Efforts to be made for emergence of peaceful, modern and developed nation upholding Union Spirit

Senior General Than Shwe inspects Thahtay Hydel Power Project in Thandwe

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
**Work for greater peace and development**

Development of a nation or a region mainly depends on its transport infrastructure and therefore the government has given top priority to improvement of the transport infrastructure for harmonious development of all regions across the Union.

With the emergence of new motor roads, railroads and bridges all over the nation, national people in different regions can go from one place to another and often visit each other easily, thus forging a friendly relationship among them and cementing national unity.

The opening of Mawlamyine Railway Station and Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine) rail bridge was held in Mawlamyine in Mon State on 17 April. Thanlwin Bridge (Mawlamyine), with the 2-mile-long motor road and the 4-mile-long railroad, is the longest in Myanmar and it is especially important for the political, economic and social sectors of the nation.

Due to this new bridge, people in Mon and Kayin States and Taninthayi, Bago and Yangon Divisions can now trade their local products easily. Not only that, national people in Putao in the northern part of Myanmar can go by car to Kawahtoung in the southern part and those living in Myitkyina, Kachin State, can go direct by train to Dawei, Taninthayi Division.

Local people in Mon State can now enjoy the fruits of easy and smooth transport as new roads and bridges are being built all over the nation. Thanks to the roads linking villages and towns, there has been a good flow of goods among more than 1,000 villages in 10 townships in Mon State. As a result, rural people have been enjoying higher socio-economic status.

There has been development in the health, education, economic and social sectors of the nation and it is because of national unity, cementing and maintaining higher socio-economic status.

Economic, education, health and transport infrastructures are being built in all regions of the Union with the correct leadership of the government, enthusiastic participation of the people and efforts of government employees. We would like to call on the entire national people to work for the emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democracy by enhancing their national spirit, consolidating their national unity and maintaining peace and development.

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**Min Naing secures champion in Thingyan Gold Cup Golf Championship**

YANGON, 19 April — The fourth and final round of the 48th Thingyan Gold Cup Golf Championship 2006, co-organized by Myanmar Golf Federation and PyinOoLwin Golf Club, was held at PyinOoLwin Golf Club in PyinOoLwin on 18 April afternoon.

After the fourth round, Commander of PyinOoLwin Station and Rector of Defence Services Academy Brig-Gen Nyi Tun presented the first prize to Min Naing (Srixon) who shot 286 strokes in the professional golfers division, the second prize to Aung Hsan Win (Srixon) 289 and the third prize to Zaw Zaw Latt (Srixon) 291.

Executive of MPGA and MGIF U Ko Ko Lay gave prizes to Aung Win (Forestry) who stood first by firing 288 strokes in total in the amateur golfers division, Nang Naing Lin (YGN) who stood second by shooting 297 strokes, and Bo Bo (YCDC) who stood third by scoring 305 strokes.

KM Golf Centre Managing Director U Maung Maung Myint presented the first prize to Than Naing Oo (Forestry), and the second prize to Win Tun Thein (Customs) in the gold level singles event.

Commander of PyinOoLwin Station and Rector of Defence Services Academy Brig-Gen Nyi Tun awarded the first prize to Forestry Team led by U Aung Win in 496 strokes and the second prize to KM Team led by U Maung Maung Myint that fired 455.

Deputy Commandant Col Zaw Myint of Defence Services Technology Academy presented joint first prize to Sai Khin Zaw (PyinOoLwin) and Tin Hlut (PyinOoLwin) in the silver level singles event. Commander of Defence Services Administration School Col Zarni Win awarded the first prize to Monywa Team led by U Aung Win with 496 strokes and the second prize to PyinOoLwin (B) Team led by Lt-Col Soe Win with 496 strokes in the silver level team event.

Rector of DSTA Brig-Gen Win Myint presented the first prize to Customs Team led by U Nay Myo Thaung with 506 strokes, and the second prize to PyinOoLwin Team led by U Soe Naing with 507 strokes in the bronze level team event, the best scorer award to Min Naing (Srixon) in the professional golfers event, and prizes to daily best scorers.

The golf championship was co-sponsored by Air Bagan Ltd, KM Co Ltd, Mandalay Golf Association, AK Group, KBZ Bank, Srixon, MK Fashion Shop, Hotel PyinOoLwin, KM PyinOoLwin Golf Club, PyinOoLwin Golf Club and Han Event Management performed functions of the competitions.

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**CASH DONATED:**

Min Naing presented the first prize to the funds of Jivitada Sangha.

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**Forestry Team reacts after winning the trophy of 48th Thingyan Gold Cup Golf Championship**

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**U Thein Htoo, Daw Thin Thazin Thaung and family of Lannadaw Township recently donated K 100,000 to the funds of Human Rights Home for the Aged through Joint-Treasurer U Maung Maung Gyi of the home. — MNA**

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**People's Desire**

* Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views*
* Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation*
* Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State*
* Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy*
S Korea not to sign unbalanced FTA with US

SEOUL, 18 April— South Korean Trade Minister Kim Hyun-chong said Monday that his country will not accept a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States without a balance of interests for both sides.

"It will be very difficult for either country to receive the necessary domestic approval unless the overall package achieves a balance of interests which considers the concerns of the two countries," Kim said at a meeting with foreign correspondents here. South Korea and the United States agreed on 2 February to formally start full-fledged negotiations in June to reach a FTA by early next year.

The minister's comments came as South Korea chief negotiator for the FTA with US Kim Jong-hoon started a second round of preparatory meeting with US officials over the trade pact in Washington on Monday. "I can't sign an agreement which does not meet our negotiating objectives, simply because time is ticking away," Kim said, while stressing the importance of such a pact.

Before leaving for Washington, Kim Jong-hoon told Yonhap news agency that South Korea's public services such as electricity, water, gas and railways will not be subject to the talks.

South Korea and the United States recorded 72 billion US dollars in trade in 2004. The Korea Institute for International Economic Policy said in a report that Korea's exports to the United States could gain as much as 15.1 per cent, or 7.1 billion US dollars, while imports from the United States would rise as much as 39.4 per cent, or 12.2 billion US dollars, if the free trade deal goes into effect.—MNA/Xinhua

Eleven die in traffic accidents in Zimbabwe

Harare, 18 April — A total of 11 people have been killed while 161 others injured in 132 road accidents reported countrywide in Zimbabwe since the beginning of the Easter holiday, local media reported on Monday.

Police spokesman Inspector Andrew Phiri said on Sunday that Masvingo Province had the highest number of casualties with three deaths while the provinces of Mashonaland East, Matabeleland North and Midlands recorded two accident-related fatalities each. Manicaland and Bulawayo both had a single death. Phiri said most of the accidents were attributed to speeding, tyre bursts and negligent pedestrians. He also said last year, 29 people were killed while 447 others were injured in 406 accidents reported countrywide. He attributed the decline in the number of accidents this year to heavy police presence on the country's major roads and road safety campaigns by the police and the Zimbabwe Traffic Safety Board. —MNA/Xinhua

Foreign countries urged not to interfere in Nigeria’s affairs

LAGOS, 18 April — A high-ranking Nigerian official on Monday urged foreign countries not to interfere in the country's ongoing constitutional amendment aimed at paving the way for incumbent President Olusegun Obasanjo for the third term presidency. Julius Borvbene, special adviser to President Obasanjo on Project Monitoring and Implementation, said the process was “strictly an internal affair” and that foreign nations were allowed to interfere in his hometown Abosinonigeria’s southern state of Edó. The constitutional amendment, he added, was not new to democratic practice and that various countries had carried out similar exercises when they were necessary.

“No one should begin to cry wolf since the phenomenon accords with the basic tenets of democratic practice, especially when such mandate is exercised by the nation’s legislators,” he said. Any extension of tenure by the National Assembly would not affect President Olusegun Obasanjo alone, he explained. — MNA/Xinhua

Traffic Safety Board.

