Model paddy farming zones gaining more ground

YANGON, 19 Feb—Lt-Gen Myint Swe of Ministry of Defence inspected paddy cultivation in irrigated fields by Dagon International Ltd in the Agricultural Mechanized Model Farming Special Zone-1 in Dagon Myothit (East) Township today.

During the tour, Lt-Gen Myint Swe viewed progress of work on construction of ring road at the lake, cultivation of paddy in the farm and pumping water into the fields.

Lt-Gen Myint Swe went to Yuzana Co Ltd in the zone and inspected the paddy cultivation and land preparation for the integrated farm.

He also visited the 50-acre model paddy field of Htoo Trading Co Ltd, and thriving paddy field of Shwenaga Mm Co Ltd in the Special Zone-2 in Dagon Myothit (South) Township and the main irrigation canal of Pnle Koethe Co in the Special Zone-2 in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Myint Swe proceeded to the 50-acre model paddy field of the local battalion in Dagon Myothit (South) Township and pumping water into the field.

After viewing thriving paddy plantation in irrigated field in Shantaegyi Village in Dagon Myothit (South) Township, Lt-Gen Myint Swe went to Thakhtpin Monastery in Darbain, Hlegu Township, and donated offerings to the Presiding Sayadaw of the monastery.

Afterwards, he inspected work on construction of a new school building in the village and viewed learning of students at the Basic Education Middle School in the village. He also inspected the 2-mile-long and 12-foot-wide earth road linking Darbain and Thakhtpin. He also looked into the road works between Mile Post No. 21/7 and 22/20 on No. 2 Highway maintained by Public Works of Ministry of Construction and gave instruction to officials concerned.

Easter Island’s controversial collapse: More to the story than deforestation?

STAVANGER, 19 Feb — Easter Island (Rapa Nui) has gained recognition in recent years due in part to a book that used it as a model for societal collapse from bad environmental practices—ringing alarm bells for those concerned about the health of the planet today.

But that’s not the whole story, says Dr. Chris Stevenson, an archaeologist who has studied the island—famous for its massive stone statues— with a Rapa Nui scientist, Sonia Haoa, and Earthwatch volunteers for nearly 20 years.

The ancient Rapanui people did abuse their environment, but they were also developing sustainable practices—innovating, experimenting, trying to adapt to a risky environment—and they would still be here in traditional form if it weren’t for the diseases introduced by European settlers in the 1800s.

While evidence suggests the Rapa Nui people cut down 6,000,000 trees in 300 years, for example, they were also developing new technological and agricultural practices along the way—such as fertilization techniques to restore the health of the soil and rock gardens to protect the plants.

As a result, every rock on Easter Island has probably been moved three or four times, Stevenson said.

So far, of 8042 villages of the three arid divisions, 8039 villages have got 12,551 water supply facilities. That accounts for over 99 per cent fulfillment of the target.

In fear lest they will be further away from the goal (2)
Development tasks need participation of local people

Rakhine State, a region of the Union of Myanmar, is home to various national races who have been living in harmony, sharing joys and sorrows for thousands of years.

Local people of Rakhine State have been enjoying the fruits of development, resulting from the hard work the government has exerted for equitable development of all regions of the nation.

Previously, Rakhine State was like a separate region due to geographical barriers. So, the government constructed Yangon-Sittway Highways with great tenacity, along with Yangon-Kyaukpyu Road to link southern and northern parts of the state, and to link with Ayeyawady and Yangon divisions.

Now, a railroad is under construction in the state, and on completion it will link Sittway and An through Ponnyaung, Kyauktaw, MraukU and Minhya. And the railroad will link with the railroad on the west bank of the Ayeyawady River.

The media sector needs further improvement for human resource development of Rakhine State. With this object in view, TV retransmitting stations of Rakhine State are being upgraded with the use of modern machines in order that every part of the state can receive television programmes.

Necessary plans are ongoing to retransmit FM radio programmes in Sittway.

Now, old machines are being replaced with modern ones in the printing press of Rakhine State in order that each of the villages of the state has access to daily newspapers. The project will cover 892 villages of 14 townships. Follow-up programmes will be implemented to benefit the remaining villages.

Local people are, therefore, to join hands with the government in the plans the government is pursuing to ensure equitable development of the states and divisions.

Mandalay Division Fire Service Officer U Tin Min and party inspect gas plant as a part of preventive measures in Dawnaubwa Ward, Aungmyethazan Township on 9 February.

U Khin Maung Soe appointed as Myanmar Ambassador to Vietnam

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Feb —The Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Khin Maung Soe as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.—MNA

U Tin Yu appointed as Myanmar Ambassador to Egypt

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Feb —The Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Tin Yu as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the Arab Republic of Egypt.—MNA

U Thet Oo appointed as Myanmar Ambassador to Nepal

NAY PYI TAW, 20 Feb —The Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar has appointed U Thet Oo as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.—MNA

Talks on micro-credit scheme given

Vice-President of MWAF Daw Khin Thet Htay delivers an address at talks on micro-credit scheme of MWAF.—MNA

Supply chain & value chain discussed

 Supply chain and value chain discussed

Vice-President Daw Khin Thet Htay of MWAF delivered an address.

Chairman of Central Cooperative Ltd and Cooperative Bank U Khin Maung Aye gave talks on benefits of the micro-credit scheme.

The chairman replied to the queries raised by responsible persons of MWAF, patrons and chairpersons of State and Division Women’s Affairs Organizations.

Vice-President Daw Khin Thet Htay gave gifts to Chairman of Cooperative Bank U Khin Maung Aye, members of Myanmar Police Force, Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Health who contributed to holding the Annual General Meeting through officials.

