Bridges, roads not for economic profit, but for regional development

Mawlamyine Railway Station, Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine) rail bridge open

NAY PYI TAW, 18 April — The opening ceremony of Mawlamyine Railway Station and Thanlwin River Rail Bridge (Mawlamyine) took place at the pandal near the station in Mawlamyine yesterday morning.

Present on the occasion were Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo of the Ministry of Defence, Chairman of Mon State PDC Commander of South-East Command Maj-Gen Soe Naing, Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min, Deputy Minister for Construction U Tint Swe, Deputy Ministers for Rail Transportation Thura U Thaung Lwin and U Pe Than, Chairman of Kayin State PDC Col Khin Kyu, senior military officers, officials of State Peace and Development Council Office, members of Mon State PDC, departmental personnel at state, district and township levels, engineers and staff of Public Works and Myanmar Railways, national races, members of Union Solidarity and Development Association, Women’s Affairs Organization, Maternal and Child Welfare Association, War Veterans Organization, Red Cross Brigade and Auxiliary Fire Brigade, teachers and students, nurses, traditional cultural troupe numbering over 5,500. At the ceremony, Lt-Gen Maung Bo unveiled the stone plaque of Mawlamyine Station and delivered an address. He said that the nation’s longest motor road bridge was opened on 5 February 2005, attended by Head of State Senior General Than Shwe. As the approach structures for the rail bridge are completed on either bank of Thanlwin river, trains as well as cars can use the bridge smoothly. The rail bridge and the Mawlamyine Railway Station can be opened one year after the completion of the road bridge.

(See page 16)
Cultivate Union Spirit and work in concert for regional and national development

The government of the Union of Myanmar is making every endeavour on all fronts for parallel development of all the regions across the Union. With the purpose of strengthening national economy, all the necessary steps are being taken for the development of the agriculture sector, the main pillar of the national economy. At the same time constant efforts are being made for establishment of modern factories in the industrial sector and for progress of the education, health and social sectors.

Needless to say, progress of the transport sector is the sine qua non for all-round national development. This being the case, all the requirements are being fulfilled for easy and smooth transport so that people living in various regions of the Union can go from one place to another easily.

The Yangon-Kyaukpyu Highway and the Minkyaung Creek Bridge constructed by Public Works under the Ministry of Construction were inaugurated on 17 April and Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe himself graced the opening ceremony with his attendance and extended greetings to local people on the occasion.

In his address to national people in the region, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe exhorted the locals as well as all the national people of the Union to work in concert, cultivate Union Spirit and serve the Union.

In the past, people in Rakhine State had to rely on travel by air or by water. But now, thanks to the emergence of Yangon-An-Sittway, Yangon-Taungup-Kyaunkpyu and Yangon-Ngaingchaung-Gwa-Thandwe highways, people in Rakhine State can travel to other states and divisions easily by road. The 2700-foot Minkyaung Creek Bridge is one of the bridges on the Yangon-Kyaukpyu Union Highway.

Due to the emergence of the Yangon-Kyaukpyu highway and bridges on it, 300,000 people in Kyaunkpyu, Yanbye and 480 villages on Yanbye Island can easily travel by land and work for their higher socio-economic status. And we would like to call on the national people in Rakhine State as well as in the rest of the Union to cultivate Union Spirit and work in concert for regional and national development and perpetuation of the Union.

YANGON, 18 April — Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Khin Zaw, accompanied by Majway Division PDC Chairman Col Phone Maw Shwe and officials, visited Lawkananda river-water pumping project site in NyaungU Township on 12 April morning.

At the briefing hall, the commander was reported on targeted acreage of summer and monsoon paddy cultivation, cultivation of other crops and supply of irrigation water within the project area. Next he instructed the officials to extend crop items. He inspected the thriving plantations of physic nut, cultivation of summer paddy and green gram and scattering of fertilizers. The commander and party next went to Mya Kantha greening project site near Nyaungto village in NyaungU Township. At the briefing hall, officials reported to the commander on construction tasks of the project.

On arrival at field No 2270 in Magyiyaing village in Kyaukpaduang Township in the afternoon, the commander and party viewed cultivation of Shwe Myanmar summer paddy strains and broadcasting of fertilizers. During his visit to Kyetmauktaung Dam, the commander gave instructions to officials on boosting cultivation of summer and monsoon paddy as the dam was able to store more water through the project of supporting dam. The dam’s capacity of water storage reached 27,123 acre feet this year compared with 12,810 last year. In 2005-2006, the region cultivated 7,870 acres of summer paddy and has planned to cultivate up to 12,000 acres of monsoon paddy in 2006-2007.

Later, the commander and party inspected the thriving plantations of summer paddy in Taguntaing village, Kyaukpaduang Dam in Natmauk Township, and cultivation of physic nut plants on Meiktila-Kyaukpaduang Road in Meiktila Township. — MNA

Culture Minister inspects National Library

YANGON, 18 April — Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung held a meeting with Deputy Director-General Daw Nandar Hmun of the Fine Arts Department and officials and discussed matters related to construction tasks.

After hearing reports, the minister attended to the needs.

On 18 April, the minister inspected the construction of the library including inner decoration of it. During his inspection, Minister Maj-Gen Kyi Aung held a meeting with Deputy Director-General Daw Nandar Hmun of the Fine Arts Department and officials and discussed matters related to construction tasks.

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Danube at century high

Bucharest, 17 April — The Danube rose to its highest level in more than a century on Saturday, but the breaching of a dam in Romania eased pressure on towns and villages struggling to hold back the floods, officials said.

Rivers fed by heavy rain and melting snow crept higher across the Balkans for the fourth straight day, driving people from their homes and swamping low-lying farmland and ports. Waters rose to an 111-year high in the Romanian town of Bazias, near the Serbian border, flooding around 5,000 hectares (12,355 acres) of farmland on the Danube's northern bank.

The river also flooded the small port of Becchet, while soldiers and civil defence workers scrambled to reinforce dykes and build sand bag barriers on both sides of the river.

Romania’s government started controlled flooding to divert water, flowing near a record 15,800 cubic metres per second, away from low-lying villages and was helped by the collapse of a dam in southwestern Romania which flooded farmland.

"The water flow has remained high at 200 cubic metres per second. This is a success," Beatrice Popescu, of the Environment Ministry, told Reuters.

In all, Romania plans to submerge about 90,000 hectares of fertile soil on a 400-kilometre (250-mile) stretch on the Danube’s northern bank, a major area for wheat and maize farming.

The Danube is still recovering from devastating floods last summer, which killed scores of people and caused hundreds of millions of euros in damage to farmland and infrastructure.

This time, floods have submerged hundreds of houses, leaving thousands homeless and leaving tens of thousands more at risk.

Death toll reaches 476 during Thai Songkran festival

Bangkok, 17 April — The death toll from road accidents in Thailand during the ten-day watch-out period related to Songkran festival holidays topped at 476, caretaker Interior Minister Kongsak Wantana said here on Monday.

On Sunday, the last day of the ten-day watch-out period, 386 road accidents occurred and 35 people killed, raising the death toll to 476, he said. Kongsak said 5,327 road accidents happened during the ten-day period and 5,985 people were injured.

Thailand’s long Songkran holiday is widely known for its high casualties from road accidents as a large number of Thais, particularly those who work in the capital, Bangkok, usually travel to reunite with their families upcountry to celebrate the water festival.

Kongsak said drunken driving remained the number one cause of the accidents, followed by excessive speed.

Pigs, bulls in Vietnam contract foot-and-mouth disease

Hanoi, 17 April — Over 1,000 pigs and bulls in Vietnam’s central highlands Lam Dong Province have been infected with foot-and-mouth disease in recent days, local newspaper Labour reported on Monday.

