New school building of Wan Pyae Village BEMS in Myinmu Township, Sagaing Division, handed over

YANGON, 16 March — A ceremony to hand over a new school building of Wan Pyae Village Basic Education Middle School in Myinmu Township, Sagaing Division, took place at the school on 12 March morning.

It was attended by Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Chairman North-West Command Commander Maj-Gen Tha Aye, departmental officials at division, district and township levels, members of social organizations, teachers and students, wellwishers and guests.

Sagaing District PDC Chairman Lt-Col Soe Naing, Division Education Officer U Toe Maung and donor U Tin Aung formally opened the ceremony and the commander unveiled the signboard of the school building. The commander and party then inspected the school building.

The commander spoke on the occasion and U Toe Maung expressed thanks for the donation of the school building. The donor presented documents related to the building to the division education officer.

The commander donated exercise books, school uniforms, sports gear and journals. The two-story building with 126 feet in length and 27 feet in breadth was built at a cost of K 18.46 million — K 7 million each by the education department and wellwishers and K 4.46 million by the public. — MNA

YANGON, 17 March — A ceremony to nurture physic nut saplings was held at the model nursery in Metmang on 8 March morning.

It was attended by Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander of Triangle Region Command Maj-Gen Min Aung Hlaing, departmental officials and local people.

The commander explained benefits of growing physic nut plants.

Next, milling of physic nut seeds and operating of engines with physic nut oil was demonstrated. The commander presented physic nut grafts and seeds to those present. He viewed sowing of 10,000 physic nut seeds.

At Minyanaung Hall, the commander met with departmental officials, social organizations and local people. He heard reports on facts about Metmang Township and its progress by Chairman of Township PDC U Maung Tha Mya.

 Afterwards, the commander provided rice, edible oil and foods, cloths and cash assistance to staff families of the departments concerned and sports gear, newspapers and periodicals to officials.

The commander paid homage to Minyanaung Pagoda and Sayadaw U Çandasiri of Pyinnyadipa Monastery of Metmang. Commander Maj-Gen Min Aung Hlaing and Township Secretary of Union Solidarity and Development Association U Sai Lon Hsai offered 45 Buddha images donated by Shan State (East) USDA to the Sayadaw for public observance. At the township hospital, the commander donated K 300,000 to the medical fund of the hospital.

(See page 8)

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

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Step up sale of quality jade and gems

Myanmar is rich in terrestrial and aquatic resources. It has a good reputation around the world for its fine precious stones such as jade, ruby, sapphire and pearl with high quality.

The Myanmar Gems Enterprise under the Ministry of Mines holds gems emporia every year with a view to promoting sale of domestic gems and jade and raising the finance of the nation.

The Myanmar Gems Emporium Central Committee conducted the 43rd Myanmar Gems Emporium (2006) at the Myanma Gems Mart on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Yangon beginning 15 March, drawing the attention of 1,572 merchants — 827 from 232 companies of 11 foreign countries and 745 from 337 local companies.

The 43rd emporium attracted more merchants than the previous ones as the quality and quantity of the jade, gems and pearls displayed there were higher than its predecessors.

The lots of jade, gems and pearls exhibited at the emporium are of high quality. Among them, lot No 2429 comprising five jade blocks weighing 15 kilos will be sold at reserve price of one million euros, lot No 63 of Mogok ruby weighing 33.39 carats, at reserve price of 3.5 million euros; and lot No 233 comprising 68 gold hue pearls weighing 2.50 moones, at reserve price of 17,500 euros and they are highest prices of their kinds.

Moreover, lots of jade, gems and pearls will be sold through tender. Altogether 2,459 lots of jade, 251 lots of gems and 250 lots of 23,950 pearls are being displayed. Gems lots comprise those with fine quality produced in Mongshu gems land and Mogok gems land.

In Myanmar, gems mining was mainly run by the State in the past. Now, national gems mining companies are spreading their wings in cooperation with the State based on mutual interest system.

If gems mining makes greater progress, the State will earn more foreign exchange. Therefore, the government and national gems companies are urged to make efforts in concert to boost sale of gems with fine quality for mutual interests.

Blood donation ceremony on 21 March

YANGON, 17 March — Hailing the 61st Anniversary Armed Forces Day, the blood donation ceremony, co-organized by Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation and Union Solidarity and Development Association, will be held at No 2 Military Hospital and Yangon General Hospital on 21 March. — MNA

Mandalay Association (Yangon) pays homage to Agga Maha Pandita Sayadaws

YANGON, 16 March — Mandalay Association (Yangon) held the ceremony to honour Meiktila Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sujanaraya of Dhammikaya Taik of Chanmyathazi Township, Sitha Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Narada of West Khinmagan Taik of Chanayethazan Township, Kinwummyingyi Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Vajravudha of Mahauamgmye Township, and Yankin Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Odhahasiribhavamsa who were offered Agga Maha Pandita title, at Yadanaubon Hall of the association on Merchant Street in Pabedan Township yesterday.

Chairman of the Organizing Committee U Khin Maung Nyunt supplicated on the purpose of the ceremony to the Sayadaws.

On behalf of the wellwishers, the chairman and executives of the association donated alms to the Sayadaws.

Afterwards, Chairman U Mya Thaung presented prize to Maha Suddhamma Jotika title winner Dr Khin Maung Nyunt. On behalf of the Sayadaws, Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Narada delivered Suddhammodiaya.

The congregation shared merits gained. — MNA

Prizes presented to winners in Grand Royal Golf C’ship

Aung and Lt-Col Khin Maung Win of North-East Command gave consolation prizes to nine golfers.

Brig-Gen Kyaw Lwin of North-East Command presented first, second and third prizes to Shwe Nann who fired a five-under-par 138 nett total, Win Naing who shot a five-under-par 139 nett total, Than Win who scored a five-under-par 139 nett total, and the fourth prize to Khin Maung Zaw who fired a four-under-par 140 nett total.

U Tint Oo of IBTC presented gifts to Joint-Secretary of the golf club U Khin Maung Yi. Co-sponsors of the championship were Air Mandalay Ltd, Crusher Club Soda, Srixon and Grand Plaza Parkroyal Hotel.

The functions of the championship were organized by Han Event Management. — MNA
Syrian leader rejects US criticism

Thursday that his nation was essential to a stable Iraq, rejecting US accusations that Damascus has not tried to stop the infiltration of terrorists across its border to fight coalition forces.

President Bashar Assad also said in an interview on Britain’s Sky News that the only way forward in Iraq was for American forces to immediately leave, dismissing the argument their departure would deepen the sectarian strife.

“Iraq is on the brink of civil war, what could be worse?” he said.

He said the guerrilla was largely a political problem caused by US forces. “If they leave at least it could be better.”

In this photo released by China’s Xinhua news agency, visitors check real estate informations in the “2006 Spring in Shanghai” Real Estate Exhibition in Shanghai, China’s commercial hub, on 16 March, 2006. —INTERNET

Iran, Russia reach agreement on Iran’s nuclear issue

Meanwhile, Asefi stressed that Iran would not give up its peaceful nuclear research activities.

“The activities are our inalienable right and no one can make such a request,” Asefi said.

Iran resumed talks with Russia on Monday in Moscow on a Russian proposal to defuse the standoff over Iran’s nuclear programme.