The chairman of the bank presented K 1 million to the funds of the federation through the vice-president.—MNA
No victory against Taleban soon
SYDNEY, 19 Feb—Australia’s Defence Minister warned Thursday he did not expect victory against Taleban militants in Afghanistan in the near future and would not commit more troops unless NATO members did so too. Warning that Australia’s 1,000-strong contingent was likely to remain in the war-torn country for years to come, Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation that other countries needed to do more.

“Australia could double its troop numbers tomorrow and without significant additional contributions from others it would make no difference,” he said.

“We have always said this is not about numerics. It’s about ensuring, (before) we even consider doing more, that those NATO countries, which I believe are undercommitted, are prepared to do more.”

Fitzgibbon was speaking from Poland where NATO defence ministers were gathering to reassess strategy on Afghanistan as the United States prepares to deploy 17,000 more troops to fight Taleban-led militants.

Asked how long Australian troops would remain in Afghanistan, Fitzgibbon replied: “No one believes we will meet success with any success any time soon. The reality is we are talking years.

“How many years we don’t know because we don’t yet know how much will there be amongst the NATO partners to achieve success.”

Gunmen kill Sunni Arab party member in Baghdad
BAGHDAD, 19 Feb—Unknown gunmen assassinated a member of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) in front of his house in Baghdad on Wednesday, an Interior Ministry source said.

Samir Safwat al-Haditi, head of IIP branch in Baghdad’s southeastern district of Zaafaraniyiah, was killed in the morning by gunmen, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

IIP, a major Sunni political party, headed by Iraq’s Vice President Tarig al-Hashimi, condemned the assassination of Hadithi in a statement posted on its website.

Three of IIP members were killed across Iraq within less than a month, during the campaign for the 31 January provincial elections.

Soldier pleads guilty to assault in Iraq death
FORT CAMPBELL, 19 Feb—An Army staff sergeant who was facing a murder charge in the death of an Iraqi detainee pleaded guilty to assault on Wednesday and received more than a year’s confinement.

Staff Sgt Hal M Warner was sentenced to 17 months’ confinement, had his rank reduced to private, and was given a bad conduct discharge. He pleaded guilty to charges of assault, maltreatment of a subordinate and making a false statement.

Another soldier, 1st Lt Michael Behenna of Edmond, Okla, faces trial next week on a murder charge in the death of detainee Ali Mansour Mohammed in May 2008. Prosecutors say Behenna shot Mohammed, then used an incendiary grenade to burn the detainee’s body.

US military deaths in Afghanistan region at 580
WASHINGTON, 19 Feb—As of Wednesday, 18 Feb, 2009, at least 580 members of the US military had died in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan as a result of the US invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, according to the Defence Department. The department last updated its figures Wednesday at 10 am EST. Of those, the military reports 425 were killed by hostile action.

Outside the Afghanistan region, the Defence Department reports 67 more members of the US military died in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Of those, three were the result of hostile action. The military lists these other locations as Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba; Djibouti; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Jordan; Kenya; Kyrgyzstan; Philippines; Seychelles; Sudan; Tajikistan; Turkey; and Yemen.

Ecuador expels second US embassy official
QUITO, 19 Feb—Ecuador on Wednesday expelled a US embassy official for allegedly interfering with internal national police matters. Mark Sullivan, the first secretary in the embassy’s office of regional affairs, was the second US embassy official expelled this month by President Rafael Correa, who has accused the American officials of “insolence” for conditioning aid on the right to veto personnel choices.

Foreign Minister Fander Falconi said Sullivan was ordered to leave after a police report mentioning his alleged interference with the Special Investigation Unit (UIE) came out.

India’s Jet cuts int’l routes, plans leasing aircraft
NEW DELHI, 19 Feb—Amid difficult times for the aviation industry, India’s Jet Airways has cut three of its biggest loss-making international routes and plans to lease four wide-body Boeing 777 aircraft, besides phasing out three Boeing 737 planes.

The carrier, which has been overtaken last month by Kingfisher as the largest airline, disconnected the Amritsar-London route in December, Bombay-Shanghai-San Francisco and Banglore-Brussels sectors in January as part of its network rationalization exercise.

“These were the highest loss-making routes. This will, therefore, help us reduce losses further in the next few quarters,” Jet Airways CEO Wolfgang Prock-Schaur told investors.

Commenting on the flight rationalization programme undertaken by the company for the ongoing quarter, he said, “we will lease out another Boeing 777 aircraft, this is aircraft number three (third to be leased out) to Turkish Airlines. Starting April, the plans are to lease out four more Boeing 777.

“In addition we will be phasing out our three Boeing 737 classic aircraft, whose lease expire in Q4 of FY 2009, and not replace them.”

US general visits Afghan bomb site for death claim
KABUL, 19 Feb—Responding quickly to another allegation of civilian casualties, a US general traveled to western Afghanistan on Wednesday to investigate claims six women and two children were killed in a US airstrike. Photos of the site showed at least one dead body, bloodied and dirty from the attack.

Civilian deaths have been a huge source of friction between the US and President Hamid Karzai, who has increased demands that American troops avoid killing civilians in its fight against the Taleban.

President Barack Obama announced Wednesday he was deploying an additional 17,000 US forces to Afghanistan to bolster the 33,000 already in the country. That plan increases the chances that more civilians could be killed.

The Afghan Ministry of Defence condemned the deaths of civilians in Monday’s airstrike and said it came despite a recent US-Afghan agreement to incorporate participation of Afghan forces in US missions, a step aimed at preventing civilian casualties. The US coalition said in a statement that the strike Monday in the Gozara district of Herat Province killed 15 militants and targeted a leader named Ghulam Yahya Akhbari.

