Senior General Than Shwe leaves for Indonesia to attend Asian-African Summit 2005, Commemoration of Golden Jubilee of Asia-Africa Conference

YANGON, 21 April — At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Indonesia Dr Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe left here by special flight of Myanmar Airways International at noon today to attend the Asian-African Summit 2005 and the Commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of the Asia-Africa Conference to be held in Jakarta and Bandung from 22 to 24 April 2005. The Myanmar delegation led by Senior General Than Shwe was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Daw Kyaing Kyaing, wife of Senior General Than Shwe, Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San, member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet, Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Daw Khin Khin Win, wife of Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, members of the State Peace and Development Council, the Commander-in-Chief (Navy), the Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command and wife, ministers, senior military officers, Indonesian Ambassador Mr Wyoso Prodjowarsito and embassy staff, military and civilian officers.

Senior General Than Shwe was accompanied by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, Military Assistant to the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San. —MNA

INSIDE

Shan State (North) is blessed with the most suitable topography and climate under which the species thrive very well. (Page 11) THAUNG WIN BO

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
PERSPECTIVES
Friday, 22 April, 2005

For further national development

The Government of the Union of Myanmar is mobilizing entrepreneurs as one of the national forces in the process of building a discipline-flourishing democracy. During his visit to Taninthayi Division on 6 April, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe met with national entrepreneurs and said that the government regarded them as colleagues travelling in the same boat as goodwill ventures of entrepreneurs were very important to the State.

The government is encouraging the national entrepreneurs by giving them more rights, by rendering all the necessary assistance to them and by protecting them in accordance with the law. Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, who accompanied Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe during the visit to Rakhine State, met with townsfolk and district-level departmental personnel, entrepreneurs, members of social organizations and townsmen of Thandwe and Taungup Districts on 18 April. At the meeting, General Thura Shwe Mann said that entrepreneurs were required to do business ventures with genuine goodwill towards the State and the people and that only if they did so would their respective regions develop and the socio-economic life of the people improve.

It is found that most of the national entrepreneurs are engaged in trade and service industry rather than in manufacturing. Therefore, it is necessary for them to embark on agriculture, livestock breeding and manufacturing.

The government is encouraging industries that produce import-substitute and export items. Not only that, it is also encouraging the export of crops yielded from newly-reclaimed farmland.

The government is encouraging and rendering assistance to national entrepreneurs as well as local people who work on farms on a manageable scale.

Entrepreneurs and local people should take up cultivation of rubber not only in the plains but also on the hills.

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Appomtment of
Ambassador agreed on

YANGON, 22 April — The Government of the Union of Myanmar has given agreement to the appointment of Mr Robert Joseph Davis as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Australia to the Union of Myanmar in succession to Mr Paul John Grigson.

Mr Robert Joseph Davis was born in 1947 and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of New South Wales. Since joining the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, he had served in various capacities at the Department as well as in the Australia Embassies in Japan and Korea. From 2001 to 2003, he served as Australian High Commissioner to Solomon Islands and currently as Assistant Secretaty, Open Source Collection Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Mr Davis is married and has three daughters.

Services given to domestic tours

YANGON, 21 April — The Myanmar Tourism Service makes arrangements for convenience of domestic trips throughout the country.

The MTS arranges a two-day individual or package tours for Yangon-Kyaikhteio-Yangon and a four-day individual or package tours for Yangon-Bagan-Popay-Yangon.


At present, service is being given to Yangon-Bago-Yangon two-day trip for paying homage to famous pagodas in Bago and watch various species of birds at Moeyunyi Lake. The visitors can stay at Shewutaw Hotel.

Those wishing to know more details may dial 252859 and 387002 of Information Unit at MTS.

U Nay Win accredited to United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

YANGON, 22 April — The Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Nay Win, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Korea, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Official Statement of the Myanmar Embassy

YANGON, 21 April — To attend the Golden Jubilee of Asia-Africa Conference to be held in Bandung, Indonesia, on 21 and 22 April, a ten-member Myanmar delegation led by President of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Win Myint left for Indonesia yesterday. The delegation was seen off at the airport by Vice-President U Thaung Tin and officials. Yesterday, Vice-President of UMFCCI U Zaw Min Win and CEC member U Wai Phyo left for Manila, the Philippines, to attend the meeting on East-Asia Sub-Regional Unleasing Entrepreneurship-Making Business Work for the Poor. Similarly, Joint-Secretary-2 U Tun Aung left here for Cebu, the Philippines, to attend the 11th Meeting of AMEICC HRD-WG on the same day.

UMFCCI President U Win Myint and party seen off by officials at the airport. — UMFCCI
China will back India's candidacy for UNSC seat

NEW DELHI, 20 April— China on Tuesday said it would support India’s candidacy for permanent seat in an expanded Security Council whenever such a stage comes, clearing confusion over its position on the issue.

“One stage of stages for taking a decision on giving support to any country, India will be on top of the list. We have no difficulty in supporting India,” Chinese Ambassador Sun Yuxi said at a ‘meet-the-press’ programme here.

Elaborating, the envoy said China had made it clear in the Joint Statement issued after Premier Wen Jiabao’s visit here recently that it wanted India to play a larger role in the UN.

He said Wen had also given an assurance in this regard to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during their talks.

On the issue of UN reforms, Sun said “we are very positive” on this issue and are open to any kind of idea.

Noting that China had made its views clear on backing India, he said “inclusion of developing countries should be considered first as such countries don’t have enough representation despite having a majority in the world body”.

“At present, China is the only developing country in the UNSC. There is a need for inclusion of more,” the envoy said giving clear hints that his country would support India’s candidacy.

He said the reform of the UN framework was needed to help it meet the new challenges that have emerged in the world.

To a question, the Chinese Ambassador said that there was a need to play down concerns in India over supply of arms to Pakistan, saying it was business like in any other item.—MNA/PTI

Japan, Russia to hold ministerial talks on pipeline

TOKYO, 20 April — Japan and Russia will hold ministerial talks on Thursday on a project to build an oil pipeline linking Taishet in eastern Siberia to Petrovzanye near Nakhodka in the Russian Far East to ship oil to Japan and other markets, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) said on Tuesday.

METI Minister Shoichii Nakagawa will meet with Russian Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko to discuss the pipeline plan ahead of a Japan-Russia intergovernmental trade and economic meeting on Friday, the METI said. On Monday, experts from the two countries met in Moscow to discuss the project and agreed to strive to build the pipeline without fail, according to the METI.— MNA/Xinhua

Asian-African Summit hot topic on Indonesian newspapers

JAKARTA, 20 April — Newspapers in this capital city on Tuesday devoted large space to the forthcoming historic event, the Asian-African Summit and the commemoration of the golden jubilee of the 1955 Asian-African Conference, which is expected to be attended by more than 100 countries representing 4.6 billion Asians and Africans between 22-24 April.

In an editorial titled “Welcoming Asia Africa” run by The Jakarta Post, the paper said, “We trust that the officials in charge have made thorough preparations. Efficiency and hospitality are the hallmarks of every successful conventions.”

The paper also carried several articles on the Asia-Africa cooperation. President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono “hoped the upcoming Asian-African Summit would result in cooperation among participating countries to seriously develop use of renewable energy, as well as reducing dependency on conventional energy sources — such as oil, gas and coal,” it said. In an article titled “Reinvigorating the Bandung Spirit,” it said Asian and African leaders are expected to not only dwell on past experiences but also to enter into new cooperative arrangements.

“Three bridges are expected to be built to facilitate interactions among the countries of Asia and Africa. Those bridges will enable interactions in political, economic, and social-cultural fields of the peoples of the two great continents,” it said.

Those three main bridges are expected to enable Asian and African countries move together to face increasingly complex challenges, including terrorism, cyber crimes, drug trafficking, and new forms of colonialism in the present word,” it noted.— MNA/Xinhua

Iraq Prime Minister escapes assassination attempt

BAGHDAD, 20 April— Iraq's caretaker Prime Minister Iyad Allawi escaped an assassination attempt on Wednesday night when a suicide bomber in a car attacked his convoy near his home, a government spokesman said.