An Iranian delegation, headed by Seyed Ali Hosseini-Tash, Deputy Secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), has been talking with Russian officials in Moscow since Monday, SNSC spokesman Hossein Entezami said on Tuesday.

Russia proposed last December that Iran transfer its uranium enrichment to Russia to remove the Western fear of the technology being diverted to making nuclear weapons. —MNA/Xinhua

Two US soldiers killed in western Iraq

BAGHDAD, 16 March — Two US soldiers were killed on Tuesday in Iraq’s volatile western Anbar Province, the US military said on Wednesday.

Two soldiers, assigned to the 28th Combat Brigade Team, were killed while conducting operations in Anbar Province on 14 March,” the military said in a statement.

The names of the killed soldiers are being withheld pending notification of next of kin, the brief statement said. The latest deaths have brought the total death toll of US military personnel in Iraq to at least 2,307 since the US-led invasion in March 2003. —MNA/Xinhua

Bomb blast injures 14 in S-W Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 16 March — At least 14 people, majority of them girl students, were injured in a bomb blast in Pakistan’s southwestern Baluchistan Province on Wednesday, a senior police officer said.

Senior Superintendent Police Wazir Khan Nasir said that the bomb was kept in a general store on the busiest Brevory Road in the Pakistani city of Quetta, the provincial capital of Baluchistan, when a passenger bus was also passing through the area.

Shop owner Muhammad Bilal said that some people came to his shop in the morning but he did not know who had placed the device. — MNA/Xinhua

Researchers says Indian Ocean coral may die in 50 years

VICTORIA, 16 March — Rising sea temperatures caused by global warming could kill off the Indian Ocean’s coral reefs in the next 50 years, threatening vital marine life, a marine researcher said on Wednesday.

Vast ecosystems often called the nurseries of the sea, coral reefs are vital spawning grounds for many species of fish, help prevent coastal erosion and also draw tourist revenues.

“Scientific reports are indicating we will have no corals left by 2050,” Jude Bijoux, manager of the Seychelles Centre for Marine Research and Technology, told Reuters.

“We lost 90 per cent of them in 1998 and the little that was left is recovering slowly and is apparently under frequent threat.”

In 1998, the El Nino weather phenomenon, which occurs when sea surface temperatures rise substantially, had devastating effects.

According to researchers, 33 vast sites in the Indian Ocean where corals died in 1998 may suffer repeated damage every five years — roughly corresponding to El Nino cycles — by 2025 if not sooner.

Many scientists believe global sea temperatures are rising because increasing fossil fuel emissions from cars, industry and other sources are trapping the earth’s heat.

Other threats to reefs include pollution, overfishing, coastal development and diseases.

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Kangaroo leads Austrian cops on snow chase

VIENNA, 16 March — A kangaroo led police in southern Austria on a snow chase Thursday after it jumped the fence of its cage and decided to explore its wintry surroundings.

The marsupial — discovered on a country road about 3 miles outside the town of St Veit in the province of Carinthia — kept hopping away from perplexed police trying to rein it in, local police officer Joerg Fortin said.

In the end, a local veterinarian helped capture the animal using a stun gun.

“There are no kangaroos in Austria” because this European country is sometimes confused with Australia, where the marsupials are native. Some tourists in Austria have been known to ask where kangaroos can be found. —INTERNET

In this photo released by China’s Xinhua news agency, visitors check real estate informations in the “2006 Spring in Shanghai” Real Estate Exhibition in Shanghai, China’s commercial hub, on 16 March, 2006. —INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR, Saturday, 18 March, 2006

In a phone interview, Tehran’s nuclear dossier entzami said on Wednesday.

But the spokesman did not give any details of the agreement reached between Teheran and Moscow.

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Shop owner Muhammad Bilal said that some people came to his shop in the morning but he did not know who had placed the device. — MNA/Xinhua
China-ASEAN Joint Cooperation Committee holds 7th meeting

The two-day meeting has attracted about 80 participants, including Assistant Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai with the Chinese delegation and other officials from the foreign ministries of 10 ASEAN members and the ASEAN Secretariat.

China’s home-made malaria vaccine to be tested on human

SHANGHAI, 16 March—A China-developed malaria vaccine will soon undergo clinical trials in Shanghai — a move China hopes it will contribute to global prevention efforts of the deadly disease.

Seventy healthy adult volunteers will receive the vaccine, code-named PICP2.9, at the Changhai Hospital in Shanghai. If the eight-month trial is successful, full clinical trials will be conducted on adults and children in areas where malaria is most prevalent, a source close to the programme said on Wednesday.

The trails will be funded by the worldwide non-profit fund PATH, and its Malaria Vaccine Initiative.

Shanghai-based Wanxing Biological Pharmacy Co., Ltd, is also engaged in the research and development of the vaccine.

Poll shows pessimism about Iraq war growing

WASHINGTON, 16 March—Pessimism about the war in Iraq is increasing, according to a CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll released on Thursday.

In the past three years, the number of people who believe a US victory in Iraq is likely has fallen from 40 percentage points. In the survey of 1,001 adults conducted on 10 March through the 12, 54 percent of respondents were either certain of a US victory or said that it was likely. In a March 2003 poll, 84 percent of respondents fell into those categories.

Moreover, 41 percent of the respondents in the recent survey said the prospect of a US victory is unlikely or certain not to happen. Only 1 percent were sure of a US defeat at the 2003 poll, with just 3 percent saying a US victory was unlikely.

In the latest poll, 60 percent said things were going poorly in Iraq, up from 53 percent in January.

And 55 percent said they believe Iraq is headed for a civil war, compared with 40 percent who think Iraq will emerge from its current troubles with a stable government.—INTERNET

World Water Forum opens in Mexico

MEXICO CITY, 16 March—Failing public water systems have forced more and more people in poor countries to buy bottled water from private companies, a form of privatization that has created a sharp divide among activists and officials gathered in Mexico City for an international water summit.

As delegates from the 121 countries gathered Thursday for the 1V World Water Forum, demonstrators plan protests against privatization, dam projects and water extraction from impoverished Indian communities.

The goal of the seven-day forum is improving water access for the poor, an effort that has failed in the past. The poor pay vastly more money to private corporations for their water today than they did when the first global water forum was held in Marrakech, Morocco, in 1997.

Privatization of water systems has been a hard sell since 2000, when thousands of Bolivians protested rate increases in water contracts held by foreign companies. Delegates from the 121 countries gathered Thursday for the 1V World Water Forum, demonstrators plan protests against privatization, dam projects and water extraction from impoverished Indian communities.

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Privatization of water systems has been a hard sell since 2000, when thousands of Bolivians protested rate increases in water contracts held by foreign companies. The protests left seven demonstrators dead and forced the companies out of the country.

Bottled water, on the other hand, has earned good profits and little attention.

“It’s in some way sort of a stealth privatization,” said Janet Larsen, research director for the Earth Policy Institute, a private, Washington-based environmental group.

Once a First World health indulgence or a symbol of European epures, bottled water is fast becoming a staple of the Third World, dominated in many regions by giants like Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and Nestle.

Larsen noted that bottled water sales are in developing countries.

Two killed in microlight plane crash in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, 16 March—Two men were killed when their microlight plane crashed into a field in Hartswater, about 300 kilometres southwest of Johannesburg, police said on Tuesday.

Superintendent Mashay Gamieldien said the plane crashed apparently after hitting a small point (irradiation structure) in Hartswater, about 300 kilometres southwest of Johannesburg, police said on Tuesday.