Most of the infected animals are in Duc Trong District. By 16 April, some 1,000 pigs in the district have contracted the disease, and more than 400 of them died, the paper quoted Pham Ngoc Thiep, head of the Lam Dong Veterinary Bureau, as saying.

Relevant agencies are assessing the disease situation in Duc Trong, and tightening management over the transport of cattle, and operation of meat shops and slaughterhouses, so that infected pigs are not slaughtered or transported to the nearby resort city of Da Lat in Lam Dong, he said, noting that the province may have to announce an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in its territory in the coming days.

Lam Dong currently has 669 poultry-and cattle-trading bases, nearly 500 of which operate without licence, the newspaper said. — MNA/Nothav

US yacht attacked by pirates off Yemen

Rome, 17 April — A US-flagged yacht with three people aboard was attacked by pirates wielding rocket launchers off the coast of Yemen, the Italian Coast Guard said on Sunday after an Italian freight ship reported a distress call.

"Around 9:45 am (0745 GMT) an Italian container ship, the Jolly Plastino called to say it had heard an SOS message from an American sailing vessel, the Tir Na Nog," an official from the Rome headquarters of the Coast Guard told Reuters.

The Italians informed US authorities in the region of the incident which happened some 25 miles (40 kilometers) off the Yemen coast. The official said two US and one Dutch military vessel in the area had been told of the attack but he did not know how any rescue attempts were progressing.

Commander Jeff Breslau, a spokesman for the US Navy’s Fifth Fleet based in Bahrain, said: "Coalition forces are investigating the incident." He gave no further details.

In Aden, an official at Yemen’s Coast Guard said he did not have any information about the incident, adding that it had occurred outside the Arab country’s territorial waters. Yemen shares territorial waters with Somalia, whose coastal waters have become among the world’s most dangerous in the 14 years the country has lacked a central government.

MNA/Reuters

Chinese construction workers are working on a construction site at the central business district amid heavy dust and smog in China’s capital Beijing, on 18 April, 2006. Dusty conditions will continue to prevail in many parts of northern China today and in the few days ahead, meteorologists warn, China Daily reported. — Internet

US soldiers view a car destroyed during a gun battle between the Iraqi Army and guerrillas in the western Iraqi town of Falluja, 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad, on 15 April, 2006. — Internet

This NOAA satellite image taken on Monday, 17 April, 2006 at 03:15 PM EDT shows a wide band of clouds in association with a frontal system stretching from the Mid-Atlantic westward through parts of Ohio and Tennessee Valley and then northwestern across the Central Plains. A storm system in the northwestern Atlantic produces widespread clouds over the New England. — Internet

Baghdad, on 15 April, 2006.

The Marines fired grenades at several sites occupied by sites occupied by US casualties.

The Marines fired mortars and rockets, and had started controlled flooding to divert water, flowing near a record 15,800 cubic metres per second, away from low-lying villages and was helped by the collapse of a dam in southwestern Romania which flooded farmland.

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MNA/Reuters

Coalition forces are investigating the incident," he said.

MNA/Nothav

MNA/Reuters

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 19 April, 2006 3
Beijing turns yellowish as sand rains down

BEIJING, 17 April — Most Beijingers woke up on Monday to find, to their surprise, that a “yellow blanket” has covered up everything in the open air: from window sills, cars and the ground to every single leaf on the trees.

“As if the desert has crawled to Beijing overnight,” said Zhang Rui, a citizen in Chaoyang District in eastern Beijing.

He was not exaggerating — Zhang said he spent at least 15 minutes dusting the sand off his Jetta sedan.

A sandstorm hitting the China-Mongolia border on Saturday and Sunday started to affect Beijing at midnight on Sunday and by daybreak, the city had turned yellowish.

Unlike the particulate matter that often exists in Beijing’s air, the suspending granules hitting the city today are bigger, though still less than 100 microns in diameter,” said Wang Xiaoming, an official with the municipal environment protection bureau. “That’s why we feel sand is raining down.

The particulate matter that often hovers over Beijing is mostly less than 10 microns in diameter, he added.

“Wang said this is the eighth, as well as the worst, sandy weather that attacks Beijing from outside Beijing this year.

The bureau forecast at 9:00 am that the city’s air quality will be level V or hazardous on Monday, with pollution reading over 301.

The municipal government launched a pollution control scheme Sunday night hoping to lessen the impact of the sandy weather. The city has sent sprinklers to wash urban roads and construction sites have been told to halt earthwork.

MNA/Xinhua

Zambia confiscates 242 kilos of game meat

LUSAKA, 17 April — The Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) has confiscated 242 kilos of game meat after an operation in Chongwe District of Lusaka Province, ZAWA Public Relations Officer Maurice Mwape confirmed in Lusaka on Saturday.

ZAWA also confiscated six muzzle loading guns, one shot gun and one live baboon during the same operation.

Mwape said ZAWA in a joint operation with the paramilitary officers conducted the operation between 31 March to 10 April and 27 people were arrested, including five women who are illegal game meat traders.

MNA/Xinhua

2,378 US troops killed in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 17 April — US military deaths in Iraq have risen sharply in April — after five straight months of decline — amid warnings by American officials that the failure to form a new Iraqi government has helped perpetuate violence.

Last month, there were 31 US military fatalities, the fewest since 20 died in December 2004 in the lowest monthly toll of the 3-year-old war. So far this month, which is a bit more than half over, there have been at least 48 American fatalities, according to a count of military death announcements.

There have been 2,378 US military deaths in the war, the Pentagon said, with another 17,549 US troops wounded in action. The average monthly US military death toll in the war has been 65. — Internett

Kalashnikov says Iraq shows his gun is still best

MOSCOW, 17 April — Mikhail Kalashnikov, designer of the world’s most popular assault rifle, says that US soldiers in Iraq are using his invention in preference to their own weapons, proving that his gun is still the best.

“Even after lying in a swamp you can pick up this rifle, aim it and shoot. That’s the best job description there is for a gun. Real soldiers know that and understand it,” the 86-year-old gunmaker told a weekend news conference in Moscow.

“In Vietnam, American soldiers threw away their M-16 rifles and used (Kalashnikov) AK-47s from dead Vietnamese soldiers, with bullets they captured. That was because the climate is different to America, where M-16s may work properly,” he said.

“Look what’s happening now: every day on television we see that the Americans in Iraq have my machine guns and assault rifles in their armoured vehicles. Even there American rifles don’t work properly. Some US troops in Iraq have reportedly taken to using AK-47s in preference to the standard-issue M-16. The Cold War-era gun, renowned for its durability and easy handling, is plentiful in Iraq. — Internett

Light plane crash kills two in western Canada

OTTAWA, 17 April — Two men died when a light plane crashed Saturday on Vancouver Island in Canada’s western British Columbia province, Canadian Press reported on Sunday.

Rescuers located the wreckage west of nearby Horne Lake on the island after an overnight search.

The 59-year-old pilot and 56-year-old passenger were dead at the scene. The four-seat Cessna, which was owned by the Alberni Valley Flying Club, was on a return flight from Sechelt on the mainland to Port Alberni on Vancouver Island. Captain Steve Eyle of Joint Rescue Coordination Centre in provincial capital Victoria said crew spent all night searching for the aircraft and finally located it at 6:01 local time Sunday morning. — MNA/Xinhua

Workers clean up the glass roof of the China World Trade Center after a dust storm deposits its layer of dust across Beijing on Tuesday, 18 April. Beijing was preparing on Tuesday to use artificial rain-making to clear the air after a choking dust storm coated China’s capital in yellow grit, prompting a health warning to keep children indoors, state media said. — Internett

Tigers play in a pond at the Tiger Temple in Kanchanaburi Province, 120 km (74 miles) northwest of Bangkok, on 17 April, 2006. The temple now has 16 tigers which are looked after by the Buddhist monks. — Internett

Chinese actress Zhang Jing Chu reacts after she received the best actress award for the film ‘Peacock’ in the Sixth Chinese Film Media Awards in Hong Kong on 17 April, 2006. — Internett

A boat sails on the Wujiang River around the small town on 11 April, 2006 in Gongtan Township of Youyang County, Chongqing Municipality, China. Gongtan Township is an ancient town with a history of over 1,700 years and abundant in cultural heritages. — Internett
HK shoppers dump plastic bags for “No Plastic Bag Day”

HONG KONG, 17 April — Up to 90 per cent of shoppers at Hong Kong’s biggest supermarket chains used their own carrier bags on Saturday while Hong Kong was launching the “No Plastic Bag Day”, according to a report by South China Morning Post on Sunday.