The attack killed one policeman and wounded four, the spokesman said.

Allawi was in a meeting on forming Iraq's government and then headed to his house near his party headquarters when the suicide bomber struck, said the spokesman.

Thaier al-Naqib was unharmed. The attempt on his life came hours after Iraq's President Jalal Talabani said a new government was likely to be announced on Thursday more than 11 weeks after Iraq's historic elections.— Internet

China’s coastal cities report better economic performance

BEIJING, 20 April— The first group of 15 coastal cities China selected two decades ago to open up to the outside world produced 21.4 per cent of the country’s overall gross domestic product last year, the National Statistics Bureau said on Monday.

According to figures released by the bureau, the 15 cities, whose population accounts for only 7.4 per cent of the nation, generated a total of 2.9244 trillion yuan (356.6 billion US dollars) in gross domestic product (GDP), 21.4 per cent of the nation's 13.6515 trillion yuan (1.6648 trillion US dollars).

The 15 cities include Shanghai, Guangzhou, capital of south China’s Guangdong Province, which borders Hong Kong, north China’s Tianjin Municipality, Qingdao in east China’s Shandong Province, Ningbo in east China’s Zhejiang Province, and Dalian, a port city in northeast China’s Liaoning Province.

The 15 cities registered an average annual economic growth rate of 15 per cent in 2004, compared with 9.5 per cent of the national average.

Per-capita GDP of the 15 cities grew to 30,729 yuan (some 3,750 US dollars) last year, nearly three times as much as the national average. The disposal per-capita urban income for those 15 cities totalled 11,966 yuan (about 1,460 US dollars) last year, 27 per cent more than the national average. The actual foreign direct investment in the 15 cities stood at 25.5 billion US dollars, up 36.9 per cent year-on-year, or 42 per cent of the country’s 60.6 billion US dollars.—MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

More flights to operate between Hangzhou, Hong Kong

HONG KONG, 20 April — The number of daily flights between Hong Kong and Hangzhou, capital of east China’s Zhejiang Province, has increased to 12 round trips with Air China launching a daily scheduled service between the two cities on Tuesday.

“Today’s inaugural flight marks a step further in the implementation of the air-bridge concept to link the two airports, to foster closer ties between the Pearl River and Yangtze River Delta, thus bringing economic value to the two regions,” said David Pang, chief executive officer of Airport Authority Hong Kong.

MNA/Xinhua

Computer sales in the Asia-Pacific region outside Japan totalled 8.9 million in the three months to March, an increase of 13 percent from a year ago.—INTERNET

INTERNET
Friendly coexistence only correct choice for China, Japan

BEIJING, 20 April — Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said here on Tuesday the friendly coexistence and win-win cooperation between China and Japan is the only correct choice in serving the fundamental interests of the two peoples.

Li made the remarks in his report on Sino-Japanese relations to an audience of 3,500 people, including officials from six Chinese ministries and the military.

According to Li, during the past 20-plus years, Chinese and Japanese have had friendly exchanges. Ancient Chinese civilization pushed forward the formation and progress of the Japanese culture while China learned a lot from Japan in contemporary period.

After briefly reviewing the growth of Sino-Japanese ties, Li said that the Sino-Japanese relations have scored great progress in political, economic, cultural, educational and non-governmental contacts after the two countries normalized diplomatic relations in 1972, bringing important interests to the two countries and peoples and playing positive role in peace and development in the region and the world at large.

In recent years, the negative sides of Japan's policy toward China have gradually emerged. "Its wrong attitude and doing in a number of issues, including the history issue, deeply hurt the national feeling of the Chinese people and brought complexity to Sino-Japanese relations," he said, adding that it also aroused strong displeasure of peoples in Asian countries, including China.

According to Li, Japan is an important neighbouring country of China. The interests of the two countries have been intertwined with ever frequent communication and contacts among the peoples. "Such a trend will be further developed in the context of economic globalization," he said.

Senior Chinese military official meets Cuban guest

BEIJING, 20 April— Xu Caihou, vice-chairman of China's Central Military Commission, met here on Monday with Raul Castro Ruz, Minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba.

Xu said China and Cuba had maintained frequent high-level military exchanges for a long period and had conducted effective cooperation in personnel training.

Raul Castro's visit would certainly inject "new vigor" to the relationship between the two Armed Forces, added Xu.

Praising China for its stable society and booming economy, Raul Castro, also second secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, said Cuba hoped to boost cooperation with China in all spheres, and described Cuba's relationship with China as "friendship between comrades".

Philippines, Pakistan to share anti-terrorism intelligence

MANILA, 20 April — The Philippine and Pakistan leaders on Tuesday agreed to cooperate in anti-terrorism intelligence sharing.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said after her meeting with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, who started on Monday his three-day state visit to Manila, that they have reached consensus to boost coexistence and win-win cooperation between China and Japan is the only correct choice in serving the fundamental interests of the two peoples.

On the socio-political front, the Philippines and Pakistan agreed to cooperate in anti-terrorism intelligence sharing.

The two countries' commerce is countries kept growing quite fast over the past few years.

Chinese figures show that the two-way trade reached 20.39 billion U.S. dollars in 2004, up 50.3 percent from a year ago, double the figure of 2002 and more than 230 times the figure when the two countries established diplomatic relations in December 1972.

Malaysia’s vehicle sales up in March

KUALA LUMPUR, 20 April — Malaysia's vehicle sales in March 2005 reached an all-time high of 50,558 units, up 21.6 percent over the same month of 2004, the Malaysian Automotive Association (MAA) said on Tuesday.

The market conditions remained positive while production had geared up to match the strong demand, MAA said in releasing the March production and sales figures in a statement here.

Out of the sales volume for March, passenger cars accounted for 37,544 units and commercial vehicles 13,014 units compared with the respective 32,653 units and 8,926 units sold in March 2004, it said.
Vietnam, S Korea to promote multi-faceted cooperation

HANOI, 21 April — Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai and his visiting South Korean counterpart Lee Hae-chan affirmed to strengthen the two countries’ multi-faceted cooperation, especially in the fields of economy and trade, local newspaper Vietnam News reported on Wednesday.

During their talks on Tuesday, the two prime ministers agreed to enhance their cooperation in such fields as manufacturing, mining, oil and gas, petrochemicals, energy, transport, and agriculture. Vietnam will continue to improve its business environment, facilitating South Korean investors, Khai said. “We encourage South Korean enterprises, especially small and medium-sized ones operating in the fields of manufacturing industry, urban construction, and tourism, to invest in Vietnam.”

The South Korean Prime Minister expressed his support to Vietnam’s bid for the WTO accession. The South Korean Government will do its best to complete bilateral negotiations with Vietnam on the issue soon, he noted, adding that his country will offer continued support and assistance for Vietnam’s industrialization and modernization.

After the talks, the two prime ministers witnessed the signing of five cooperation documents on criminal extradition, judiciary and technological assistance, human power training, and gas sale and purchase. On the same day, Lee Hae-chan also met with Vietnamese President Tran Duc Luong.

Vietnam considers South Korea an important partner and determines to boost bilateral relations with the country, Luong said, adding that their strategic partnership not only benefits each country but also makes important contributions to the region and the world.

Regarding the Korean Peninsula, Vietnam has followed developments on the peninsula, the President noted. “Vietnam supports the disarmament on the Korean Peninsula and thinks that any nuclear disputes should be resolved peacefully through dialogues on the basis of respect for the legitimate interests of concerned parties.”

MNA/Xinhua

Japan to resume yen loan facility to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 20 April — Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi will formally announce the resumption of yen loan facility to Islamabad during his two-day official visit to Pakistan from 30 April to 1 May, English language newspaper The Nation reported on Tuesday.

