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

YANGON, 8 April — The Myanmar goodwill delegation led by Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San held a discussion with Chief of Staff of the Russian Federation First Vice-Minister for Defence General YN Baluevsky at the Russian Ministry of Defence in Moscow in the Russian Federation at 12.30 pm local time on 4 April.

Also present at the discussion were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Member of the State Peace and Development Council Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Tin Aye of the Ministry of Defence, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Soe Thein, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, and Military Attaché Brig-Gen Tun Tun.

The Chief of Staff of the Russian Federation First Vice-Minister for Defence General YN Baluevsky was accompanied by senior military officers of the Russian Federation.

They cordially discussed matters related to friendly relationship between armed forces of the two countries.

After the discussions, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and General YN Baluevsky exchanged souvenirs.

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

Sunday, 9 April, 2006

**Enhance cooperation in all spheres between Myanmar and Russian Federation**

Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San paid a goodwill visit to the Russian Federation from 2 to 7 April at the invitation of Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mr Mikhail Fradkov.

During his visit, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye met with Prime Minister Mr Mikhail Fradkov in Moscow on 3 April.

At the meeting, they exchanged views on promotion of sector-wise cooperation including trade and economy between the two countries, combating terrorist acts, and control of narcotic drugs in cooperation with international communities, and current international affairs.

After the meeting, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Prime Minister Mr Mikhail Fradkov held a press conference. The prime minister at the press conference expressed belief that the discussions will enhance cooperation in economic, trade and education sectors of the two countries. The two countries have agreed to cooperate in ending international terrorism. There are plans to extend cooperation between the ministries of the two countries, he disclosed.

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye said that the goodwill visit is to open a new chapter of bilateral relations for further cementing the existing friendly ties between the governments, the peoples and the Tatmadaws of the two nations.

Although the two nations are far away from one another, they have been dealing with one another, they have been dealing with one another. They have been dealing with one another. They have been dealing with one another. They have been dealing with one another. They have been dealing with one another. They have been dealing with one another. They have been dealing with one another. They have been dealing with one another. They have been dealing with one another.

The joint declaration signed by the two countries in year 2000 and an agreement to hold formal meetings signed in 1999 have proved to be a sound foundation for cementing bilateral relations.

The goodwill visit of Myanmar delegation to the Russian Federation has produced such fruitful results that the two nations were able to sign a string of agreements and MoU. All in all, we firmly believe that the goodwill will visit of Vice-Senior General Maung Aye to the Russian Federation will be able to further cement the existing friendly ties and enhance cooperation in all spheres of the two nations.

**USDA members receive journalistic skills**

**YANGON, 7 April — Union Solidarity and Development Association concluded its 4th basic journalism course today at the headquarters of the association here.**

As part of an effort to teach USDA members mass media, national politics, propaganda and rebuttal of rumours in media, the USDA conducted the basic journalism course, and trainees are to carry out public welfare tasks with the knowledge gained at the course, said Central Executive Committee Member of USDA U Aung Min in his concluding remarks.

Since its birth, Union Solidarity and Development Association has been carrying out public welfare activities and has conducted training courses for human resource development paving the way for the emergence of future’s democratic State, he added.

Having laid foundations for peace and stability of the State joining hands with people and the Tatmadaw, the Government has also implemented development tasks in border and rural areas and 24 development zones, U Aung Min said.

He continued to say that five rural area development tasks as well as power supply task and growing of physic nut plantation are being undertaken in rural areas.

**In conclusion, he called on the trainees to preserve the Union Spirit and to participate in development tasks in line with the 12 objectives of the State.**

**CEC Member U Aung Min awarded prizes to the first, second and third prize winners of the course and completion certificates to all the trainees.**

The concluding ceremony was also attended by CEC Members of USDA U Thein Sein, Thura U Myint Maung and U Maung Pa, course instructors and trainees. — **MINA**

**Chief Executive of Asian Cricket Council leaves for home**

**YCDC to meet with Energy in final**

**YANGON, 8 April — The second semifinal of the Myanmar League Closing Cup Knockout Football Tournament was held at Aung San Stadium this afternoon.**

YCDC’s Hla Aye Hto scored the winning goal into the net of Home Affairs.

In the final match to be held on 11 April afternoon, Energy will meet with YCDC at Aung San Stadium. — **NLM**

**Officials of Myanmar Cricket Federation see off Chief Executive Mr Syed Ashraful Huq of Asian Cricket Council at the airport. — **MCF**

**YANGON, 8 April — Chief Executive Mr Syed Ashraful Huq of Asian Cricket Council departed for home yesterday.**

Mr Syed Ashraful Huq was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Vice-President of Myanmar Cricket Federation U Kyaw Kyaw, General Secretary Daw Swe Zin Htai, Advisor U Kyee Myint and executives.

While in Myanmar, he discussed promotion of cricket in the country, coach for Myanmar Cricket team and supply of sports gear with the officials of MCF. — **MINA**
Bush admits mistakes in Iraq, prods Baghdad

WASHINGTON, 7 April — About 1.2 million children under age 6 accidentally ingest poison each year. This often occurs at home when parents are not paying attention, or when children mistakenly reach to what appears to be an otherwise safe medication. Everyday substances that are potentially harmful to children include cleaning products, kerosene, gasoline, anti-freeze, pesticides, wind-shield wiper fluid and furniture polish.

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests storing these and other potential poisons in locked drawers or cabinets that are out of children's reach.

Childproof safety latches should be installed on any storage units. All medications should have childproof safety caps, and any unused medications should be thrown away where children cannot reach them. You should never store medications or toxic substances in regular food or drink containers, or in other containers that are not properly labeled.

Woman tricks herself out of reward

BERLIN, 8 April — When a German woman found a wallet containing 1,000 euros (696 pounds) she decided it was better to get a reward from the owner than to keep the money—even if that meant resorting to extortion, police said on Friday.

“It was a bit stupid. She could just have kept the wallet,” said a spokeswoman for police in the southwestern city of Darmstadt. “But she wanted the finder’s reward—and might have got one anyway. But she opted to extort it instead.”

Police said the 47-year-old found the owner’s phone number in the wallet and told the pensioner she could only have it back for 100 euros “plus 20 euros travel costs.” The owner agreed to the terms, and tipped off police, who arrested the woman with the wallet at the handover point.

Bush pledges closer trade, energy links with Yemen

BEIJING, 7 April — Chinese President Hu Jintao said here on Thursday China will further its trade and energy cooperation with Yemen in an effort to lift bilateral relations to a new height.

