman said.

He noted that charcoal stoves were found in the car but declined to give further details, citing ongoing investigations. The charcoal generates carbon monoxide, a poisonous gas.

Separately, a man and two women were found dead in a sealed car parked in the foothills of a mountain in Aomori Prefecture, some 280 miles north of Tokyo, a police spokesman said.

In this case too, charcoal stoves were found in the car with the three, who were undergoing treatment for mental illness and may have met at hospital, an Aomori police spokesman said.

The number of Japanese killing themselves in group suicides has risen steadily in recent years, and in many cases the people have met through the Internet, although police declined to say whether this was the case with the six people in Saitama.

In 2003, 34 died in group suicides, rising to 55 in 2004 and 91 last year. That compares with a total of 32,325 suicides in 2004, the latest year for which figures are available — down from the record-high 34,427 in 2003 but second only to Russia among Group of Eight industrialized nations.

According to World Health Organization data, Japan’s suicide rate was 24.1 per 100,000 people in 2000, compared with 39.4 in Russia and 10.4 in the United States. — MNA/Reuters

China’s large aircraft dream to come true by 2015

BEIJING, 11 March — China is expected to realize its “large aircraft” dream by the year 2015, a senior aviation official said Friday in an exclusive interview with Xinhua.

“Large aircraft” refer to large transportation planes with a carrying capacity exceeding 100 tons, trunk liners with more than 150 seats and other derivative special-purpose planes, Liu said.

Liu Daxiang, who is a senior official with the state-owned China Aviation Industry Corporation I and also a deputy to China’s Parliament or the National People’s Congress (NPC), said he was happy to learn that the development of large aircraft is listed as one of the country’s 16 major development plans in the 11th Five-Year Programme for the 2006-2010 period.

“If things are going smoothly, large transport planes for military and civil purposes are expected to fly into the sky in 10 years,” Liu said.

“With five more years of further development, the Chinese people are likely to travel by home-made 150-seat planes by 2020.”

China has long considered building a large 150-200 seat commercial aircraft, rather than continuing to merely rely on Boeing of the United States and Europe’s Airbus.

Although China has encountered difficulties and failed in several large aircraft development plans, the experience obtained has laid a good foundation for the coming scheme,” he said.

Liu, who is also an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, has submitted, together with other experts, motions to the NPC’s second and third annual sessions held respectively in 2003 and 2004, calling for earlier research and development of large aircraft. — MNA/Xinhua

13 foreign sailors saved from shipwreck in N-E China sea waters

SHENYANG, 11 March — Thirteen foreign sailors were rescued from a sinking cargo ship Thursday afternoon in the sea waters near Dandong Port in northeast China’s Liaoning Province.

The 13 foreigners, including eight people from South Korea and five from the Philippines, were aboard the South Korea-registered ship when it began to sink 65 sea miles from Dandong at 1:30 pm on Thursday.

Dandong’s border inspection guards, who received SOS signals from the crew members, rushed to the scene for rescue along with the local maritime salvagers.

Despite strong winds and high waves, the Chinese salvagers managed to take all the 13 crew members to safety at 3:15 pm the same day.

The ship, carrying 6,100 tons of goods from Dandong to South Korea, sank entirely into the seawaters at around 5:00 pm. — MNA/Xinhua
Indian President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam concludes goodwill visit to Myanmar

YANGON, 11 March — Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan inspected Photolitho Press in Bahan Township yesterday.

Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan heard a report on printing tasks, and security and fire prevention measures presented by Press Manager U Hlaing Win Khaung. Managing Director of Printing and Publishing Enterprise U Aung Nyine presented a supplementary report. Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan gave instructions to employees of the press on taking security measures. He also instructed officials to supervise security and fire prevention measures and fire fighting drills.

Afterwards, the minister inspected functions of the press and warehouses. In giving instructions, he said that officials are to coordinate with technicians for renovation of the press building. Arrangements are to be made for repairing machines parts. Matters related to old machine parts that cannot be used are to be conducted in line with the rules and regulations.

MNA

Information Minister inspects functions of Photolitho Press

YANGON, 11 March — Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan inspected Photolitho Press in Bahan Township yesterday.