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India says Russia to supply fuel to its atomic plants

NEW DELHI, 16 March — India will receive uranium from Russia to run two atomic power plants that have struggled to find fuel after the United States stopped supplies more than three decades ago, the Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday.

Moscow’s decision to supply fuel to India’s Tarapur nuclear power plants came nearly two weeks after New Delhi and Washington sealed a landmark deal which aims to give India access to atomic equipment and fuel from the United States, and eventually from other nuclear nations.

MNA/Reuters

Venezuela says US has militarized relations with Latin America

CARACAS, 16 March — The Venezuelan Government said on Wednesday that US Latin America policy has been militarized, responding to a US Army statement which described Venezuela as “a destabilizing influence” on the region.

The remarks, made by Bantz Craddock, chief of the US Southern Command, “constitute one more sign of the militarization of US Government policy towards Latin America as a whole and towards Venezuela in particular,” Jose Vicente Rangel, the country’s vice-president, told reporters on Wednesday.

“These US commentators are not White House officials, or State Department officials, but from the Defence Department, and from the intelligence services”, Rangel added.

He said that it was worrisome that such people, who should be concerned about the grave situation in Iraq and other such nations, were now focusing on Latin America.

Rangel described them as “layabouts,” adding that US military involvement confirmed what Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez had said about the permanent threat of US aggression against the country.

MNA/Xinhua

Exodus of Africans to Europe stirs crisis

NOUAKCHOTT, 16 March — African migrants desperate to escape their continent are streaming through Mauritania to embark on a perilous ocean voyage to Europe that has already killed hundreds.

The exodus from the desert country on the coast of northwest Africa prompted a call for help from sub-Saharan Africa — had been discovered in waters off the coast of Mauritania. Spain also intercepted some 400 Africans trying to reach its northwest African colony on Thursday for two boats.

Spanish officials said 101 African men who set out from Mauritania in two boats reached the Canary Island of Tenerife on Thursday. More than 1,000 Africans — some driven by hopes of jobs, others to escape their continent’s many wars — have died over the past four months while trying to sail in small wooden boats from Mauritania to the Canary Islands, according to the country’s branch of the Red Crescent.

MNA/Xinhua

Malaysia to usher in water festival month

KUALA LUMPUR, 16 March — Malaysia will usher in its National Water Festival Month 2006 in April, a senior tourism official said Wednesday.

Supreme Head of State, the Tourism Ministry to make the National Water Festival as one of the country’s tourist products, which at the same time can turn Malaysia into a tourist destination full of festivities, carnivals and jovial all the time, “Tengku Adnan told reporters here. He said that it was worrisome that such people, who should be concerned about the grave situation in Iraq and other such nations, were now focusing on Latin America.

Rangel described them as “layabouts,” adding that US military involvement confirmed what Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez had said about the permanent threat of US aggression against the country.

MNA/Xinhua

Theaters may ask to jam cell phones

LAS VEGAS, 16 March — Movie theater owners faced with falling attendance are considering asking federal authorities for permission to jam cell phone reception in an attempt to stop annoying conversations during films, the head of the industry’s trade group said on Tuesday.

Industry leaders at the ShoWest conference for theater owners want to find ways to win back crowds.

“I don’t know what’s going on with consumers that they have to talk on phones in the middle of theaters,” John Fithian, president of the National Association of Theater Owners, told the ShoWest conference in Las Vegas. Theaters are trying a number of ways to silence cell phones, from sweeps by ushers to funny fake movie trailers urging viewers to shut off phones. Fithian said owners were considering other steps if that does not work.

MNA/Xinhua
“SU-27” fighter jets for aerial acrobatics arrive Hunan Province

ZHANGJIAJIE (Hunan Province), 16 March — Five SU-27 fighter jets arrived at the airport of Zhangjiajie National Forest Park in central China’s Hunan Province on Wednesday, poised for the upcoming aerial acrobatics display through a natural mountain cave.

The fighter jets dispatched by the Russian Air Force made a stopover in Hohhot, capital of north China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region before heading to the performance site at Zhangjiajie, which is famous for its natural water-eroded cave, known as Heavenly Gate Mountain.

Pilots of the heavy fighter planes are expected to race through the 60-metre wide natural cave at a speed of 700 kilometres per hour in the aerial acrobatics stunt on 17 March.

Hungarian Peter Besenyei, on an Extra 300S plane, who flew through the Heavenly Gate in a stunt in 1999, entered the Guinness Book of Records as the first pilot in the world to fly through a natural cave.

The cave, located 1,261 metres above the sea level, is measured at 127 metres x 2 metres.

The Russian Air Force is expected to send 10 planes including the fighter jets, coast plane and transporter for the three-day performance in Zhangjiajie, which is one of the activities to mark China’s Russian Year, when a range of cultural exchanges between China and Russia will be held. — MNA/Xinhua

Iraqi say US raid on home killed 11 family members

TIKRIT (Iraq), 16 March — Eleven members of an Iraqi family were killed in a US raid on Wednesday, police and witnesses said. The US military said two women and a child died during the bid to seize an al-Qaeda militant from a house. Television pictures showed 11 bodies in the Tikrit morgue — five children, two men and four women. A freelance photographer later saw the bodies being buried in Isihaq, the town 60 miles north of Baghdad where the raid took place.

The US military said in a statement its troops had attacked a house in Isihaq early on Wednesday to capture a foreign fighter facilitator for the al-Qaeda in Iraq network. “Troops were engaged by enemy fire as they approached the building,” US spokesman Major Tim Keefe said. “Coalition Forces returned fire utilizing both air and ground assets. There was one enemy killed. Two women and one child were also killed in the firefight. The building … (was) destroyed.” Keefe said the al-Qaeda suspect had been captured and was being questioned. Major Ali Ahmed of the Isihaq police said US forces had landed on the roof of the house in the early hours and shot the 11 occupants, including the five children. — MNA/Reuters

LA couple gets prison for robbing 5-year-old girl

LOS ANGELES, 17 March — A Los Angeles man and woman were each sentenced to two years in prison on Wednesday for stealing a gold chain from around the neck of a five-year-old girl in January. Julio Cesar Beltran, 18, and Patricia Serrano, 31, each pleaded no contest to one count of second-degree robbery and were given two-year sentences by a Los Angeles judge, prosecutor June Chung said. A videotape captured Beltran leaping from a car being driven by Serrano and grabbing two chains on the girl’s neck as she stood in front of a meat market, Chung said. — MNA/Reuters

China develops sophisticated underwater robot

BEIJING, 17 March — Chinese scientists have developed a new kind of sophisticated underwater robot which could be used for seabed mining surveys.

Feng Xisheng, an academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering (CAE), said in an exclusive interview with Xinhua that his research team has worked out indigenous technologies for composite control, module structure and optical fiber application on the underwater robot, which is within the industrial category of autonomous robot vehicle (ARV).

The ARV combines the features of a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) and an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV). Feng said, adding that it could be used for precise operation in fairly long distance.

The Shenyang Institute of Automation of the Chinese Academy of Sciences is known for inventing underwater robots. It has developed another type of long-range AUV with endurance reaching tens of hours and several hundreds of kilometres. In the latest underwater test, the newly-developed AUV set a domestic record in sustainability.

AUV is equipped with a satellite navigation receiver for precise positioning, a new kind of sonar system, airgh-power fuel cell and lithium cell systems, Feng said.