"China supports and welcomes the enterprises to increase their investment in the two countries, and is willing to expand cooperation with Yemen in such areas as energy, infrastructure and fishery," said Hu while meeting with visiting Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Saleh arrived in Beijing on Wednesday, kicking off his six-day state visit to China.

In reply to Hu’s call for further economic and trade cooperation, Saleh said the Yemeni Government is pleased with the sound development of bilateral relations and trade ties.

The friendly cooperation between Yemen and China has seen stable development and trade cooperation has achieved much progress since the two countries forged diplomatic ties 50 years ago, said Saleh, adding that trade volume hit 3.5 billion US dollars in 2005.

Hu urged the two countries to continue to step up exchanges at various levels and strengthen coordination in international and regional affairs.

On the situations in the Middle East and Gulf region, Hu said China has always engaged itself in easing and stabilizing the situations in the region, and opposes any move to intensify regional tension.

China insists that parties concerned increase dialogue, conduct consultations equally and solve disputes through peaceful negotiation in line with relevant UN resolutions, said Hu.

Chinese President Hu Jintao (R) shakes hands with visiting Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh during a welcoming ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China, on 6 April, 2006. Saleh arrived in Beijing on Wednesday, kicking off his six-day state visit to China.—INTERNET

Health tip: keep your home poison-proof

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Russian FM accuses EU of trying to isolate Belarus

PRAGUE, 7 April — Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday renewed Moscow’s accusations that the European Union (EU) was trying to isolate Belarus since the month.

“We are convinced that if the EU has questions concerning the activities of a country’s government, these questions should be addressed in a dialogue, and not through attempts to isolate the country,” Lavrov told a news conference in the Slovak capital Bratislava.

However, his Slovak counterpart Eduard Kukan expressed full support to Lukashenko for his election in Belarus, which was branded by the EU and the US as being rigged.

On the contrary, Russia expressed full support to Lukashenko’s reelection. The March 19 election in Belarus, which saw Lukashenko reelected with 83 per cent of the vote, was fair and was legitimate.

Better method found on detecting mutation of bird flu virus

Tokyo, 7 April — Genetic mutations in bird flu viruses could be monitored by a simple and inexpensive method using natto, or fermented soybeans, a Japanese research team announced on Tuesday.

Takashi Suzuki, a professor from the Shizuoka University’s School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, said his research team jointly developed with its partners a new method to detect signals of the viruses’ mutation into potentially new forms that could be transmitted from human to human.

In their experiment, adhesive substances in natto were used to fix cells from birds and humans on the surface of test plates, and viruses were then placed on the cells to check whether the form of the viruses has changed, the newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun reported on Wednesday. The method boosts higher sensitivity than conventional ones, Suzuki said. — MNA/Xinhua

New species of parrot, mouse found in Philippines

MANILA, April 7 — A brightly plumaged parrot and a long-tailed forest mouse unique to the Philippines have been discovered in the vanishing rainforest of a tiny tropical island, US-based researchers said on Thursday.

Camiguin, a volcanic island in the southern Philippines, is a treasure trove for fauna, and already had an endemic species of rodent and frog before the discovery of the rusty brown mouse and the green hanging parrot, known among locals as “Colasisi.”

But Camiguin’s wildlife was at risk from deforestation, researchers, writing in Fieldiana:Zoology, a scientific journal published by the Chicago-based Field Museum of Natural History, warned.

“Knowing that at least 54 species of birds and at least 24 species of mammals live on Camiguin and that some of these animals are found nowhere else on earth, makes us realize how important this island is,” said Lawrence Heaney, curator of mammals at the Field Museum.

“For these animals to survive, we’ve got to save the dwindling forests where they live.”

A diverse archipelago of more than 7,000 islands, the Philippines hosts a wealth of endemic flora and fauna but more than 70 per cent of its original forests have been destroyed.

Camiguin was once almost entirely covered by rain forest but by 2001, only 18 per cent was still forested due to logging, agriculture and human settlement. Half of the island, a popular diving destination, is covered with coconut plantations.

Midlife obesity raises risk of Alzheimer’s disease

SAN DIEGO, 7 April — Being overweight during one’s early 40s increases the risk of Alzheimer’s disease, decades later, new research shows.

“We originally thought that once we took into account diabetes and cardiovascular disease, that there would be no effect of overweight on Alzheimer’s disease, but that turned out not to be the case,” Dr. Rachel A. Whitmer said at a Press briefing held at the American Academy of Neurology’s annual meeting here in San Diego.

Whitmer, from the Kaiser Permanente Foundation Research Institute in Oakland, California, and her colleagues studied data on nearly 9,000 men and women who were between the ages of 40 and 45 years old when they were first examined between 1964 and 1973. Body fat was measured in the back and arms using special calipers.

Lawmakers want junk food out of schools

WASHINGTON, 7 April — Trying to shrink the growing waistlines of children, lawmakers want to expel soda, candy bars, chips and other junk food from the nation’s schools.

Dangerous weight is on the rise in kids. This week, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the rate of obese and overweight kids has climbed to 18 percent.

A Frenchman displays an electrical tricycle during an invention exhibition in Geneva, Switzerland, on 5 April, 2006. The 34th Geneva International Exhibition of Inventions, attracting some 700 manufacturers with more than 1,000 inventions from 45 countries and regions, inaugurated on Wednesday.

An undated handout photo shows a brightly plumaged parrot in captivity sitting on a branch of a tree on the island of Camiguin, a volcanic island in southern Philippines. — Internet

A robot is removing a suspected explosive object. On 6 April, A large-scale joint anti-terrorism drill was held in Jinyang district of Guiyang, capital city of Southwest China’s Guizhou Province. — Internet

Internet

Lawmakers blame high-price meals, high-sugar snacks that compete with nutritious meals in schools.

“Junk food sales in schools are out of control,” Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, senior Democrat on the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, said Thursday.

“It undercut our investment in school meal programs and steers kids toward a future of obesity and diet-related disease.”

Harkin and a bipartisan group of lawmakers introduced a bill to have the Agriculture Department set new nutritional standards for all food sold in schools.

The goal is to restrict junk food sales in schools.

The department sets standards for breakfasts and lunches in federal school meal programs, which reimburse public and nonprofit private schools for giving free or reduced-price meals to kids. Those meals must follow federal dietary guidelines, which call for more fruits, vegetables and whole grains and less calories, fat, added sugars and sodium.