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MNA

Grand Royal Special Reserve Golf Championship kicks off in Lashio

YANGON, 11 March — The Grand Royal Special Reserve Golf Championship 2006 was opened at Lashio Golf Club in Lashio this morning.

Deputy Commander of North-East Command Brig-Gen Hla Myint, Design and Development Director U Tin Oo of International Beverages Trading Co Ltd and MPG and MGF Executive U Ko Ko Lay opened the championship by teeing off before the competitions of the first round.

Than Win (Muse) and Win Naing (N-EC) scored a four-under-par 66 each on the first round. Bala, Shwe Nann, and Hla Myint (Muse) tied at the second position by firing a three-under-par 69. Third position golfer Kyaw Thet Paing, Thang Esk, Soe Thein and Tin Win scored a two-under-par 70 each.

A total of 120 amateur golfers are taking part in the competitions.

The championship is organized by Myanmar Golf Federation, and mainly sponsored by IBTC together with co-sponsors Air Mandalay Ltd, Crusher Club Soda, Srixon, and Grand Plaza Parkroyal Hotel. Han Event Management performed functions of the championship.

The second round of the championship continues tomorrow at the same venue.

MNA
UMFCCI President hosts dinner in honour of Indian President

YANGON, 11 March — Visiting President of the Republic of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam attended a dinner hosted in his honour by President of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Win Myint at the Traders Hotel on Sule Pagoda Road at 8.30 pm yesterday.

The Indian President was accompanied by high-ranking officers of the Indian Government and Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Bhaskar Kumar Mitra and embassy officials.

Also present at the dinner were Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, Minister for Science and Technology U Thaung, Myanmar Ambassador to India U Kyi Thein, departmental officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, vice-presidents of the UMFCCI and CEC members, entrepreneurs and guests.

First, UMFCCI President U Win Myint extended greetings.

Next, Indian President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam explained industries, economy and technological matters.

Entrepreneurs of the UMFCCI asked about investment opportunities between Myanmar and India. The Indian President replied to the questions. The Indian President and goodwill delegations members were served with dinner.

After the dinner, Indian President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam cordially greeted the entrepreneurs.

Measures for ensuring smooth and secure transport discussed

YANGON, 11 March — Yangon Division Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport held its coordination meeting at Yangon Command yesterday evening, attended by Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win.

First, Commander Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win made a speech. Afterwards, rectors and pro-rectors of universities and colleges in Yangon, officials, supervisory committee members, departmental officials, chairmen of bus-lines reported on matters related to shool buses, declining traffic accidents, conversion of vehicles into CNG vehicles.

Regarding the reports, the commander attended to the needs and the meeting ended with the concluding remarks by the commander.

Progress of Pyapon Bridge construction inspected

YANGON, 11 March — Accompanied by Deputy Minister for Construction Brig-Gen Myint Thein and officials, Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun oversaw upgrading of Twantay-Kanbate-Kungyangon-Dedaye-Pyapon Road this morning.

At the site of Pyapon Bridge Construction Project, Deputy Superintending Engineer U Khin Maung Hse of the project reported to the minister on progress of the project and future tasks.

The minister gave necessary instructions, and fulfilled the requirements of heavy machinery. He also inspected progress of construction at the bridge.

MMCWA donations for Cancer Foundation

YANGON, 11 March — A ceremony to donate medicines to U Hla Tun Hospice Cancer Foundation in Dagon Myothit (East) Township this morning.

Chairman of the Foundation U Hla Tun explained functions of the foundation.

Next, Central Executive Committee members and the Executive Director of the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association handed over medicines worth K 1.5 million donated by MMCWA to Foundation Chairman U Hla Tun.

They comforted cancer patients at the building of the foundation.

Appointments presented to UDNR graduates

YANGON, 11 March — The ceremonies to mark concluding Junior Assistant Teachership Course No 15 of University for Development of National Races and presenting the letters of appointment to graduates of No 37 BEd 4-year Course took place at the UDNR yesterday afternoon.