A majority of Saturday shoppers took part in the day-long experiment by environmental activists to push home the message that plastic is not fantastic, the English daily said.

The English daily quoted Angus Ho Hon-wai, chairman of the Green Student Council, who campaigned for the event involving more than 1,200 retail stores, as saying that he could not expected better.

He said citizens from 80-year-old grannies to domestic helpers went shopping with their own bags. His council was greatly encouraged that the event was a success.

At Park n Shop and Welcome chain stores, the two major groups for daily goods selling in Hong Kong, more than 80 per cent of shoppers either had reusable bags or old shopping bags, or gladly paid 50 cents per bag as a donation to Oxfam, a local charity organization.

To minimize complaints, Mannings and Wing On Department Store had sales assistants warm customers by informing customers Saturday was a no plastic bag day.

More than 1,000 shops and supermarkets in Hong Kong joined “No Plastic Bag Day” on Saturday in a move to persuade shoppers out of excessive use of environmentally-unfriendly plastic bags.

The cruise ship “Freedom of the Seas”, one of the world’s largest cruise liners, manoeuvres on the river Elbe while docking in at Blohm + Voss shipyard in Hamburg, on 17 April, 2006. The 1,112 feet (339m) long 18-deck ship by Royal Caribbean International was built at the Aker Finnyards drydock in Turku, Finland and will accommodate 4,370 passengers served by 1,360 crew.—INTERNET

Bomb blast wounds 31 in Istanbul street

ISTANBUL, 17 April — A bomb explosion on a busy pedestrian street on the outskirts of Istanbul wounded 31 people on Sunday, police said, in the latest violence to strike Turkey in recent weeks.

Istanbul’s police chief Celalettin Cerrah said two civilians were in critical but not life-threatening condition and had been rushed to hospital for emergency surgery. He told reporters at the scene two plainclothed policemen, patrolling the area, had been injured from broken glass.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Turkey’s mainly Kurdish southeast, which left 16 dead. Scores of soldiers and rebels of the separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) have also been killed in separate clashes.

The blast blew out windows of stores in the street. The street was closed off and forensic experts were examining the area.

“Our friends are working. An assessment will be made according to the information received,” Cerrah said.

Police fired into the air to disperse angry residents who initially thought a person taken by the police was a bomber. Police said the person was a witness.

The Kurdish Liberation Hawks (TAK), a shadowy group which has ties to the PKK, has claimed responsibility for a series of deadly bomb blasts in Istanbul. TAK, formed by former PKK guerrillas, has warned of further attacks.

Militant groups, including Kurdish separatists, Islamists and ultra-leftists, have carried out attacks on civilians, security and military targets in Turkey in recent days.—ANAREUTERS

Canada confirms new case of mad cow disease

OTTAWA, 17 April — Canada confirmed on Sunday the existence of mad cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), in a British Columbia dairy cow.

It is the country’s fifth case of mad cow disease since 2003.

The national BSE surveillance programme identified the cow on a farm in British Columbia’s Fraser Valley, but initial screening tests proved inconclusive.

Samples were sent to the National Centre for Foreign Animal Disease in Winnipeg for further testing last week.

However, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) said Canadian beef is still safe. “Tissues in which BSE is known to concentrate in infected animals are removed from all cattle slaughtered in Canada for domestic and international human consumption,” the CFIA said in a statement Sunday afternoon local time.

“No part of this animal entered the human food or animal feed systems.” — ANA/REUTERS

HK Airport handles more flights

HONG KONG, 17 April — Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department on Saturday said that the HK airport handled 870 flight movements on Friday, a daily record high.

The figure represents 1,360 crew

A gold bar is seen in an undated photo. Gold traded to a fresh 25-year high of $617.60/$618.40 an ounce on Tuesday as rising oil prices resurrected fears of inflation. — INTERNET

City Hall robbers crack open ATMs for Easter

RIO DE JANEIRO, 17 April — In Rio de Janeiro, the City Hall is not immune from robberies, not even on Easter.

Police said on Monday that a group of between 10 and 15 armed masked people raided the lobby of the City Hall complex buildings the previous day also saw the guards’ motorcycles.

That was the second attack on Easter.

Maintenance workers hostage during the raid that took place on Easter.

The guards’ motorcycles were stolen to a fresh 25-year high of $617.60/$618.40 an ounce on Tuesday as rising oil prices resurrected fears of inflation. — INTERNET

A destroyed motor scooter and broken chairs lie on the sidewalk after a car bomb attack near a restaurant in Baghdad on 15 April, 2006. —INTERNET

The English daily said.

The English daily said.
Residents perform a dragon dance to celebrate the upcoming 23rd Weifang International Kite Festival in Weifang, China's Shandong Province on 18 April, 2006. The 23rd Weifang International Kite Festival will be held in Weifang on 20 April, 2006. —INTERNET

S Korea President says to further develop ties with China

SEOUL, 18 April—South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun said Monday that his country will continue to push forward bilateral ties with China and make positive efforts to maintain regional peace and stability.

In a meeting with Chinese Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan, Roh said the bilateral relations between the two nations sees a smooth development as South Korea attaches importance to the friendly cooperation with China.

He highly commended China’s role in resolving the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula as well as other international issues.

Cao, who is also vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of China and a State Councillor, expressed regards of Chinese President Hu Jintao to Roh during the meeting.

He said the two countries have seen frequent exchange of high-level visits; a fast-growing economic cooperation; increasingly active exchanges in culture, education, science and technology since the diplomatic relations were established 13 years ago.

The military cooperation between the two neighbours is also developing steadily, he added.

Cao said China is willing to join efforts with South Korea to develop long-term and stable bilateral ties.

He reiterated China’s sustained stance on issues concerning the Korean Peninsula and said China will continue to cooperate with parties concerned to maintain regional peace and stability and promote a common development.

MNA/Xinhua

5.4-magnitude earthquake jolts Greek Islands

ATHENS, 18 April—A 5.4-magnitude undersea earthquake hit Greece’s western Ionian Islands Sunday, but no damage or injuries were immediately reported, the Athens News Agency reported.

The earthquake occurred at 12:15 am (1015 GMT), with its epicenter 240 kilometres west of the Greek capital Athens, but close to the island of Zakynthos. The Zakynthos Island has been jolted by a series of earthquakes measuring from 4.8 to 5.7 on the Richter Scale since 3 April. The region is one of the most earthquake-prone in Greece, which is considered one of the most seismically active countries in the world. MNA/Xinhua

“Forbes” to issue Indonesian edition

JAKARTA, 18 April—Forbes magazine, which targets readers of middle and entrepreneurial classes, plans to publish the local version in Indonesia, a newspaper reported on Monday.

Forbes Asia confirmed that it has given a license for the publication of Forbes Indonesia to the Investor Group, a local media group that also publishes Investor Daily and Suara Pembaruan newspapers, reported The Jakarta Post.

The local version of Forbes will hit the newsstands in September.