Flood waters pass through stock yards at Yarrarloola Station, a large farm in the Pilbara Region in northern part of Western Australia State in this handout picture received on 18 Feb, 2009.
Singapore’s stealth frigates display power in Navy drill

SINGAPORE, 19 Feb — Singapore’s six radar-evading stealth frigates displayed their firepower for the first time at a military exercise held by the country’s navy and air force, local media reported on Thursday.

According to Chinese Language newspaper Lianhe Zaobao, some 800 personnel participated in the two-day military exercise to end on Thursday in the South China Sea.

The newspaper said it was arranged by Singapore’s Defence Ministry on board the RSS Steadfast in the north-east of Singapore, to observe the joint military drill.

India ready to review India-Nepal treaty

KATHMANDU, 19 Feb — Visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon has said New Delhi was ready to review the India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 and willing to sit for talks whenever Kathmandu requests, The Himalayan Times reported on Thursday.

“About 98 percent work had been completed on updating the boundary between the two neighbours and the strip maps will be exchanged very soon,” he was cited as saying.

The minister said an updated extradition treaty would also be signed between the two governments soon.—Xinhua

Britain’s helicopter goes down in North Sea, all rescued

LONDON, 19 Feb — All 18 people on board a helicopter of Britain that went down to the North Sea on Wednesday evening have been rescued.

The Super Puma helicopter went down when approaching a platform 120 miles east of Aberdeen, northeast Britain.

The alarm was raised just before 1900 GMT, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reported.

The people on board the Puma helicopter, which was used to transport oil workers to and from rigs, have been rescued from two liferafts, a coast-guard was quoted from two liferafts, a coast-guard was quoted as saying.

A Ministry of Defence spokesman referred to the ditch as “a civilian incident,” adding “The RAF (Royal Air Force) has sent one Nimrod from RAF Kinloss and one Sea King helicopter from RAF Lossiemouth.”

A full scale rescue operation is underway, with four helicopters involved.—Xinhua

Iran says to sign gas contract with France’s Total soon

TEHRAN, 19 Feb — An Iranian oil official said that France’s oil giant Total would soon sign a contract with Iran to develop one phase of the South Pars gas field, the state broadcaster IRIB reported on Wednesday. Seifollah Jashnsaz, general manager of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), told IRIB that Iran would sign the 5-billion-US-dollar contract with Total oil company before the end of the current Iranian year.

We have been in talks with Total on developing a phase of SouthPars. The deal will be finalized by the end of the current Iranian year, Jashnsaz said, adding under the deal, Total will develop both the upstream and the downstream sectors of the phase of SouthPars.

Total “had never stopped its negotiations and its contacts with us,” which “are now coming to a conclusion,” said the NIOC head.

Yves-Louis Darricarrere, head of the Total’s exploration and production, said last week that “Total is still in negotiations with Iran on a major gas deal, but talks are moving very slowly.”

In September 2008, Total’s chief executive Christophe de Margerie denied that the company had withdrawn from Iran, saying Total wanted to remain involved in Iran’s energy projects.—Xinhua

Chinese vice premier meets Bahamian governor-general

NASSAU, 19 Feb — Governor-General of Bahamas Arthur D Hanna met with visiting Chinese Vice Premier Hui Liangyu on Tuesday and the two leaders pledged to enhance cooperation and friendly ties between their two countries.

Hui, after conveying warm greetings from President Hu Jintao to Hanna, said since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1997, China-Bahamas relations have entered a new phase of all-round development with political mutual trust deepened, economic and trade cooperation developing rapidly and personnel exchanges enhanced.

Hui said China attaches great importance to developing ties with the Bahamas. He said China is willing to enrich the content of bilateral relations, enhance mutual understanding and friendship and deepen pragmatic cooperation in order to boost their friendly relations of cooperation to a new high.—Xinhua

China’s trade of electronics, information products total $885 bln last year

BEIJING, 19 Feb — China’s imports and exports of electronics and information products reached 885.4 billion US dollars in value last year, said the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology here Wednesday.

The figure represented a 10 percent growth from 804.7 billion US dollars in 2007. The growth rate was less than 23.5 percent in 2007.

Among the total, exports rose 13.6 percent to $218.2 billion US dollars, which accounted for more than a third of China’s total exports last year. Imports of these products expanded by 5.4 percent to $367.3 billion US dollars, accounting for 32.1 percent of the country’s total.—Xinhua

6.8-magnitude earthquake hits New Zealand’s Kermand Islands

WELLINGTON, 19 Feb — An earthquake measuring 6.8 on the Richter scale struck the remote Kermadec Islands region, north of New Zealand’s North Island on Thursday, the New Zealand Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (GNS) said.

The quake occurred at 10.53 am New Zealand local time (2153 GMT Wednesday) at a depth of 62 km, the GNS reported. The quake’s epicenter was about 260 km north east of Raoul Island.

There were no immediate reports of any damage or injuries. No tsunami warning was issued by the Hawaibased Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

The islands, which are often hit by severe quakes, have no permanent population except a small New Zealand Department of Conservation team on Raoul Island.—Xinhua

Two Chinese walk past an ox statue during a snowfall in the coastal city of Dalian, northeast China’s Liaoning Province, on 18 Feb, 2009. Rain and snowfall have helped ease a severe drought in northern and eastern China.—Xinhua

All items from Xinhua News Agency
Iran says it has built unmanned aircraft

Tehran, 19 Feb— Iran has built an unmanned surveillance aircraft with a range of more than 600 miles — enough to reach Israel — a top defence official said in remarks published on Wednesday.