Koizumi will visit Pakistan at the invitation of his Pakistani counterpart Shaukat Aziz and during his stay in Islamabad he will hold talks with President General Pervez Musharraf.

Japan agreed to resume yen loans to Pakistan, which were suspended in 1998. However, its formal announcement, which would be made by Koizumi at the end of his visit, was awaited, according to the paper.

MNA/Xinhua

Malaysia expect NAASP to contribute to capacity building

JAKARTA, 21 April — Malaysian Minister of Foreign Affairs Syed Hamid Albar said here Wednesday that the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) is expected to encourage all the member countries to build capacity for further development.

“The NAASP can therefore play a useful role in helping to forge partnerships geared towards capacity building, strengthening public infrastructures and government institutions and structures through the exchange of experiences,” said Albar at the Asian-African Ministerial Meeting. If sufficient capacity is generated, then it will enable the scope and number of projects to be expanded in the near future, he said, adding that this is the essential way for continents to carry out cooperation to seek for further development.

VA measures engagement with the wider world is required, but the terms of engagement must be favourable to us and to our benefit, he added. — MNA/Xinhua

WFP offers rice aid to Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, 21 April — The UN World Food Programme (WFP) will provide about 1,500 tons of emergency rice aid to Cambodia’s food shortage areas in the next three months, local media reported on Wednesday.

As many as 150,000 rural Cambodians who are short of food due to the drought in the country will receive the aid, according to the WFP official residing here. The WFP announced the decision on Tuesday. It was said that there are 500,000 people facing food shortage in the country of more than 13 million population, about 85 per cent of which are living in the countryside.

Among 24 provinces and municipalities, Kompong Speu and Kompong Cham provinces are the hardest hit areas. Emergency rice distribution began on April 6 and 10 provinces will receive rice aid, including Battambang, Kompong Cham, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Speu, Kampot, Kompong Thom, Kandal, Kratie, Prey Vetig and Pursat. — MNA/Xinhua

Thailand, New Zealand ink free trade agreement

BANGKOK, 21 April — Thailand has signed a free trade agreement with New Zealand, a long-anticipated treaty believed to boost bilateral trade, local newspaper The Nation reported on Wednesday.

After Tuesday’s signing ceremony witnessed by many Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and visiting New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark, Thaksin said the Closer Economic Partnership (CEP) agreement would liberalize trade in goods between the two countries and benefit Thailand in terms of increased access to the New Zealand market.

“The access to the New Zealand market would be a good reference for Thai products to gain access to other countries which also have a high sanitation standard,” he quoted Wednesday by the Bangkok Post newspaper as saying.

Under the agreement, New Zealand will eliminate duties on 5,878 Thai products while Thailand will wipe off those for 2,978 exported items from New Zealand on 1 July. By 2010, New Zealand will scrap duties on another 697 products, and by 2015 on some 858 items on the sensitive list including textiles, clothing and shoes.

Clark hailed the agreement, saying it would bring immediate benefits to many sectors of New Zealand’s industry which faced high tariff.

MNA/Xinhua

Vietnam intensifies bird flu prevention

HANOI, 20 April — Vietnam will take more drastic measures on bird flu prevention to bring the disease under control by 2006 and 2007 and eliminate it by 2010, local newspaper Vietnam News reported on Tuesday.

The country will ban raising poultry in some inner cities and urban areas, including Hanoi capitalcity, Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong northern city and Hue central city, and isolate fowl production establishments from residential areas. Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Bui Ba Bong said at a conference reviewing bird flu prevention on Monday.

Vietnam will extend a ban on hatching and raising waterfowls until 30 June to the end of this year, he added, noting that local farmers will also not be allowed freely breed waterfowls in fields.

MNA/Xinhua

Philippine lawmakers propose more power to curb oil price

MANILA, 20 April — Two Philippine lawmakers on Monday proposed to give President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo more power to control oil price amid increasing labour unrest caused by rising oil price.

House of Representatives Minority Floor Leader Francis Escudero (Sorsogon) proposed that President Arroyo be given more powers to help curb the spate of increase in oil prices. In a news conference, Escudero said Congress should study the possiblity of allowing government to meddle with oil prices to prevent its adverse effect on the populace.

“May be not emergency power but we need to study the possibility of giving government the right to intervene with oil prices,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

China Eastern Airlines and Shenzhen Airlines signed a deal with Airbus to buy a total of 10 A319/A320 planes, while China Southern completed an agreement on its purchase of five A380 superjumbos. — Internet

MNA/Xinhua
Australian, Austrian leaders to attend Boao Forum

HAIRUN, 20 April—Government leaders of Australia and Austria are scheduled to deliver their first-ever speeches at the imminent Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2005 in China’s southernmost island province of Hainan, organizers of the forum said on Tuesday.

John Howard, the Prime Minister of Australia, and Wolfgang Schuessel of Austria, will be among the estimated 800 government leaders, scholars and entrepreneurs to attend the forum to be held during 22-24 April.

Austrian Prime Minister Howard will attend the special session of China and Australia—The Energy Future as an honorary guest, while the Australian Chancellor is expected to give a keynote speech of New Role of Asia and the Future of Asia-Europe Cooperation.

A spokesman for the organizing committee said there would be a lot more new faces at the conference, indicating the growing influence of the forum all over the world.

In addition to Jia Qinglin, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Prime Minister of Malaysia, Gyaundrea Bir Bikram Shah Dev, King of Nepal, Lee Kuan Yew, Minister Mentor of Singapore, and Karim Khaliq, Vice President of Afghanistan, are also expected to take part in the conference.

Other leaders include Supachai Panitchpakdi, director-general of the World Trade Organization, Martin Bartenstein, Austrian Federal Minister for Economy and Labour, Zhou Xiaoqiang, governor of the People’s Bank of China.

Thai Govt vehicles to use gasohol to save oil

BANGKOK, 21 April—Government vehicles in Thailand will have to use gasohol as fuel by the end of this year in a bid to save 95 octane petrol, a Cabinet meeting has decided.

Vehicles operated by state agencies and state enterprises which can run on gasohol are required to switch over by the end of this year, Bangkok Post on Wednesday quoted deputy government spokesman Danuporn Poonsakun as saying.

The final goal of the energy-saving campaign is to cut down government sectors’ consumption of 95 octane petrol to zero by 2007.

A total of 4,800 state vehicles can run on gasohol, but only 305 do so now, according to Danuporn.

The latest decision is part of Thailand’s national campaign to save energy in face with soaring oil prices.

The government plans to cut the use of 95 octane petrol in half by increasing the number of gasohol outlets nationwide from 730 to 4,000.

The authorities also encourage the use of natural gas for fuel as vehicles so as to cut down consumption of petroleum and diesel nationwide.

With retail petroleum prices climbing, the government has carried on strong energy-saving campaign since last year.

NAM women meeting to focus on practical projects

KUALA LUMPUR, 21 April—The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) ministerial meeting on women in Malaysia next month would focus on practical projects for the benefit of member countries, a government minister said on Tuesday.

“The suggestions to be incorporated in the Putrajaya Declaration on the Empowerment of Women in NAM Countries must be realistic, viable and implementable,” Malaysian Women, Family and Community Development Minister Shahrizat Abdul Jalil told Bernama, Malaysia national news agency here.

She said she would prefer the meeting to come out with one small practical and viable project that could be implemented to help member states rather than many big projects that stayed on paper.

The meeting will be held for four days at Putrajaya International Convention Centre, some 45 kilometres south of here, beginning 7 May with the theme of “Empowering Women in Facing the Challenges of Globalization”.

To date, 44 countries have confirmed that they will send ministers or their representatives to take part in the meeting, the first of its kind for the 114-member grouping of developing countries.

NAM plays a significant role in the post-Cold War world as custodian of southern interests.