But the standards don’t apply to a la carte lines in cafeterias, vending machines or school stores.

The Agriculture Department has tried to restrict junk food before, but a 1993 federal court ruling, in a lawsuit by the National Soft Drink Association, said the limits could only apply to cafeterias during meals, not for the entire day throughout campus.

But if the rate continues, the researchers warned that “one in two Americans will be obese by 2030.”

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**Venezuela to investigate American Airlines’ route permits**

**Caracas, 6 April**— Venezuela said on Tuesday that it would investigate the authorizations for two of the Miami-Caracas flights of American Airlines. Venezuela’s National Civil Aeronautical Institute said in a statement that it has opened an investigation to determine responsibility for the “irregular situation” of the two daily flights.

The two flights, 902 and 903, have been operated by American Airlines on its Miami-Caracas, Caracas-Miami route. The company suspended Flight 903 on Monday, as it did not have authorization from Venezuela.

Venezuelan firms are only permitted to operate international flights in the United States, and internal air routes have always been shut away from them.

MNA/Xinhua

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**Putin invites Brazilian President to attend G-8 summit**

**Brazilia, 6 April**— Russian President Vladimir Putin has invited Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to attend the Group of Eight (G-8) summit, which is to be held in St Petersburg on 15-17 July.

Visiting Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov conveyed Putin’s invitation letter to Lula on Tuesday, according to the Brazilian Foreign Ministry.

International energy security, infectious disease prevention and education development are included in the agenda of the upcoming G-8 summit, Putin said in the letter.

Putin also said that he believed Brazil could offer help in drafting the G-8 initiative, which would be released in 2006.

Russia, as the host of the G-8 this year, would like to make efforts along with other member countries to promote discussions on global issues, Putin added.

Lula expressed his thanks for Putin’s invitation, saying he would study it seriously and with interest. Fradkov, who arrived in Brazil for a three-day official visit, will also tour Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro along with a group of Russian entrepreneurs.

MNA/Xinhua

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**Let China, Pacific island countries create dynamic partnership**

**Nadi (Fiji), 6 April**— Fiji Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase on Wednesday called on the Pacific Island countries and China to work together to create dynamic partnership for a new Pacific.

“Let China and our countries create dynamic partnership for a new Pacific,” said the Fiji Prime Minister at the opening ceremony of the First Ministerial Meeting of the China-Pacific Island Economic Development and Cooperation Forum.

The Prime Minister said, “and we say, welcome China! We ask you to join with us shaping relationship for the 21st Century.”

He said China is already a valued provider of aid and development assistance, adding that “we are grateful for the commitment.”

He said the forum would give the island countries a chance to come together with China to turn on a new page in the region’s history.

The Prime Minister said there is a common desire for increased cooperation, commerce and investment.

“The key to the higher growth and related prosperity we seek is increased international trade,” he said.

He explained “that is what we would like to engage with China, as we increasingly look North for the answers to our trade and investment aspirations”.

The Prime Minister said, Fiji hoped that from this landmark conference at Nadi will become regular summit meetings with China at the highest level. The two-day forum meeting is jointly sponsored by China’s Ministry of Commerce and Fiji Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade.

MNA/Xinhua

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**Norway aims to reduce Microsoft dependence**

**Oslo (Norway), 7 April**— The Norwegian government said Friday it will increase its use of freely shared, open-source software to reduce its dependency on large computer companies like Microsoft Corp.

“It should no longer be necessary to use software from the major, international computer companies to gain access to important information in the public sector,” the government said in a statement. “Now that dependency will be broken.”

The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform said measures to increase use of open-source programs include a specialist panel to set standards for public information.

The government statement said the project will also set standards to allow various operating systems to communicate with one another.

Several countries, including Brazil, China, France, Germany, Japan and South Korea, have been actively moving toward open-source alternatives.

Proponents say open source results in quicker development of software because vast numbers of people can study, update and adapt programs without having to pay licensing fees.

MNA/Xinhua

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**Two killed, over 50 injured in storm in southern Bangladesh**

**Dhaka, 7 April**— Two persons were killed and over 50 others injured in cyclonic storm that lashed the southern Bhukathang District of Bangladesh early hours on Thursday, officials contacted by telephone said.

They said the storm swept through the district when people were sleeping. A couple in a village of the district died following a house collapse during the hour-long storm that flattened around 200 houses.

The officials said the storm damaged croplands heavily, but immediately could not assess total damage.

MNA/Xinhua
I was born and brought up in Mandalay. When I was young, I often boasted that even my belly was stuck with gold foils of the palace posts. As I am so inquisitive, I know every incident that occurs in the city. Recently, a group of foreigners arrived in the city. They could be seen visiting this or that place in the city by car, causing some public annoyance. First, I assumed them to be tourists. But I came to notice later that they were different. Other tourists usually visited Maha Muni Buddha Image, Mandalay Hill, PyinOoLwin or Zeygo Market. But they met the chairman of the organizing committee and executives of the Mandalay Division National League for Democracy, asked about a national race couple, saw some persons of drama and literary field, who once faced legal action, invited students of Mandalay to a meeting without any permission from authorities, and made arrangements to show the uncensored movie “Crash”. They became an eyesore to the people.

When I enquired about them, I came to know that those White people were not tourists, but the staff of the American embassy. If said precisely, they were the charge d’affairs, the first secretary, the military attaché and staff of the embassy. First, I thought that what they were doing did not concern us. But when I listened to the VOA on 2 March 2006, I was surprised and angry, because people from the so-called civilized country dared make brazen lies. So, I wrote this article to counter media with media.

What the VOA said was that the staff of Yangon-based American embassy and American centre visited Mandalay on 27 February for teaching local youths and students English; that the group led by the charge d’affairs went to the city as Myanmar students needed help to learn English; that they started to implement their education programme only after meeting with authorities; and that unknown groups distributed anonymous letters to authorities, warning people against the meddling of Americans in the city.

Americans who are shouting “press freedom” are now lying the world with false news, while withholding the truth. They are flagrantly violating the journalism ethics. But it is not strange. Have any of the successive American administrations ever taken a sincere stance towards Myanmar?

During the parliamentary democracy era, the US government organized and used even the persons of literary and journalism worlds, students, ordinary persons of the religious field and monks with assistance from Ford Foundation and Asia Foundation claiming that no strings were attached. But it was an effort to organize local people to think highly of the US, with the library as a tool. Now, the USIS has become the American centre. But nothing has changed, only the name.