William Adampoulus, the publisher of Forbes Asia, said in the statement that the dynamic business climate and fast growing middle and entrepreneurial classes had made Indonesia a prospective market for Forbes. —MNA/Xinhua

ADB to help Philippines improve local government units

MANILA, 18 April—The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will help the Philippine Government improve the work of local government units (LGUs) through a technical assistance grant of 1.8 million US dollars, the ADB said on Monday in a statement.

The grant, provided in response to a request from the Philippine Government, will address three key aspects of local governance, including legal framework for decentralization of government operations, budget management and better mobilizing of resources, the ADB said.

LGUs in around three provinces will be selected for participation in the project based on their prospects for accessing credit markets and commitment to improved government management, among others.

The total cost of the technical assistance is estimated at 2.575 million US dollars. MNA/Xinhua

Minister says Uganda, Rwanda in good relations

KAMPALA, 18 April—Uganda’s relations with Rwanda are healthy despite contrary Press reports, a senior Ugandan Government official said on Monday.

Henry Okello Oryem, the minister of state for international affairs, was quoted by local Press on Monday as describing the relations between the two neighbouring countries as cordial.

“Uganda and Rwanda continue to enjoy very cordial relations despite Press speculation and wishful thinking in some quarters. Common sense and pragmatism guide us through any strains of the relations,” Oryem said.—MNA/Xinhua

UN to launch global alliance for “ICT”, development

UNITED NATIONS, 18 April—United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has approved the launch of a global alliance for information and communication technologies (ICT) and development, the world body said Monday.

As stressed by the 2005 World Summit and the World Summit on the Information Society, information and communication technology must be effectively integrated into development activities if the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, are to be achieved within the agreed time frame, the UN public information department said in a Press release.

The mission of the global alliance will be to facilitate and promote such integration by providing a platform for an open, inclusive, multi-stakeholder cross-sectoral policy dialogue on the role of information and communication technology in development, the department said.—MNA/Xinhua

Five Egyptians killed in car crash

CAIRO, 18 April—Five people were killed and five others injured in a car crash in Behera governorate, 130 kilometres north of Cairo, on Sunday, the official MENA news agency reported.

Four of the victims were identified and the wounded were rushed to a nearby hospital, said the report.

In a separate accident, six were wounded when two vehicles collided head-on near Damanhour, the capital city of Behera governorate. MNA/Xinhua

Iraqis assess the damage after a powerful bomb blast in Baghdad on 18 April, 2006. Four civilians were killed and 22 people were wounded, including two policemen, when a roadside bomb exploded near a police patrol in northern Baghdad, police said. —INTERNET

A Japanese shop clerk displays the official World Cup ‘Teamgeist’ soccer ball for sale at the 2006 FIFA World Cup Official Shop operated under licence by FamilyMart in Tokyo on 18 April, 2006. —INTERNET
There are more than 300 townships in the nation. But the number of villages is over 60,000. Thus, on average, one township has over 200 villages. Some townships have 50 to 100 villages each, and some have 600 or 700 villages each. Townships are different in terms of population and have different types of socio-economies. A few villages even don’t know the language and literature. Anyhow, thanks to the restoration of peace, the education system has reached most parts of the nation. The nation now has over 40,000 basic education schools including primary ones. The education development is satisfactory. School age children can now attend classes with convenience.

The campaign to open rural self-reliant libraries has helped open libraries in over 40,000 villages out of the total of 60,000 in two years, 2004 and 2005. The Information Ministry has been able to open such a large number of rural libraries because of the public support, local authorities’ assistance and donors’ contribution. The ministry is pursuing the target of opening self-reliant libraries in all villages of the nation by the year 2006. Up to the previous month, it has opened over 50,000 rural libraries. But we still need enough books and journals for the libraries to fully act as public knowledge centres. The task of opening and running village libraries is a continuous work we should not lose momentum in carrying it out. We have not reached the goal yet.

We invite everyone’s contribution of books to village libraries. We have heard that even in a country like developed Japan, people donate books they have already read for others to read. They leave books and periodicals at the seats in railway stations. In the economically developed countries, wider knowledge is the foundation of better efficiency. Human resources development is important.

Human knowledge development project is not a short-term task. It needs patience and zeal for long-term development of human knowledge.

Today’s developed countries are enjoying the fruits of the trees they have grown 100 or 200 years ago. Thanks to the globalization, we have the opportunity to gain greater success in a short period. Army Major Anderson, a famous person during the American Revolution, set up a public library. His library was a great assistance to the people of surrounding areas wishing to seek knowledge. Some youths came to the Major Anderson Library daily. One of them came to the library every Saturday morning, reading books and noting down important and useful facts the whole day. He was a Scot. He thanked the library as he gained much knowledge from it. Twenty years later, he became the richest person in America. He was Andrew Carnegie.

When he became a millionaire, he realized the importance of enhancing public knowledge to develop everything from socio-economy to public financial power. He set up Carnegie Public Libraries in the whole US. Although they never revealed the fact, many people were able to enjoy better lifestyles thanks to the libraries.

The Scot millionaire who read books at a library when he was a youth made the most significant accomplishment. He helped produce 43 millionaires at a time when millionaires were rare.

But we don’t need to look far as countries as America. If we asked men or letters in their seventies or eighties, they will tell us about the importance of the information libraries. What the eminent monks, successful physicians, engineers, and military leaders will recount is that they gain much knowledge from books, or in other words, their second mother who fed them milk of energy for success.

Thanks to prison warden U Maung Lay, a bad guy by the name of Maung Ohn Pe, who was put in prison for three times, became a book-worm at the prison library. His life changed to good and he became a writer.

He used a large amount of money to set up the U Ohn Pe Library in Pakokku, Athopinnya Library in Htanunggon village, and Bahuthuta Library in Shadaw village. He, who became a good guy from a bad one, believed that libraries gave light of knowledge to the people.

Literature awakes many youths. It opens the door for the light of knowledge to enter youths’ minds. Books and literature have helped increase the number of intellectuals and intelligentia in the nation. Whether it is an evolution or a rapid development, the main players and leaders throughout the successive eras have been the intellectuals and intelligentia.

We can see the important roles of intellectuals and intelligentia in the industrial revolution, democracy and human rights activities, the national independence struggles and development of human history. The leadership with less knowledge ends up in a failure. Knowledge is power. Lack of knowledge is like a chronic disease that creates only the hardships.

If the people lack knowledge, and intelligence at this age, they may be tricked, abused and crushed by the powerful media. It is a grave danger to the nation. Long-term development and success of the over 50,000 libraries and youths is a challenging task for us all. We all should understand the power of contribution and the importance of self-reliant rural libraries to make more donations. We should give more water to the main roots for national interest. All should take part in the setting up and maintaining of libraries as a national task.

**Chit Naing (Psychology)**

Let’s contribute more!
As all the national races living in the 14 states and divisions of the nation are brothers and sisters, the government has been sharing the wealth among them and catering for their health. It shows no discrimination against any national race at all. Like the parents, it wishes to see all the nation’s sons and daughters enjoying prosperity and prestige.

Bridges and roads are not for economic profits, albeit the cost, they are for regional development. The aim of building the facilities is to develop the locals facing various sufferings caused by insurgency.”

In addition to engineers of Public Works, engineers of Military Engineers and Myanma Railways and other related organizations are being trained to build bridges. The nation now has over 58,000 miles of roads and over 3,000 miles of railroads, up from 21,000 miles and about 2,000 miles respectively in 1988.

The government also built Aungban-Loikaw, Nyaungswe-Taunggyi-Namhsan-Mongnai railroads in the rough terrain. In Mon State also, it has built a number of bridges, some linking the state with its neighbouring Kayin State. In addition to a network of roads, it has built irrigation facilities and industrial estates.