“The meeting is not just a talk shop as it aims to produce results especially in finding practical solutions in enhancing women’s role in economic and social development towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals,” she said.

She warned of the spurious efforts against member countries’ economic and social development if women issues were not seriously taken up by the respective governments because women comprised about half of the population and workforce.

Nepal to deepen relations with Asian, African nations

KATHMANDU, 21 April—Nepal’s participation in the Asian-African Summit will further deepen the cordial relations and understanding between Nepal and the participating countries, Nepal King Gyanendra said on Wednesday.

In a message sent to the nation before leaving for Jakarta, the King said his visit will “provide an opportunity for reiterating Nepal’s commitment, since the very beginning, to the principles pronounced by the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the Non-Aligned Movement”.

King Gyanendra and Queen Komal left here Wednesday morning for the Indonesian capital of Jakarta to participate in the Asian-African Summit 2005 to be held on 22-23 April. The King is scheduled to address the summit on 22 April.

He will also exchange views with the Heads of State or government and other Asian and African leaders participating in the summit, the King said.

Following the summit, the royal couple will proceed to Bo’ao in Hainan Province of China on 23 April to participate in the Bo’ao Forum for Asia Annual Conference 2005 on 24 April.

This is the King’s first visit abroad after his takeover of power on 1 February.—MNA/Xinhua

Dhaka to allow foreign investors to set up small power plants

DHAKA, 21 April—The government of Bangladesh is likely to allow foreign investors to set up small power plants to overcome the current electricity generation problem in the country and reduce the burden on public sector investment.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs may soon take a decision on accepting fresh proposals from local and foreign firms for setting up 15 small power plants with capacity between 10 and 30 megawatts, The Financial Express reported Wednesday. Such a move will not only help the government to overcome the fund shortage, it will also enable the local entrepreneurs to enter into the power generation business. The government floated a tender last year to set up such small power plants under private sector. More than 200 local firms purchased tender documents. But only local entrepreneurs were allowed to participate in the bidding.—MNA/Xinhua

New Zealand, Thailand to sign FTA deal

BANGKOK, 20 April—New Zealand’s Prime Minister Helen Clark on Tuesday began her official visit to Thailand.

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark and her Thai counterpart Thaksin Shinawatra will witness the signing of the Free Trade Agreement deal during Clark’s official visit to Thailand between 19 and 20 April.

The two countries will also sign other bilateral agreements. They include the working and tourist visa deals, as well as the labour and environment agreements.

The New Zealand Prime Minister held talks with Thaksin and other Thai Cabinet members on Tuesday. Clark is scheduled as well to preside over the opening of a seminar on business operations in New Zealand, to be held at the Conrad Hotel here on Wednesday.—MNA/Xinhua

People walk past a billboard which advertises an economic census in Beijing on 20 April, 2005.—INTERNET

A Japanese businessman walks in front of an electronic board displaying a fall in the Nikkei share average in Tokyo on 21 April, 2005.—INTERNET
Senior General Than Shwe looks into regional development of Shan State (East)

YANGON, 21 April — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by officials, arrived at Kengtung Airport, Shan State (East) at 2 pm yesterday. They were welcomed by Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Khin Zaw, senior officials, state/district/township level departmental officials.

Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, the commander and party inspected the agricultural and regional development tasks in Pacho and Kenglek regions and the progress of Tale-Pacho-Kenglek Road construction. At the briefing hall, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe heard the reports on the area, houses and population of Kenglek Township, agriculture and livestock breeding, road construction and regional development tasks. It was followed by the supplementary report by Commander Maj-Gen Khin Zaw. After hearing the reports, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe delivered a speech. Next, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe cordially greeted the departmental staff, local people and townelders. Later, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe looked into the tarring of city road in Kenglek, progress of departmental building and cleaning and beautifying of the wards in the city and gave necessary instructions to the officials.

MNA
Declaration of National League for Democracy (NLD)  

Dated; 19 April 2005  

1. NLD’s policy towards the nationalities is as follows:  
   (i) To build the mother nation into a genuine Union of Myanmar with democratic practices  
   (ii) With the constant unity, all the nationalities shall work hand in hand keeping in mind perpetuation, development and peace and tranquillity of the Union.  
   (iii) Not any part of the nation’s territory including states and divisions shall break away from the nation at any time.  
   (iv) The nation is formed with all the national races including Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan races all enjoying the equal status.  

2. NLD hereby declares that any plot or act or formation of a parallel government that is against its policies is totally unacceptable for it.  

According to the resolution of central executive committee meeting held on 19 April 2005.  

Central Executive Committee  
National League for Democracy

Declaration of SSNA Brigade (11) Commander U Kan Na and members  

Dated; 21 April 2005  

1. On 18 April 2005, the Radio Free Asia broadcasting station carried the declaration of a handful of renegades led by Sao Hkam Hpa with the intention of breaking up the State that says Shan State was an independent nation. As a matter of fact, the malicious declaration depicts their betrayal to the State and their real intention is just to disturb peace and stability of the State.  

2. SSNA Brigade (11), after realizing the genuine goodwill of the State and the Tatmadaw to it, broke away from the SSNA and then unconditionally exchanged arms for peace with the Government on 12 April 2005 to shoulder development undertakings in the interests of the region and local people.  

3. The SSNA Brigade (11) simply believes that the State’s seven-point Road Map being translated into reality under the leadership of the Government is the only and the correct path on which the entire national people should continue to march forward steadfastly and without fail.  

4. Their declaration is mean and absolutely abhorrent to the entire national people and their intention is just to break up the Union. We SSNA Brigade (11) members hereby declare our attitude that we and all the local national races absolutely distrust and cannot accept the declaration.  

U Kan Na  
Leader  
Group that unconditionally exchanged arms for peace  
Hsenwi Township

U Eindar  
Deputy Leader  
Group that unconditionally exchanged arms for peace  
Hsenwi Township

U Khun Sye  
Member  
Group that unconditionally exchanged arms for peace  
Hsenwi Township

Declaration of National Unity Party (NUP)  

Dated: 21 April 2005  

1. On 18 April 2005, the NUP heard the announcement of Sao Hkam Hpa of the renegade Shan group living abroad concerning the independence of Shan State.  

2. According to its name, the NUP is a political party paying serious attention to the national solidarity and non-disintegration of the Union. Thus, the NUP upholds and exercises the policy of ensuring equality, the right of self-determination, the right to exist and the right of equitable development of all the nationalities.  

3. The right to self-determination of the nationalities shall help further consolidate the national solidarity and strengthen the Union in which all the national races are living in unity.  

4. As the announcement of Sao Hkam Hpa endangers national unity and can lead to breaking up of the Union, the NUP totally opposes it.  

5. Concerning the State structure, the National Convention has already laid down and approved the basic principles — the Union is delineated and constituted with seven regions and seven states; and no part of the territory of the Union, namely, regions, states and self-administered areas etc shall ever secede from the Union.  

6. The NUP finds the announcement of Sao Hkam Hpa deviates from and contrasts with the basic principles laid down and approved by the National Convention. The NUP hereby declares that it opposes all acts that may destroy and that deviates from the agreed basic principles laid down by the National Convention, in which representatives of the party are taking part.  

Central Organizing Committee Headquarters  
National Unity Party

(i) To build the mother nation into a genuine Union of Myanmar with democratic practices  
(ii) With the constant unity, all the nationalities shall work hand in hand keeping in mind perpetuation, development and peace and tranquillity of the Union.  
(iii) Not any part of the nation’s territory including states and divisions shall break away from the nation at any time.  
(iv) The nation is formed with all the national races including Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Bamar, Mon, Rakhine and Shan races all enjoying the equal status.  

According to its name, the NUP is a political party paying serious attention to the national solidarity and non-disintegration of the Union. Thus, the NUP upholds and exercises the policy of ensuring equality, the right of self-determination, the right to exist and the right of equitable development of all the nationalities.
Declaration of KPF

Dated: 21 April 2005

1. We learnt from the broadcast by the VOA on 17 April 2005 that independent Shan State government was formed with five members including U Sao Hkam Hpa, son of U Sao Shwe Thaike, as chairman.