Construction starts on power station on China’s Yellow River

BEIJING, 16 April— China has begun work on a 1.79 billion dollar hydroelectric project which will become the biggest dam on the Yellow River, state media reported. Work began on the Laxiwa Hydroelectric Station in the remote northwestern province of Qinghai, Xinhua news agency reported Sunday.

The 250-metre-high (825 foot) dam, the highest on the Yellow River, is expected to have 4,200 megawatts of installed generation capacity and will be able to produce 10.22 billion kilowatt hours annually, the report said. Its situated between the Longyang and Qingtong Gorges in the upper reaches.

The first generating units are scheduled to go into operation in 2008 and the dam will be completed in 2010, it said. Despite growing opposition from environmentalists, China appears eager to speed up construction of dams in an effort to tap into huge hydroelectric energy potential.

The lower reaches of the Yellow River have repeatedly dried up in recent years due to huge population pressures along the watercourse and an increasingly feeble ecosystem in its headwaters.—Internet

An old villager uses a plastic cover to protect herself from the rain in the flooded village of Rast, 300 km southeast of Bucharest. Thousands of Romanians prepared to flee homes threatened by floodwaters from the rising River Danube, as emergency crews desperately sought to reinforce damaged river dykes.—Internet

Wipe out : A Brazilian surfer flies off a wave at Leblon beach in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. —INTERNET

A vendor displays a violin made of glass at a shopping centre in Beijing, on 18 April, 2006. —INTERNET

South Korean farmers shout slogans during an anti-government rally denouncing the South Korean government’s move to forge a free trade deal with the United States in downtown Seoul, on 15 April, 2006. —INTERNET

Taleban commander killed in raid in S Afghanistan

KABUL, 19 April — Taleban’s senior commander Mohamad Haleem was killed and two other insurgents captured in a raid in the southern Afghan province of Zabul Monday night, a police officer said on Tuesday.

"Police launched the raid after they got information from locals that Mohamad Haleem and his followers were to attack Qalat, the capital of Zabul," Mohamad Nadem Mullikhel, police chief of Zabul, told Xinhua.

Mohamad Haleem, who was behind many attacks targeting government officials and schools in the province, was surrounded by the police near the Qalat City. He was shot dead in the clash while two guerrillas were captured at the site, the police chief added. —MNA/Xinhua

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Mohamad Haleem, who was behind many attacks targeting government officials and schools in the province, was surrounded by the police near the Qalat City. He was shot dead in the clash while two guerrillas were captured at the site, the police chief added. —MNA/Xinhua
US military deaths rise in Iraq after 5-month fall

WASHINGTON, 18 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 February 2004 in the lowest monthly toll of the 3-year-old war. So far this month, which is about half over, there have been at least 48 American fatalities, according to a count of military death announcements.

Many of the deaths again occurred in Anbar Province, one of the hotbeds of the insurgency led primarily by the Sunni Muslim Arab minority who had controlled the country under deposed president Saddam Hussein.

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.

Lieutenant-Colonel Barry Johnson, a senior US military spokesman in Iraq, said there currently was “a high tempo of operations” against guerrillas. Johnson noted that US commanders had raised by about 3,700 the number of American-trained Iraqi Government security forces and US troops in Baghdad for increased patrols.

“We’re not prepared to attribute this to any changing trend that’s occurred over the past two weeks. Each incident stands on its own,” Johnson said by e-mail, referring to the increase in US deaths in April.

“I really believe it is premature for anybody to be talking about trends regarding incidents that have occurred over a two-week period,” Johnson said. — MNA/Reuters

Small plane crash kills three in Florida

WASHINGTON, 18 April — A small plane crashed into a sport utility vehicle parked outside an airport in Florida and hurled it through a terminal wall, killing three people in the plane, officials said.

The twin-engine Beech B-60 crashed in the Gainesville Regional Airport terminal on Sunday, triggering a fire behind the airport’s commercial baggage claim area.

About 100 to 150 people were inside the airport terminal when the crash occurred. But no injuries were reported on the ground. The plane took off from the north Florida airport and circled several times before attempting to land. It did not send distress calls.

The plane’s destination was not known for the time being. The terminal was immediately evacuated and would remain closed until late Monday. — MNA/Xinhua

Bone drug cuts risk of breast cancer

New York, 18 April — A widely used osteoporosis drug is safer and just as effective reducing invasive breast cancer risk as tamoxifen, the only drug now approved for that use, say long-awaited data released Monday from a trial of nearly 20,000 women.

After an average of four years of treatment, both raloxifene and tamoxifen cut the risk by about 50%, say researchers with the Study of Tamoxifen and Raloxifene, or STAR.

Q&A: Which is the right drug for you?

But there were 36% fewer uterine cancers and 29% fewer blood clots among women who took raloxifene compared with those on tamoxifen.

Women on raloxifene also had 21% fewer cataracts than those on tamoxifen.

“It’s clear that we feel that raloxifene is the winner of this trial,” Lawrence Wickerham, associate chair of the National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project (NSABP), which ran the trial, said at a press briefing. STAR randomly assigned 19,747 post-menopausal women considered at increased risk of breast cancer to take either tamoxifen or raloxifene for five years.

British animal charity saves 200 dogs from horror house

LONDON, 18 April — A British animal charity appealed on Monday for help finding homes for 200 Yorkshire terriers and 37 cats rescued at the weekend from what it called a “house of horror”.

Celia Hammond, a former top fashion model turned animal saviour, said her charity found the animals in appalling conditions at a house in West Sussex in southern England after the son of the deceased owner called them in.

“They are in an disgusting state, filthy, neglected and starving,” she told Reuters.

“I have been doing this work for 30 years and I have never seen anything like it before.”

The dogs had been kept in faeces-filled pet carriers — some crammed three or four to a box — she said, describing the place as a “house of horror”.

“Several puppies were dead and some had been partly eaten by the others,” she said. “It was awful.” — MNA/Reuters

India refuses US proposal to stop nuclear test

NEW DELHI, 18 April — India has refused to include a ban on nuclear test in a draft civil nuclear cooperation pact with the United States, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said on Monday.

India is continuing its commitment to a unilateral moratorium on nuclear testing, said Navtej Sarna, the spokesman of the Ministry of External Affairs, in a briefing.

The US side had shared with India some weeks ago a preliminary draft agreement on India-US civil nuclear cooperation under Article 123 of the US Atomic Energy Act, he said.

In the draft pact the US side suggested that India discontinue nuclear test, he added.

“In preliminary discussions on these elements, India has already conveyed to the US that such a provision has no place in the proposed bilateral agreement,” Sarna said.

“India’s position on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is well known and continues to remain valid,” he said.

New Delhi has refused to sign the CTBT, claiming that its discriminatory and tends to divide the world into nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states. Instead, it advocates universal disarmament.

India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974 and the latest one took place in 1998.

India is bound only by the joint statement issued by the two countries in July last year when Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Washington, Sarna said.

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Women on raloxi-
Former Illinois governor guilty of fraud, corruption

CHICAGO, 18 April—Former Illinois Governor George Ryan, praised by death penalty foes for halting executions but accused of using public office to enrich friends and family, was found guilty on Monday of fraud, racketeering, tax evasion and other charges.

The federal court jury verdict, which similarly found Ryan’s friend and co-defendant Larry Warner guilty of all counts against him, is a stern warning that no one in public office is above the law, officials said after the decision.

The jury convicted Ryan, 72, of all 18 felony counts against him, including racketeering conspiracy, mail fraud, tax fraud and making false statements to the FBI.