The State, after designating special development regions, is taking measures to develop education and health sectors of those regions. Moreover, steps are being taken for the development of rural as well as border regions to ensure the equitable development of all parts of the Union. In doing so, the government is striving its utmost on a self-reliant basis enlisting the strength of the people plus the innovation of service personnel in order to build a modern developed State, said Lt-Gen Maung Bo. All in all, the government hand in hand with the people and the Tatmadaw is trying to improve the incomes of the people and service personnel and for development of industrial and fish and meat sectors. Therefore, Mon State will become economically reliable for the country if the state strives its utmost by making use of already achieved fruitful results. It is necessary for the people of the region to work within the framework of law, to cultivate the sense of national unity and to help the local authorities enforce the rule of law and community peace and tranquility.

Lt-Gen Maung Bo
Bridges, roads not for economic profit, ...

(from page 8)
built by the State, to guard against all forms of danger in cooperation with the Tatmadaw and to cultivate Union Spirit.

Speaking on the occasion, Commander Maj-Gen Soe Naing said Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine) is the longest one in Myanmar and its motor road is over two miles long and railroad is over four miles long.

As a measure of hail

ing the 58th Anniversary Union Day, the main bridge and approach roads to the motor road of Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine) were opened on 5 February, 2005 in the presence of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe.

The commander quoted Senior General Than Shwe as giving guidance that as the economy of the country has grown and the engineering technique has improved a lot, the Government constructed the bridge which would make a valuable contribution towards improvement of the local people’s living standard.

The completion of the bridge and Mawlamyine Railway Station is the fruits of the efforts of Ministry of Construction and Ministry of Rail Transportation. The rail-cum-road bridge is the pride of the nation.

In the past, the travelers had to cross Thanlwin River by ferry. Although there was a lot of troubles to cross the bridge, now there have become things of the past.

Thanks to the bridge, it will be easy to travel from the northernmost part of Myanmar to the southernmost part by train and car.

Regarding the transportation sector in Mon State, the length of roads in Mon State has increased from 988 miles in 1988 to over 2615 miles in 2006 while the length of railroads reached 293 miles from 276 miles.

Moreover, a bridge which will also contribute towards the development of Mon State, Kayin State and Taninthayi Division is now under construction near Sittau ng Bridge.

The construction of the 101.36-mile long Ye-Dawei railroad began in 1994 and was completed on 26 March, 1998. The 850-foot long Ye River crossing bridge on Ye-Dawei road was inaugurated on 25 November 2003, and thus, the Union Highway linking Mon State and Taninthayi Division has emerged.

The Government State Senior General Than Shwe as saying that better transport is imperative for national development; and that roads and bridges were built to bring about equitable development nationwide and ensure national solidarity.

The rail bridge opened today is the longest facility in Myanmar. In the past, people can travel from Mawlamyine to Dawei on Mawlamyine side, and from Mottama to Yangon on Mottama side by train. And the Thanlwin River made Mawlamyine to Dawei road was inaugu-

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Roads in four townships upgraded

YANGON, 18 April—Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Brig-Gen Hla Htay Win and party inspected upgrading of West Race Course Road in Tamway Township, Anawrahta Road in Kyauktada Township, Ahlon Road in Dagon Township and Strand Road in Kyimyindaing Township and an outlet conduit to Hlone River.

The YCDC is taking measures to prevent floods in Yangon City during the monsoon, and efforts are being made to complete the outlet conduits to Yangon River, Bago River and Ngamoeik Creek by the rainy season. — MNA

USDA CEC member meets secretaries, executives at state, district, township levels

YANGON, 18 April — Mon State In-Charge CEC member of Union Solidarity and Development Association Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint met with secretaries and executives at state, district and township levels yesterday.

During the meeting, the secretaries of Mon State, Mawlamyine District and Township, USDA presented reports on organizational set-up, rural development tasks and free medical treatment.

Next, CEC Member Minister Brig-Gen Ohn Myint gave instructions on presentation of reports on measures to be taken in Mon State, implementation of the development tasks, participation in the building of a peaceful modern developed nation with added momentum, cooperative measures with the cooperation of the people as the association is vital for the State, measures to be taken for realization of National Convention and the interest of the people, efforts for electricity generation in rural areas, growing of physic nut plants, organizational tasks to be carried out in universities and colleges, field trips to grassroot level, opening of rural libraries, conducting courses and participation in the realization of seven-point Road Map. — MNA

US Ambassador to Venezuela agrees to report activity plans

CARACAS, 18 April — US Ambassador to Venezuela William Brownfield has agreed to inform the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry of his public activity plans in Venezuela after experiencing repeated harassment here, a government official said on Sunday.

Information Minister William Lara said that Brownfield and Venezuela’s Deputy Foreign Minister for North America Mari Pili Hernandez met on Wednesday to discuss plans for security coordination and that Brownfield had insisted that Brownfield give the Foreign Ministry a written notice of his public engagements in advance.

Lara explained that the purpose of the measure was to allow the nation to offer him security, whilst still allowing Venezuelans to demonstrate peacefully and democratically either in their support or in disapproval of Brownfield’s presence.

“At last Mr Brownfield has understood that this is a sovereignty issue, and that the aim of the government is to offer him the security to which he is entitled,” Lara said.

He added that Brownfield had used Wednesday’s meeting to give notice of his two public engagements. — MNA

Discipline enforced during Thingyan

YANGON, 18 April — Thanks to the systematic enforcement of traffic rules, there were only few road accidents, in which 11 died and 27 were injured, during the Mahl Thingyan Festival from 13 to 16 April 2006.

The number of death and injury was few as people mostly took part in the water festival in accord with Myanmar traditions, and the respective authorities on their part issued rules, announcements, pardons and reminders well before the advent of the Thingyan festival. In addition there were also systematic enforcement of rules during the festival. — MNA

UMFCCI General Secretary visits Indonesia

YANGON, 18 April — To attend the 13th Meeting of AMEICC Working Group on Human Resource Development (HRD-WG) to be held in Bali, Indonesia, on 19 and 20 April, General Secretary of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Sein Win Hlaing left here for Indonesia today.

He was seen off at the airport by Vice-President of UMFCCI U Aung Lwin and officials. — MNA

MERITORIOUS DEEDS DONE ACROSS

Mandalay City on New Year Day

YANGON, 18 April— People performed merito-
rious deeds throughout Mandalay City yesterday. Myanmar New Year’s Day from dawn until evening.

Saydaw Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadha Bhaddanta Panñavamsa cleansed the face of Maha Muni Buddha Image, and offered Shwehtingan (robe), alms food and water to it. Lay persons also offered Shwehtingan, alms food, flowers, lights and water to the image, cleansed the Buddha images and released fish and birds.

Mandalay Division Union Solidarity and Development Association organized a ceremony to set free fish into the Mandalay moat in Aungmyethazan Township at 8 am. Patron of Mandalay Division USDA Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Khin Zaw and his wife Daw Khin Pyone Win, Chairman of Mandalay City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Phone ZawHan and wife, local authorities, USDA members, officials and members of social organizations released fish into the moat.

Mandalay Division USDA also organized its 13rd ceremony to pay respects to elders persons. Commander Maj-Gen Khin Zaw and wife, the Mandalay mayor and wife presented gifts to 70 persons aged 75 and above. The USDA members tended to the mancure of the elders and shampooed their hair in accordance with Myanmar traditions.

At 9 am, the commandery and wife, the mayor and officials and MCDC staff attended the ceremony to recite parittas in front of MCDC office on 26th Street and released 30,000 fingerlings into the moat.

In the afternoon, Mandalay Division USDA organized a ceremony to pay respects to the aged in Mandalay District at the Central Command. Commander Maj-Gen Khin Zaw and the congregation paid respects and presented gifts worth K 8,334,000 to 74 aged persons.