Deputy Defence Minister Ahmad Vahidi said he could not provide more details, only saying the development of the unmanned aircraft, or drone, was an "important achievement." His remarks were published Wednesday in the government-owned newspaper, Iran, and by the semi-official Fars news agency.

Iran announced two years ago it had built an unmanned aircraft, but Vahidi’s comments were the first by a top official revealing its range. His claims could not be independently confirmed.

Wednesday’s reports follow this week’s announcement that Iran has restructured its military in an effort to improve its air defence capabilities.

The move was widely seen as part of a broader military build-up by Tehran, which is concerned about the US military’s presence in neighbouring Iraq and Afghanistane and Israeli threats to target its nuclear facilities.

Iran has taken Israeli threats to strike its nuclear sites seriously and has said Israel would be subject to Iran’s "devastating retaliation" if it attacks. —Internet

Israel decides not to accept Gaza ceasefire before release of kidnapped soldier

Jerusalem, 19 Feb— Israel’s security cabinet decided unanimously Wednesday not to accept a ceasefire in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip before kidnapped Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is released.

In doing so, the security cabinet accepted the position of outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who said local daily The Jerusalem Post.

The security cabinet also decided after hours of discussion that while Gaza border crossings would continue to facilitate the passage of vital humanitarian supplies for Gaza residents, any further opening of the crossings will be dependent on the release of Shalit.

He has been in Palestinian captivity since he was abducted in a cross-border raid by Hamas-allied militants in June 2006.

Meanwhile, local daily Ha’aretz quoted Israeli Interior Minister Meir Sheetrit as saying that "it would be inconceivable" for Israel to accept an Egyptian-proposed ceasefire calling for reopening Gaza border crossings to more than-limited humanitarian aid without Shalit’s release.

The security cabinet decided that Israel would not open its border crossings with Gaza until Hamas agrees to release Shalit, said Sheetrit, who made the remarks shortly after the security cabinet meeting. —Internet

Fed says US economy will get worse in 2009

Washington, 19 Feb— The Federal Reserve warned Wednesday that the nation’s crippled economy is even worse than thought and predicted it would deteriorate throughout 2009, with no sign that the housing market will stabilize.

The Fed’s bleak indicators of unemployment could climb as high as 8.8 percent this year and that the economy would contract for a full calendar year for the first time since 1991. The central bank’s latest projections came hours after a separate report showed that new home construction and applications for future projects both fell to record lows last month.

Still, some economists saw a silver lining in the otherwise dismal housing report: Scaled-back building permits may reflect a number of unsold homes and contribute to an eventual housing recovery. The reports raise the stakes for the plan President Barack Obama announced Wednesday to curb foreclosures and ease the broader US housing slump that sent the economy into recession. The Fed’s latest forecast says the unemployment rate will climb to between 8.5 and 8.8 percent this year.

The old prediction, issued in mid-November, estimated that the jobless rate would rise to between 7.1 and 7.6 percent. —Internet

Bankruptcy stalks automakers despite loan plans

Chicago, 19 Feb— Even if General Motors and Chrysler obtain billions more in government loans, the threat of bankruptcy remains high for the troubled automakers, analysts warned.

"Despite the extension of considerable emergency funding to GM and Chrysler and their finance arms, we continue to see a high risk of a Chapter 11 filing for one or more of the US automotive makers," Bruce Clark of Moody’s Investors Service said.

Moody’s, a credit rating agency, estimated the likelihood of an “orderly” bankruptcy protection filing backed by the government at 70 percent.

GM and Chrysler insist they can return to profitability if the US Treasury extends up to 21.6 billion dollars in additional loans on top of the 17.4 billion approved in December. That would bring GM’s total to 30 billion and Chrysler’s to nine billion.

In detailed, long-term viability plans submitted to the Treasury Tuesday, they warned that the cost of doing nothing would be far higher.

GM placed the tab of restructuring through bankruptcy at 100 billion while Chrysler said it would need 24 billion. —Internet

Five soldiers killed in plane crash in Colombia

Bogota, 19 Feb— At least five soldiers aboard a Colombian Air Forces (FAC) plane were killed when it crashed on a training mission on Wednesday, officials said.

The reports raise the number of US military personnel killed in Colombia in recent years to 14.

The FAC regretted to inform that today (Wednesday), off-duty soldiers were flying in a training mission, the FAC said.

People parade to celebrate the 147th anniversary of the foundation of the city of Matagalpa in Nicaragua, on 14 Feb, 2009. —INTERNET

CBS 4Q profits fall; company cuts dividend

Los Angeles, 19 Feb— CBS Corp said on Wednesday its profits fell 52 percent in the fourth quarter because of weaker advertising sales and the broadcasting company slashed its quarterly dividend more than 80 percent.

CBS estimated it would save about $450 million in the remainder of 2009 by cutting the dividend starting April 1 to 5 cents a share from a previous 27 cents.

While the company said it could pay off $1.4 billion in debt maturing in July 2010 with regular cash flows, it said the step will give it greater flexibility.

“When the economy and the credit markets improve, we will revisit the amount of our dividend at that time,” Chief Executive Leslie Moonves told analysts on a conference call. Shares in CBS jumped 24 cents, or 4.6 percent, to $5.37 in after-hours trading following the announcement. They had dropped 2.3 percent in the regular trading session. —Internet

A police dog jumps through a fire ring at the command of a Chinese police officer during a city show for local residents at a square in Lianzhou, southwest China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 17 Feb, 2009. —INTERNET
Eight hurt in Colombian plane explosion

MEDELLIN, 19 Feb — Eight people were hurt when a DC-3 on a mission to ferry police officers was ripped by an explosion while at a Medellin, Colombia, airport authorities said.