French ‘Spider-Man’ climbs 31-storey tower

BAGNOLET, 15 March — French skyscraper climber Alain Robert scaled a 31-floor office building outside Paris on Wednesday using only his bare hands, his last climb before spending a week in prison in Texas.

Robert was arrested in Houston in November on charges of trespassing and drug possession as he was about to climb the 46-floor One Houston Centre. Police said they believed Robert was carrying the sedative Xanax, while the climber says it was a prescription anti-epilepsy medication.

Robert said his effort on Wednesday was a protest against the court decision ordering him to serve prison time.

“I don’t really understand why they are charging me with criminal trespass, as I didn’t even climb,” Robert said before ascending one of the 400-foot Mercuriales Towers in the suburb of Bagnolet.

He wore a skintight black and yellow outfit covered with advertisements. Robert has climbed more than 70 of the world’s tallest structures, including the Eiffel Tower, the Empire State Building and the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, with his bare hands and without a safety net. — Internet

Swiss delegate of Red Cross kidnapped in Gaza

GENEVA, 16 March — A Swiss delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was kidnapped on Tuesday by suspected Palestinian militants in the southern Gaza Strip, Swiss Radio International (SRI) reported. Armed men seized Julien Grosclaude in Khan Younis at around 1:30 local time, and the ICRC is demanding his immediate release.

Dorothea Krimitsas, spokeswoman of the Geneva-based organization, was quoted as saying. She added that Grosclaude had managed to make a phone call from captivity to say that he had not been harmed. “We have no idea who may have taken him,” she said. “We hope that he will be released safe and sound, and of course we are demanding his immediate and unconditional release.”

Krimitsas said Grosclaude had been working in Gaza since May 2005 on projects providing assistance and protection to the Palestinian population.

The Swiss was among four foreign hostages seized on Tuesday. The French Foreign Ministry confirmed that two of its nationals working for the charity Medecins du Monde had been abducted. A receptionist at a Gaza hotel told the media that a Korean had been kidnapped at the same time.

A People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) activist in a bear costume is led away by a policeman after a protest outside the Istana, Singapore, on 17 March, 2006. PETA was protesting against the slaughter of Canada’s black bears for the Queen’s Guards’ ceremonial bearskin hats and called to replace the fur with modern synthetic materials. — Internet

MNA/Xinhua
Inherent nature of US and allies that are exploiting human rights

A Reader

The US State Department has issued the so-called annual Reports on Human Rights Practices of other countries since 1977. It issued the annual report for 2005 on 8 March 2006. The 2005 report featured human rights records of a number of nations. However, the report did not include the human rights records of the US and some of its allies.

According to the US, it is issuing human rights reports annually for the Congress to use the facts of the records as the base to draw the nation’s foreign policy. But the concealed real aim of the US government is to use human rights as a tool to discredit and humiliate countries that are not its allies, that never yield to its domination, or that will become its rival, through the media. But the whole world knows very well the double-standard policy of the US.

It is common knowledge that the US leading the West bloc competed with the East bloc headed by the Soviet Union for global superiority in the Cold War. During the period, most of the countries that freed themselves from colonial rule with the help of the effects resulting from World War I and World War II were in favour of communism and socialism. On the other hand, most of the western nations were colonialists. As those western nations exploited other countries, the world peoples loathed them so much.

The successive US governments trying to find a way to change the global people’s attitude toward the colonialists, introduced the words “human rights” and “democracy” to the world to make their dirty tricks look good. In reality “human rights” is a tool to mislead the world peoples in launching political attacks on targeted nations.

As usual, the annual report targeted China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, Cuba, Belarus, Myanmar etc. These countries are all included in the human rights reports compiled according to the wishes of the US.

Columnist Ren Yanshi refuted the double standard report of the US that is acting like a global judge to manipulate human rights affairs of the world, with his article “A Look at the US Human Rights Record” which appeared in Beijing Review (1997, March 17-23).

The doctor continued to express his view, saying that although the nations of the west were shouting “human rights”, they themselves had broken up Iraq into pieces; that they also invaded Afghaniatan; that they used the same methods as the US against the world peoples as the report failed to mention even the deeds of the western countries were against their words, Myanmar would never be able to solve her problems if it only depended on the support of the West; and that solution to the internal problems existed only within.

He also said that America was claiming itself a liberator of human race, but on the other hand it was committing unscrupulous acts; that once he had lived and been educated in America; that he had been launching various campaigns against America; and that solution to the internal problems existed only within.

If we consider all the facts contained in this article, we can see the steps and goals of the US. It is common knowledge that the US and its allies are puttinglop-sided pressure on developing countries including Myanmar, with false accusations, while using democracy and human rights as pretexts.

It is clear that the US is trying to trick the global peoples as the report failed to mention even a piece of information about American hegemonism and domination. The international community is strongly criticizing the US for the military’s abuse and torture of detainees at prisons in Afghanistan, Iraq and Guantanarno, and human rights violations. We all know the plots of the US however clandes-tine they may be.

But the political parties, terrorist groups and lackey expatriates dancing to the American tune are still staying silent in support of the American atrocities. They are trying to appease their master as they are minions. Because they all aren’t true democracy activists, instead, just the persons practising the policy of strictly obeying the master and recruiting lackeys, even though shouting at the height of their voice “democracy” and “human rights”. Their words are for human rights, but their acts are no other than for destroying and obstructing the human rights of the people of Myanmar.

Translation: TMT
Myanmar Alin: 16-3-2006
Commander, Mayor inspects sanitation, upgrading tasks

YANGON, 17 March — Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Brig-Gen Hla Htay Win and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin oversaw sanitation, tasks for proper drainage in ditches and upgrading roads in Yangon City this morning.

A water tank is being built on Parami Road in Mayangon Township. Physic nut plants have been grown on vacant lands near the lake. Thudhamma Road in North Okkalapa Township, Thudhamma Road in Dagon Myothit (North) Township, and U Hlaung Bo Road in Bahan Township are being upgraded. Sanitation tasks were carried out along Thudhamma Road.

Metmang grows physic nut for alternate fuel...

In Sukwoe Model Village, the commander offered 45 Buddha images donated by Shan State (East) USDA to a Sayadaw for public obeisance.

They also attended the demonstration on milling physic nut seeds and running the vehicles with its oil. Later, the commander oversaw the physic nut nursery of Tarkawlay Village USDA.

In Metmang Township, 53 acres of land have been put under physic nut plants, and 38,400 saplings are being nurtured.

Members of Sangha, lay persons honoured

YANGON, 17 March — A ceremony to honour Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Silavansa of Dhamma Rakthita Monastery in Myitkyina, eight members of Sangha of Kachin State and two lay persons who received the religious titles took place at Kyaukseintwin Sangha of Kachin State and Two lay persons who received the titles.

Chairs of Myitkyina Township Association U Ohn Shwe explained the ceremony and the officials and wellwishers offered alms to the Sayadaw and members of the Sangha.

The Sayadaw gave a sermon to the congregation who shared merits gained later. — MNA

Educative talks given to young women

YANGON, 17 March — The Yangon Division Women’s Affairs Organization gave educative talks to young women at the office of Hline Township WAO within the compound of Hline Township Peace and Development Council office in Yangon West District this afternoon.