He had steadfastly denied any guilt for the alleged offenses that took place when he was governor, and before that secretary of state. Each count carried maximum prison sentences of between three and 20 years, plus fines, and prosecutors said they will seek three million US dollars in restitution from Ryan and Warner. They will be sentenced in August.

Warner, 67, a businessman who won lucrative state lobbying deals while Ryan was in office, was found guilty of racketeering, mail fraud, attempted extortion, money laundering and making unlawful currency withdrawals.

The bulk of the case involved a web of leases and contracts that benefited friends of Ryan, who prosecutors said had hung a “for sale” sign on his office.

Prosecutors portrayed him as a big-spender who accepted free vacations, tickets to events and gifts to his family from friends who brokered deals with the state with Ryan’s backing. —MNA/Reuters

Iraq, US troops under fire as rebels exploit power vacuum

BAGHDAD, 18 April—Iraqi guerillas have staged fresh bomb attacks and battled US forces in a wave of violence that has seen the US military suffer one of its deadliest months since the 2003 invasion, as the country’s protracted war winds forced the plane almost 400 kilometres off its destination airport to land amid sisal plants.

The accident occurred at 7:17 am on Monday when a bus that was to pass the cross collided with a running cargo train at Shijiuatian in the Hunnan New District of the provincial capital Shenyang, provincial railways officials said. —MNA/Xinhua

S Korea, China to build maritime logistics centres

SEOUL, 18 April—South Korean officials said Monday that South Korea and China have agreed to build maritime logistics centres to boost bilateral trade and exchanges, the Yonhap News Agency reported.

According to a memorandum of understanding signed on Sunday, the two nations agreed to open a logistics centre in South Korea’s western port city of Incheon and another in China’s northeastern city of Qingdao.

The logistics centres will be jointly operated and they are tasked with dealing with storage and shipment of products being traded between the two cities, Yonhap quoted South Korean officials as saying. —MNA/Xinhua

 visitors look at the jelly fish at the newly-opened exhibition hall titled ‘Sea Jelley Spectacular’ inside the Ocean Park aquarium- amusement park complex in Hong Kong on 18 April, 2006. —INTERNET

Bus-train collision kills one, injures 22 in N-E China

SHENYANG, 18 April—One was killed and 22 others injured Monday in a bus-tram collision at a railway-road cross in northeast China’s Liaoning Province, local railway officials said.

The accident occurred at 7:17 am on Monday when a bus that was to pass the cross collided with a running cargo train at Shijiuatian in the Hunnan New District of the provincial capital Shenyang, said the railway officials. —MNA/Xinhua

Nine survive plane crash landing in N Tanzania

DAAR-ES-SALAM, 18 April—Nine people have survived the crash landing of their light airplane in northern Tanzania where torrential rains and gusting winds forced the plane almost 400 kilometres off its destination airport to land amid sisal plants.

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Mexican bus crashes down ravine, 63 dead

MEXICO CITY, 18 April—A tour bus veered off a mountain road, crashed through the metal barrier and plummeted hundreds of feet down a ravine in eastern Mexico on Monday, killing 63 people, police said.

The accident, on a steep stretch of highway linking the capital with the Gulf of Mexico port city of Veracruz, was one of the worst traffic crashes in Mexico in recent years.

At least 10 children were among the dead.”It broke the bridge and went down a ravine,” civil protection official Ramulfo Marquez said.

FELCN seizes seven tons of marijuana, over 129 kilos of cocaine

LIMA, 18 April—Bolivia’s Special Anti-Narcotics Force (FELCN) had seized more than 7 tons of marijuana and 129 kilos of cocaine in a massive crackdown on drug trafficking, reports from Bolivia’s soap on Monday.

The operation hit 129 locations and led to 74 arrests. Colonel Miguel Vazquez, head of FELCN, was quoted as saying. He said in one importunt bust they found cocaine hidden in handicrafts destined for Spain and other parts of Europe.—MNA/Xinhua

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ASEAN-China ICT business forum opens in Malaysia

GEORGE TOWN (Malaysia), 19 April — As part of the second ASEAN-China Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Business Week, the ASEAN-China ICT Business Forum opened Tuesday here, providing a platform for industry players to discuss issues of common interest in this field.

About 100 delegates from China and member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) involved in the ICT industry attended the forum held in George Town, capital city of Penang State in northern Malaysia.

During the two-day forum, delegates are expected to exchange views on a wide range of issues covering ICT investment, foreign trade policies, ICT technology standards, etc. Delegates from member countries attended the forum.

Secretary-General of China Association of Communication Enterprises Zhang Chunlin made remarks at the opening ceremony on behalf of the Chinese research institutions, companies and associations which sent representatives for the forum.

Ever since the ICT field was established as one of the five major fields of cooperation between China and ASEAN in the year 2001, bilateral exchanges and cooperation in the ICT industry have leapedfrogged, said Zhang, who also expressed his belief this business forum will further strengthen the ties and promote common development and prosperity of China and ASEAN.

The Chinese delegation comprises of representatives from many leading companies in the ICT industry, including China Telecom, Huawei Technology and Datang Telecom Technology and Industry Group Corporation, to name just a few.

During the second business week themed "Strategic Regional ICT Cooperation for Growth and Prosperity," other programmes coming on the agenda include ASEAN-China ICT Senior Officials and Business Forum Consultative Meetings, ASEAN-China ICT Ministerial Dialogue with Business Forum and ASEAN-China ICT Ministerial Forum.

At least 13 killed in Kenya’s cattle rustling

NAIROBI, 19 April — A renewed wave of cattle rustling has claimed at least 13 lives in central and northern parts of Kenya in the past week as tension remains tense over raids by armed bandits, local media reported on Monday.

At least seven people were killed in Samburu District of northern Kenya, five in Baringo and one in Laikipia, northwest of Nairobi.

Besides the deaths, armed rustlers have left in their wake a trail of devastation and loss of hundreds of animals which were stolen during the raids.

Residents of the affected areas said the resurgence of cattle rustling was aimed at restocking the animals which died during thejust-ended drought. The East African nation has been experiencing one of the worst droughts in recent years due to consecutive failure of rains.

Local lawmakers have called on the government to beef up security in the areas before violence escalates and many more people killed.

“We want Internal Security Minister John Michuki to send security forces to protect the people in Samburu,” said Samburu West lawmaker Simeon Lesrima.

Some residents have fled the area for fear of being attacked during the raids.

Lesrima said the latest attacks in Samburu took place on Saturday at Meru near Bargo where the raiders attacked several manyattas before stealing herds of cattle.

Chinese diners lay off the exotic animals

BEIJING, 19 April — Normally adventurous Chinese diners are eating fewer owls, civets and other wildlife due to fears of SARS and bird flu, according to a survey released Tuesday by US-based WildAid and the official China Wildlife Conservation Association.

“Although not everybody believed that civets were to blame for SARS, the market still has been shrinking. Fewer and fewer people consume civets,” Yin Feng, a researcher for the Chinese group, said at a news conference.

Wild animals have long been delicacies in China, where they are served at banquets to show off the host’s wealth. Rare species also are used in traditional medicine, which describes deer horn, snake blood and other products for a wide range of ailments.

Severe acute respiratory syndrome, which first emerged in China’s south in late 2002, was believed to have jumped to humans from civets, an animal sometimes served in restaurants. China also has suffered dozens of outbreaks of bird flu, which experts say might originate in migrating ducks and other wildbirds.

Death toll of rainstorm rises to 76 in Colombia

BOGOTA, 19 April — The death toll in Colombia’s winter rainstorms rose to 76, with 170 people injured and 24 others missing, the Colombian Red Cross said on Tuesday.

The winter weather, which began in March, have affected 50,000 people in 17 of the 32 departments of the country, rescue director of the Colombian Red Cross Walter Cote said.