The aircraft had arrived from Bogota to pick up 27 members of Colombia’s special forces and was to have transported them to Choco, Colombia Reports said on Wednesday. Four of the eight officials who were wounded suffered substantial injuries. The plane reportedly broke in two pieces.

While the blast appeared to be accidental, anti-explosives personnel were brought in to investigate, Colombia Reports said. Although authorities assume that it concerns some sort of accident, they did order anti-explosive units to investigate the location.

The incident occurred at Enrique Olaya Herrera Airport, which has become a secondary facility in Medellin since completion of Jose Maria Cordova International Airport. — Internet

Mental activities reduce memory loss risk

ROCHESTER, 19 Feb — Reading, playing games, using a computer or working on crafts in middle age or later reduce the risk of memory loss, US researchers recommend.

The study involved 197 people between the ages of 70-89 with mild cognitive impairment, or diagnosed memory loss, and 1,124 people that age with no memory problems. Both groups answered questions about their daily activities within the past year and in middle age, when they were between ages 50 and 65.

The study found people who participated in social activities and read magazines during middle age were about 40 percent less likely to develop memory loss than those who did not.

Japanese man says is oldest to conquer Everest

A Japanese climber who scaled Mount Everest last year at the age of 75 said on Thursday he has been recognized by Guinness World Records as the oldest person to reach the world’s highest peak.

Yuichiro Miura, who conquered Mount Everest despite having undergone two heart operations, had earlier congratulated Nepal’s Min Bahadur Sherchan, who was said to be 77 and reached the summit just two days before Miura.

But Miura’s office showed a certificate from Guinness World Records, which gave him the title as the Nepalese climber failed to submit documents to prove his record. A Guinness spokesman was not immediately available to comment.

“Honestly, I’m happy to be recognized as the Guinness record holder, even though I didn’t climb the mountain to get the record,” Miura, now 76, said in a statement. “The record is something which will be broken in the future,” he continued.

A veteran climber, Miura was the first person to ski down Everest’s South Col in 1970, a feat immortalised in an Oscar-winning documentary.

The plane reportedly broke in two pieces.

Two Britons detained in Venezuela

CARACAS, 19 Feb — Two British nationals have been detained in Venezuela in connection with alleged drugs offences. They were arrested at the airport of the island of Margarita, while allegedly carrying a large amount of cocaine hidden in three suitcases.

Four children who were with them have been placed in the care of Venezuelan social services.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office said it was providing consular assistance to the couple.

No formal charges have yet been brought against the couple, who remain in custody on Margarita.

The British consulate said it took any case involving young children very seriously, and members of the family are believed to be travelling to Venezuela to begin the process of bringing the children back to the UK. — Internet

Top weatherman says global warming good for Russia

MOSCOW, 19 Feb — Global warming may be a worry to low-lying lands but Russia’s top weatherman said on Wednesday that warmer temperatures would help to cut heating bills in one of the world’s coldest countries.

“The heating season will be reduced and this is a positive factor for us as it will allow us to economise on fuel,” Alexander Bedritsky, head of Russia’s state weather centre, was quoted as saying by RIA news agency.

Russia is one of the biggest producers of carbon dioxide as it burns vast amounts of oil and gas to heat houses during the bitter months where temperatures regularly fall below minus 50 degrees Celsius (minus 58 degrees Fahrenheit).

Heating bills in Russia could be cut by 5 to 10 percent by 2050 if current trends continue, the weather centre said.— Internet

Japanese climber Yuichiro Miura (R) with Nepalese climber Min Bahadur Sherchan at Mt Everest’s base camp in May 2008. Miura, who scaled Mount Everest last year at the age of 75, said he has been recognized by Guinness World Records as the oldest person to reach the world’s highest peak.
I would also like to present the programmes for supply of clean water. Now, the 10-year plan (2000-2009) is ongoing in line with the guidance of the Head of State. The project covers 8042 villages of three arid divisions: Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay divisions and 15,183 villages of other states and divisions, totaling 23,225 villages. So far, 4,042 villages of the three arid divisions, 8039 villages have got 12,551 water supply facilities. That accounts for over 99 per cent fulfillment of the target.

And so far, of 15,183 villages of other states and divisions, 13,626 villages or about 90 per cent have got 19,311 water supply facilities. As for the whole project, of the 23,225 targeted villages, 21,665 have got 31,862 facilities. So, work progress is about 93 per cent.

As for Mandalay Division alone, so far, 6,936 water supply facilities have been built for all the 4119 targeted villages. So, all the villages in Mandalay Division have access to clean water. Meiktila District has a well-grid with 757 villages and all the villages have got 1260 water supply facilities. Therefore, all the villages in Meiktila District have access to safe water. Due to scarcity of water, there was a well-known expression in the arid regions including Meiktila District “We need water rather than gold”. Now, all the villages in the arid regions have had access to safe water thanks to the rural water supply project. So, local people are appreciating the goodwill of the government. However it was very awkward of Meiktila NLD to have levelled such groundless accusations against the government, thus showing their malevolent attitude to the government in spite of the government working hard and making a good headway in the services for community well-being.

Now, I would like to present development in the electric power sector. The nation’s total electric power supply has jumped remarkably to 4507.916 million units from only 1559.308 million units in 1988. It indicates that in the time of the Tatmadaw government, the nation uses 2948.608 million more units. In order to achieve that result, the government put great emphasis on generation of hydropower.

The total size of the water that flows along the rivers and creeks in Myanmar a year is 870 million acre feet. About 40,000 megawatts can be generated if the water flows are controlled at 267 sites along the rivers and creeks. Therefore, the government is constructing hydropower plants on a large scale: Now, all the hydropower plants of Myanmar generate 1420 megawatts a year, and hydropower plants under construction will be able to generate 21,043.5 megawatts on completion.