However, its intention has remained unchanged. The US Center has been equipped with a USIS library, and there a film show is presented weekly. The pictures include newsreels that feature how the US presidential elections are held democratically and fairly, episodes of appreciating US lifestyle, and political movies like “Crash”. The US Center also conducts English language courses. Today, it is encouraging that Myanmar youths pursue foreign languages such as Japanese, Russian, German, Spanish, Korean and Thai. Among them is English. In reality, English is not a British language, but an international language or communicative language between different peoples. Fully taking advantage of this point, the US Center does organizing work through various English language courses. That is its concern. But, the course on English for journalism is like a sugar-coated course for young journalists from the Myanmar journalism sphere, and so it can be called poisonous media. The class is open in the morning, as well as in the afternoon for those who are busy in the morning. In particular, the course targets novice journalists to stuff them with its ideas.

Naturally, youths are open-minded, curious to know everything and mentally and physically active and hate unfairness without pretence. The Ministry of Information has granted permission to almost all those who wanted to publish magazines and journals. So, more than 200 magazines and journals are in circulation in Myanmar and the number is unprecedented. That calls for many editors and reporters but there is no journalism course to train them. So, they have to study journalism through books on journalism and approach veteran journalists for the subject. Surely, they will be qualified one day through experience. Meanwhile, the US Center launched the course on English for Journalism that was good news for such novice journalists. Every kind of course is beneficial to the trainees. But such a course with particular intention poses grave dangers. To my knowledge, over one hundred youths must have completed the course by now. The course graduates are now serving for respective magazines and journals. I have close relationship with many youth journalists. I happened to bluntly ask some of them if their English improved much especially in writing after the course. They gave me the same answer “no”. You readers may inquire such youths who have completed the course to find out if they know how to present a news story simply and briefly. Then, you should ask what the American course instructors taught them in the term of three months and if the text included journalists’ ethics or journalists’ writing. In fact, the course instructors teach the trainees journalism just a little and hunt a lot of information about education, health and social sectors of Myanmar from the latter. I do not think such artless youth trainees are aware of the fact that their generosity and sincerity have been exploited cleverly. The instructors are organizing the youths. For instance, they choose some with whom they get along (who seem to dance their tune) out of the trainees and sent them to some foreign nations such as Thailand and Cambodia. They also keep three or four senior Myanmar youth journalists by sending them to some big countries including America four or five times each. So, they can organize local youths through such followers. Many of dollar-earning American nationals in some embassies and international organizations in Myanmar are such kinds of persons who were punished under law or who were sacked by government departments and their children. So, it is obvious that such employees are getting along with some media to feed information. I wholeheartedly encourage and support some folks of Mandalay who are shouldering national duty by sending warnings in writing to certain American diplomats and US Embassy staff who violated diplomatic ethics and are interfering in the internal affairs of Myanmar.
Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspects cultivation of physic nut and rubber in Kachin State

YANGON, 8 April — State Peace and Development Council Member Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence together with Kachin State PDC Chairman Northern Command Commander Maj-Gen Ohn Myint and departmental officials, met with military officers and other ranks and their families at Myitkyina Station Hall on 5 April and gave instructions on growing physic nut and rubber plants to meet the target, cooperation in regional development tasks, attending to the educational, health, social and welfare requirements of family members and carrying out breeding tasks. Afterwards, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party attended the ceremony to grow physic nut plants, heard a report on completion of growing physic nut plants and left instructions. Next, grafts and seeds of physic nut were distributed to the departmental officials and social organizations.

On arrival at physic nut plantation of Kachin State Development Affairs Committee Shadaung Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party presented the grafts and bags of physic nut seeds and viewed the plantations.

At Myitkyina Station, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and Commander Ohn Myint distributed the physic nut seeds to units, and gave instructions on growing physic nut plants. Afterwards, Li-Gen Ye Myint and party proceeded to the honey orange farm of Kachin State USDA and inspected the nurturing of the 6,000 grafts and 94,000 saplings at the honey orange farm.

When they arrived at the briefing hall, Lt-Gen Ye Myint heard reports on the construction of Myitkyina-Sinbo-Myoha No 3 district-to-district Road and left necessary instructions. At Sinbo Township local battalion, Lt-Gen Ye Myint met with military officers, other ranks and their families and cordially greeted them. When they arrived at Township Administration Office, Lt-Gen Ye Myint heard reports on regional developments and gave instructions to the officials.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party inspected the people’s hospital, BEHS and market in Sinbo. At Amatgyigon Village in Shwegu Township, Lt-Gen Ye Myint gave a speech and attended to the needs.

Later, Lt-Gen Ye Myint met with departmental officials at Shwegu Township local battalion and left instructions on growing physic nut plants. At Shwel Bridge (Nga-O), Lt-Gen Ye Myint gave instructions on durability of the bridge. — MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye... (from page 16)

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye cordially shakes hands with Chief of Staff of the Russian Federation First Vice-Minister for Defence General YN Baluyevsky. (News on page 1) — MNA

Myanmar Ambassador U Tin Soe. Deputy Governor of St. Petersburg Mr Lobko was accompanied by First Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, accompanied by Daw Khin Khin Win, wife of Secretary-1 Li-Gen Thein Sein, Daw Khin Saw Hnin, wife of member of the State Peace and Development Council Quartermaster-General Li-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Daw Myint Myint Soe, wife of Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Daw Myint Myint Thein, wife of Myanmar Ambassador U Tin Soe and officials, arrived at the Office of the Governor of St. Petersburg.

They were welcomed there by Information and Public Relations Officer Ms Svetlava Matveea and officials.

Daw Mya Mya San and party visited women’s boarding school founded by Empress Catherine, Tzar dynasty of Russia and the house where Lenin and his wife lived during the October Revolution. They were conducted round the museum by officials. — MNA

Ceremony to pay respects to former teachers on 1 May

YANGON, 6 April — A ceremony to pay respects to the former teachers of No 2 Basic Education Middle School in Dagon Township and a get-together will be held at the school on 1 May (Workers’ Day). The former students, whether the invitation cards are received or not, may attend it.