Patron of Yangon Division WAO Daw Mar Mar Wai delivered an introductory speech, and accepted 200 membership applications from Township WAO Chairperson Daw San Myint, in charge of the working group of young women of Yangon Division WAO.

Chairman of Myitkyina Township Association U Ohn Shwe explained the ceremony and the officials and wellwishers offered alms to the Sayadaw and members of the Sangha.

The Sayadaw gave a sermon to the congregation who shared merits gained later. — MNA

Examination centres supervised

YANGON, 17 March — Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyuen, Deputy Minister U Myo Nyunt and Director-General of the Education Planning and Training Department U Bo Win inspected the matriculation examination centre of Ela Basic Education High School in Lewe Township this morning.

The minister visited the students sitting the exam and instructed the officials to enforce examination rules and regulations.

Later this morning, he looked into the matriculation examination centre of Thawutti BEHS in Lewe Township and gave encouragement to the students. He inspected preparations made for the exams and instructed the supervisers and assistant supervisors to take necessary measures so that the students could do the exam in peace free from nuisance and enforcement of exam rules and regulations.

The minister met members of the round checking team and gave instructions on ensuring that students are free from malpractices in the exam.

— MNA

Dr Ma Tin Win and Dr Daw Khin Ye Tin of Kyauktada Township WAO gave educative talks. — MNA
Tourist security training concludes

YANGON, 17 March — Tourist security training course No 13/2005 concluded today at the Ministry of Home Affairs here. A total of 40 police officers attended the 12-week course.

With the aim of providing security assistance to tourists, Ministry of Home Affairs organized the training courses. Officers of Myanmar Police Force attended the training. — MNA

Steps taken to control Avian Influenza in some townships in Sagaing, Mandalay Divisions

YANGON, 17 March — The coordination meeting on control of Avian Influenza was held at the People’s Hospital in Meiktila on 14 March 2006, attended by Secretary of National Health Committee Chairman of Work Committee for Control of Avian Influenza Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo, the head of Mandalay Division Health Department and officials.

The deputy minister discussed control of the disease, and Head of Mandalay Division Health Department Dr Khin Maung Tun control of Avian Influenza and replied to queries raised by those present.

The deputy minister attended the work coordination meeting on control of Avian Influenza held at Kyaukse People’s Hospital.

He met members of Kyaukse District Health Committee, local authorities and officials to discuss control and treatment of the disease.

In meeting with members of Mandalay Division Livestock and Fisheries, and members of Mandalay Division Health Department, local authorities and officials discussed control and treatment of the disease.

There have been poultry deaths in some townships of Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions due to an outbreak of H5N1 bird flu. Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, local authorities, respective health committees, and the people are to make integrated efforts to control the disease.

Preventive measures are to be taken against control of the entry of people from outside into poultry farms. At the same time, those who are engaged in poultry marketing, staff from poultry farms are to be kept under observation so that they cannot be infected. The Ministry of Health has already taken steps to give treatment in case of the outbreak of the disease, he disclosed.

Accompanied by officials of the Ministry of Health, the deputy minister attended the work coordination meeting held at the meeting hall of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council where he met with officials and discussed matters on control of Avian Influenza. — MNA

USDA CEC Member U Than Htay receives Cuban Ambassador

YANGON, 18 March — Union Solidarity and Development Association Central Executive U Than Htay received Cuban Ambassador to Myanmar Mrs Maria Luisa Fernandez at USDA (Headquarters) this evening.

At the call, USDA CEC member U Than Htay clarified the salient points of the USDA. Also present at the call were officials of USDA. — MNA

Computer quiz held

YANGON, 17 March — Organized by Working Committee for exhibiting the booths of twelve objects of the State in honour of the 61st Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, an opening ceremony of computer quiz took place at Defence Services Museum on Shwedagon Pagoda Road on 15 March. It was attended by the committee members, members of Yangon Division Union Solidarity and Development Association and guests.

Chairman of the Working Committee Maj-Gen Aung Thein of the Ministry of Defence made a speech on the occasion. After that, the 30 members of Tamwe, Kamayut, Dagon, South Okkala, Kyauktada, and Insein Township USDA's competed in it that continued until 20 March.
UN creates new human rights panel
US fails to block move to replace commission

Blessings of celestial and human beings

- Written as based on American whims
- If you peruse the human rights reports
- Many nations across the world will be found
- Not to click with the American whim.
- If you scan this situation
- Many of the world’s peoples’
- Original ideas and ideals concerning human rights
- Put out by the Americans
- Are not to their liking
- Can be apparent.
- Paying attention to what’s transparent
- The state of one’s homeland
- To build it to the liking of world’s citizens
- According to the ideas and ideals
- Would be like reaching the pinnacle of democracy
- Getting to the top of pride and ecstasy without fall
- And for this advice of goodwill
- May celestial and human beings take note.

Agreement on providing medical equipment to Jivitadana Sangha Hospital

YANGON, 17 March—Under the programme of the Japan’s Grassroots Grant of the Japanese Government, Chairman of Jivitadana Sangha Hospital Board of Trustees U Ko Ko Gyi (Retired Ambassador), Secretary U Maung Maung and Deputy Head of Mission of Japanese Embassy Mr Hiroshi Kawamura signed an agreement on providing medical equipment worth US$ 92,313 to the hospital in Bahan Township on 9 March.

The modern medical equipment will include machines for laboratory, operation theatre, X-ray, ENT patients, phaco machine and others.

With those modern medical equipment, the hospital will be able to give more effective treatment to patients.—MNA

Summer soccer course opens

YANGON, 17 March—A summer football training course was opened in Thawunna sports ground this morning. Sports and Physical Training Department and Myanmar Football Federation organized the course with the aim of enabling the youths to spend their summer vacation efficiently and to keep fit themselves.

The course is being attended by 280 trainees and coached by U Nay Win.

General Secretary of Myanmar Olympic Committee SPTD Director General U Thaung Htike attended the course opening and viewed the training of the youths today.—NLM

Boys at the summer football training session.—NLM
1. Incidences of Avian Influenza

Avian Influenza (bird flu) is of zoonotic nature, (transmissible to human beings) that has occurred since December 2003 and spreads to 14 countries in Asia and 30 countries in other parts of the world totaling 44 countries. As of the end of February it caused 96 numbers of human death.

2. Situation in Myanmar

Starting from the 1st week of February to the early part of March, the outbreaks of chicken disease, suspected Avian Influenza occurred in Shwebo Township, Kantbalu and KhinOo Townships in Sagaing Division and Pyigyidagun Township in Mandalay Division. The cause of disease may be due to migratory birds that fly across the country or illegal importation of hatching eggs and day-old-chicks. If the dead bird had been vaccinated with Avian Influenza vaccine, it causes complication in disease diagnosis and identification.

3. The measures currently taken

The above said townships in the southern part of Sagaing Division and Mandalay Division are confined as restricted zones and the movement control, temporary close down of markets and disease investigation in the poultry farms are undertaken under the guidance of local authorities. Field investigation and disease surveillance are carried out continuously.

4. Signs and Symptoms

(a) Sudden death and high mortality, drop in egg production
(b) Dull, decreased feed intake and excessive drinking
(c) Difficult in breathing, eye and nasal discharges.