In 1988, under the Ministry of Electric Power (1) were 14 hydropower plants, two of which could generate more than 10 megawatts each: Baluchaung (2), Chibwenge, Tapein (1), Tapein (2), Thanlwin (upper), Thaminbary, Baluchaung (3) and Sai Tin are being implemented jointly with foreign investors. Upon completion, the projects will be able to produce over 21,000 megawatts.

Threeteen hydropower projects are due to be implemented in the future, and they will be able to generate 11,850 megawatts, on completion. Some are undertaken by related ministries, and some, through Joint Venture (JV) system and Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) system. Therefore, local electric power demand will be fulfilled soon, and the surplus will be exported to neighbouring countries. In reality, those projects are very heartening.

Up to 1988, Mandalay Division had only one large hydropower plant “Kinda”. After 1988, it has seen Hsedawgyi (25 megawatts) and Paunglaung (280 megawatts) hydro plants. Yeywa (790 megawatts), Paunglaung (upper) (140 megawatts), and Nancho (40 megawatts) hydropower plants are under construction. On completion, they will be able to generate 970 megawatts. The electricity consumption of Mandalay Division was 183.59 million units in 1998, and now it has increased to 1058.613 million units.

In order to distribute the electric power to the people, the Ministry of Electric Power (2) is now implementing grid projects and main power station projects in states and divisions. Under the ministry are 18 small-scale hydropower plants with the total annual generation capacity of 35,859.2 kilowatts. In Mandalay Division, electric power is distributed with the use of eight 230 KV grids, seven 132 KV grids, seven 230 KV main power stations, and two 132 KV main power stations, apart from Shweli-Mansan-Shwesaryan grid. In 1988, the number of households using electricity was 90,420 in Mandalay Division, and the number has increased to 311,696.

The above-mentioned hydropower projects are large. There are many medium- and small-scale State-owned and private-owned hydropower plants, diesel-fired power plants, biogas power plants, coal-fired power plants, recycled biogas electric power plants, and steam power plants. Anyhow, the government’s efforts to boost generation of electricity are very rewarding. For the time being, the nation still has to deal with the issue of power shortage. However, the government is implementing a large number of electric power projects with huge investments across the nation at the same time for long-term interests. Now, the way has been paved to meet the domestic electric power demand, and then to sell it to neighbouring countries, and what is needed is just to keep on going on the way. I am sure the expression “electricity is out” will no longer be common in the near future.

The projects the government is undertaking to boost supply of electricity and clean water for the whole country and for Mandalay Division and Meiktila District make it clear that the plot that the anti-government groups say “Signature Campaign” is particularly designed to deceive the people. They are indeed trying to exploit the public with the intention of inciting riots. If a person gets involved in the campaign, he is the one to suffer. It is common knowledge that they are deceiving the people into opposing the government, but they fail to back the people in times of serious problems. The people have known well that they are such kind of persons, so it is set fire to a bridge when the building is ablaze, they flee for a safe place earlier than others, bringing together with their belongings.

As said by U Khin Maung Gyi, they said that they would not stand for 1999 election, and then they changed their mind and said that they would stand for election. Again they said they would not attend the National Convention, then they said they would attend it. In the end, they did it. Then, their representatives left the National Convention under the directive of Daw Suu Kyi. And again they are saying they will not stand, then will stand for election. If they want to stand for election, they should do it, and accept the decisions of the people.

They should not get the people confused by expressing their indecisive words.

In the run-up to the referendum, they tried their best to disrupt it through the campaign of ‘No-vote’ or ‘Vote- no’. However, their attempts were all abortive in the end. Despite their tremendous attempt, the people did not comply with their campaign. So, the State Constitution was approved with the record percentage of votes. When the constitution was approved with massive public support, they complained that the results were unacceptable, so it was needed to review that. They could accept it only after the process. In fact, they should have given up levying such baseless accusations.

In democracy, decision maker is the public. Political parties have to respect the people’s desire and accept the public decisions. I am sure those responsible of NLD must know that point. They persist in inciting anti-government campaigns and mass demonstrations, taking full advantage of the government’s forbearance towards them. If their acts become harmful enough to stability and peace of the nation, the government may take action against them. I wish they would know that no one or organization is above the law.

In conclusion, I would say it is high time they stopped deceiving the people into getting involved in their campaigns for their interest or to come to power. They should have honoured the people’s decisions and wishes as their party is a prestigious one serving its interest in the framework of the law. If they persist in exploiting the people and provoking riots, they will be further away from the goal. Now, it is not too late for them to mend their ways. They have the hope of reaching the goal only if they apply correct and honest ways.

Translation: MS

In order to distribute the electric power to the people, the Ministry of Electric Power (2) is now implementing grid projects and main power station projects in states and divisions.

Kyaw Ye Min

In fear lest they will be further away from the goal (2)
All villages, towns, States and Divisions become mini-unions through relationship, understanding and unity

Information Minister attends stake driving ceremonies for construction of self-reliant village libraries

**NAY PYI TAW, 19 Feb—**Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, together with member of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Police Col Ba Kyi, Managing Director U Soe Win of News and Periodicals Enterprise and Acting Director-General U Ye Htut of Information and Public Relations Department drove stakes for construction of self-reliant library in Taungphu Village of Pauktaw Township on 16 February.