Later in the afternoon, the Central Command held the releasing of fish at the Mingalar Bridge on the southern Mandalay moat. The commander and commandery, the mayor, Deputy Chief Justice of Supreme Court (Upper Myanmar) U Khin Maung Latt and wife, Deputy Attorney General U Han Shein, local authorities, Tatmadaw members and their family members released 101,500 fingerlings into the moat.

The famous pagodas in Mandalay City were teeming with pilgrims doing meritorious deeds on that day. — MNA
The incident took place in Puerto Armuelles, a rural settlement in the eastern province of Chiriqui on the Costa Rica border. The plane took off from a small airfield, ignoring the direct order from authorities. Air Service officers shot down the plane bearing the letters TI-TLI, killing Mexican pilot Justiano Jaques. The aircraft was found to be carrying 400 kilos of cocaine.

The officers arrested Mexican co-pilot Marcos Edgar Rivera, who tried to jump off the plane, and another two men, a Panamanian and a Colombian, who had been guarding the plane before its take-off.

Regarding the rehabilitation, arrangements are to be made for raising of new fowls, training and holding talks on disease control. The reminder also includes detailed instructions for breeders and producers, transport, buying and selling of fowls and fowl eggs and safe consumption.

Panama City, 18 April — Panama’s National Air Service said on Monday they had brought down a light aircraft, killing its pilot and arresting several suspected drug traffickers.

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In disease control townships arrangements are being made for transport, sale of chickens, ducks and quails with the permission of local authorities and safe consumption.

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Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department
Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries

UN development conference opens in Peru

Lima, 18 April — A UN development conference was kicked off here on Monday, with fight against poverty high on the agenda.

Peruvian President Alejandro Toledo inaugurated the meeting on the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Latin American Parliament, in the Peruvian capital Lima.

Describing himself as living proof of his success, Toledo said just with the help of such UN programmes, he managed to realize his ambitions in life despite an underprivileged background.

What’s more, his government, which completes its term in July, managed to reduce the poverty rate by 6 percentage points to 48.4 per cent thanks to a sustained economic growth in Peru, he said.

Also with the UN help, Latin America was now investing more in infrastructure, social programmes and job creation, the president said.

However, there was still much to do to share the social wealth more equally, he added.

MNA/Xinhua

Bird flu under control in Myanmar

Myanmar has put avian influenza under control in bird flu-infected townships in Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions.

Continued observation on disease control and detection is being conducted in the rest of poultry farms.

The LBVD also issued a reminder regarding regular flow of fowls and ducks and their eggs and quail eggs and safe consumption.

From the first week of March 2006 the bird flu occurred in Myanmar and it spread to 13 townships in Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions.

The bird flu is now under control in those townships. Duration of the outbreak of the disease is between seven days and 20 days.

In bird flu-free townships, measures on transport of fowls and their eggs are to be taken with the support of the township livestock breeding and veterinary department and Bird Flu control Committee comprising LBVD, Health Department, Development Affairs Committee and Myanmar Livestock Breeding Federation.

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Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department
Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries

MNA/Xinhua
Traffic accidents on rise in Zanzibar

Dar-es-Salam, 17 April — A total of 218 traffic accidents have been reported in Zanzibar between January and early April this year to post a slight increase on the corresponding period from the last year, according to reports reaching here on Sunday.

Eighteen people have lost their lives in these accidents whereas 13 people died out of 216 traffic accidents between January and early April last year. Mohammed Aboud, Deputy Minister for Public Safety and National Security, was quoted as saying in Zanzibar on Sunday.

Most of the 331 injured people were pedestrians, he said.

In comparison, 274 people got injured between January ant early April last year. In the United Republic of Tanzania as a whole, more traffic accidents occurred last year to claim more lives, according to official statistics.

Mohammed Aboud said that a total of 2,149 road accidents had taken place in 2005 countrywide, causing 2,509 deaths and 17,434 injuries.

Traffic accidents on rise in northern Iraq

Baghdad, 17 April — Seven workers killed by gunmen in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Sunday, a police source said.

A group of labourers who worked for the police department on the rebuilding of a police station in Mosul came under attack by unknown gunmen while on their way back home in a car, said the source. Mosul, about 360 kilometres northwest of Baghdad, has been infested with violence. Guerrillas have mounted attacks against workers and contractors working for the US forces and the US-backed Iraqi Government, accusing them of being collaborators.

Chinese Mainland’s GDP grows by 10.2% in 1st quarter

Beijing, 17 April — The Chinese Mainland scored a 10.2-per-cent growth in its gross domestic product in first quarter of this year, said Hu Jintao, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, here Sunday.

The Mainland also achieved a 25-per-cent growth in import and export in the three months, said Hu at a meeting with Lien Chan, honorary chairman of the Taiwan-based Kuomintang party.

The rapid economic growth and the big market of the Mainland have created favourable conditions for further economic and trade cooperation across the Straits, along with opportunities for Taiwan compatriots to give full play to the talent, said Hu.

“Frankly speaking, we do not want to pursue excessively rapid economic growth. What we are seeking is efficiency and quality of development, the change in the economic growth mode, resources conservation, environmental protection and improvement of people’s livelihood,” he said.

Hu Jintao pledges to further boost Cross-Strait relations

Beijing, 17 April — Hu Jintao, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, said Sunday the Mainland would take substantial steps to expand economic and trade relations with Taiwan.

Commenting on a package of new policies announced Saturday to boost Cross-Strait economic and trade ties, Hu said the Mainland will actively push forward Cross-Strait exchanges in the fields of agriculture and education and provide Taiwan people with more job opportunities in the Mainland.

The CPC leader made the remark Sunday during a meeting with Taiwan delegates who attended the Cross-Strait Economic and Trade Forum in Beijing.

Hu emphasized that a mutually complementary and beneficial relationship is the effective way for realizing peaceful development across the Taiwan Strait.

Four killed in car bomb attack in eastern Baghdad

Baghdad, 17 April — Four people were killed and six others wounded in a car bomb blast in eastern Baghdad on Sunday, an Interior Ministry source told Xinhua.

“An explosive-laden car parking near the Kamaliyah mosque detonated shortly before 11:00 am (0700 GMT), killing four civilians and wounding six others,” the source said on condition of anonymity.

Seven workers killed by gunmen in northern Iraq

Baghdad, 17 April — Seven workers were killed and three others wounded by unidentified gunmen in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Sunday, a police source said.

A group of labourers who worked for the police department on the rebuilding of a police station in Mosul came under attack by unknown gunmen while on their way back home in a car, said the source. Mosul, about 360 kilometres northwest of Baghdad, has been infested with violence. Guerrillas have mounted attacks against workers and contractors working for the US forces and the US-backed Iraqi Government, accusing them of being collaborators.

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Venezuelan Cardon oil refinery resumes production

CARACAS, 17 April — Venezuela’s Cardon oil refinery, which had been paralyzed by a major electrical fault for two days, resumed production on Sunday. Media reports said that a fault in the electrical system had halted operations in the refinery early Friday morning, fortunately without any injury to personnel, significant material damage, or environmental effect.

The refinery activated its emergency plan immediately and stopped all operations. It then initially restored vapor and electrical systems based on its safety-startup programme, and then resumed operations step by step in different units. Petroleos de Venezuela SA said in a statement that oil shipments would not be affected because there were enough inventories to guarantee supplies. The company has organized a committee to investigate the incident. The Cardon refinery produces about 305,000 barrels a day. This part of the Paraguana refining complex in eastern Venezuela which produces 940,000 barrels a day and is Venezuela's main source of gasoline exports.

Indonesian hostages moved to safer area in Somalia

JAKARTA, 17 April — The nine Indonesian citizens taken hostage by armed groups in Somalia were already moved to a safer area in Mudug Province of the country, Foreign Ministry spokesmen said.