Any students may donate cash and contact Headmistress Daw San Tin, Tel (379178), Thitagu Ko Naing Oo—Tel (591999, 590590), Daw San San Wai—Tel (558168), Ko Than Win—Tel (382235, 242310), and Ko Nyein Chan Oo—Tel (099024072). — MYANMA ALIN
YANGON, 8 April — Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San, together with Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win, Member of the State Peace and Development Council Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and wife Daw Khin Saw Hnin, and Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Tin Aye of the Ministry of Defence, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Soe Thein, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, Minister for Science and Technology U Thaung, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win and wife Daw Myint Myint Soe, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi, senior military officers, Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation U Tin Soe and wife Daw Myint Myint Thein, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Tun Tun, Director-General of the State Peace and Development Council Office Col Kyaw Kyaw Win, and departmental heads, accompanied by Russian Ambassador Mr Oleg V Kabanov, arrived at Vnukovo-2 Airport in Moscow at 9 am local time on 5 April to continue their goodwill visit in the Russian Federation.

After taking the salute, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr AY Alekseev inspected the Guard of Honour. At that time, the State Band played the national anthems of the Union of Myanmar and the Russian Federation.

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr AY Alekseev inspecting the Guard of Honour. — MNA

Likewise, the Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs greeted high-ranking officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation who saw off Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Daw Mya Mya San at the ramp of the aircraft.

The Guard of Honour marched past Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr AY Alekseev.

A Russian woman presented a bouquet to Daw Mya Mya San at the ramp of the aircraft.

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Mr AY Alekseev saw off Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Daw Mya Mya San at the ramp of the aircraft.

The aircraft carrying the Myanmar goodwill delegation led by Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San landed at Pulkovo-I Airport Zone A in St Petersburg of the Russian Federation at 11.10 am local time.

They were welcomed at the airport by officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Governor’s Office of St Petersburg.

Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San and party proceeded to Hotel Astoria in St Petersburg. — MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San being welcomed by officials of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and Office of Governor of St. Petersburg. — MNA
Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San meet staff, families of Myanmar Embassy, Military Attaché’s Office

YANGON, 8 April—The Myanmar goodwill delegation led by Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San arrived at the Myanmar Embassy in Moscow of the Russian Federation at 6.55 pm local time on 4 April.

Staff and families of the Myanmar Embassy and the Military Attaché’s Office welcomed them.

First, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye extended greetings to staff and families of the Myanmar Embassy and the Military Attaché’s Office.

On behalf of Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein explained matters related to the goodwill visit of Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye to the Russian Federation beginning 2 April, the traditional relationship between the Union of Myanmar and the Russian Federation and promotion of friendship between them, matters concerning the shifting of military units and ministries to Naypyitaw City, the programmes to build a modern, developed, discipline-flourishing democratic nation in line with the seven-step Road Map, and the programmes to build a modern, developed, discipline-flourishing democratic nation, endeavours of the Government to fulfill the requirements while wiping out dangers posed by internal and external destructionists, and implementation of the border area and national races development plan, the 24-special-development region plan, and five rural development tasks for development of the nation.

The Secretary-1 stressed the need for staff of the Myanmar Embassy and the Military Attaché’s Office to discharge their respective duties conscientiously.

Next, staff and families of the Myanmar Embassy and the Military Attaché’s Office paid respects to Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San.

On behalf of Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein presented gifts to staff and families of the Myanmar Embassy through Ambassador U Tin Soe, and gifts to those of the Military Attaché’s Office through Military Attaché Brig-Gen Tun Tun.

The Myanmar Ambassador and wife hosted a dinner in honour of the Myanmar goodwill delegation led by Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San.

After the dinner, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, wife Daw Mya Mya San and party went back to President Hotel.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein meets staff and families of Myanmar Embassy and office of military attaché in Moscow. — MNA

Rural roads inaugurated

YANGON, 8 April—The Hsutaunggya-Einme gravel road was inaugurated in Pantanaw Township, Ayeyawady Division this morning.

Officials formally opened the facility that was undertaken with contributions of K 33.88 million by Pantanaw Township Development Committee.

Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt inspected the 3 miles and 4.5 furlongs long and ten feet wide road linking Hsutaunggya Village with Einme. That will benefit more than 36,550 local people.

CEC Member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Col Thein Nyunt briefed executives of division, district and township USDA on tasks being carried out for regional development.

The minister attended the opening of rural gravel road linking Minbaw Village and Maubin-Kyaklatt Road. The 9,440-foot-long road was constructed with cash assistance of K 32.1 million and it will benefit over 6,000 local folks.

He also attended the opening of Toe Myitta tarred road in Ward 12 in Maubin and inspected it.

MNA
Regional development undertakings supervised in Shan State (East)

NAYPYITAW, 8 April — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Kyaw Win of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Shan State (East) PDC Commander of Triangle Region Command Gen Min Aung Hlaing, Brig-Gen Win Aung of Mongphyat Station and senior military officers, held a meeting with Tatmadaw members and families at local regiment of Mongphyat on 6 April morning.

Together with Commander Maj-Gen Min Aung Hlaing and senior military officers, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win from helicopter inspected Mongphyat-Mongyawng-Mongyu road, summer paddy fields and rubber plantations along the road.

Later that morning, he met departmental personnel at the township assembly hall. Deputy Head of Mongyu General Administration Department U Min Aung Naing reported on progress of cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy and other crops and physic nut.

In response, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win provided assistance, calling on departmental personnel to cooperate harmoniously with local people for ensuring food security, submit progress of agricultural sector of the region and make efforts with goodwill for regional development.

Mongyu Region has 17,112 acres of farmland, 337,210 acres of virgin and fallow lands, 259,227 acres of forests, and other 44,160 acres of reserved forests, and other 214,842 acres of other lands. In 2005-2006, the region put 15,619 acres under monsoon paddy with per acre yield of 66.86 baskets. So far, it has cultivated 402 acres of summer paddy, grown 193,253 physic nut saplings, and nurtured 220,300 physic nut seedlings and grafts.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party visited Mongyu People’s Hospital where they were conducted by Medical Superintendent Dr Min Thein around the wards and medical store. Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party also visited Mongyu BEHS and gave necessary instructions to officials. Next, they proceeded to Nampan region rubber and summer paddy plantations of Shan State (East) Special Region-4, inspected the plantations and cordially greeted local farmers.

On arrival at Mongyawng, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win met servicemen and their families at the local battalion. Again in meeting with departmental personnel at the Mongyawng Township PDC office, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win heard a report by the council chairman on the area, location and population of the township, cultivation of summer and monsoon paddy, ten major crops, rubber and physic nut plants and plans to ensure regional food sufficiency.