2. The announcement is designed to cause disintegration of the Union and undermining of national solidarity and it can harm the sovereignty of the State. The KPF hereby declares that it does not recognize the announcement.

U Saw Tha Mu He
Colonel
Commander
Haungthayaw Special Region, Kayin State

Declaration of DKBA

Dated: 21 April 2005

1. On 17 April 2005, the DKBA heard the Voice of America (VOA) quoted the Bangkok-based Ministry of Foreign Affairs as announcing that the Independent Shan State Government was formed with the President, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Defence Minister and the Home Affairs Minister with five names led by renegade Sao Hkam Hpa.

2. The announcement is designed to cause disintegration of the Union and undermining of national solidarity and it can harm the sovereignty of the State. The DKBA hereby declares that it does not recognize the announcement.

U Tha Htoo Kyaw
Chairman
DKBA (Central) Headquarters
(Myainggyingu Special Region)

Declaration of Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association

Dated: 21 April 2005

The Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association of Kayah State Special Region-3 is an organization representing the entire Kayan national race and it returned to the legal fold on 16 July 1994 to carry out regional development tasks in harness with the Government (Tatmadaw Government).

The Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association’s 12 fundamental principles include: to safeguard and protect the independence, to enjoy equal rights with other national brethren, to enhance mutual respects among the national races, not to secede from the Union, and to create the region for Kayan national race.

Therefore, the Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association of Kayah State Special Region-3 hereby declares that it does not recognize the declaration on forming the independent Shan State according to the federal principle of the group led by renegade Sao Hkam Hpa, son of Sao Shwe Thaike, since the declaration contrasts with the 12 fundamental principles of the Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association, and totally (totally) opposes it.

Than Soe Naing
Vice-Chairman
Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association

Declaration of Kayin Peace Force (KPF) of Haungthayaw Special Region

Dated: 21 April 2005

1. We learnt from the broadcast by the VOA on 17 April 2005 (Sunday) that independent Shan State government was formed with five members including U Sao Hkam Hpa, son of U Sao Shwe Thaike, as chairman.

2. The State Peace and Development Council Government is convening the National Convention, part of the State’s seven-point Road Map, adhering to Our Three Main National Causes and the 12 political, economic and social objectives, with the aim of building a discipline-flourishing multi-party democratic nation. And the holding of discussions on the legislative, executive and judiciary sectors is nearing completion.

3. The above-mentioned declaration can trigger the collapse of the Union, and thus we hereby declare that Kayin Peace Force (KPF) of Haungthayaw Special Region in Kayin State, totally disapproves of and protests against the declaration.

U Saw Tha Mu He
Vice-Chairman
Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association

Haungthayaw Special Region, Kayin State

The Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association of Kayah State Special Region-3 hereby declares that it does not recognize the declaration on forming the independent Shan State according to the federal principle of the group led by renegade Sao Hkam Hpa, son of Sao Shwe Thaike, since the declaration contrasts with the 12 fundamental principles of the Kayan New Land Party Peaceful Association, and totally (totally) opposes it.
Olympic Sports and Literary Competitions to be held

YANGON, 21 April — The Olympic Sports and Literary Competitions Organizing Committee plans to hold Olympic Sports and Literary Competitions for University/ Degree College/Institute and Basic Education School students. The Competitions will be categorized into three groups — the under-12 age group at 5th, 6th and 7th standards level, the 12-18 age group at 8th, 9th and 10th standards level and above-19 age group at university, degree college and institute level.

The competitors are to choose any topic among the Excelling one-self, the Fair Play, the Joy in effect, the Respect for others and the Balance between Body and Mind. The competitors are to take part in the contest with any topic at respective higher learning institutions and basic education schools. Levels 1 and 2 contests will be held at basic education schools at 8 am to 11 am on 7 May 2005 and level 3 at university, degree college, college and institute from 8 am to 11 am on 8 May.

The essay must not exceed 7,500 words. Anybody is allowed to send one entry for one contest. Those wishing to know more information may contact respective higher learning institutions and basic education schools.

Myanmar delegation leaves for PRC

YANGON, 21 April — A Myanmar delegation comprising 15 high-ranking officials — from Department for Human Settlement and Housing Development and 7 from the respective ministries — led by Deputy Minister for Construction U Tint Swe left for Shanghai, the People’s Republic of China, to attend a meeting on China-Myanmar Development Zone to be held from 20 April to 3 May.

KNU terrorists commit atrocities

YANGON, 21 April — KNU terrorists committed looting and robbery by firing on two trucks, twelve buses en route from Dawei to Yangon at a place of mile-post No 33/2 on Dawei-Ye road section at 5.15 am today. At 5.30 am, the two buses with 87 students, a lecturer and five teachers from Dawei University on board on their excursion trip to Taunggyi and Pindaya Townships arrived at that place and 5 policemen who were on the buses and the terrorists exchanged fire. The terrorists fled at about 5.45 am. In that incident, two police, a woman teacher and a girl student of Dawei university, three passengers, one bus conductor totalling eight were killed and 15 persons wounded. The terrorists robbed jewelleries and cash worth about K 3 million from the passengers.

Regional Tatmadaw column, security forces members, regional authorities went to the place and provided necessary assistance to those wounded and passengers. The Tatmadaw columns are in hot pursuit of the terrorists.

CASTRO presses for arrest of Cuban-origin terrorist in US

HAVANA, 21 April — Cuban leader Fidel Castro has called on the US Government to immediately arrest Luis Posada, whom he described as a terrorist, and proceed with his deportation to Venezuela, where he has to stand trial, the local Press reported.

In his first public comments on the issue this month, Castro said Monday evening that the most convenient thing for the White House and the combat against terrorism is to arrest Posada, who is of Cuban origin. Castro said Cuba would accept that Posada be sent to an international tribunal in Venezuela, stressing that his country is not interested in either bringing him back to Cuba for trial or having him sentenced to death. “We are not going to ask for him, the whole world knows we won’t,” he said.

“We are demanding that justice be done,” he added. Posada, a Cuban native who has Venezuelan citizenship, was tried and acquitted twice in connection with the 1976 Cuban Airlines bombing which killed 73 people aboard. He is wanted for escaping from a prison in Venezuela in 1985 while awaiting a prosecutor’s appeal in that case.

Posada and three associates were then imprisoned in Panama for their roles in an alleged plot in 2000 to kill Castro at a conference in that country. They were pardoned last year.

Rules for competitions to mark International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking announced

YANGON, 20 April — The Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control will organize the Short Story, Article, Poem, Song, Painting, Cartoon, Poster, Photo, Computer Arts and Poster Competitions to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking which falls on 26 June 2005.

Two entries must be submitted as open class for the short story contest and the entry must be between 3,000 and 5,000 words. Similar rules were designated for the article contest. In the song contest, the entry can be sent to the open class only. It must be its own creation and that the entry did not win prize must be described on the back of the entries together with signature. The entries are to be sent together with two passport size photos and brief biography.

Students can send one work in the short story, article, song and poem, cartoon, painting, poster, computer arts and computer poster competitions.

The entries are to be sent to Police Li-Col Mya Mya, CCDAC Office, Ministry of Home Affairs, not later than 20-5-2005 for short story, article and poem and 25-5-2005 for song, painting, cartoon, poster, photo, computer arts and computer poster contests.

Prize winning list will be announced on 18 June 2005 and the prize presentation ceremony will be held in Yangon on 26 June 2005.