Present on the occasion were Rector of the University U Zaw Min Thein, representatives of state/division PDCs, faculty members of the university, heads of departments, lecturers, teachers, guests and trainees.

First, Head of Departments (Academic Affairs) U Htay Lwin read out the report on Junior Assistant Teachership Course No 15 and Rector U Zaw Min Thein presented the completion certificates to trainees and appointments to graduates of No 37 BEd 4-year Course.

Next, the rector awarded prizes to the outstanding trainees and the ceremonies ended with the concluding remarks by the rector.
YANGON, 11 March — The 21st ASEAN Football Federation Council meeting took place at Sedona Hotel, here, this evening. It was attended by President of AFF Tengku Tan Sri Dato Seri Ahmad (Malaysia), Vice-President Ibrahim Ohman (Singapore) and officials, President of Myanmar Football Federation U Zaw Zaw and delegates of 11 member countries of AFF.

At the meeting, they discussed matters on holding of ASEAN Championship Women Football Tournament, ASEAN U-20 Football Tournament, ASEAN U-17 Football Tournament and ASEAN Futsal Tournament in 2006-2007. AFF member countries, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines, Cambodia, Brunei and Timor Leste are attending the meeting.

**Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects progress in construction of Yeywa hydel power project.**

**Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects summer paddy fields in Pyigyidagun Township**

**Special sale of Industry-1 Ministry continues**

**Merits shared for Jivitadana donations**

**Respects to be paid to title-recipient Sayadaws**

**AFF Council meets**

**YANGON, 11 March** — The 41st merit-sharing ceremony for cash donations to the fund of Jivitadana Sangha Hospital was held in conjunction with the ceremony to honour the wellwishers at home and abroad at the hall of the hospital this afternoon.

President Nayaka Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Angisa of Palikayi Pariyatti Monastery of Thakata Township administered the Five Precepts.

After offering alms to members of the Sangha, the Sayadaw delivered a sermon, and the congregation shared merits gained.

**Yangon, 11 March** — To hail the 61st Anniversary Armed Forces Day, the special sale of Industry-1 Ministry continued in North Okkalapa Township today.

A total of 345 kinds of products of factories under the ministry including garment, foodstuff, medicines and household items, ceramics, stationery and electrical appliances are available at the reasonable price at the sale and it was packed with the public.

Besides, the artistes entertained with the songs to the visitors and the restaurants are also being opened at the sale. The special sale will be kept open daily from 8 am to 8 pm.

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Top cleric says Iran never be frightened on nuclear issue

TEHERAN, 11 March — A top Iranian cleric said on Friday that Iran would never be frightened by the UN involvement in the country’s nuclear case, the official IRNA news agency reported. “The Iranian people are not afraid of the threat posed by the United Nations Security Council,” Hojjatoleslam Ahmad Khatami, substitute Friday prayers leader, was quoted as saying in a speech to worshippers.

“Patience and resistance are the two major factors that definitely thwart all plots of enemies,” Khatami said.

Khatami also cited a frustrated hostage rescue operation of the United States in 1980, hinting any activity against Iran were doomed to fail.

“During those days, the sand of the Tabas desert acted like forces of God Almighty and killed them (US troops),” Khatami said.

In November 1979, five months after Iran’s Islamic Revolution, a group of Iranian students took over the US Embassy in Teheran and held 52 people hostages for 444 days.

In April 1980, an aerocade of US aircraft, which was sent secretly by the White House to Iran to rescue the hostages, landed in the Dasht-e Kavir Desert near the eastern Iranian city Tabas for refueling. But a strong sandstorm caused crash of two helicopters and a C-130 transport plane, which killed several American soldiers and finally led to the abortion of the mission.

Khatami’s comments came two days after the International Atomic Energy Agency handed over the Iranian nuclear file to the UN Security Council.

The Security Council is scheduled to convene next week to deliberate on the next move on the Iranian nuclear issue.

Iranian Supreme Leader Seyed Ali Khamenei and President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Thursday that the Islamic Republic would never give in under pressures and bullies, vowing to forge ahead with the development of nuclear energy.