In response to the report, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win fulfilled the requirements and called for concerted efforts for boosting cultivation of rubber, a raw industrial product. Mongyawng Township has cultivated 31,895 acres of monsoon paddy in 2005-2006, yielding 71.23 baskets of paddy per acre. Besides, 964,271 acres have been put under summer paddy in the township.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party visited Kengtung Government Technical College in the afternoon. Principal Dr Min Aung Naing reported on the conducting of courses, number of students, strength of staff. Lt-Gen Kyaw Win left necessary instructions. Later,Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party visited the Government Computer College (Kengtung) and left necessary instructions there.

Prizes of ASEAN radio quiz awarded

YANGON, 8 April — A Summer Course on Swimming of Kokkaing Swimming Club concluded at the club this morning. It was attended by Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint.

The minister made a speech and the officials presented completion certificates to the trainees.

Vice-chairman of the club U Han Tun Aung presented gifts to the coaches and Dr Khin Shwe, President of Myanmar Swimming Federation spoke words of thanks. It was followed by a lucky draw programme.
Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department of the Ministry of Livestock Breeding and Fisheries issued a press release on death of chicken in central Myanmar.

1. Death of chicken: The LBVD carried out restriction and control measures on prevention and control of disease regarding the death of chicken and quails in Shwebo District, Sagaing Division from the first week of February 2006 to 26-3-2006 and Mandalay Division from 8-3-2006 to 26-3-2006.

   (A) Death of chicken/those destroyed

   Out of 60,929 fowls at 93 poultry farms, 6,731 died in Shwebo District (Shwebo, KhinU, Kanbalu and YeU) from the time of chicken death to 26-3-2006, altogether 24,836 fowls were culled and buried. In Mandalay District (Pyigyidagun, Amarapura, Chanmyathazi, Chanayethazan, Maha Aungmye and Aungmyethazan) 2,060 fowls died at 99 poultry farms where 111,919 were kept and 96,159 were destroyed. Therefore, 8,791 fowls died and 120,995 fowls and 560 eggs were destroyed and buried in those districts.

   (B) Death of quails and those destroyed

   Altogether 1,941 quails at two quail farms in Shwebo District and 115,650 quails in 44 quail farms in Mandalay District and 50,515 eggs were killed/destroyed and buried. Therefore, 117,591 quails and 50,515 quail eggs were killed/destroyed and buried.

   (C) Finding of bird flu virus

   After the initial outbreaks in the cull zone in Kanbalu, KhinU, YeU, Pyigyidagun, Amarapura, Chanmyathazi, Chanayethazan, Maha Aungmye and Aungmyethazan Townships, investigation was made at 47 poultry farms. A total of 433 samples (blood, inner organs of the chicken and trachea) were collected and examined through rapid test and HA, HI and PCR processes. The H5N1 virus was detected in 26 samples of 35 chicken farms.

2. Control of disease: Under the supervision of local authorities the LBVD is taking measures on disease control in the cull zones in cooperation with Health Department, Development Affairs Departments, Myanmar Livestock Breeding Federation and breeders and with the assistance of disease control experts from international organizations. All the fowls in the farms from one kilometre radius of the farm where the virus was found were culled for risk prevention. The destruction included 120,995 fowls, 112,414 quails, 50,515 quail eggs and 560 eggs.

   The farms and other materials were sprayed with pesticides. The ban on sale and transport of animals and their products was imposed after the control and restricted and control areas were designated between 3 kilometres and 7 kilometres from the infected farm. It was found that there was no evidence of human and other animal infections from the H5N1. The situation is now under control in affected townships of Mandalay Division.

3. The latest condition up to 26-3-2006: The disease has been brought under control in Shwebo, KhinU except in Kaboe Village in Kanbalu Township and Mandalay District; control measures continue at Kaboe Village.

4. Cooperation with international organizations: Regional Coordinator of FAO Dr K Watanabe and Regional Coordinator of USAID of the United States Dr John MacArthur in cooperation with the LBVD made a field trip to the affected areas in Mandalay and Shwebo Districts and took emergency measures on control of the disease. Minister for Livestock Breeding and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein received the FAO and WHO resident representatives to Myanmar and discussed bird flu control programmes. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and a regional laboratory in Australia provided educative posters and laboratory equipment. Myanmar received protective gear, testing kits and others worth about US $ 100,000 provided by FAO, JICA and the regional laboratory in Australia. Three experts from FAO, JICA and DLD of Thailand together with Dr K Watanabe will conduct disease control in Mandalay and Shwebo for two weeks beginning 28-3-2006.

5. Rehabilitation: Under the programme of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, the Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, the Myanmar Livestock Breeding and Fisheries Development Bank and the Myanmar Livestock Breeding Federation will jointly take measures for rehabilitation of the affected chicken runs.

6. Regions that have not been infected: To ensure normal rate of consumption and trade of domestic chickens and chicken products in such regions, State/Division Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Departments will hold coordination meetings and issue animal health certificates to livestock breeders and traders to distribute products with the permission of respective local authorities.

Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department
Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries
A citizen walks with an umbrella against snowfall in Panjin City, northeast China's Liaoning Province, on 6 April, 2006. Sleet and slight snowfall hit many cities of the province Thursday. —INTERNET

**Study shows Tirana noisiest city in Europe**

**TIRANA, 7 April**— Albania is the most heavily noise-polluted country in Europe, and Tirana is the noisiest capital in the region, according to a study published on Wednesday.

The study, conducted by the Albanian Institute of Public Health in eight major towns, found that the level of noise measured in Tirana in the daytime could reach up to 80 dB, whereas the average noise in other European countries is 50 dB. Even at night, the noise level in Tirana could reach up to 60 dB, as opposed to the average 40 dB in other European countries.

Experts pointed out that leading causes of the noise pollution are the huge flux of worn-out vehicles and the decrepit road infrastructure. Albania has around 300,000 vehicles on the road, and over 100,000 vehicles circulate in Tirana every day, according to statistics.—MNA/Xinhua

**Norway listed as world leader in foreign aid**

STOCKHOLM, 7 April— The nations in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) set a new record for aid contributions in 2005, and Norway topped the donor list, said reports reaching here from Oslo on Wednesday.

Minister of International Development Erik Solheim has his sights set even higher for aid efforts, according to Aftenposten. OECD members gave 106 billion US dollars in aid to the third world last year, 31.4 per cent more than in 2004.