Extended cultivation coordinated

YANGON, 21 April — A coordination meeting on extended cultivation to be implemented in 2005-2006 fiscal year by the Ministry of Commerce was held this afternoon at the ministry attended by Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun, Managing Directors, officials and those from companies engaged in agro-business. First, the deputy minister made a speech on cultivation on reclaimed land and land reclamation. Next, MD U Min Hla Aung of Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading explained matters on extended agricultural tasks followed by a general round of discussions. The meeting ended with concluding remarks by the deputy minister. MNA

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu and wife being welcomed by British Ambassador Ms Vicky Bowman at the reception to mark Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on 21 April, 2005. — MNA
Thriving Hsin Shweli strain crops in Shan State (North)

Photos and Article by Thaung Win Bo

The government has been putting into motion the long-term projects and short-term projects in the states and divisions for ensuring a great surplus of paddy in Myanmar, an agro-based nation. To meet the targeted per acre yield of crops annually, it is providing all possible assistance for respective regions through the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, thereby resulting in a significant progress in the agricultural sector.

All the states and divisions have economically developed to a certain degree with the thriving agriculture. Nowadays, Hsin Shweli strains of crops are captivating local farmers in Shan State (North). Hsin Shweli strain paddy, Hsin Shweli strain corn, and Hsin Shweli honey orange thrive in the region.

Shan State (North) is blessed with the most suitable topography and climate under which the species thrive very well. Now, plans are well under way in the region for extended growing of the Hsin Shweli strain honey orange with a good reputation for its honey-like sweet taste. Indeed, it is a lucrative business. In an interview with U Win Zaw of the 300-acre Hsin Shweli honey orange farm in Naungmon village, which produces more than any other similar farms in Shan State (North), he said that it cost around K 250,000 for a one-acre farm with the most appropriate rate of 173 plants of the species. On average, a Hsin Shweli strain honey orange plant with a lifespan of about 30 years, yields 200 fruits annually all-year round.

In addition, the region is broadening the horizon of the highland reclamation for the agricultural purpose alongside the breeding of various species of fish. A 1,000-acre farmland each reclaimed in highland farm Nos 2 and 3 has been put under poppy-substitute crops, beans and pulses, corn, paddy, soya bean, pigeon pea, Tanyin (djenkol bean), buckwheat, groundnut, tea, mango and lychee.

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The Union Solidarity and Development Association is making arrangements to put 5,000 acres in highland farm No 4 under poppy-substitute crops, Hsin Shweli honey orange, Hsin Shweli hybrid paddy, Hsin Shweli strain corn, buckwheat, groundnut, soya bean, Tanyin, tea, mango, lychee, macadamia, coffee, Thitseint (belleric myrobalan). Such a profitable business will create many job opportunities for local people, and benefit the implementation of the five rural development tasks. Practising the profit-sharing system, departments, servicemen and social organizations are going to throw themselves into the cultivation of Hsin Shweli strain paddy in Shan State (North) under the supervision of the commander.

Dr Khin Hlaing (Kanbawza Khin Hlaing) explained to me that Hsin Shweli Home for the Aged, constructed with the trust funds of K 100 million donated by U Than Win and family of Tangyan and under the leadership of the commander, has been launched recently in Lashio, the capital of Shan State (North), and it cares for the elderly persons.

Now, plantations and farms of Hsin Shweli strain crops and greens are ubiquitous all over the region, and it indicates that the region will be able to produce surplus crops in the near future.

On the whole, the Hsin Shweli strain crops enhance the economy and the living standard of local people in Shan State (North), in making a remarkable contribution towards the successful implementation of the rural development drive by the government.

Translation: MS Myanma Alin: Kyemon 21-4-05
Peru rules out candidacy for OAS chief

 Lima, 20 April — Peru ruled out fielding a candidate for the post of secretary-general of the Organization of American States (OAS), Press reports said Tuesday. "There is no Peruvian candidacy," President Alejandro Toledo was quoted as saying.

 Earlier Peruvian Prime Minister Manuel Rodriguez hinted at the possibility of the Andean country aspiring to the post of OAS secretary-general through a “consensus-based candidate”.

 The election of the OAS head was postponed to May 2 as the contenders, Chilean Interior Minister Jose Insulza and Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Derbez, had got a draw for five times in a row during the elections at Washington on 11 April.

 According to officials, Insulza, and derbez would compete again for the job, even though former Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Ernesto Leal was said to be running for it too. — MNA/Xinhua

Mexican Foreign Secretary foresees victory to win OAS race

MEXICO CITY, 20 April — Mexican Foreign Secretary Luis Ernesto Derbez is looking forward to his victory in the pan-American race as he is likely to win 21 votes in the battle for the top post of the Organization of American States (OAS), the national daily El Universal reported on Tuesday.

To win the post of the OAS secretary-general, a candidate must get at least 18 votes from its 35 members. Both Derbez and Chilean Interior Minister Jose Insulza claimed 17 votes in the initial race held on 11 April. The second round of voting is planned for 2 May.

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In 2005, GM reported loss of $1.1 billion in first quarter

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GM was the GM's steepest quarterly deficit since the first quarter of 1992, when it reported a loss of 21 billion dollars primarily because of changes in accounting procedures for health care costs. — MNA/Xinhua

Norwegian PM meets Chinese Vice-Premier

OSLO, 20 April — Norwegian Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik met with visiting Chinese Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu here on Tuesday and exchanged views with him on better ties between the two countries.

Norway attaches importance to its relations with China, its largest trading partner in Asia, and wishes to further cooperation in politics, economy, trade and environmental protection and continue strengthening coordination at multilateral arenas such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, Bondevik said. — MNA/Xinhua

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Millions of girls still denied education

NEW YORK, 20 April— More youngsters than ever before are attending school but millions of girls are still being denied basic education, a new report by UNICEF has said.

The “Progress for Children” report by the UN’s child agency stresses that to make the millennium goal a reality, a radical shift in the thinking and policy would be required.

“This report proves that our strategic focus on getting more girls into school is working to increase attendance rates for boys and girls in primary school,” UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy said.

“But it also makes clear that a quantum leap is needed both to break down the barriers keeping girls out of school and to make school available to all children.”

Girls who do not attend primary school are more likely to fall victims of HIV infection and less able to bring up a healthy family, she said.

A “quantum leap” in resources and an extra 5.6 billion dollars a year are needed to reach the goal of universal primary education by 2015 which is a millennium development goal, the report said.

It said the gender gap in primary education is closing globally but in some parts of the world, there are wide gaps.

Some 125 out of 180 countries for which data are available are on course to reach gender parity by 2005, a prerequisite for achieving the education MDG, but the global average masks huge pockets of inequity.

Three regions the Middle East and North Africa; South Asia; and West and Central Africa will not meet the gender parity goal.

According to projections, fewer than 100 million children may be out of primary school by 2005, down from an estimated 115 million in 2001.

But whatever the exact figure, the report said it is clear that far too many are still shut out of the classroom, and at the present rate of increased school attendance, the goal of universal primary education by 2015 will not be met.

Opening the school gate to all wishing to enter has put a massive strain on already over-burdened resources, hence the need to drastically increase international aid, with UN estimates putting the price tag at an extra 5.6 billion dollars per year.

“The goal of universal primary education with equal opportunity for girls and boys is realistic. It is affordable, it is achievable and what’s more, it’s our children’s birthright,” Bellamy said.— MNA/PTI

Indian Ocean nations urged to set up tsunami warning system

NEW YORK, 20 April— Warning that the risk of another tsunami hitting is real, a top United Nations official has called on the Indian Ocean countries to “really” commit themselves to setting up an early warning system within next 14 months.

Pointing out that a warning system could have saved tens of thousands of lives when tsunami hit in December, Director-General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Koichiro Matsuura said nature has alerted the world once again that there is no place for complacency.

He was referring to severe earthquake which struck Indonesia in March which did not produce tsunami though it had the potential of doing so.

“We still did not have any way of detecting the presence of a tsunami in eastern part of the Indian Ocean, ” he noted in a message to an international conference discussing the issue in the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius.