“After a series of phone calls between the company and the captors, it was said that all the hostages were in a good health. They were all safe,” Antara news agency Monday quoted spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, Desra Percaya, as saying. The spokesman said he had met with the relatives of the hostages in Indonesia to inform them of the hostages-taking while seeking a negotiation for the release of the hostages.

The agent which had sent the release of the hostages. The agent which had sent the nine Indonesians was PT Berjaya. On 11 April, Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi also took part in efforts for the release of the 25 crew members, including nine Indonesians, of a South Korean vessel.

The South Korean fishing vessel Dong Won 628 was hijacked about 200 kilometres off the Somali coast on 4 April. According to a report, the eight hijackers demanded a ransom of 400,000 US dollars. This was not the first such incident in Somalia. On 15 August, 2005, around 14 Indonesian citizens employed by a Taiwanese ship owner were taken hostage in Somalia.

Chinese universities hold education exhibition in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 17 April — The two-day China Education Exhibition 2006 kicked off here Sunday in a bid to provide information for the Nepalese students willing to study in China.

As many as 25 universities from various parts of China including Communication University of China, Sun Yat-Sen University, Fudan University, Tongji University, are participating in the event, the forth of its kind in Nepal. The exhibition is jointly organized by China Scholarship Council under Chinese Education Ministry, the Chinese Embassy to Nepal and the Araniko Society, a Sino-Nepal friendship organisation.

China maintain friendly relationships in various fields, which can be further strengthened through this exhibition.”

Chinese education system is at the international level, and it is suitable for Nepalese students, Mainali noted.

Thailand to conduct tests on stem cells

BANGKOK, 17 April — Thailand will carry out an experiment on the efficacy and safety of stem cell technology in curing heart disease, the first-ever official test on stem cell treatment on humans, local media reported on Sunday.

The programme, to be conducted on 40 patients with heart symptoms, will be joined by the Department of Medical Sciences, Mahidol University and the Cardiac Institute of Thailand.

Pongpan Vongmanee, deputy chief of the Medical Sciences Department, said Thailand has no official report about possible consequences from this new medical technology. The test results will be a concrete guideline for drawing up an effective plan for stem cell development.

Japanese electronics giant Sony researcher Fumihide Tanaka shows his humanoid robot Qrio during an interview with AFP at the company’s Intelligence Dynamics Laboratories in Tokyo recently.—INTERNET

Battle in Afghanistan kills 41 Taleban

KANDAHAR (Afghanistan), 17 April — Forty-one Taleban fighters and six Afghan policemen were killed in a fierce battle in southern Afghanistan, a provincial governor said on Saturday.

There were no foreign casualties in Friday’s battle between Taleban fighters and Afghan and foreign forces in the Zare Daash District of Kandahar Province, Kandahar Governor Assadullah Khalid said.

“Forty-one Taleban were killed in the fighting, mostly as a result of air bombing. Six policemen, including the Zare Daash police chief, were also killed,” Khalid told a news conference in Kandahar City. A number of Taleban bodies had been recovered. Afghanistan has been a surge in attacks on Afghan and foreign forces since the Taleban announced last month they had launched a spring offensive.

Khalid said the fighting, some of the heaviest in weeks, erupted after foreign and Afghan forces came under attack during a search operation for Taleban hiding in the area.

He said the foreign forces retaliated by bombing Taleban positions. Nine Afghan troops were also wounded in the battle and Afghan soldiers arrested 13 Taleban guerillas, Khalid added.

But a senior provincial official who declined to be named said government forces had suffered high casualties as several bombs mistakenly hit them.—MNA/Reuters
CSF ponders sanctions after Libertadores brawl

Asuncion, 18 April—Palmeiras and Cerro Porteno could face disciplinary action after their players were involved in a huge brawl during a Libertadores Cup tie last week, the South American confederation (CSF) said on Monday.

The fight, involving nearly all the players on the field, delayed the start of last Thursday’s tie in Sao Paulo for nearly 10 minutes.

“It was all very unfortunate and, of course, the Confederation deplores this sort of anti-sporting conduct,” CSF general secretary Francisco Figueredo told reporters.

“Cerro and Palmeiras do not have matches this week which gives us more time to consider sanctions, which could be against the players or against the clubs.”

Paraguayan champions Cerro won 3-2 but still failed to qualify for the last 16. Brazil’s Palmeiras had already qualified.—MNA/Reuters

Mourinho plays down Man United title clash

London, 18 April—Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho has played down the prospect of winning a second successive Premier League title in their clash with arch rivals Manchester United.

After Saturday’s 3-0 defeat of Everton, Chelsea are nine points in front of second-placed United with three league games left. With an FA Cup semi-final against Liverpool on Saturday, their next league match is against Alex Ferguson’s United at Stamford Bridge on 29 April.

“If we were Blackburn or Newcastle, our desire would be the same. I just want to be champions,” Mourinho told a news conference after Monday’s win.

“I would prefer it at home, some away. The next match is against Manchester Utd. That is a match we want to win to be champions. For me, the important thing is to finish in front of them. The best team are the champions. It’s not about luck, not about the referees, it’s not about the ball hitting the post.

“The season is over 10 months and the best team wins.” Mourinho said Chelsea, 1-0 up at halftime after a goal by England midfielder Frank Lampard, were always in control of the game and that a red card for Everton’s Lee Carseley in the second half for a tackle on Didier Drogba had no effect.

Everton manager David Moyes said he felt referees were sometimes “star-struck” when officiating Chelsea matches and felt the sending off was harsh.—MNA/Reuters

Tajikistan beat Sri Lanka to lift AFC Challenge Cup

Dhaka, 17 April—Tajikistan lifted the inaugural AFC Challenge Cup with a 4-0 win over Sri Lanka in the final on Sunday.

Striker Dzhomikhon Mukhidinov scored twice, while Khursheed Makhmudov and Numondzhon Hakimov completed the rout.

Sri Lanka were awarded the fair play trophy. The event was contested by 16 Asian nations at the lower end of the FIFA world rankings.—MNA/Reuters

Zhang Yimou to direct Beijing Games ceremonies

Beijing, 17 April—Internationally acclaimed Chinese filmmaker Zhang Yimou will direct the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, organizers announced on Sunday.

Multi-Oscar winning Hollywood director Steven Spielberg, who was also present at Sunday’s announcement in Beijing, will be part of Zhang’s team as an artistic adviser.

“A member of China’s ‘Fifth generation’ of directors, Zhang is best known in the West for his 1991 film ‘Raise the Red Lantern’ and his 2004 title ‘House of Flying Daggers’, both of which were nominated for Oscars. ‘I’m very honoured to become executive director of the ceremonies,’ Zhang, 54, said at a ceremony at the headquarters of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (BOCOG).

Chelsea win but Rooney spoils the party

London, 18 April—Chelsea swaggered to a 3-0 victory over 10-man Everton on Monday but were denied the chance to celebrate a second consecutive Premier League title by Manchester United striker Wayne Rooney.

Chelsea now only need one point from their remaining three league games to pop the champagne, having restored a nine-point lead at the top with three games left to play. "Some people would prefer it at home, some away. The next match is against Manchester Utd. That is a match we want to win to be champions. For me, the important thing is to finish in front of them. The best team are the champions. It’s not about luck, not about the referees, it’s not about the ball hitting the post. The season is over 10 months and the best team wins.”

Chelsea matches and felt the sending off was harsh. —MNA/Reuters

Cherchlyn celebrate title with 1-0 away win over PSG

Paris, 17 April—Olympique Lyon celebrated their record fifth consecutive Ligue 1 title with a commanding 1-0 away victory over Paris St Germain on Sunday.

Brazilian striker Fred struck midway through the first half to send Lyon 17 points clear in the standings on 78 points with three games remaining.

Gerard Houllier’s side were handed the title on Saturday after second-placed Girondins Bordeaux lost 3-2 at Lille.