5. Disease control measures to be taken

(a) To notify promptly the local authorities or Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD) if the disease suspected of Avian Influenza is noticed.
(b) If chickens are affected with any kind of disease, not to sell out to the market or any other region.
(c) To protect the domestic birds from contact with wild and migratory birds.
(d) Not to convey the birds from other farms to the own farm and not to practice mixed farming of different species.
(e) Not to allow the entry of people including young children from outside into own poultry farm
(f) Whenever enter the farm, use boots, overcoat, head wear, glove and mask for protection.
(g) To keep the farm hygienic and apply disinfectants and lime regularly on the farm.
(h) Not to allow farm workers to poultry markets and to change clothes and shoes before entering the farm if happens to do.
(i) To cook well poultry meat and eggs to prevent transmission to humans.

6. The Animal Health and Development Law has been promulgated for the control of animal infectious diseases. The stakeholders involved in poultry farming and trading are notified to coordinate and cooperate in contributing effectively to the control of Avian Influenza.
Carolina.—
It is too soon to draw conclusions
about the risks and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

There was, however, evidence that men who waited longer than six months were more likely to show recurrence.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 1:10 pm and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERSIA LINES
Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Claim Day Notice
MV HUA SHAN VOYNO (061)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HUA SHAN VOYNO (061) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 19.3.2006 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T. where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 1:10 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Canadian hostage in Gaza released
OTTAWA, 17 March — A Canadian aid worker kidnapped by Palestinian militants in the Gaza Strip was released on Wednesday, Canada’s Foreign Affairs Ministry confirmed.

Adam Budzanowski, 57, of Toronto, was one of 11 foreigners seized by Palestinian gunmen protesting Israel’s military raid on a West Bank jail Tuesday.

Pictures on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) showed Palestinian security officials escorted Adam Budzanowski and three other freed foreign hostages, including a South Korean journalist and two French citizens, to their headquarters in Gaza City.

Budzanowski said he was treated fairly well, but was tired and looking forward to having a shower and getting some sleep.

MNA/Xinhua

Treasures from British Museum ready to meet Beijing audience
BEIJING, 16 March — A 3,000-year-old mummy, an ancient statue of Dionysos and a 2,100-year-old gold pendant featuring Aphrodite and Eros were the featured guests at the Capital Museum in Beijing.

The Roman, Greek and Egyptian antiquities are coming to China courtesy of the British Museum and its touring exhibit titled ‘Treasures of the World’s Cultures’.

The exhibition is scheduled to open in Beijing on March 18. A total of 272 artifacts will be on view, said Guo Xiaoling, curator of the Capital Museum, on Wednesday.

Treasures on show also include ancient Egyptian tables, Greek busts, Roman sculptures and the world’s oldest tool.

However, no Chinese items collected by British Museum will be on display in Beijing.

“There is no need to bring Chinese items here,” said Jane Portal, assistant curator of the British Museum.

“The two and a half month exhibition will enable Chinese audiences an opportunity to enjoy the collection of a world class museum without going abroad,” Guo said. Five lectures on world history have been arranged during the exhibition. Students studying world history in Beijing’s universities have volunteers to provide consultations and other services to visitors.

In the exhibition hall, guide Li Xue is rehearsing an explanation of how the mummies were made in ancient Egypt.

“Have recited it for three days. It’s my first time to practice the explanation in front of the antiques today,” Li said, adding that her tour is free to museum guests.

Guo said it is the first large-scale international exhibition since the newly-built Capital Museum opened last year and it will put its new equipment and technology to the test. — MNA/Xinhua

Swissport opens air freight terminal at Changi Airport
SINGAPORE, 16 March—Swissport International, a Swiss ground and cargo handling company serving more than 300 million passengers and over two million aircraft in the world, opened its air freight terminal at Singapore’s Changi Airport on Wednesday.

“This air freight terminal is the largest such facility in Singapore’s global station network of 175 airports,” said a Press release issued by the company, adding that it will play a vital role in the company’s business expansion in Singapore as well as in the region.

Covering an area of 17,600 square metres, the new warehouse has an initial handling capacity of 250,000 tons and future expansion potential to 400,000 tons, which will bring Changi’s overall cargo handling capacity up to three million tons per year, said Singapore’s Transport Minister Yeo Cheow Tong at the opening ceremony.

To guarantee safe and high-speed processing of air cargo, Swissport equips the terminal with a fully-automated material handling system and other infrastructure worth 10 million US dollars.

“Swissport’s offerings such as integrated cold room solutions and perishables-handling capability will greatly increase Changi’s range of capabilities and augment Changi’s position as the leading air cargo hub in the region,” Yeo said.

Swissport, the third ground handling agent at Changi Airport besides Singapore’s Air Cargo Terminal Services and Changi International Airport Services, started operations here in March 2005. — MNA/Xinhua

Ruslan, MNA/Xinhua

Delaying therapy ok for low-risk prostate cancer
NEW YORK, 16 March—Men with early, slow-growing prostate cancer may safely wait up to six months before starting treatment, a new study suggests.

Researchers found that among 895 men with so-called low-risk prostate cancer, those who waited up to six months before undergoing surgery to remove the prostate had no increased risk of disease recurrence. There was, however, evidence that men who waited longer than six months were more likely to show “biological progression,” a marker of possible cancer recurrence.

Because this group included a relatively small number of men — and because it is unclear why they delayed therapy — it is too soon to draw conclusions about the finding, according to the study’s lead author.

“It’s concerning, and it needs to be confirmed in further studies,” said Dr. Stephen J. Freedland of Duke University Medical Centre in Durham, North Carolina. — MNA/Reuters
US space shuttle launch delayed to July

WASHINGTON, 16 March — NASA said on Tuesday the launch of space shuttle *Discovery* would be postponed from May to at least July.

A malfunctioning fuel tank sensors is said to cause the delay, and shuttle programme manager Wayne Hale said replacing the sensors would cost NASA.

The sensors are designed to ensure the fuel tank's main engines shut down before the shuttle drains the liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen propellants from the fuel tank. Malfunctions with the sensors could cause the main engines to be turned off before the shuttle is in orbit.

Replacing the sensors will take three weeks and require a worker to enter through the bottom of the 46-metre tank while it is upright.

The next opportunity to launch *Discovery* to the International Space Station will be between 1 and 19 July.

The postponement could further delay the multinational orbital construction of the International Space Station, which depends on the US space shuttles.

The headquarters of Parexel drug company are seen in Uxbridge on 16 March, 2006 west of London, England. Six volunteers remain in hospital after becoming ill during the first human trials of the TGN1412 drug made by Parexel. —INTERNET

MNA/Reuters

Study shows fewer smokers means less heart disease

LONDON, 16 March — Deaths from heart disease in Ireland have fallen by nearly 50 per cent in 15 years thanks to lifestyle changes and improved treatments, researchers said on Wednesday.

About half the decrease was due to a sharp drop in the number of smokers and better diet while almost 44 per cent was attributable to more effective medication and surgery.

"Between 1985 and 2000, coronary heart disease mortality rates in Ireland fell by 47 per cent in men and women aged 25-84," said Dr Kathleen Bennett, of St James' Hospital in Dublin.

The decrease resulted in about 3,800 fewer deaths in 2000 than in 1985, according to the research reported in the *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*.

Heart disease and stroke are leading causes of death in developed countries. In the European Union, cardiovascular disease is the single biggest health problem and cost the bloc's 25 members 169 billion euros (202 billion dollars) in healthcare in 2003, according to a recent report by scientists at Oxford University.