MNA/PTI

Joseph Ratzinger of Germany elected new Pope

ROME, 20 April — Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger of Germany was elected the 265th Pope of the Roman Catholic Church on Tuesday and took the name Pope Benedict XVI, the Vatican announced.

Ratzinger, who was born on 16 April, 1927 in Marktl am Inn in Germany’s southern region of Bavaria, gained strong support among cardinals seeking a successor to Pope John Paul II who died on 2 April at the age of 84.

Ratzinger, who becomes the first German pope in nearly 1,000 years, served since 1981 as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

He was promoted to the rank of cardinal in June 1977 by Pope Paul VI, three months after being named Archbishop of Munich.

The new Pope was elected in the conclave attended by 115 voting cardinals which started on Monday.

MNA/Xinhua

Denmark to participate in Afghanistan’s reconstruction

VILNIUS, 20 April— Danish Defence Minister Soeren Gade said here Tuesday that Denmark is to participate in a NATO mission in Afghanistan led by Lithuania for the reconstruction of a western province.

Gade, who is on a visit to Lithuania, told reporters that the decision had been approved in his country, and the military authorities of Denmark and Lithuania will discuss and map out details of their coordinated actions some time later.

Denmark will provide the most needed assistance to Lithuania, pledged Gade.

Lithuania decided recently to lead one of four multinational missions of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) — Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) — that have been set up in western Afghanistan.

The PRT, which groups small squads of military and civilian personnel, aims to promote security and development in their respective provinces and help bring the area under the control of the central government.

The team led by Lithuania will be responsible for the reconstruction of Ghor Province.

MNA/Xinhua

US Mint to make 24-carat gold coins next year

WASHINGTON, 20 April— The US Mint announced Tuesday it will begin producing new 24-carat uncirculated gold bullion investment coins in early 2005.

This will be the first time the Mint makes 24-carat gold coins.

Upon completion of a successful test strike, the designs, specifications, quantities and denominations will be considered. Possible themes for the images on the 24-carat gold bullion coins will be presented on April 28, 2005 in Washington, a Press release issued by the Mint said.

MNA/Xinhua

First 3G mobile drama in Asia to be released in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 21 April — The first drama in Asia to be viewed on the third generation (3G) mobiles will be available in mid-June in Singapore, according to Channel NewsAsia report on Wednesday night.

A co-product by Singapore’s MediaCorp Studios, Motorola and the Media Development Authority of Singapore, the Chinese-language drama, “PS I Love You”, comprises 30 episodes with each lasting three minutes.

MNA/Xinhua

A Bangladesh vendor waits at a bus stand with bulks of hand fans made from palm leaves near the capital Dhaka on 20 April, 2005.— MNA/PTI

A Model pose next to a Ford Focus concept car at pre-opening event of Ford exhibition section of Auto Shanghai 2005 exhibition on 20 April, 2005 in Shanghai, China.— INTERNET

A Bangladeshi vendor waits at a bus stand with bulks of hand fans made from palm leaves near the capital Dhaka on 20 April, 2005.— MNA/PTI

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MNA/Xinhua
Italian soccer game can be cancelled for clashes

ROME, 21 April — Italian police have been granted the right by the Italian football federation (FIGC) to cancel a soccer game even before the start if clashes take place in or outside stadiums, Il Corriere della Sera reported on Wednesday.

The measure, urged by the Ministry of Interior, strengthens and bolsters rules that FIGC introduced last week after a Champions League game between AC Milan and Inter Milan was abandoned when objects were hurled from the stands.

Under the new rules, local police chiefs can decide to cancel a game based on reports from officers patrolling stadiums and train stations where visiting fans arrive.

In a fans riot, the team, whose supporters cause the disorders, will be handed a 3-0 defeat by the judge, while it is also possible that both teams receive the same sanction.

AC Milan return to top of Italian First Division

ROME, 21 April — Defending champions AC Milan returned to joint top of Italian First Division soccer league with Juventus on 70 points as Milan beat Chievo 1-0 at home and Juve lost 1-0 to Inter Milan on Wednesday.

Milan, whose defeat at Siena on Sunday allowed Juve to go into Wednesday’s games with a three-point lead, beat Chievo with a 65th-minute strike from Dutch midfielder Clarence Seedorf.

Inter, who are in third on 59 with six games remaining, scored the winner of Argentine Julio Ricardo Cruz’s header in the 24th minute while Juve twice struck the woodwork in the game.

Udinese were held 1-1 at home by Livorno while Sampdoria were drew by the same score at struggling Parma.

Palermo striker Luca Toni scored twice in his team’s 3-3 draw against Brescia which saw red cards for Brescia’s Simone Dalessandro and Palermo’s Christian Terlizzi.

Sampdoria are fourth on 52 points with Udinese on 50 and Palermo on 48.

Roma’s miserable season continued as Francesco Totti was sent off in the second half of their 2-0 defeat at home to lowly Siena.

Fiorentina remain in relegation trouble after an injury-time goal from Messina’s Arturo Di Napoli cancelled out Dario Dainelli’s opener.

Wenger hails Chelsea as worthy champions

LONDON, 21 April — Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger said Chelsea will be worthy champions after his Gunners held the Blues to a goalless draw in Stamford Bridge Stadium on Wednesday.

Wenger, who said on Tuesday that Arsenal’s would not give up so long as they had mathematical possibilities, became realistic after the high-tempo and high-quality London derby.

The Frenchman said: “You always congratulate the winners. You make a difference between what has happened on and off the pitch. On the pitch they have done fantastic and deserve to be congratulated. ‘But I cannot fault my team here at all, we tried to go forward but Chelsea is a team that defends very well.”

Arsenal had two excellent early chances. Robert Pires volleying against the crossbar and then missing the target with only goalkeeper Petr Cech to beat.

“We played well and as a unit we were very fluent,” added Wenger. “It was important to score first and hold them to come out from the back. I feel that is where I have regrets because we had opportunities at the beginning of the game.

“Pires took the first chance very well but when I saw the ball at his feet for the second I thought it would be a goal — and when you know Pires nine times out of 10 it is.”

Arsenal failed to create any clear-cut chances after the break, and afterwards Wenger admitted: “In the second-half we missed a few opportunities but in the first-half we missed clear chances.

AC Milan Brazilian soccer star Kaká, centre, dribbles past Chievo Verona midfielder Daniele Franceschini, left, and midfielder Roberto Baroni during their Italian First Division soccer match at the San Siro Stadium in Milan, Italy, 20 April, 2005.

AC Milan won 1-0. — INTERNET

Chelsea draw 0-0 with Arsenal

LONDON, 21 April — The top-of-the-table encounter at Stamford Bridge ended goalless on Wednesday with neither Chelsea nor Arsenal unable to break the deadlock.

Chelsea remain 11 points clear of Arsenal at the summit as the best chances came in the first half.

Everton strengthened their claim for a place in next season’s UEFA Champions League thanks to Duncan Ferguson’s headed winner which salvaged them a 1-0 win over visiting Manchester United, which was reduced to 9 men.

This is Red Devils’ second successive loss at league level, as Gary Neville and Paul Scholes were both sent off in the second half.

Liverpool triumphed 2-1 at Portsmouth courtesy of goals from Spanish duo Fernando Morientes and Luis Garcia, with a rare header. Pompey had drawn level when Diamonys Kamara scrambled the ball past Jerzy Dudek.

Dean Ashton was the Norwich City hero with a sensational last gasp winner against Newcastle United to aid the East Anglians’ fight against relegation. A stunning shot from Youssef Safri broke the deadlock but Patrick Kluivert looked to have salvaged a point for The Magpies. However, Ashton’s late effort heaps more misery on Graeme Souness.

West Brom picked up a vital point from a 1-1 draw at Tottenham but it could have been more.

Zoltan Gera’s excellent strike put the visitors ahead in the first half but Robbie Keane cancelled it out with an equally emphatic finish.