Norway topped the list with gifts worth 0.93 per cent — 2.77 billion US dollars — of its gross national income, just ahead of Sweden with 0.92 per cent.

Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Denmark filled out the top five, and were the only countries in 2005 to exceed the United Nations target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for rich nations.

"Sweden has said that they will reach 1 per cent (of GNP) and then so must we. I don't have a budget (of GNP) and then so must they. But we are letting us down," she said. Dube said some villagers have resorted to prematurely harvesting their crops due to the problem.—MNA/Xinhua

**Scientists find new ring around Uranus is blue**

WASHINGTON, 7 April— The newly discovered outer ring of Uranus is bright blue, for the same reason the Earth’s sky is blue — it is made up of tiny particles, astronomers said on Thursday.

It is "strikingly similar" to Saturn’s outer ring, which astronomers last month confirmed was probably generated by one of the planet’s moons. Enceladus.

Like Saturn’s ring, the Uranus ring also has a small moon in it, called Mab. But Mab is too small and too cold to be spewing a geyser of ice that contributes to the ring as Enceladus is now believed to be doing.

"The outer ring of Saturn is blue and has Enceladus right smack at its brightest spot, and Uranus is strikingly similar, with its blue ring right on top of Mab’s orbit," said Imke de Pater, a professor of astronomy at the University of California Berkeley, who helped lead the study.

"I think there is no chance that the blue ring is caused by geysers" said de Pater, whose report is published in Friday’s issue of the journal Science. "We don’t know what the composition of the particles is. Mab is probably covered with water ice, like the other moons, but we have nothing to do with the ring’s colour, said de Pater.

"They are blue because they are tiny particles," De Pater said in a telephone interview. "That is same reason why the sky is blue. You have little particles that scatter light as blue light."—MNA/Reuters
Deficiency in Vitamin C accelerates aging process

Tokyo, 7 April—The deficiency in Vitamin C definitely accelerates the aging process, Japanese researchers found in their experiments on genetically engineered mice, a local newspaper reported on Thursday.

The research team, headed by experts from Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology and Tokyo Medical and Dental University, first created through genetic engineering mice that lost their natural ability to create Vitamin C internally, then fed them with less than the normal daily requirement of Vitamin C. It took just six months for half of the engineered mice to die of old age, only a quarter of the life-span of another control group’s normal mice, researchers said.

The researchers also set up a group of engineered mice and deprived them of Vitamin C. Those mice developed a scurvy, a disease that arises in humans deficient in Vitamin C, and all died in about six months, the daily Asahi Shimbun said.

The researchers boast their finding’s contribution to studies on the mechanism behind aging.

NASA says planets may rise around dead star

Los Angeles, 7 April—NASA’s Spitzer space telescope has uncovered evidence that planets may form out of a dead star’s ashes.

While the infrared telescope surveying the scene around a pulsar, the remnant of an exploded star, it found a rotating disk made up of debris.

“The dusty rubble in the disk might ultimately stick together to form planets, according the astronomers. This is the first time scientists have detected planet-building materials around a dead star. “We’re amazed that the planet-formation process seems to be so universal,” said Deepto Chakrabarty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), principal investigator of the new study.

Pulsars emit a tremendous amount of high energy radiation, he said, yet within such a harsh environment they found a disk that looks “a lot like those around young stars where planets are formed”.

The findings were published in the April 6 issue of British journal Nature.

Lead author of the paper, Zhongxiang Wang, is a post-doctorate researcher at MIT from China.
27 Sugary
26 Norwegian explorer
25 Crying
24 Survival from past
20 Energetic person
16 Simple
14 Bill of fare
13 Sever
11 Headland
ACROSS
10 Stiff
9 Plunder
8 Animal
7 Naturist
6 Deviate
5 Shortened
4 Primula
3 Dash
2 View
1 Voe
DOWm
1 Got up
2 Pigtail
3 Dash
4 Danger (anag.)
5 Shortened
6 Deviate
7 Naturist
8 Animal
9 Decorative twist
10 Greek letter
11 Headland
12 Sorrow
13 Sever
14 Bill of fare
15 Simple
16 Cushion
17 Styx ferryman
18 Move stealthily
19 Slender
20 Energetic person
21 Milk-white gem
22 Cost
23 Minus
24 Survival from past
25 Crying
26 Norwegian explorer
27 Sugarly

Van Hooijdonk salvages a point for Feyenoord

AMSTERDAM, 8 April — Pierre van Hooijdonk struck 11 minutes from time to salvage a point for Feyenoord at Heerenveen in the Dutch First Division on Friday.

Heerenveen dominated the first half but squandered their chances and the home side khởied the deadlock four minutes into the second half.

Arnold Bruggink set up Niklas Tarvajarvi for the third goal in the second set before clawing his way back.

“I knew it would be a tough match against Calleri and I had to dig very deep not to put us in a very difficult position on the opening day,” Ljubicic told reporters.

“We knew Nalbandian would be too strong for Cilic so I think it’s a good result on the opening day with so many things going wrong for us,” Ljubicic broke Calleri to take it 7-5, delighting the vociferous Argentine fans who at one point had to be calmed down by security officials after they ignored the umpire’s plea for quiet.

Ljubicic, who recovered from an abdominal problem just in time for the opening rubber, needed treatment for a twisted ankle and was on the verge of defeat when he fell 4-1 down in the third set.

The world number five, though, won five consecutive points before taking it 6-2 to deny Calleri.

Van Hooijdonk won the silver and Pellegrini won the bronze. — INTERNET

Chile's Gonzalez stuns Blake in Davis Cup

BARRANCO MIRAGE, 8 April — Chile's Fernando Gonzalez recovered from two sets down to stun American James Blake 6-7, 6-4, 6-7, 6-4, 10-8 in the opening rubber of their Davis Cup quarterfinal on Friday.

The 25-year-old Gonzalez staged an extraordinary comeback from 3-5 down in the third set as he seized control of the match from Blake, whipping over huge forehands and looking comfortable around the net on the dry grass court.

The pair played out a tremendous fifth set with Blake squandering a 4-1 lead and Gonzalez then failing to serve out the match 6-5 when Blake came up with a forehand winner.

The Chilean got into a series of arguments with the chair umpire over questionable over-rules but held his nerve and won the gripping four-hour, 19-minute contest on his second match point when he crushed an ace down the middle. — MNA/Reuters

Couples makes 22nd successive cut at Augusta

AUGUSTA, 8 April — Former champion Fred Couples made the US Masters cut for the 22nd consecutive time after firing a two-under-par 70 in Friday’s second round.