Bennett and her team studied published data on specific treatments for heart disease and risk factors for the illness such as high blood pressure, and obesity, smoking, raised cholesterol levels, diabetes and lack of exercise.

MNA/Reuters

Heritage guardians to start high-tech survey on Great Wall

BEIJING, 16 March — An epic field survey aided by a range of high-tech devices will be carried out along China’s 6,300-kilometre-long Great Wall, *China Daily* reports on Wednesday.

A massive repair programme on the Wall, only one-fifth of which is considered well preserved, will follow the survey.

Special patrol teams will also guard against further man-made damage of the Wall, the paper says.

By 2014, when the overall project is scheduled to be finished, we will not only have a clear and complete picture of the current conditions of the Great Wall and its landscape, but also have a basic legal framework for its protection, such as marking out its preservation areas and buffer zones,” the paper quotes Cai Xiaoming as saying.

MNA/Xinhua

Hot pepper kills prostate cancer cells in study

WASHINGTON, 16 March — Capsaicin, which makes peppers hot, can cause prostate cancer cells to kill themselves, US and Japanese researchers said on Wednesday.

Capsaicin led 80 per cent of human prostate cancer cells growing in mice to commit suicide in a process known as apoptosis, the researchers said.

Prostate cancer tumors in mice fed capsaicin were about one-fifth the size of tumors in untreated mice, they reported in the *journal Cancer Research*.

"Capsaicin had a profound anti-proliferative effect on human prostate cancer cells in culture", said Dr. Soren Lehmann of the Cedars-Sinai Medical Centre and the University of California Los Angeles School of Medicine.

"It also dramatically slowed the development of prostate tumors formed by those human cell lines grown in mouse models." While it is far easier to cure cancer in mice infected with human tumors than it is in human beings, the findings suggest a possible future treatment.

They also may offer a good excuse for men who like spicy food to eat more of it.

Lehmann estimated that the mice ate the human equivalent of 400 milligrams of capsaicin three times a week.

That is about the amount found in three to eight fresh habanero peppers, depending on how hot the peppers are.

MNA/INTERNET

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MNA/INTERNET
**Edmundo blames ball, soap opera after Palmeiras held 0-0**  
**RIO DE JANEIRO, 17 March** — Former Brazil striker Edmundo blamed the ball and a soap opera after Palmeiras were held to a goalless draw at home by Rosario Central in the Libertadores Cup. The veteran player, known for his explosive temper, missed an open goal late in Wednesday night’s Group Seven game after appearing to misjudge the flight of the ball. “Unfortunately, other people impose things on us and the players have to do what they’re told,” he said. “That’s the case with this wretched ball. ‘We didn’t play well but we didn’t have much of a chance. You haven’t got a hope because of this ball. You try and control it and it always does something unexpected. I think someone’s having a laugh,” he told reporters.

The 1998 World Cup striker was also angry when the match, scheduled to kick off at 9.45 pm local time, began nearly 15 minutes late. “It’s mad to play at 10 o’clock. People don’t think about the players or the supporters. We’d done our warming up but the game only began after the soap opera finished. It all went blaming television for the delay.” — MNA/Reuters

**Chiapas extend unbeaten run in Mexico against hapless UAG**  
**MEXICO CITY, 17 March** — Chiapas extended their unbeaten run in the Mexican championship to eight games and handed opponents UAG their sixth successive defeat on Wednesday night.

Paraguay forward Salvador Cabanas scored in the first minute for the Jaguares, fielding seven players under the age of 21, to win 1-0 and to stay top of Group 3 in the Clausura championship.

Chiapas lead with 21 points from 10 games and stayed three ahead of Cruz Azul, who thumped relegation-threatened Santos Laguna 4-1.

UAG, who won their first four games, dropped to fifth in Group One with 12 points.

Former Argentina forward Claudia Lopez scored the only goal to send America, the country’s richest team, top of Group One by beating defending champions TolucA.

Lopez collected a pass from Cuauhtemoc Blanco and spotted goalkepper Hernan Cristante off his line in the 51st minute to give the Eagles their second win in three games under former Mexico coach Manuel Lapuente.

America, who have 14 points, lead on goal difference from Atlantic, who won 2-0 at Morelia, and Necaxa, who suffered a shock 3-0 defeat at San Luis.

TolucA are second in Group Two but dropped six points behind leaders Pachuca, who were held to a goalless draw by UANL. — MNA/Reuters

**Benitez agrees new deal at Liverpool**  
**LONDON, 17 March** — Liverpool’s Spanish manager Rafael Benitez has agreed a new four-year deal with the club that will extend his stay on Merseyside by an extra year to 2010, British media reported on Thursday.

The Guardian reported that Benitez’ agent Manuel Garcia Quilon spent Wednesday in talks with Liverpool chief executive Rick Parry hours before their Premier League match with Fulham and the new contract is likely to be signed on Thursday.

The newspaper said the deal was worth around 10 million pounds (17.37 million dollars) to Madrid-born Benitez, 45, who had been linked with a return to Spain. Media speculation in England and Spain had centred on Real Madrid heading the queue for the services of the man who steered Liverpool to Champions League success last year. — MNA/Reuters

**Zenit hold Marseille to reach UEFA Cup quarters**  
**ST PETERSBURG, 17 March** — Zenit St Petersburg reached the UEFA Cup quarterfinals for the first time on Thursday, a 1-1 draw against Olympique Marseille putting the Russians through 2-1 on aggregate.

Alexander Kerzhakov fired the hosts in front in the 69th minute and though defender Frederic Dehu levelled five minutes later, Zenit withstood Marseille’s late rally to advance to 2-1 on aggregate.

Trailing 1-0 after last week’s first leg in Marseille, the French side, playing without injured goalkeeper Fabien Barthez and midfielders Wilson Oruma and Franck Ribery through suspension, had better chances in the first half.

Meanwhile Zenit, also missing injured goalkeeper Kamil Kontofalsky and suspended defender Martin Skrtel, were content to sit back and rely on the counter-attack on a poor pitch more suited for horse riding than playing soccer.

Their tactics paid off when Marseille reserve keeper Cedric Carrasso fumbled a harmless-looking shot by Kerzhakov, which then hit the post before trickling over the line.

Dehu beat Vycheslav Malafeyev from a 20-metre free kick in the 74th minute but Zenit held on to reach the last eight of an European competition for the first time.

Carrasso compounded Marseille’s misery when he was sent off for a foul on Kerzhakov in the 89th minute.

Marseille coach Jean Fernandez had to watch Thursday’s match from the stands after being given a one-match ban for comments he made to the referee following last week’s defeat at the Stade Velodrome. Fernandez’ assistant Albert Emon was also suspended after being ejected from the bench in the first leg. — MNA/Reuters

**Steaua stun Betis 3-0 to progress in UEFA Cup**  
**SEVILLE (Spain), 17 March** — Two goals from Banel Nicolita helped Steaua Bucharest into the quarterfinals of the UEFA Cup on Thursday as the Romanians stunned 10-man Real Betis 3-0 after the first leg ended goalless.

The midfielder opened the scoring in the 54th minute after an evenly-contested first half.

Steaua’s task was made easier when Betis winger Joaquin was shown a straight red card for elbowing Nicolae Dica in the face six minutes later.

Victoras Iacob headed the second after 78 minutes and Nicolita added the third nine minutes from time, as Betis fell to pieces.