Philippines rejects US human rights report

MANILA, 11 March — Philippine Government on Friday rejected a report by the United States criticizing human rights situation in the Philippines, saying its portrayal of human rights violations in the Philippines is vague and unfair.

“The country’s democracy has been as healthy as ever, with our public institutions operating within transparent, lawful bounds. Cases of human rights violations are squarely being handled by an independent commission with which the national government has been working closely in the investigation of specific cases, as well as in the proper education of the uniformed services,” said the presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye.

He added that the government has also taken steps to tackle the problems of jails, such as overcrowdedness and the mixture of minors with adults.

“The Justice Department has already taken cognizance of this problem ... to improve the current situation. Since last year, the Department of Social Welfare and Development has been gradually moving children-in-conflict-with-the-law from different prisons into their facilities as guardians,” he said.

“This problem of overcrowded jails has been with us for a long time, even before the President’s term began in 2001. Certainly, more resources are needed for us to be able to build bigger jails and separate rehabilitation facilities for minors,” he added.

A US 2005 human rights report on the Philippines severely criticized the country, blaming the government for failing to enforce the rule of law and checking corruption among government officials and accused “some elements of the security forces” of committing human rights abuses.

US Interior Secretary Gale Norton steps down

WASHINGTON, 11 March — US Interior Secretary Gale Norton said on Friday she was stepping down after serving five years overseeing federal lands, in a tenure in which she often clashed with environmentalists.

In her resignation letter, a portion of which was released to the news media, Norton said she would be moving to the private sector at the end of March.

The Interior Department manages national parks, wildlife refuges and other federal lands, which make up a fifth of the acreage in the United States.

She is the first woman to head the 156-year-old department and one of the original members of Bush’s Cabinet.

Her departure comes as Congress is looking into leases that the Interior Department issued in the late 1990s to energy companies that will allow them to avoid paying billions of dollars in royalties for oil and natural gas drilled in the Gulf of Mexico.

Vietnam to upgrade northern airport

HANOI, 11 March — Vietnam will invest some 33.3 million US dollars to upgrade an airport in northern Dien Bien Province from now to 2025, Vietnam News Agency reported on Friday.

Under a master plan worked out by the Civil Aviation Administration of Vietnam, 140 billion Vietnamese dong (VND) (9.3 million US dollars) will be used to upgrade aviation standard of the Dien Bien Airport in 2015 so that it can annually serve 200,000 passengers.

From 2016 to 2025, some 382 billion Vietnamese dong (over 24 million dollars) will be spent on expanding the airport to 120.8 hectares for both civil and military purposes. It is scheduled to handle 200,000 passengers annually in the period.

Now, the airport conducts 10-14 flights a week between Dien Bien and Hanoi capital. It is expected to offer flights to China’s Kunming City, Thailand’s Chiang Mai Province, and some other destinations in the Greater Mekong Sub-region in the future time, the report said.

The Dien Bien Airport served over 4,000 passengers and thousands of tons of cargo in the first two months of this year.
China needs law on Press supervision

BEIJING, 10 March — A lawmaker from Northeast China’s Jilin Province has called for the enactment of a law on Press supervision to curb the rampant violation of journalists’ right to make investigative reports as well as prevent malpractices of “corrupt reporters”.

Meanwhile, there are also explicit stipulations to guarantee the journalists’ right to be informed of and cover news events, as well as to make investigations sometimes by secret means. “Those who try to prevent the journalists from reporting the truth, especially those who resort to violence, should be severely punished on charges of obstructing public supervision and denying the people the right to know,” said Wang.

Time to boost EU-Russia energy ties

BRUSSELS, 10 March — The European Union should improve its energy cooperation with Russia as part of the bloc’s general review of its ties with Moscow, European Commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso said on Thursday.

Barroso said his planned meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on energy issues will take place on March 17 in Moscow, about a week before the EU’s 25 leaders gather to debate, among other issues, the bloc’s future energy policy.

“Now is the time to rethink the future shape of EU-Russia relations and to explore all the options for a closer and more effective cooperation,” Barroso said in a statement.