Thousands of hectares of arable land have been flooded, and many bridges, houses and roads destroyed, he noted. With worsening weather in April, rainstorms struck the southwestern department of Valle del Cauca hard, leaving 31 people dead and around 10 missing, he said. The Hydrology, Meteorology and Environment Ministry has warned that the bad weather could last until June.
China to issue world’s first statistical method for e-commerce

BEIJING, 19 April — The world’s first official method to guide the statistical work of the e-commerce industry will soon be in use, Chinese Vice-Minister of Commerce Liao Xiaochi announced on Monday.

“This unprecedented method will provide uniform standards for the data collection and allow decision makers in governments, academia and the general public to have a better understanding of China’s robust e-commerce industry,” said Liao at the Press conference for the issue of the 2004-2005 China e-Commerce Report.

Gao Xinmin, executive deputy director-general of the China Information Association, said the lack of uniform statistical methods had caused a data deficiency, which in turn stemmed scholars and government from making concrete conclusions on the country’s e-commerce industry.

While the 2004-2005 report was being drafted, Gao said that a comprehensive survey was launched at the request of the Ministry of Commerce to collect first-hand statistics.

More than 2,000 companies in textile, coal mining, petroleum, petrochemical, construction, medicine and electronic sectors from 31 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities have been covered, which made this report very objective, he acknowledged.

In comparison with the first report issued by the Ministry of Commerce in 2003, experts said the new report had provided a wide-ranging view of the growth of China’s e-commerce industry.

The report also touches upon the future trends of China’s e-commerce industry and includes special reports on the e-commerce in foreign trade, logistics, small and medium-sized companies and on-line retailing.

Liao claimed that the report represented the highest achievements of Chinese academia.

Gregory T Shea, President of the United States Information Technology Office in Beijing, hailed the report as “very comprehensive and substantial”. — MNA/Xinhua

Singapore minister says 3 ways to strengthen ASEAN SMEs

SINGAPORE, 19 April — There are three ways to strengthen the small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said Singapore’s Minister for Trade and Industry Lim Hug Kiang on Tuesday.

Speaking at an ASEAN SME Forum held in the city-state, Lim stressed that the development of SMEs in ASEAN is critical to the region’s growth as they account for over 90 per cent of all private sector firms in the region and employ 75 per cent to 90 per cent of the domestic workforce.

“I strongly believe that SMEs have immense potential and promoting them would yield wide-ranging benefits for ASEAN countries, both individually and as a regional group,” Lim noted.

The three ways to strengthen SMEs in the region include equipping them with capabilities to expand overseas, matching them with international buyers and suppliers as well as facilitating collaboration opportunities for them.

Governments in the region should actively extend their free trade networks to provide SMEs with increased access to overseas markets and should help SMEs build up their brand capabilities, according to Lim. The Internet can serve as a strong medium for securing new businesses and deals, Lim said, adding that “ASEAN has identified e-commerce as one of the cornerstones of three ASEAN framework” — MNA/Xinhua

Iran says Army to make any attacker regret action

TEHERAN, 19 April — Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said during an Armed Forces parade on Tuesday that any aggressor would regret attacking the Islamic Republic, which is embroiled in a nuclear dispute with the West.

The President declared Iran a nuclear power last week after he said it had successfully enriched uranium to the level used in power stations. Iran insists its programme is civilian despite accusations by the West that it wants atomic bombs.

The United States has said it wants a diplomatic solution to the standoff but has not ruled out a military option.

“Today, Iran’s Army is one of the most powerful armies in the world and it will powerfully defend the country’s political borders and the nation,” Ahmadinejad said in a brief speech before troops and small missiles were paraded past.

“I will cut off the hands of any aggressors and will make any aggressor regret it,” he added.

Ahmadinejad took the salute of thousands of Army, Navy and Air Force troops goose-stepping past. Tanks were towed passed on large trucks and helicopters flew in formation overhead. Parachutists trailing ribbons sailed down from the sky. — MNA/Reuters

China, Philippines pledge to further strategic cooperation

BEIJING, 19 April — Chinese and Philippine leaders said here on Monday that ties between the two countries are at a “golden period” and they are at a “golden period” and they pledged to make more efforts to enhance bilateral relations.

“Our relationship is at its highest level in history and in its golden period,” Philippine Senate President Franklin Drilon said in a meeting with senior Chinese leader Jia Qinglin.

“Two countries are at a ‘golden period’ and they will yield wide-ranging benefits for ASEAN countries, both individually and as a regional group,” Lim noted. The three ways to strengthen SMEs in the region.

Daryl Boyington, centre, Toby Day, left, and Larry Doucette, paddle in the rain at the start of the 40th annual Kenduskeag Stream Canoe Race, on Saturday, 15 April, 2006, in Kenduskeag, Maine. This was the 21st year the Gunmile team competed. “If you can’t be fast be funny,” said Boyington. — Internet

Nigeria records fresh bird flu outbreak

LAGOS, 19 April — Fresh outbreak of bird flu that has killed 200 birds has been recorded in Bakori in Nigeria’s northern state of Katsina, the official News Agency of Nigeria reported on Monday.

Alhaji Haliuru Atiku, head of the agriculture department of the Bakori local government was quoted as saying that the disease was discovered in Bakori and Jargaba towns, about 280 kilometres north from the Nigerian capital Aboja.

He said the local governments had taken measures including aggressive enlightenment campaigns to prevent the spread of the disease to other parts.

— MNA/Xinhua

Trade officials say Sino-Indian trade to top $20b this year

BEIJING, 19 April — The bilateral trade between China and its neighbour India is expected to exceed 20 billion US dollars this year, and the figure may reach 100 billion dollars in six years, trade officials said on Monday.

Addressing Sino-Indian Business Forum in Beijing, Wan Jifei, chairman of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), said the Sino-Indian trade totalled 18.7 billion US dollars last year, up 37.5 per cent.

India has become China’s biggest trade partner in South Asia, while China is the second biggest trade partner of India.

— MNA/Xinhua

Tamiflu tablets on display at a pharmacy in Hanoi. Swiss pharmaceutical giant Roche says it has finished building a stockpile of three million courses of the antiviral drug Tamiflu for the World Health Organization. — Internet
Three 34-megawatt turbines will be installed to generate 102 megawatts.

Thahtay Hydel Power Project linked up with the national power grid is being implemented with the aim of supplying power not only to regions of Rakhine State but also to other areas. The dam is also being built for the prevention of floods in the region.
FM leaves for Indonesia to attend AMM Retreat

YANGON, 19 April
— At the invitation of Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr N Hassan Wirajuda, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win left for Bali, Indonesia, by air yesterday evening, to attend ASEAN Ministerial Meeting Retreat to be held in Ubud, Bali, Indonesia on 19 and 20 April. The foreign minister was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, officials of the Indonesian Embassy, and those from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ambassador of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Indonesia U Khan Zaw Win, Director-General of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Nyan Lynn and Deputy Director of the Department of ASEAN Affairs U Aung Htoo will also participate in the Retreat. — MNA

Winners in AIDS quiz awarded

YANGON, 19 April
— The AIDS quiz organized by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Information took place at MRTV here yesterday morning and the enthusiasts took part in it.

In the quiz, Maung Myint Swe of Dalla Township, Myanmar won first prize, Maung Zeya Than Htut of Kungyangon Township, second, Ma Aye Thanda of Dalla Township third and Maung Aung Myo Htet of Kungyangon Township consolation prize. Prizes were awarded to the winners by the officials, Secretary of Foreign Affairs Organization and Union Solidarity and Development Association who successfully scaled Phonkanrazi ice-capped mountain in Patao District, Kachin State, at the hotel. Next, leader of the mountaineering group Dr Khin Maung explained the experiences gained during their mountaineering trip to the commander and those present.