In meeting with over 1,200 local people from six villages, the minister heard reports on regional development matters presented by officials and fulfilled the requirements. The minister presented K 3 million for construction of the library in Taungphu Village donated by Union Solidarity and Development Association and K 400,000 each for construction of school buildings at basic education schools in Thawinchaung and Taungnyo Villages, books for self-reliant village libraries and clothes personal goods to the local people through officials. Police Col Ba Kyi handed over K 500,000 donated by Rakhine State PDC for purchase of furniture at Taungphu Village Library to officials.

In Sunye Village of Minbya Township, the minister also attended the stake driving ceremony for the self-reliant village library. Afterwards, the minister met with over 1,500 local people of three villages and attended to the needs.

The minister handed over K 3 million donated by USDA for construction of the library in Sunye Village, K 400,000 each for school buildings of basic education schools in Sunye and Kyaungshaychaung Villages, books for libraries and clothes and personal goods for the local people through officials. Police Col Ba Kyi presented K 500,000 donated by Rakhine State PDC for purchase of furniture at Sunye Village Library to officials.

At the ceremonies meeting with local people, the minister said that the government is striving for development of the region in Rakhine State. In February this year, the Ministry of Information is gathering momentum on construction of new TV retransmission station and installation of high frequency transmission machines for enabling the local people to enjoy various kinds of TV channels of their choice. Efforts are being made to implement the FM radio system to present news and entertainment to the people in the state as quickly as possible, he said.

He added that all the national brethren have been living in the Union since yore through thick and thin. As such, the national people turn into families in amity. All the villages, towns, States and Divisions become mini-unions through relationship, understanding and unity. Therefore, the national people are to uphold the Union Spirit to prevail peace and tranquility. The Union Spirit can develop the Union as well as to prevent the Union from breaking up. The lives of people in miseries can be seen across the world due to breaking up of the countries. By taking lessons gained from the miseries, the national people are to make collective efforts for prevailing peace and stability of the State with Union Spirit, for undertaking development tasks, for ensuring perpetual existence of the nation and for achieving success in realization of the democratic process.

**MYANMAR**

**Geospatial Technology Course 24 Feb-31 May**

**YANGON, 19 Feb—**The Geospatial Technology Certificate Course No. 1/09, jointly organized by Myanmar Computer Professionals Association and Myanmar Credent Technology, will be conducted at e-learning centre in Myanmar Info-Tech in Hlin Township from 6 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The training course will accept only 20 trainees from 24 February to 31 May. For further information, contact MPCA at Room 4, Hall 4 of Myanmar Info-Tech in Hlin Township, Tel: 8522876.—MNA

**Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association AGM 2009 opened**

**YANGON, 19 Feb—**The opening of annual general meeting of Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association 2009 was held at the hall of University of Nursing (Yangon) this morning.

Chairperson of Myanmar Nurse and Midwife Association Prof. Dr Nann Htun Hla delivered an address and presented certificates of honour to wellwishers followed by the plenary meeting. Vice-Chairperson (2) of the association Daw Nwet Khin made an address and the agenda of the meeting followed.

In the afternoon session, Vice-Chairperson (2) Prof. Daw Yin Mya delivered an address.

Next, chairpersons of state/division associations read out the annual reports, held discussions and laid down future programme.—MNA

**Chairperson of MNMA Prof. Dr Nann Htun Hla presents certificate of honour to a wellwisher at MNMA meeting.**—MNA
Regional development gaining progress in Bago, Ayeyawady Divisions

Maj-Gen Ko Ko of Ministry of Defence inspects under construction of Bago Bridge project in Bago Township.—MNA

New tarred road opened in Myeik

Nay Pyi Taw, 19 Feb—Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Costal Region Command Maj-Gen Khan Zaw Oo attended the opening ceremony of new tarred road of Pale road and Myothit market ring road in Myeik Township on 10 February. Afterwards, the commander inspected taking preventive measures on deficiency of vitamin B1 in mothers and child by doctors of Myeik People’s Hospital. MNA

CMSD, Worksite Health Division under inspection

Yangon, 19 Feb — Secretary of National Health Committee of Ministry of Health Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo met staff at the hall of Central Medical Store Depot, here, yesterday and inspected ambulances and storage of medicines.

On arrival at the Worksite Health Division, the deputy minister met with service personnel. Next, he visited laboratories and attended to the needs.—MNA

New gravel road inaugurated in Magway

Nay Pyi Taw, 19 Feb—Chairman of Magway Division Peace and Development Council Col Phone Maw Shwe attended the inauguration ceremony of new gravel road to Aungmyaegon Village in Magway Township on 11 February. He opened the road and strolled on it.

At the house of farmer U Kyaw Soe in Thabyesan Village, Col Phone Maw Shwe viewed use of bio-fuel in cooking and lighting through the natural waste.—MNA

Maj-Gen Ko Ko of Ministry of Defence on 16 February heard reports on construction of two three-lane bridges in the places of two iron frame bridges presented by the senior engineer of Public Works at the Bago Bridge Construction site.

Maj-Gen Ko Ko inspected progress in construction of the bridge.

They looked into resettlement of storm survivors at the houses built by Eden Co and cultivation of kitchen crops at the respective compounds of houses.

Maj-Gen Ko Ko and party inspected construction of Tamatakarwak embankment to prevent inflow of seawater near the model village. The director of Irrigation Department reported on progress of tasks and plans for construction of embankments around the island.

At the briefing hall, they heard reports on construction of Tama-kaw embankment and priority to be given to cultivation of monsoon paddy. The commander gave a supplementary report.

Maj-Gen Ko Ko inspected the site for construction of the cyclone shelter. The Assistant Engineer of Shwetaung Development Co submitted the reports on choosing of the site for the cyclone shelter and stockpiling of construction materials.