“At the heart of our relations will be a new energy partnership with Russia,” he said. Russia is a major energy exporter to the EU and the bloc worried over the stability of supplies when Moscow cut off gas supplies to Ukraine temporarily this year over failure to agree a new pricing and supply deal. The dispute resulted in lower supplies to Europe as most Russian gas passes through pipelines crossing Ukraine. Partly in response to the snag, the Commission, the EU executive, unveiled proposals on Wednesday to coordinate the bloc’s fragmented energy policies. The EU will have an opportunity to reshape ties with Moscow after its current 10-year partner-ship agreement with Russia expires next year.

Migrating birds could bring bird flu to US in months

WASHINGTON, 10 March — Migrating wild birds could transmit the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu to the United States in the next few months, said Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff on Thursday.

“There will be a reasonable possibility of a domestic fowl outbreak” as migrating birds mix with ducks, chickens and other birds in the US he said, speaking to newspaper editors and publishers.

He said the US Agriculture Department has years of experience in dealing with infections of other strains of bird flu, and that it is able to tackle situations caused by H5N1, which the World Health Organization said has caused at least 95 human deaths. Scientists fear the H5N1 strain would mutate quickly to be easily transmissible among humans, leading to a global flu pandemic.

Chertoff said he “certainly have to say that we should be prepared for the possibility that at some point in the next few months, a wild fowl will come over the migratory pathway and will be infected with H5N1”.

Iraqi soldiers aboard a tank patrol a street in Baghdad, on 10 March, 2006. THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Sunday, 12 March, 2006
Belgium’s Zaventem, Denmark’s Copenhagen are Europe’s best Airport

BRUSSELS, 10 March— Belgium’s Zaventem Airport in the capital of Brussels has been crowned the best airport in Europe by the Airport Council International (ACI), news agency Belga reported on Wednesday.

However, Zaventem was awarded equal first place with the Copenhagen Airport in Denmark.

Zurich Airport of Switzerland and Helsinki Airport in Finland were ranked second and third.

The Airports Excellence Awards are awarded based on a broad survey among passengers.

Ciba building Asia’s largest antioxidant plant in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 10 March— Ciba Specialty Chemicals, a Swiss company, is building Asia’s largest antioxidant plant on Jurong Island, Singapore’s petrochemical centre, according to Channel NewsAsia report.

To be completed by 2008, the plant worth 100 million US dollars is Ciba’s single largest investment in the region.

Antioxidant is a petrochemical derivative used extensively in the manufacture of plastic products, the report said, adding that the demand for plastic-related products is estimated to double in two decades.

The new facility will help increase the company’s revenue generated from Asia, which accounted for about 30 per cent of its total global sales last year.

Ciba has invested more than 382 million US dollars in total, passengers filled in 100,000 surveys, spread over 66 airports.

“The main objective is to improve the provision of services of the airports,” ACI spokeswoman Nancy Gautier was quoted as saying.

Korea’s Incheon Airport was named the world’s best airport, with second place honours awarded to Hong Kong Airport and Singapore’s Changi Airport, it was reported. — MNA/Xinhua

Canadian women get married less, divorce more

OTTAWA, 10 March— Canadian women are getting married less, divorcing more and outlining the men they do live with, said Statistics Canada on Wednesday.

In 2001, more than 1.5 million women — 14 per cent of Canadian women over the age of 15 — lived solo because of dropping marriage rates and increasing divorce rates, according to a study released by the Statistics Canada as the world celebrates the International Women’s Day.

That is more than double the number compared with 30 years before, according to the study.

Coupled with the fact that men still have a shorter lifespan than women, the study found that more women aged 65 and over are also living alone these days.

The number of women with post-secondary education is also on the rise — climbing to 15 per cent in 2001 from 3 per cent in 1971. — MNA/Xinhua

Survey shows most Japanese worry about population decrease

Tokyo, 10 March— An overwhelming majority of Japanese regard the issue of population decrease as serious, according to a recent survey conducted by one of the country’s leading newspaper Yomiuri Shimban.

The survey, carried out among 3,000 people at 250 locations, showed that 87 per cent of the respondents said that the current social security system, including pensions, medicine, and nursing care, would not be able to be maintained as society aged, and 76 per cent of respondents said Japan was not a good place to raise children.