After that, wellwishers presented K 3.6 million through Dr Khin Maung and the commander hosted dinner to the mountaineers. — MNA

Myanmar hosts JICA-ASEAN meeting

YANGON, 19 April
— Myanmar hosted the 5th JICA-ASEAN Regional Cooperation Meeting at Traders Hotel here this afternoon.

Director-General Daw Myo Nwe of Foreign Economic Relations Department of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development and Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Nobutake Odano gave speeches.

Officials of FERD, JICA head office in Tokyo and JICA representative office in Yangon and representatives of Cambodia, Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Timor Leste are taking part in the meeting that continues till 21 April. — MNA

Commander attends opening ceremony of luxury hotel, honours mountaineers

YANGON, 18 April
— A ceremony to open eight-storey Two-Dragons Luxury Hotel in Myoma Ward, Myanmar, was held in front of the hotel on 12 April evening. The hotel has 53 rooms.

Present on the occasion were Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Commander of Northern Command Maj-Gen Ohn Myint and wife, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen San Tun, senior military officers, Secretary of Kachin State PDC Lt-Col Maung Myo, departmental officials, members of social organizations, hotelier U Aik San and wife, hotel staff and guests.

First, the commander formally unveiled the signboard of the hotel and he viewed round it. Next, the commander delivered an address on the occasion and the ceremony came to an end.

Afterwards, the commander attended a ceremony to honour mountaineers of Union Solidarity and Development Association who successfully scaled Phonkanrazi ice-capped mountain in Patao District, Kachin State, at the hotel. Next, leader of the mountaineering group Dr Khin Maung explained the experiences gained during their mountaineering trip to the commander and those present.

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MWAF welcomes New Year with deeds of merit

Aged women at Pyinmana Home for the Aged being shampoed on Myanmar New Year Day. — MNA

YANGON, 19 April
— The Working Group for Rehabilitation and Reintegration under the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, Pyinma Women’s Affairs Organization and Social Welfare Department welcomed the New Year with shampooing, bathing and manicuring of the aged at the Home for the Aged in Pyinmana on 17 April, the Myanmar New Year Day.

The members of social organizations also provided cash assistance amounting to K 224,000 and medicines to the aged. Wellwishers also donated cash for a day meal at the home.

It was attended by Leader of the Working Group for Rehabilitation and Reintegration Daw Khin Aye, leader of the Group for Prevention of Human Trafficking Daw Kin May Soe and members, Director-General of the Social Welfare Department U Sit Myaing and members of Pyinma Town Women’s Affairs Organization, Maternal and Child Welfare Association and Union Solidarity and Development Association. — MNA

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Thursday, 20 April, 2006

5th JICA-ASEAN Regional Co-operation Meeting in progress. — MNA

MNA
**Minister meets UNICEF representative**

**YANGON, 19 April** — Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and Population Maj-Gen Sein Htwa met with UNICEF resident representative Ms Carroll C Long, who had completed her tout of duty, at Population Department here this morning. Present at the meeting were Officer on Special Duty at SWRR Ministry Brig-Gen Thura Sein Thaung, Director-General of Fire Services Department U Myint Tun, Deputy Director-General of Social Welfare Department U Aung Tun Khang, Director of PD Daw Soe Aung and officials. — MNA

**Myanmar delegation leaves for PRC**

**YANGON, 19 April** — At the invitation of Mr Chen Jian, Deputy Minister for Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu left here by air for the People’s Republic of China this afternoon to attend the Myanmar-China Deputy Minister level consultation on cooperation in timber, mining and bilateral trade.

The Myanmar delegation led by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs was seen off at Yangon International Airport by officials from the Ministries concerned, and Chinese Ambassador Mr Guan Mu and officials from the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Yangon.

The Deputy Minister was accompanied by seniors from the Ministries of Defence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Mines, the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Home Affairs. — MNA

**Chinese language contest held in Cairo**

**CAIRO, 19 April** — A Chinese-speaking contest was held in Cairo on Monday to promote language skills of Egyptian college students.

All participants were top Chinese-learning students from universities of Cairo, Al-Azhar and Ain Shams which have run Chinese courses. The competitors displayed their skills in speaking and performance.

Three contestants from Al-Azhar University won a travel award that will help them attend further contests and cultural activities in China.

Xu Zhiqiu, director of the Chinese Cultural Center in Cairo, said that the contest will help promote the ability of Egyptian college students in Chinese-learning and enhance people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

Abd El Aziz Hamdi, director of Chinese-language faculty of Al-Azhar University, told Xinhua after the competition that he was satisfied with the excellent performance of his students who had made tremendous efforts to prepare for the event. He added that thanks to increased exchanges between Egypt and China, more Egyptian universities, like universities of Alexandria and Minya, will introduce Chinese courses in the coming years. — MNA/Xinhua

**Survey shows English proficiency of Filipinos down**

**MANILA, 19 April** — The number of Filipinos who can read, write, speak and think in English dropped, results of the latest Social Weather Stations survey revealed on Tuesday.

The survey indicated that only 68 per cent of the respondents can read English, lower than the 76 per cent recorded in the year 2000.

The survey said 48 per cent of the respondents said they can write in English, down from 61 per cent six years ago.

The number of Filipinos who can speak English also went down to 32 per cent compared to 54 per cent in the last survey.

The number of Filipinos who can think in the English language also dropped to 27 per cent from 44 per cent in 2000.

The survey showed that Filipinos who cannot totally understand English doubled from 7 per cent in 2000 to 14 per cent this year. The survey utilized 1,200 respondents nationwide and was conducted from March 8 to March 14 of this year. — MNA/Xinhua

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**Officials to attend ASEAN-China ICT Forum**

**YANGON, 19 April** — Member of Civil Service Selection and Training Board and Vice-Chairman of e-National Task Force U Aung Myint will attend the ASEAN-China ICT Ministerial Forum in Penang, Malaysia, on 20 and 21 April. Accompanied by Assistant Director-U Naing Lin of Directorate of Telecommunications of the Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs, U Aung Myint left here by air for Penang today. — MNA

**Air Macao opens new route to mainland city**

**MACAO, 19 April** — Air Macao, the flag-ship air carrier in the special administrative region of China, launched a new route to Changsha City of central-south China’s Hunan Province here on Monday.

The release issued by the airline said the Macao-Changsha route will offer a service of two flights every week on Tuesday and Thursday.

Fiee Hongjun, general manager of the airline, told the opening ceremony that the new airflight is hopefully to help boost the tourist flow from the Hunan Province to Macao.

Residents of the province from May 1 will be covered in the Individual Tourist Scheme, which permits mainland tourists to travel to Hong Kong and Macao on personal planning. — MNA/Xinhua
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.

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.

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.

Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department
Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries

Thai King wins
UNDP Award

BANGKOK, 19 April — Bhumibol Adulyadej, the King of Thailand, has won this year’s United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Award for his decades-long dedication to the country’s development through royal works and many royally initiated projects.

The United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has requested an audience with the King Bhumibol Adulyadej to present the award, Government Spokesman Surapong Sueb Wonglee said Tuesday. He said Annan would visit Thailand between May 25 and May 27. King Bhumibol Adulyadej is the world’s longest reigning monarch.

Thailand is now preparing to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the King’s ascension to the throne.

Los Angeles, 19 April — Health officials in California said the state have nowhere near the capacity to treat the hundreds of thousands of people who might need medical care should a pandemic flu strike, a report said on Monday.

Officials are only beginning to work out how they would find the extra hospital beds, health workers and equipment needed in such a crisis, according to the Los Angeles Times report.

It said local and state health authorities even had no idea about how many ventilators might be on hand to keep ill people breathing.

"No one, and I repeat no one, is prepared for a pandemic that starts tomorrow," Dr Howard Backer, an official with the California Department of Health Services, was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

Three flu pandemics occurred in California in the 20th century in 1918, 1957 and 1968, and another one could come any time, experts said.