The Andalucians carved the first opening of the game after eight minutes as Joaquin curled a shot just over the bar. — MNA/Reuters

**Cup final joy for Espanyol makes up for league woes**  
**MADRID, 17 March** — Espanyol coach Miguel Angel Lotina said reaching the King’s Cup final made up for all the problems the side had suffered during their inconsistent season.

The Catalans held Depor to a goalless draw on Wednesday and their 2-1 win from the first leg was enough to get them into the final with Real Zaragoza next month.

“I would swap the whole year for what I have experienced in the dressing room this evening,” Lotina said after the game.

Walter Pandiani’s late strike from the first leg proved too much for a toothless Depor who, while dominating in the Riazor, were limited to rare sights of goal by their defensively resolute visitors.

Espanyol, three times Cup winners, have been unpredictable at best this season and Lotina’s position has been under constant scrutiny.

— MNA/Reuters

**Martina Hings of Switzerland stretches for a volley during her quarter-final victory over Dinara Safina of Russia at the Pacific Life Open tennis tournament in Indian Wells on 15 March.** — INTERNET

**Schalkle’s scorer Mmmoun Azaaouha, left, fights against Palermo’s Massimo Muntarli, right, during the UEFA Cup second leg match between FC Schalke 04 and US Palermo in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on 16 March, 2006. Schalkle defeated Palermo with 5-0.** — INTERNET
Study finds gene test helps predict lung cancer

WASHINGTON, 17 March — A test that finds damaged genes in the lungs of people considered at high risk of lung cancer might be able to predict who actually develops the deadly disease, US researchers said.

“The test is still not accurate enough for widespread use, but could replace risky and expensive X-rays, the researchers said.

“Short of repeatedly X-raying a person’s lungs to look for emerging tumours, there is no way now to screen people at high risk for lung cancer, much less predict who will be diagnosed with the cancer at a later date,” said Steven Belinsky, director of the Lung Cancer Programme at the Lovelace Respiratory Research Institute in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who led the study.

“When perfected and validated, this kind of test holds great promise for identifying people with lung cancer early enough to successfully treat them,” he added in a statement.

Writing in the 15 March issue of Cancer Research, Belinsky and colleagues said their test identified 65 per cent of patients who developed symptoms of lung cancer within 18 months, but also falsely tagged 35 per cent of cancer-free people who volunteered as “controls”.

The test looks at the DNA in lung cells in sputum. Certain genes are known to be silenced or turned off in lung cancer.

Lung cancer is by far the most common cause of cancer death in the United States and much of the world. The American Cancer Society says that in 2006, there will be an estimated 174,470 new cases of lung cancer and it will kill 162,460 people.

Only 15 per cent of lung cancer patients survive for more than five years, in part because it causes few symptoms early on and most people are not diagnosed until after the tumours have spread.
Bago Division (West) exceeds cultivation of 154,591-acres summer paddy against target of 150,000 acres

YANGON, 16 March — Chairman of Bago Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Southern Command Maj-Gen Ko Ko, accompanied by Secretary of Bago Division (West) Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Ohn Myint and departmental Secretary of Bago Division (West) Peace and Development Council Commander of Southern Command Maj-Gen Ko Ko, accompanied by personnel and local people at the hall of the agricultural research farm of Agricultural Research Department.

While in Pyay, the commander oversaw progress of 10-acre model physic nut nursery of Bago Division (West) Police Force. The commander gave instructions on systematic growing of physic nut plants, and tasks of plant grafting.

Bago Division (West) had put 36,900 acres under physic nut plants against the target of 2,765.23 acres in 2006-2007.

In Thegon, the commander met with division, district and township level authorities, departmental personnel and local people at the hall of the agricultural research farm of Agricultural Research Department.

Chairman of Thegon Township PDC U Hla Htay Naing reported to the commander on progress of the township, growing of summer paddy, the plan to extend cultivation of monsoon paddy in 2006-2007, and arrangements for growing physic nut yearly. Pyay District PDC Chairman Lt-Col Tun Aye gave a supplementary report.

The commander attended to the needs.

In 2005-2006, Thegon Township had cultivated 17,560 acres of summer paddy against 23,342 acres, and 11,309 acres had been put under pulses and beans, 1,200 acres under sesame, and 1,400 acres under sunflower.

The commander oversaw thriving summer paddy on either side of village-to-village roads in the township, cultivation of summer paddy, pulses and beans, and edible oil crops along Yangon-Pyay Highway.

In 2006-2007, Thegon Township (West) had put 154,591 acres under summer paddy by exceeding the target of 150,000 acres in 2005-2006. — MNA

1,940 gem merchants attend 43rd Myanmar Gems Emporium

YANGON, 17 March — For setting up Myanmar National Football Team and age-wise youth selected teams, the second quadrupartite football trials continued at Aung San Stadium, here, at 4 pm today.

In the third match of the trials, Under-23 Selected Team-A blocked Tentatively Selected Team-A (A) blocking the attack of Sun Day Thein (L) of Under-23 Selected Team.— NLM

In the third match of the trials, Under-23 Selected Team beat Tentatively Selected Team-A with a clear-cut result. The Tentatively Selected Team-A could not move their plays tactfully. Three goals of the U-23 Selected Team came through Sun Day Thein, Soe Thaha Aung and Myo Min Tun.

Tentatively Selected Team-B will play against Above-23 Selected Team at Aung San Stadium at 4 pm tomorrow. — NLM

Goalkeeper Thaha Si Thu and defenders of tentatively selected Myanmar team (A) blocking the attack of San Day Thein (L) of Under-23 Selected Team.— NLM

YANGON, 17 March — Chairman of the Myanmar Gems Emporium Central Committee Deputy Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Myint Thein viewed sales of gem lots through tender system at the hall of Myanmar Gems Mart on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road this afternoon.

A total of 1,940 gem merchants — 1,136 from 302 companies of 13 countries and 804 of 344 local companies — arrived at the emporium.

At the 43rd Myanmar Gems Emporium, 953 gem merchants of 239 companies of the People’s Republic of China, seven merchants from five companies of Singapore, 145 merchants from 37 Thai companies, two merchants from two companies of England, four from American companies, 14 from eight Japanese companies, one each from Sri Lanka, Canada, France, Russian Federation and Australia, four from two companies of Spain and two from a Malaysian company together with local merchants checked gem lots at the emporium from 9 am to 5 pm.

The local and foreign merchants will observe gem lots from 15 to 17 March. Pearl lots will be sold through tender system and competitive bidding on 18 March, gem lots on 19 and 20 March, and jade lots from 21 to 24 March. — MNA

U-23 take 3 points by 3-0 win over Selected-A

Lot No 233 of 68 gold hue pearls weighing 62.50 mommes with the floor price of 17,300 euros. — NLM

Objectives of the 61st Anniversary Armed Forces Day

* To work in concert with the people for emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed, discipline-flourishing democratic new nation
* To strive for successful realization of the seven-point policy programme of the State
* To crush every danger posed to the State hand in hand with people
* To build a strong, capable and modern Tatmadaw to safeguard

Our Three Main National Causes

* To build a strong, capable and modern Tatmadaw to safeguard

The local and foreign merchants will observe gem lots from 15 to 17 March. Pearl lots will be sold through tender system and competitive bidding on 18 March, gem lots on 19 and 20 March, and jade lots from 21 to 24 March. — MNA

Local and foreign merchants observing jade lots at the emporium.