In answer to a multiple-answer question over the cause of the declining birth rate, 63 per cent said it was too expensive to raise children and 49 per cent said the authorities did not provide enough support to those having and raising children. — MNA/Xinhua

Dubai Ports has no plans to sell US operations

LONDON, 10 March— Port operator Dubai Ports World has no plans to sell its newly acquired operations managing six US ports, despite a fierce political dispute in Washington, its head said in an interview published on Thursday.

DP World Chief Executive Mohammed Sharaf said his company would take all “humanly possible” measures to counter fears it could sell its assets.

“We have not even thought of that (selling the port management operations) yet,” he said in an interview with Britain’s Financial Times newspaper.

“We have a business to run — the USA is part of it.”

The newspaper’s website (www.ft.com) reported that private equity groups had approached DP World about buying its US operations.

The report, citing unnamed people familiar with the matter, gave no more details.

DP World’s takeover of British ports operator P&O, which previously managed the US ports, has created a political crisis for US President George W Bush. — MNA/Reuters

Airports in New York area to get “invisible fences”

NEW YORK, 10 March— Airports in New York will get an extra layer of protection by adopting a comprehensive new security system that has been used in countries like Iraq and Israel, said airport officials Wednesday.

A web of fibre optics, radar, infrared imaging, motion detectors and surveillance cameras, also known as “invisible fencing”, will be installed in Newark, Kennedy, LaGuardia and Teterboro airports within two years, said officials of the Port Authority, the agency that operates these airports in the area.

The purpose is to pump up existing security features at local airports, said a Port Authority spokesman. The Port Authority will cover the cost of the system, which has a price tag of some 138 million dollars, but expect to get some federal aid, he said.

Security at airports at Greater New York has been greatly beefed up after the 11 September terror attack in 2001. Authorities have pooled greater personnel and other resources to strengthen the security of airport, a likely target in another possible terror attack. — MNA/Xinhua

An artist’s conception of the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter using the SHARAD radar during its final approach to Mars, released by NASA on 10 March, 2006. NASA’s Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter has begun its final approach to the red planet after activating a sequence of commands designed to get the spacecraft successfully into orbit. — Internet

Switzerland’s Giorgio Mondini is pursued by Italy’s Max Papis during a practice session of the AI Grand Prix auto race in Monterey, Calif., on 10 March, 2006. — Internet
**S P O R T S**

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**Benitez says Arsenal can win Champions League**

LIVERPOOL (England), 11 March— Rafael Benitez believes Arsenal can repeat Liverpool’s feat of last season by winning the Champions League despite struggling in the Premier League.

Arsenal, the only English representatives left, were drawn against Juventus in the quarterfinals of the Champions League in Friday’s draw. Arsene Wenger’s team are fifth in the Premier League, five points behind fourth-placed Tottenham Hotspur.

“Arsenal are now looking at winning the Champions League as a real target and they can do what we did last season,” Benitez told reporters.

Benitez’s Liverpool finished fifth last season although they beat AC Milan on penalties to win the Champions League final. Liverpool travel to Highbury on Sunday.

“Our league season was not too good and their’s is the same this season,” Benitez said. “But we won the trophy when not doing well in England and I believe they can do the same.”

Liverpool’s own Champions League bid was ended by Benfica on Wednesday when failings in front of goal cost them dear.

Benitez’s side have scored four goals in their last nine games and of the club’s strikers, only Peter Crouch has registered a goal in 2006.

“I cannot decide on just two strikers to play each week because we are not scoring,” Benitez said.

“If some strikers do start scoring then maybe I can say they will stay together in the side, but for that they must start scoring first.—MNA/Reuters

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**Benfica’s Koeman confident of beating Barcelona**

LISBON, 11 March— Benfica’s Dutch coach Ronald Koeman is confident his team can overcome favourites Barcelona in the Champions League quarterfinals.

Koeman, who played for the Spanish club for several years, made his mark in Barca’s history by scoring the only goal in their only European Cup success when they beat Sampdoria in the 1992 final at Wembley.