They said that no one knows when or if the avian flu virus that has killed millions of birds, mostly in Asia, and more than 100 people will ever mutate into a strain that would spread easily among humans.

MNA/Xinhua

Officials said California not ready for flu crisis

LOS ANGELES, 19 April — Health officials in California said the state have nowhere near the capacity to treat the hundreds of thousands of people who might need medical care should a pandemic flu strike, a report said on Monday.

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MNA/Xinhua
China sees rapid growth in trademark registration

PEKING, 18 April—China’s trademark applications grew on an average of 25.2 per cent a year in the first five years of the decade, more than double the growth rate of the country’s gross domestic product.

By the end of 2005, 132 countries and regions had filed a total of 2,499 million trademark applications in China, of which 442,000 applications came from other countries, according to official statistics released here Monday from the China Achievements Exhibition for Intellectual Property Protection (IPR).

The exhibition, the first in China highlighting intellectual property, opened on Sunday at the Military Museum of the Chinese People’s Revolution in Beijing. China has ranked first in the world in the number of trademark applications for the past four years, according to the exhibition organized by China’s 11 IPR-related governmental organizations which include the Ministry of Commerce, State Administration of Industry and Commerce, State Administration of Customs and the Bureau of Public Securities.

Trademark registration was first implemented in China in 1981. In the first 14 years trademark applications averaged 100,000 a year. Last year that number reached 400,000.

MNA/Xinhua

Singapore, Qatar to set up high level Joint Committee

SINGAPORE, 18 April—Singapore and Qatar have agreed to set up a high level Joint Committee to promote bilateral relations, according to a joint statement issued by the two governments on Monday.

“The purpose of this Joint Committee is to lay down the basis for the promotion of bilateral relations in the fields of economics, culture, scientific, technical, ICT (information and communication technology) and education,” the statement said.

The committee will be headed by Singapore’s Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home Affairs Wong Kan Seng, and Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, heir apparent of the State of Qatar.

The statement was issued during Qatar First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sherif Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani’s three-day official visit to Singapore, which started on Sunday.

The visiting Qatar First Deputy Prime Minister on Monday called on Singapore’s Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew to discuss bilateral and regional matters at the Istana, the President’s official residence.

He also exchanged views on potential areas of cooperation with Singapore’s Foreign Minister George Yeo.

MNA/Xinhua

Singapore stresses talent, innovation, R&D in chemicals industry

SINGAPORE, 18 April—Singapore must focus on talent, innovation and research and development (R&D) to maintain the competitiveness of its chemicals industry, a senior government official said here on Monday.

The city state has set up the Institute of Chemical and Engineering Sciences (ICES) and the Chemical Process Technology Centre to boost the industry, said Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports Vivian Balakrishnan at the Singapore International Symposium.

He reiterated that the city state will earmark 7.5 billion Singapore dollars (about 4.7 billion US dollars) during the next five years to sustain its innovation-driven growth under the Science and Technology Plan 2010 with an emphasis on strengthening private sector R&D.

Singapore has been regarding the chemicals industry as a strategic cluster since the early 1980s, which is now the third largest manufacturing sector after electronics and biomedical sciences in the city state.

The industry’s output has nearly quadrupled in the past decade to reach 66.5 billion Singapore dollars (about 41.4 billion US dollars) last year, accounting for 32 per cent of the country’s total manufacturing output.

MNA/Xinhua

TCB invites tender for sugar import to stabilize volatile market

DHAKA, 18 April—The Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) has again invited international tender for importing sugar to rein in its galloping price in the local markets after scrapping the earlier one, local daily The Financial Express reported on Tuesday. TCB sources hinted that they are eager to procure 25,000 tons of sugar within a very short time as its prices is rising sharply, causing hardship to the fixed income and lower income groups.

Of this amount, the bids for 15,000 tons will be opened on 22 April and for the remaining 10,000 tons on 29 April, according to sources from TCB, the autonomous state trading organization under the Ministry of Commerce.

“We’ll dispatch details about the tender and the lowest quotation to the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) for necessary approval on the same day of its opening,” a senior TCB official said.

Earlier, the TCB invited international tender on last March. As many as four bidders participated in the tender and the lowest bidder quoted price at 478.85 US dollars per ton.

But indiscriminate delay in approving the tender by the MoC officials foilied the import initiative, TCB sources said, adding that such official inertia is pushing up the prices of sugar further in the local markets.

MNA/Xinhua

A Shih-tzu dog wears hair curlers during the Zoo Russia International Cat and Dog Exhibition in Moscow on 16 April, 2006. —INTERNET
New York, 18 April — The following 2006 Pulitzer Prize winners in Journalism and Letters, Drama and Music were announced on Monday at New York’s Columbia University:

— Public Service —

Two prizes: The Sun Herald of Biloxi, Mississippi, for its valorous and comprehensive coverage of Hurricane Katrina and The Times-Picayune of New Orleans, for its heroic, multifaceted coverage of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath even after evacuation of its newspaper plant.

— Breaking News —

The staff of The Times-Picayune of New Orleans, for its coverage of Hurricane Katrina, overcoming desperate conditions facing the city and the newspaper.

— Investigative Reporting —

The Washington Post’s Susan Schmidt, James V Grimaldi and R Jeffrey Smith for their probe of Washington officials for their reporting — and the newspaper.

— National Reporting —

Two prizes: The New York Times’ James Risen and Eric Lichtblau for stories on secret domestic eavesdropping, and the staffs of The San Diego Union-Tribune and Copley News Service, with notable work by Marcus Stern and Jerry Kammer, for their disclosure of bribe-taking that sent former Representative Randy Cunningham to prison.

— International Reporting —

The New York Times’ Joseph Kahn and Jim Yardley for stories on rigged justice in China as the booming nation’s legal system evolves.

— Feature Writing —

The Rocky Mountain News’ Jim Sheefer for his story on a Marine major who helps the families of comrades killed in Iraq cope with their loss and honour their sacrifice.

— Commentary —

The New York Times’ Nicholas Kristof for columns that focused attention on genocide in Darfur.

— Criticism —

The Washington Post’s Robin Givhan for her fashion criticism.

— Editorial Writing —

The Oregonian’s Rick Attig and Doug Bates for editorials on abuses inside a forgotten Oregon mental hospital.

MNA/Reuters

Indonesia prepares to evacuate villages as volcano trembles

Jakarta, 18 April — Indonesia prepared to evacuate thousands of villagers on Monday after a massive volcanic in the heart of densely populated Java Island started spewing thick clouds of smoke and hot lava, officials said.

Authorities have placed Mount Merapi, which overlooks the ancient city of Jogjakarta, on Orange Code, or the second highest alert level, following fears of an eruption due to an increase in the number of tremors. “Due to a high level of tremor activities and the spewing of the lava, Mount Merapi is now on alert status,” Dali Ahmad, a volcanologist from the Directorate of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation, told Reuters by telephone.

Officials said the military had deployed more than 200 trucks and buses to evacuate villagers living on the slopes of Merapi near Jogjakarta, 90 kilometres (55 miles) west of the capital, Jakarta.

“We have conducted an evacuation drill and it appears that villagers have grown used to it,” said Srijanto, a police official.

Mount Merapi’s increased volcanic activity prompted President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to order preparations for evacuation. Merapi’s last major eruption was in 1994 when more than 60 people were killed. One of its most destructive eruptions was in 1930 when 1,300 people were killed.

MNA/Reuters

Zambian music educator calls for uplifting gospel, secular music

Lusaka, 18 April — A Kenya-based Zambian music educator has called for uplifting of gospel and secular music in Zambia, according to the Times of Zambia newspaper on Monday.