Blackburn Rovers sink Crystal Palace 1-0 as Morten Gamst Pedersen hit the first half winner. There were chances late on to add to the lead but Mark Hughes’ men now seem safe.

Manchester City crushed Birmingham City 3-0 to further enhance Stuart Pearce’s chances of getting the manager’s job on a permanent basis. Robbie Fowler, Richard Dunne and an Antoine Sibierski penalty did the damage for the home side.

Aston Villa and Charlton Athletic failed to find a goal as it finished 0-0 in the Midlands.

Uganda to hold marathon for peace in Karamoja region

KAMPALA, 21 April — Uganda’s Sports for Peace Programme in Karamoja, along with Kenyan legendary marathon runner Tecla Lorupe’s peace initiative, will hold a marathon event in Karamoja, northeastern Uganda on 30 April.

Tolit Olwuo, public relations officer of the programme, was quoted by local Press on Wednesday as saying that the principal objective is to foster peace between three districts of the region, which have for long been engaged in a simmering cattle conflict.

Lorupe’s involvement follows existing cross-border tensions between her home district and other Ugandan tribes.

The Karamoja Peace Programme is sponsoring the participating teams. A total of 30 warrior-athletes, ten from each of the three Ugandan districts, are scheduled to participate. Lorupe herself and members of the diplomatic corps in Uganda are expected to attend the event.

China hosts Costa Rica in soccer friendly in June

CHANGSHA (Central China), 21 April — China will play Costa Rica in a friendly international on 19 June, the Chinese Football Association said on Wednesday.

The match, to be played at the Helong Stadium in Changsha, will be the two team’s first meeting since China lost 2-0 to Costa Rica in a group match of the 2002 World Cup finals.

Chinese coach Zhu Guanghu said it is “hard” to figure out the result but his side will go all out to produce good performance for home fans.

The Chinese national team, who was eliminated from the 2006 World Cup Asian qualifying tournament last November, has set its targets on the 2010 tournament.
Biggest haul of fake auto parts confiscated in UAE

Arein, 21 April — More than 10 million US dollars’ worth of counterfeit auto-parts were confiscated by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) police in the biggest haul of such fakes in the Gulf Arab country, the Gulf News daily reported Tuesday.

According to the police, about 100,000 General Motors (GM) counterfeited products, including packages with GM stamps and company sub-sidiaries, oil filters, air filters, brake pads, pistons and clutches, were stored in a warehouse in Um Al Quwain, one of the seven emirates in the UAE. GM headquarters in Dubai and their legal representative, Ali Shaali, had earlier reported to the local police about counterfeit products being stored in the warehouse. They were professionally branded and packed, ready to be exported.

The police checked the identity of the warehouse owner. Law enforcement officers then raided the warehouse and confiscated the counterfeit products. Salim Al Shaali, GM’s lawyer, was quoted by the daily as saying:

The rest of the products were from other multinational brands. Investigations are still continuing and the case will be referred to the local public prosecution.

The raid resulted in one of the largest confiscations of counterfeited auto parts in the Gulf region. The UAE authorities’ alertness and decisiveness in combating such a crime has been successful, said the lawyer.

MNA/Xinhua

WEATHER

Thursday, 21 April, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Chin State, scattered in Shan State, upper Sagaing and Tanintharya Divisions, isolated in Kayin State, lower Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining states and divisions. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Yame-thin and Kawthong (0.39) inch each. Day temperatures were (7˚C) above normal in Ayeyawady Division, (5˚C) to (6˚C) above normal in upper Sagaing Division, Kachin, Rakhine and Kayin States, (3˚C) to (4˚C) above normal in Shan and Chin States, Bago, Mandalay and Tanintharya Divisions and normal in the remaining areas. The significant day temperatures were Hpa-an (42˚C) and Shwegyin (41˚C).

Maximum temperature on 20-4-2005 was 104˚F. Minimum temperature on 21-4-2005 was 72˚F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 21-4-2005 was 46%. Total sunshine hours on 20-4-2005 was (10.0) hours approx. Rainfalls on 21-4-2005 were nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were (0.63) inch at Yangon Airport, (1.69) inches at Kaba-Aye and (0.32) inch at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) mph from Southeast at (22:55) hours MST on 20-4-2005.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 22-4-2005: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Kachin, Chin, Northern Shan, Rakhine, Kayin and Mon States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Tanintharya Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Northern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 22-4-2005: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 22-4-2005: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (40%).
Social organizations, political parties and peace groups issue declarations totally opposing, condemning acts, aims of renegade Sao Hkam Hpa, his group, cohorts

Declaration of Myanmar War Veterans Organization

1. The Myanmar War Veterans Organization upholds Our Three Main National Causes and does not accept the aims and acts of the group led by renegade Sao Hkam Hpa since they can lead to disintegration of the Union and national solidarity. The MWVO strongly protests against and cannot accept their aims and acts.

2. All the members of the MWVO unanimously support Notification No 1/2005 by the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Union of Myanmar in which the ministry declared the above-mentioned group unlawful association.

3. The State Peace and Development Council is holding the National Convention, the first step of the State’s seven-point Road Map laid down for transition to a discipline-flourishing democratic nation in accord with the desire of the entire national people. However, the aims and acts of the group led by renegade Sao Hkam Hpa not only can cause the collapse of the Union and national unity but also can disrupt the drive to introduce genuine democracy in the nation. The MWVO hereby declares that it strongly denounces and opposes such evil aims and acts.

MWVO (Headquarters)
Dated: 21 April 2005

Declaration of SSNA (break-away group) Mongyun

1. The self-declaration concerning Shan State of the group led by renegade Sao Hkam Hpa can stir the following problems.
   (a) The Union can collapse while marching towards a peaceful, modern and developed nation
   (b) It can endanger Our Three Main National Causes
   (c) It can deal a devastating blow to the National Convention and disturb the peaceful life of the national people

2. Therefore, we hereby declare that the SSNA (break-away group) condemns the self declaration.

U Saing Kyaw Naing
(Secretary) for Chairman
SSNA (break-away group) Mongyun

Declaration of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association

1. At a time when the Government accepting the national policy Our Three Main National Causes — Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty — has laid down 12 objectives and is building a peaceful, modern and developed nation, the aims and acts of renegade Sao Hkam Hpa and his group are harmful to disintegration of the Union and undermining national solidarity.

2. The Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association is a social organization that joins hands with the Government for ensuring development of human resources such as health, education, etc of mothers and children in the entire nation. The association representing 4.38 million members hereby declares that it opposes any act that harms Our Three Main National Causes, the national policy, and it does not accept the aims and acts of renegade Sao Hkam Hpa and his group.

Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association

Declaration of Kachin State Special Region (1)

1. We of the Kachin State Special Region (1) declare that we decisively oppose and are totally against the announcement on the independence of Shan State made by some renegade Shan politicians living abroad on 17 April 2005.

2. As the Union of Myanmar is home to a number of national races, we oppose any movement to divide the Union and the scheme of any race to secede from the Union.

3. Because of the ravages of the internal strife resulting from the insurgents’ armed opposition against the government of the Union of Myanmar, the nation lagged behind in development among the world nations in addition to the loss of lives and property of the nationalities. We firmly believe that consolidating national solidarity and active participation in the building of a new peaceful and developed nation is the inborn duty of all the present-day nationalities.

4. The declaration of the independence of Shan State is the breaking up the unity of the national races and puts the Shans who wish to live through thick and thin with other nationalities in danger. It is a scheme to break up the Union. We believe that the conspirators of the scheme will surely face opposition and suppression of all the national races.

5. We must put an end to all plots of confrontation and secession and armed insurgency. Only then will we be able to lay a firm foundation for building a peaceful and developed nation. With sincerity, we would like to request all the national races and organizations to lend a helping hand in laying the firm foundation.

U Za Khon Tein Ring
Chairman
Kachin State Special Region (1)