The 46-year-old American, winner at Augusta National in 1992, finished on three-under 141, three strokes adrift of tournament leader Chad Campbell.

Couples, who made his Masters debut in 1983, moved into second place in the all-time list for successive cuts. His run of 22 is the longest active streak.


Els, Mickelson in perfect harmony

AUGUSTA (Georgia), 8 April — Phil Mickelson and Ernie Els played the first two rounds of the US Masters in the same group and matched each other shot for shot to finish on two-under-par 142.

American Mickelson, the 2004 champion, birdied all four par-fours including one at the last gave him an even-par 72 in the second round at Augusta National.

South African Els also experienced a roller-coaster afternoon on the sun-baked course, mixing four birdies with a bogey and a double-bogey on the par-four 10th to return his second successive one-under 71.

“It's two good rounds, two solid rounds, I had it going there for a while,” world No. 5 Els told reporters after finishing four strokes adrift of leader Chad Campbell.

“Conditions are quite tough today. 'I've got a chance on Saturday and Sunday. I haven't quite been in the lead there yet through two rounds but I think I'm going to be in pretty good shape. ’I've just got to try and sneak something into the 60s over the weekend and see what happens. ’I’ve got to try and sneak something into the 60s over the weekend and see what happens.”

Els and Mickelson arrived here in contrasting form.

The South African’s major championship pedigree, which includes two US Open wins and one British Open victory, marked him out as a threat even though he has been below his best this year. — MNA/Reuters

Oliver Kahn (R) goalkeeper and team captain of Bayern Munich shake hands with Argentina's German goalkeeper Jens Lehmann . Coach Juergen Klinsmann named Jens Lehmann on 7 April, 2006, as Germany’s first choice goalkeeper for the 2006 World Cup, leaving former captain Oliver Kahn to consider his international future. — INTERNET

Candice Parker of the United States women’s basketball team drives past China’s Chen Nan, left, during their World Challenge Series match in Cairns, Australia, on 7 April, 2006. The US team won the match 85-77. — INTERNET
Official says passenger decline hits Air Zimbabwe

HARARE, 8 April — Negative perceptions about the safety of travelling on Air Zimbabwe coupled with problems the national airline is facing have resulted in a drastic decrease in the number of passengers, a senior official has said.

Air Zimbabwe acting chief executive officer Captain Oscar Madombwe told the parliamentary portfolio committee on Mines, Environment and Tourism on Thursday that there was a negative perception by both the local and foreign travelling public about the airline.

He was giving oral evidence on the operations of Air Zimbabwe and some of the problems it faced, local media reported on Friday.

Madombwe said that passengers were concerned about their safety when travelling on Air Zimbabwe because the airline’s planes were old.

He said although the national airline had an aged fleet with some planes now 30 years old such as the Boeing 737, it must be noted that they were flying for about three hours a day instead of the industrial standard usage of eight hours.

Air Zimbabwe had plans to buy five cargo and passenger planes with a view to replacing some of its ageing fleet, he disclosed.

Currently, the airline has a fleet of eight cargo and passenger planes.

Some of the problems facing Air Zimbabwe were of a political nature as the national airline was associated with the government, he said.

He said 93 airlines had been banned from flying to the European Union but fortunately Air Zimbabwe was not one of them as this could have generated interest in the media.

The acting Air Zimbabwe boss said the majority of the airlines that used to fly into Harare had pulled out because of reduced business mainly resulting from the travel warnings issued by some European countries discouraging their nationals from travelling to Zimbabwe.

MNA/Xinhua

Aerial view of the Bosphorus bridge spanning the Bosphorus Straits in Istanbul, Turkey, on Thursday, April 7, 2006.

INTERNET

WEATHER

Saturday, 8 April, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been scattered in Kachin and Shan States, isolated in Sagaing Division, weather has been partly cloudy in Kayah, Kayin, Mon States and Taninthayi Division and generally fair in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (6°C) below normal in Kachin State, (3°C) below normal in upper Sagaing Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Chin State, lower Sagaing, Magway and Taninthayi Divisions and (5°C) above normal in Ayeyarwady Division and about normal in the remaining areas.

The significant day temperatures were Minbu and Magway (42°C) each and Monywa (41°C). The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Thingpaw (0.91) inch, Patoa (0.51) inch and Myitkyina (0.35) inch.

Maximum temperature on 7-4-2006 was 102°F. Minimum temperature on 8-4-2006 was 70°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 8-4-2006 was (63%). Total sunshine hours on 7-4-2006 was (9.9) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 8-4-2006 were nil at Mimaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2006 were (Tr) at Mimaladon, Kaba-Aye and (0.04) inch at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) mph from Southwest at (15:30) hours MST on 7-4-2006.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 9-4-2006: Isolated light rain or thundershowers are likely in Kachin and Shan States, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States and generally fair in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

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

Forecast for Naypyitaw City and neighbouring areas for 9-4-2006: Generally fair weather.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring areas for 9-4-2006: Generally fair weather.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring areas for 9-4-2006: Generally fair weather.

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YANGON, 8 April — Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San attended a luncheon hosted by Chairman Mr Ulyanov of Tyazhprom Export of the Russian Federation at the Floating Restaurant near Kremlin Palace in Moscow of the Russian Federation at 1.30 pm local time on 4 April.

Also present at the luncheon were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win, Member of the State Peace and Development Council Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and wife Daw Khin Saw Hnin, and Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Tin Aye of the Ministry of Defence, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Soe Thein, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, Minister for Science and Technology U Thaung, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win and wife Daw Myint Myint Soe, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi, senior military officers, Myanmar Ambassador to the Russian Federation U Tin Soe, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Tun Tun, Director-General of the State Peace and Development Council Col Kyaw Kyaw Win, and departmental heads.

After the luncheon, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San and party visited the museums of Kremlin Palace in Moscow. — MNA

YANGON, 8 April — Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Deputy Governor of St. Petersburg Mr Lobko held discussions at the Office of the Governor of St. Petersburg in the Russian Federation on 5 April.

Present on the occasion were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, members of the State Peace and Development Council Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo and Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win and wife Daw Mya Mya San and party. — MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Deputy Governor Mr Lobko holding talks.

Chairman of Tyazhprom Export of the Russian Federation hosts luncheon to Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San

Mr Ulyanov hosts a luncheon to Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San and party. — MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, Deputy Governor of St. Petersburg hold talks