John Mwesa, the chairman of the music department of the Eastern Africa Baraton University, was quoted as telling the on-going musical workshop held in Ndola in northern Zambia on Sunday that there is need to uplift and establish music at the academic level in order to develop the industry.

“We need to uplift both gospel and secular music in the country. Establishing better standards of music in Zambia will promote development in Africa,” he said. Mwesa said that his return from Kenya after 10 years came at the right time when Zambian people need to improve in music and his vision is to set up a musical department in Lusaka and Monze in Southern province to cater for all students in secondary college and university education.

MNA/Xinhua

China, Italy combine to boost SMEs cooperation

Beijing, 18 April — China and Italy will jointly hold the Sino-Italian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Fair in September in southern China’s Guangdong Province in a bid to boost cooperation between the SMEs of the two countries.

It will provide opportunities for SMEs in both countries to further cooperate, said Tong Xing, the executive director of the fair’s organizing committee.

China and Italy signed a letter of intent in 2005 to exploit the international market and the fair will meet their needs in this regard.

China, Italy combine to boost SMEs cooperation.

MNA/Xinhua

India prepares to evacuate villages as volcano trembles

An Indonesian worker perches precariously over a gigantic hole as construction work continues on a building site in Beijing, China on 17 April, 2006.

A Chinese worker perches precariously over a gigantic hole construction as the foundation of another building project in Beijing, China on 17 April, 2006. President Hu Jintao announced Sunday that the economy grew 10.2 percent in the first quarter — more than 2 percentage points above the official target.

MNA/Reuters

China, Italy combine to boost SMEs cooperation

Beijing, 18 April — China and Italy will jointly hold the Sino-Italian Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Fair in September in southern China’s Guangdong Province in a bid to boost cooperation between the two countries.

It will provide opportunities for SMEs in both countries to further cooperate, said Tong Xing, the executive director of the fair’s organizing committee.

China and Italy signed a letter of intent in 2005 to exploit the international market and the fair will meet their needs in this regard.

China, Italy combine to boost SMEs cooperation.

MNA/Xinhua

HK seizes smuggled cars, spare parts

Hong Kong, 18 April — Hong Kong Customs has seized a smuggled cargo of 45 dismantled private cars and spare parts worth 900,000 Hong Kong dollars ($116,129 US dollars), the authorities said on Monday.

The vessel carrying the smuggled goods was intercepted on the sea west of Hong Kong Island on Sunday night, said a statement posted Monday on the website of the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

A crew of four men aged between 25 and 29 were arrested for the cargo without any export manifest. It is the second time in one month that the smuggled cargo of dismantled private cars was seized in Hong Kong.

In mid-March, the Hong Kong Customs seized 50 dismantled cars from a vessel without an export manifest.

MNA/Xinhua

List of 2006 Pulitzer Prize winners

New York, 18 April — The following 2006 Pulitzer Prize winners in Journalism and Letters, Drama and Music were announced on Monday at New York’s Columbia University:

— Public Service —

Two prizes: The Sun Herald of Biloxi, Mississippi, for its valorous and comprehensive coverage of Hurricane Katrina and The Times-Picayune of New Orleans, for its heroic, multifaceted coverage of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath even after evacuation of its newspaper plant.

— Breaking News —

The staff of The Times-Picayune of New Orleans, for its coverage of Hurricane Katrina, overcoming desperate conditions facing the city and the newspaper.

— Investigative Reporting —

The Washington Post’s Susan Schmidt, James V Grimaldi and R Jeffrey Smith for their probe of Washington officials for their reporting — and the newspaper.

— National Reporting —

Two prizes: The New York Times’ James Risen and Eric Lichtblau for stories on secret domestic eavesdropping, and the staffs of The San Diego Union-Tribune and Copley News Service, with notable work by Marcus Stern and Jerry Kammer, for their disclosure of bribe-taking that sent former Representative Randy Cunningham to prison.

— International Reporting —

The New York Times’ Joseph Kahn and Jim Yardley for stories on rigged justice in China as the booming nation’s legal system evolves.

— Feature Writing —

The Rocky Mountain News’ Jim Sheefer for his story on a Marine major who helps the families of comrades killed in Iraq cope with their loss and honour their sacrifice.

— Commentary —

The New York Times’ Nicholas Kristof for columns that focused attention on genocide in Darfur.

— Criticism —

The Washington Post’s Robin Givhan for her fashion criticism.

— Editorial Writing —

The Oregonian’s Rick Attig and Doug Bates for editorials on abuses inside a forgotten Oregon mental hospital.

MNA/Reuters

Indonesia prepares to evacuate villages as volcano trembles

Jakarta, 18 April — Indonesia prepared to evacuate thousands of villagers on Monday after a massive volcanic in the heart of densely populated Java Island started spewing thick clouds of smoke and hot lava, officials said.

Authorities have placed Mount Merapi, which overlooks the ancient city of Jogjakarta, on Orange Code, or the second highest alert level, following fears of an eruption due to an increase in the number of tremors. “Due to a high level of tremor activities and the spewing of the lava, Mount Merapi is now on alert status,” Dali Ahmad, a volcanologist from the Directorate of Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation, told Reuters by telephone.

Officials said the military had deployed more than 200 trucks and buses to evacuate villagers living on the slopes of Merapi near Jogjakarta, 90 kilometres (55 miles) west of the capital, Jakarta.

“We have conducted an evacuation drill and it appears that villagers have grown used to it,” said Srijanto, a police official.

Mount Merapi’s increased volcanic activity prompted President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to order preparations for evacuation. Merapi’s last major eruption was in 1994 when more than 60 people were killed. One of its most destructive eruptions was in 1930 when 1,300 people were killed.

MNA/Reuters

Zambian music educator calls for uplifting gospel, secular music

Lusaka, 18 April — A Kenya-based Zambian music educator has called for uplifting of gospel and secular music in Zambia, according to the Times of Zambia newspaper on Monday.

John Mwesa, the chairman of the music department of the Eastern Africa Baraton University, was quoted as telling the on-going musical workshop held in Ndola in northern Zambia on Sunday that there is need to uplift and establish music at the academic level in order to develop the industry.

“We need to uplift both gospel and secular music in the country. Establishing better standards of music in Zambia will promote development in Africa,” he said. Mwesa said that his return from Kenya after 10 years came at the right time when Zambian people need to improve in music and his vision is to set up a musical department in Lusaka and Monze in Southern province to cater for all students in secondary college and university education.

MNA/Xinhua

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In mid-March, the Hong Kong Customs seized 50 dismantled cars from a vessel without an export manifest.

MNA/Xinhua
Giuly strike gives Barca advantage over Milan

**MILAN, 19 April**—Barcelona took a step towards the Champions League final when a Ludovic Giuly goal earned them a 1-0 win over AC Milan at the San Siro stadium in their semifinal, first-leg match on Tuesday.

Frenchman Giuly's strike in the 55th minute — with a sharp finish after he raced on to a superb pass from Brazilian Ronaldinho — snapped a 13-match unbeaten home run for Milan in Europe.

Milan had three times gone close in attack, struck the post from a tight angle in the 14th minute after turning sharply as he received a long throw from Serginho.

A minute later Clarence Seedorf burst down the left and whipped in a bouncing cross which Shevchenko headed powerfully goalwards but Barcelona keeper Victor Valdes made a good diving save.

Milan went close again six minutes after the restart when Shevchenko flicked the ball to Kaka inside the area and the Brazilian, who could have shot himself, fed Gialdino but the Italy forward fired wide.

Six minutes later Barcelona had the lead. Ronaldinho split the Milan defence open and Giuly, anticipating the delivery and losing his marker, Kaladze with a sharp diagonal run, beat Dida with a precise left-foot finish.— MNA/Reuters

Dissident director says Real Madrid is falling apart

**MADRID, 19 April**—Real Madrid is in a desperate situation and it is time to call a presidential election, says club director Ramon Calderon.