“Barcelona are one of the favourites to win. They have great players like Ronaldinho, Samuel Eto’o and Deco but I’m pleased to face them because I played (for) and coached them (as assistant manager) for many years,” he said on Friday.

“I know the atmosphere at the Nou Camp with its 100,000 seats is something special but I must remind people that we play the first leg at the Stadium of Light where the climate is equally intense,” Koeman added on the Benfica website.

The Dutchman said his team will have to get a good result in the first leg to have a chance of reaching the semifinals.

“When we play the first game at home we must keep our goal intact. From then on any result is good, even a 0-0 draw.”—MNA/Reuters

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**United’s Queiroz points to Chelsea flaws**

MANCHESTER, 11 March— Manchester United want teams to lose their awe of Chelsea and exploit emerging weaknesses they perceive in the champions, United assistant manager Carlos Queiroz said on Friday.

Chelsea are 15 points clear of United and well on course to retain the Premier League title but they have lost one and drawn two of their last six league games and gone out of the Champions League to Barcelona. “We knew that they weren’t invincible because we beat them (in November). It was not necessary for the game against Barcelona to know that,” Queiroz told reporters.

“Queiroz believes United’s points tally puts them on a par with most teams across Europe. He attributes United’s failure to get closer to Chelsea to an injury list that at times this season has deprived the team of Paul Scholes, Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs, Gabriel Heinze, Louis Saha, Quinton Fortune and Roy Keane prior to his move to Celtic.

“Taking those problems into account Queiroz believes United can still end the season on a high note with the prospect of better to come next season.”—MNA/Reuters

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**Rooney signs record book deal**

LONDON, 11 March— Manchester United’s 20-year-old English striker Wayne Rooney has signed one of the biggest sports book deals in publishing history, agreeing to write five books over the next 12 years.

British media reported the deal with HarperCollins was worth at least five million pounds (8.7 million US dollars) but a spokeswoman for the publishers would only say it was a “substantial figure.”

HarperCollins said the first book would be released in July and cover this year’s World Cup in Germany. The following books will cover the rest of his career.

Rooney emerged as one of the outstanding players at Euro 2004 and will carry the hopes of a nation once more when he lines up for the start of the World Cup in June.

His colourful off-pitch antics — including visits to brothels — have also made him a regular fixture on the tabloid front pages, where he is often pictured with his girlfriend Coleen.

“The last few years have been brilliant for me and I’m very excited about bringing out my first book this year and all the other books that will follow,” he said in a statement—MNA/Reuters

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**Vietnam considers allowing soccer betting**

HANOI, 11 March— The Vietnamese Government is expected to approve a soccer betting plan, which is designated to prevent illegal betting and foster the state budget, an official from Vietnam’s National Sports and Physical Training Committee said here on Friday.

“After drafting a scheme on running soccer betting budget, an official from Vietnam’s National Sports and Physical Training Committee told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

If soccer betting services are allowed in Vietnam, they will annually contribute to the state budget to the tune of hundreds of billion Vietnamese dong (tens of million US dollars), the official stated.—MNA/Xinhua

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**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

**ACROSS**

1 Manchester-based orchestra  
4 Truths  
10 Echo  
11 River of Europe  
12 Synchronized  
13 Throw into shade  
15 Nobleman  
17 Ill-bred, surly fellow  
19 Watchful  
22 Ebb and flow of sea  
25 Type of cigar  
27 Main artery  
29 Narrow inlet  
30 Vacation  
31 Slugish  
32 Hind-part of ship

**DOWN**

2 Fire-raising  
3 Wash clothes  
5 Month  
6 Excursionist  
7 Grid  
8 Viper  
9 Delay  
14 Clothes  
16 Highest male voice  
18 Country-dance  
20 Tract  
21 Jeer  
23 Having skin irritation  
24 Wood-god; half-man, half-man  
26 Command  
28 Horseman

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Third-seed Maria Sharapova, of Russia, returns to opponent Jamea Jackson, of the United States, during action at the Pacific Life Tennis Open in Indian Wells. Calif, on 10 March, 2006.—INTERNET