Lyon, who have not lost in Ligue 1 since a 1-0 defeat at Caen on March 4, 2005, have equalled St Etienne’s and Olympique Marseille’s record of 12 away wins in a season.

They are now one point shy of the record they set last season when they finished with 79 points.

PSG are eighth on 50 points. “I think we deserved to win by a bigger margin,” Houllier told French television channel Canal Plus.

“We dominated the game, we were solid. Actually, there was no alcohol yesterday,” he added.

“We now have to play like champions. We must not let anything go until the end of the season. It’s our duty.”

Lyon’s France winger Florent Malouda said: “It was a little bit tough as we went to bed late yesterday. But we were strong from a psychological point of view.” —MNA/Reuters

New York Mets pitcher Pedro Martinez throws a pitch to the Atlanta Braves in the second inning in New York on 17 April, 2006. Martinez won his 200th career game as the Mets won 4-3.—INTERNET

Los Angeles Kings Luc Robitaille skates in the third period of an NHL hockey game against the San Jose Sharks on 17 April, 2006, in San Jose, Calif. It was Robitaille’s last game of his career.—INTERNET

Chelsea’s next chance of winning the league will be much-anticipated showdown against United at Stamford Bridge on April 29.

Down at the other end of the table, Portsmouth’s fine run ended on Monday with a 2-1 defeat at Charlton Athletic that will revive fears of relegation.

Middlesbrough beat West Ham United 2-0, Newcastle United came from behind to beat relegated Sunderland 4-1 in the northeast derby and relegation strugglers West Bromwich Albion were facing Bolton Wanderers in the day’s late kickoff.

Manchester United’s victory failed to dent Mourinho’s optimism about the title. “It is not easy for us to lose the three matches, it is not easy for Manchester United to win the three matches and it is not easy for them to turn around the goal difference (of 12).”—INTERNET

LONDON, 18 April— Chelsea coach Jose Mourinho has played down the prospect of winning a second successive Premier League title in their clash with arch rivals Manchester United.

After Saturday’s 3-0 defeat of Everton, Chelsea are nine points in front of second-placed United with three league games left. With an FA Cup semi-final against Liverpool on Saturday, their next league match is against Alex Ferguson’s United at Stamford Bridge on 29 April.

“If we were Blackburn or Newcastle, our desire would be the same. I just want to be champions,” Mourinho told a news conference after Monday’s win.

“I think BOCOG for trusting me with this huge task. To complete it will require the efforts of the whole team and the advisers from home and abroad.”—MNA/Reuters

Chelsea now only need one point from their remaining three league games to pop the champagne, having restored a nine-point lead at the top with three games left to play. "Some people would prefer it at home, some away. The next match is against Manchester Utd. That is a match we want to win to be champions. For me, the important thing is to finish in front of them. The best team are the champions. It’s not about luck, not about the referees, it’s not about the ball hitting the post. The season is over 10 months and the best team wins.”

Chelsea matches and felt the sending off was harsh. —MNA/Reuters
Rocky Lee urges Bush impeachment on protest album

LOS ANGELES, 18 April — Veteran rocker Neil Young has recorded a protest album featuring an anti-Iraq war track with “a holy vow to never kill again” and a song titled “Let’s Impeach the President,” the singer said on Monday.

The 10-track set, called “Living with War,” was recorded this month by a “power trio” — electric guitar, bass and drums — plus trumpet and a 100-member choir, the 60-year-old Canadian-born musician announced on his website.

Young’s longtime manager, Elliot Roberts, told Reuters the album, which has been the subject of Internet buzz for several days, will be played for executives at his label, Warner Music Group’s Reprise Records, on Tuesday.

Reprise spokesman Bill Bentley said Young’s latest effort, which he spent about three days recording, came as a surprise. “We didn’t know he was making a record,” Bentley said.

Young is the latest in a string of recording stars to take musical aim at US President George W Bush and his conduct of the war in the Iraq. Others have included Steve Earle, Willie Nelson and the Rolling Stones.

In a message crawl along the bottom of his website, www.renyoung.com, Young drew parallels to two of the leading protest singers of the 1960s, saying of his new record: “Think it is a metal version of Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan... metal folk protest?”

The crawl goes on to reveal the lyrics of the album’s title track, with such lines as: “I raise my hand in peace... I never bow to the laws of the thought police... I take a holy vow... to never kill again... In the big hotels... in the mosques and the doors of the old museum... I take a holy vow... to never kill again.”

Roberts confirmed that a separate song on the album is titled “Let’s Impeach the President.”

According to some online reports, that song accuses Bush of “lying” and features a rap with the President’s voice set against a choir singing “flip-flop.”

* [The New Light of Myanmar](http://www.thenewlightofmyanmar.com)

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**WEATHER**

**Tuesday, 18 April, 2006**

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Yangon Division, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Chin, Mon States, Upper Sagon Division, Kachin and Kayin States, Lower Sagon, Mandalay and Tanintharyi Divisions and isolated in the remaining States and Divisions with locally heavy falls in lower Sagon Division. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin and Chin States, Sagoa and Tanintharyi Divisions, (5°C) above normal in Ayeawaddy Division and about normal in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant day temperatures were Minbu (42°C) and Monywa (41°C). The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Monywa (2.75) inches, Sagon (2.56) inches, Thaton (1.81) inches, Mawlamyne (1.58) inches and Hpa-an (0.87) inch.

Maximum temperature on 17-4-2006 was 100°F. Minimum temperature on 18-4-2006 was 72°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 18-4-2006 was (75%). Total sunshine hours on 17-4-2006 was (8.7) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 18-4-2006 were nil at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2006 were (Tr) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and (0.04) inch at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kabo-Aye) was (18) mph from Southwest at (16:10) hours MST on 17-4-2006.

Bay inference: Weather is cloudy in the South-west Bay and partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 19-4-2006: Likelihood of scattered rain or thundershowers in Kachin, Chin and Shan States, Sagon and Mandalay Divisions and isolated in the remaining States and Divisions. Degree of certainty is (40%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of continuation of isolated rain or thunder showers in upper Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw City and neighbouring areas for 19-4-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring areas for 19-4-2006: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring areas for 19-4-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

**New Rainfall Record**

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Bridges, roads not for economic profit, but for regional development

The approach structure on the rail bridge on Mawlamyine bank is 1.22 miles long, and on Mottama bank is 1.42 miles long. The total length of the rail bridge is 4.75 miles long. Myanmar engineers made great innovative efforts to build the bridge. It is a politically, economically and socially important bridge for the nation.

 Concerning the transport sector, Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance, saying, “The government wishes to see the development of all regions of the Union. In this regard, the government has been extending motor roads and railroads, the basic requirement for national and regional development.”

MINISTER ASSISTS IN RUBBER, OIL PALM PRODUCTION IN TAUNGUP, THANDWEE

YANGON, 18 April — Minister for Industry U Aung Thaung yesterday went to Taungup and Thandwe in Rakhine State to assist in the region’s rubber and palm oil production.

First, the minister inspected the cultivation and production of rubber in the farm in Taungup. Farm Manager U Myint Thwin reported on facts about the farm.

After meeting with officials and workers of the farm, Minister U Aung Thaung fulfilled the requirements of the farm.

Afterwards, the minister proceeded to the oil palm farm in Thandwe and inspected the cultivation of oil palm. Altogether 4,532 oil palm trees are grown on the 89-acre farm and over 4,300 oil palms are bearing fruits. After hearing reports at the farm, the minister gave instructions.

During his inspection tour, Minister U Aung Thaung also visited the rubber plantations in Thandwe.

INSIDE

When he became a millionaire, he realized the importance of enhancing public knowledge to develop everything from socio-economy to public financial power. He set up Carnegie Public Libraries in the whole US. Although they never revealed the fact, many people were able to enjoy better lifestyles thanks to the libraries.