"Madrid is gradually falling apart and now is the moment to call an election," Calderon told sports daily AS on Tuesday. "Two months have passed since the new president took charge and he still hasn't called the board together.

"We are in a desperate situation. He said he would secure the board's agreement to important decisions and he has not done that."

Fernando Martin was appointed Real president at the end of February after Florentino Perez resigned when it became clear the club would end a third successive season without silverware. Martin has said he has no immediate plans to call an election.

He issued a statement on the Real website on Tuesday calling for unity and asking for the support of the directors.

"Now is the time for everyone connected with Real Madrid to remain calm, united and responsible so that we can defend the interests of the club and construct a solid future."

When he took charge Martin said he would get tough with the club's players and said those not committed to the cause would be offloaded.

He also promised to appoint a new coach by the end of March. Although he named a seven-man target list, no announcement has been made about the future boss.

AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti is reported by the Spanish media to be the club's first choice, with England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson as a possible back-up option.

Calderon said the board has not been informed of any progress in the appointment of a new coach.

"We know nothing about it," he said. "We seem to be at the mercy of the gut reactions of the president." — MNA/Reuters

Golden ball will be used in World Cup final

**BERLIN, 19 April**—A golden ball will be used at the World Cup final on 9 July, organizing committee president Franz Beckenbauer said on Tuesday.

"It only surprises me that no one thought of it before," Beckenbauer said at a bizarre ceremony at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, where he removed a golden wrap off the 2.2-metre diameter ball with help from gold-painted Greek warriors.

"The final is such a special occasion for the players, the coaches and the fans around the world."

"Creating a special ball for this match, the most important match every four years, was a great idea."

Adidas chairman Herbert Hainer said the golden ball would be identical to those used throughout the month-long tournament in Germany except one of the 14 panels would be coloured gold.

"We would definitely like to see this as the start of a new tradition for the final match," he told Reuters. "We'll do this again but try to come up with something special for each final."

The sets of 15 balls for each match at the tournament that runs from June 9 to July 9 will for the first time have the names of the teams, venue, date and kickoff time.

They will all be made in Thailand, with the exception of the 15 balls for the final which will be produced in Germany.

Hainer denied a newspaper report the World Cup winners would be entitled to play with gold balls for the next four years.

All 32 sides in the finals will receive a pre-tournament shipment of 20 balls for training purposes.— MNA/Reuters

Sacramento Kings forward Shawne Arron澍 goes up for the shot over Seattle SuperSonics forward Nick Collison during the third quarter of an NBA basketball game in Sacramento, Calif., on 18 April, 2006. The Kings won 111-105. — INTERNET

Gianluigi Buffon — the hero for Italy in the World Cup semi-finals against France — was named the best goalkeeper of the 2006 World Cup by the FIFA World Cup website in a special poll for the best players of the competition.

Buffon beat Spain’s Gorka Iraizoz and South Africa’s Itumeleng Khune to be named goalkeeper of the competition.

Buffon made a series of impressive saves in the final to help Italy claim their fourth World Cup title.

The best player of the tournament was determined by a poll on the FIFA World Cup website with 28,000 fans from 197 countries participating.

"It’s a real honour," Buffon told the website.

There were no Italian players in the five-man best player shortlist.

Portugal’s Cristiano Ronaldo, Brazil’s Ronaldinho, Argentina’s Lionel Messi, France’s Thierry Henry and Italian Fabio Cannavaro were named as the top candidates.

The best young player was named 19-year-old Italian goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, who kept a clean sheet in the final against France.

"It’s a real honour," Buffon told the website.

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"It’s a real honour," Buffon told the website.
Japanese scientists unveil world’s oldest ice block

Tokyo, 19 April — A million-year-old ice sample drilled from three kilometres under the Antarctic and unveiled in Tokyo on Tuesday could yield vital clues on climate change, Japanese scientists said.

Researchers, showing off the cylindrical samples of what they said was the oldest ice ever to be retrieved, said studying air trapped inside “core” samples taken from various depths under ground could also help predict how the Earth’s weather patterns will change in the future.

“The ice core is made up of snow that fell in the distant past,” said project leader Hideaki Motoyama of the National Institute of Polar Research, dressed snuggly in a parka after unveiling the gleaming ice in a room kept at minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus 4 Fahrenheit). “You can use it to examine changes in temperature, levels of carbon dioxide and methane over time, information that is only available from the core,” he said.

Motoyama, who discovered the Dome Fuji base in the eastern Antarctic, said two years more than two years of the delicate operation of drilling into the ice sheet, coming up with the million-year-old samples in January and shipping them to Japan on an icebreaker.

Research based on a previous study of Antarctic ice and published by Nature magazine last year said concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane were far higher now than at any time in the last 650,000 years.

The Japanese team will look farther into the past and are also hoping the ice samples will yield opportunities to study the evolution of tiny organisms trapped in the ice.

“The environment there is very harsh, with temperatures about minus 45 degrees, so we don’t know if life can be sustained,” Motoyama said. “But we believe we will find organisms.”

The researchers believe they can dig about another 20 metres into the ice at the Antarctic site before reaching base rock.—MNA/Reuters

Hideaki Motoyama, project leader of the National Institute of Polar Research, holds a million-year-old ice sample in Tokyo on 18 April, 2006. — INTERNET

WEATHER

Wednesday, 19 April, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Kayin and Shan States, scattered in Kayin and Mon States, upper Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions, isolated in lower Sagaing, Magway, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions, (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Mon State, upper Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions, (5°C) to (6°C) below normal in Kayin and Kayin States and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant day temperatures were Minbu, Magway and Aunglan (40°C) each. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Namhsan (0.98) inch, Khaungthong (0.95) inch, Thalton (0.71) inch, Machaing (0.55) inch, Kyaukpyu (0.39) inch, Maungda (0.35) inch, and Yamethin (0.32) inch.

Maximum temperature on 18-4-2006 was 100°F. Minimum temperature on 19-4-2006 was 72°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 19-4-2006 was (71%). Total sunshine hours on 18-4-2006 was (7.4) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 19-4-2006 were nil at Mandaladon, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2006 were (Tr) at Mandaladon, Kaba-Aye and (0.04) inch at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (12) mph from South-west at (13:50) hours MST on 18-4-2006.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 20-4-2006: Rain or thundershowers are likely isolated in Kayin State, Mandalay, Ayeyawady, Bago and Yangon Divisions, scattered in Kayin, Mon and Shan States, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Slight decrease of day temperatures are likely in the lower Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw City and neighbouring areas for 20-4-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring areas for 20-4-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring areas for 20-4-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).
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

Three 34-megawatt turbines will be installed to generate 102 megawatts

(from page 1)
Council General Thura Shwe Mann gave necessary instructions.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance to those present and cordially greeted officers, other ranks and family members. After the meeting, Senior General Than Shwe and party went back to Thandwe by helicopter.

Yesterday morning, Senior General Than Shwe and party flew to Taungup from Thandwe by helicopter. First, they viewed development of Taungup by car.

At the hall of Taungup Station, they met officers, other ranks and family members of regiments and units of the station.

Senior General Thura Shwe Mann explained construction of the nation and build-up of the Tatmadaw.

Senior General Than Shwe cordially greeted those present.

At 11.30 am, the Senior General and party arrived at the site of Thahtay Creek Hydel Power Project being implemented on Thahtay Creek, 12 miles from Thandwe by Hydro-electronic Power Department under the Ministry of Electric Power.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister for Electric Power U Myo Myint reported to the Senior General on aims of the project, feasibility survey works, the site for construction of the main embankment, future tasks and facts about the project.

Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo briefed those present.

(See page 8)