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China’s Bai Lili (R) vies the ball with a player of the United States in the first round match of Group B at the Algarve Cup 2006 held in the Algarve region of Portugal on 9 March, 2006. The match ended with a 0-0 draw.—INTERNET

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*Syracuse Orange guard Gerry McNamara (3) and forward Matt Gormann (24) force Georgetown Hoyas guard Ashanti Cook (R) to lose the ball late in the Hoyas’ Big East tournament semi-final game in New York’s Madison Square Garden, on 10 March, 2006. Syracuse won 58-57.—INTERNET*
15,000 disabled orphans receive rehabilitation treatments in China

BEIJING, 11 March — A total of 15,000 disabled orphans in China have received surgery and rehabilitation over the past two years, thanks to a programme launched by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA).

The “Tomorrow Plan — Operations and Rehabilitation for Disabled Orphans,” launched in May 2004, has promoted medical care for orphans suffering from congenital heart disease or lوردosis.

“By the end of June, it is expected that 20,000 disabled orphans will benefit from the plan,” said Dou Yupei, the Vice-Minister with MCA.

“These efforts not only bring health to the disabled orphans, but confidence towards life too,” said Dou.

The Ministry planned to raise a total of 600 million yuan (about 74 million US dollars) through issuing welfare lotteries, government financial support and public donations to help disabled orphans.

In order to ensure these children enjoy sound medical treatment and services, MCA also appointed eight first-class hospitals to offer surgery for the kids.

Meanwhile, China has about 66,000 orphans and abandoned babies living in various welfare organizations nationwide and about half of them are disabled.

Venezuela denies US charges on handling of drug problems

CARACAS, 11 March — Venezuela has complained to UN chief Kofi Annan about a United States report which discredited Venezuela’s efforts in curbing drug trafficking, local media reported on Friday.

Venezuela has provided a detailed account of Venezuela’s anti-drug actions and the increasing quantity of drugs it has seized, all of which, it said, challenged the credibility of the US report.

The emphasis in the fight against drug trafficking should be placed on countries which see wide drug use, such as the United States, it noted.

Data supplied by a Venezuelan mission has indicated that some 9 per cent of the US population is addicted to drugs, it said.

WEATHER

Saturday, 11 March, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been generally fair in the whole country. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin, Shan and Chin States, Magway and Ayeyawady Divisions, (5°C) above normal in Mandalay Division, (7°C) above normal in Taninthayi Division and about normal in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant day temperatures were Monywa, Mibag, Magway, Aunglan and Pyay (40°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 10-3-2006 was 100°F. Minimum temperature on 11-3-2006 was 68°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 11-3-2006 was (80%). Total sunshine hours on 10-3-2006 was (8.0) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 11-3-2006 were nil at Mibag adrenal, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2006 were nil at Mibag adrenal, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (6) mph from Southwest at (15:30) hours MST on 10-3-2006.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 12-3-2006: Possibility of isolated light rain in Kachin, Chin and Northern Shan States and upper Sangaing Division and weather will be 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 Central Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Pyinmana and neighbouring area for 12-3-2006: Fair weather.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 12-3-2006: Fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 12-3-2006: Fair weather.
Senior General Than Shwe bids farewell to Dr APJ Abdul Kalam...

(from page 1)
Yangon International Airport. They were welcomed by Senior General Than Shwe and party.

Senior General Than Shwe presented a documentary photo album on the State visit and VCD as gifts to the Indian President.

Likewise, Indian President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam presented books on the Republic of India as gifts to Senior General Than Shwe.

Senior General Than Shwe and party bade farewell to the Indian goodwill delegation at the ramp of the special aircraft.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe shook hands with the Indian President.

When the special aircraft carrying the goodwill delegation led by President of the Republic of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam left Yangon International Airport at 11 am, Senior General Than Shwe and party waved them from the VIP Lounge of the airport. — MNA

The Tatmadaw members are not only safeguarding the life and property of the people but also participating in the national development tasks. Together with the people, they are taking part in the construction of motor roads, railroads and bridges and building dams and reservoirs across the nation. This highlights an innate sense of the Tatmadaw members, which is based on nationalist spirit and Union Spirit.