While in Toe Model Village, Maj-Gen Ko Ko and party visited Basic Education Post-Primary School. Later, they proceeded to Conayintha Bridge in Kyainkktat Township and viewed maintenance of the bridge.

62nd Anniversary Union Day held in Taunggyi

Nay Pyi Taw, 19 Feb—Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Commander of Eastern Command Brig-Gen Yar Pyae read out the message sent by the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar to the 62nd Anniversary Union Day held at the sport ground of Taunggyi on 12 February.—MNA

Development tasks ongoing in Kyangin, Myanmar townships

Nay Pyi Taw, 19 Feb—Deputy Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Than Htay on 14 February inspected construction of the basic education primary school in Thitseintkine Village, Kyangin Township, Ayeyawady Division, and presented cash donations to the school.

In meeting with officials, members of the school board of trustees and parents of students at BEPS (Eastern Innlat) in Kyangin, he presented cash donations for renovation of the primary schools of East Innlat, Gyobin and Kyi-taw villages.

He viewed construction of the earth road linking Magyigwin and Talok-Izaw villages; Talok-Izaw Bridge construction site.

At the house of farmer U Kyaw Soe in Thabyesan Village, Col Phone Maw Shwe viewed use of bio-fuel in cooking and lighting through the natural waste.—MNA
Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan addresses Thuta Swesone Literary Award presentation ceremony

**Yangon, 19 Feb**—Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan delivered an address at the 4th Thuta Swesone Literary Award presentation ceremony organized by Thuta Swesone publishing house of Swesone Media Group under the supervision of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association at Sedona Hotel yesterday.

Chairman of Swesone Media Group Dr Tin Tun Oo explained matters related to award presentation.

Next, Chairman of award scrutiny and selection committee U Myo Thant (Maung Hsu Shin) explained award scrutiny and selection process and assessment on award winning books.

Then Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan presented Thuta Swesone Life-time Achievement Literary Award to Dr Khin Maung Nyunt and prizes to Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu (Chit Swe Myint) in the socio-economic genre, Col Saw Myint (Retd) (Hmto Thamein) in the belles-lettres genre and Ambassadør U Hla Maung (Retd) (Ambassadør U Hla Maung-Economic) in the international affairs genre.

MWJA Chairman U Hla Maung (Ko Hsang) and SMG Chairman Dr Tin Tun Oo presented awards to U Chit Naing (Director-General (Retd)) in the youth literature genre, Maung Hla Thaung (Bank) in the reference literature genre, Daw Tin Hla, on behalf of Kyaw Oo Hla, in the translation genre, Maung Tun Lwin (Meteorology) in the general knowledge (science) genre, Aung (Medicine-1) in the general knowledge (applied science) genre and Maung Zeyar in the general knowledge (arts).

Kanyinkyo Village of Kyaukdaga...

(form page 16)

formed with four villages, is home to 4,087 people. Agriculture is main business for all the local people. The village tract had been equipped with one Basic Education High School Branch, three BEPS. The affiliated BEHS was upgraded to the BEHS branch. The building of BEHS Branch was constructed with K 16 million contributions of the local people. On 23-12-2008, the affiliated school was upgraded to the BEHS branch opened by Chairman of Bago Division PDC Com-mander of Southern Command Brig-Gen Hla Min. At present, 35 teachers from schools are teaching about 950 students. Moreover, the rural health centre was built at a cost of over K 5.4 million to provide health care services to the local people.”

JAT U Myint Thein also explained, “In the communication sector, one CDMA-450 telephone was installed in the village by the commander for enabling the local people to make telephone calls to other States and Divisions. We all are pleased with telephone installation.”

He continued to say that while the Information and Public Relations Department is striving for en-hancement of reading skills and knowledge of the rural people across the nation, the village built Pyinnya Nuggaha Library with over K 17.7 million contributions of the people and the library will be opened soon. On completion, the local people will have the opportunity to read various kinds of books for broadening their knowledge.”

We had an interview with Executive Officer U Lun Tun of Township DAC. He said, “The Development Affairs Committees under the Department of Development Affairs are implementing the 30-year plan from 2000-2001 to 2030-2031 financial years for ensuring better transport in rural regions. In the past, Peinzalok-Ywama-Kanyinkyo road was a narrow earth lane. Thanks to the concerted efforts of the local people, the earth road, 14 feet wide and seven feet high, was reconstructed. In the 2005-2006 financial year, the DAC placed laterite on the road and built bridges on it. Nyaunglebin Township DAC took the responsibility for construction of road section (1) and bridges, and Kyaukdaga Township DAC, the road section (2) and bridges.”

He added, “Road section (1) was 10,933 feet long. Nyaunglebin Township DAC spent K 6,270,000 on construction of 5,021 feet long road section for the first phase. The government contributed K 12.45 million to construction of 5,630 feet long and 10 feet wide laterite road. In addition, the government spent K 3.5 million on building of 12 feet wide and 29 feet long bridge. No. 3 on Peinzalok-Ywama-Kanyinkyo road.”

In visiting the bridge on the road section (1), we had an interview with farmer grandpa U Win Yu of Kanyinkyo Village. He told us, “If we wanted to go to Yangon-Mandalay Highway from the village in the past, we had to walk over four miles long route through the paddy fields on foot and arrived at Peinzalok near the highway. At present, the local people are enjoying the fruits of better transportation thanks to the construction of over 21,000 feet long rural laterite road.”

With regard to construction of the road section (2), Executive Officer U Lun Tun of Township DAC further explained, “A total of 2,090 feet long road section was built with K 4.34 million contributions of Kyaukdaga Township DAC and 1,800 feet long another road section with K 4.05 million allocated by the government. In addition, Zalok Creek Bridge, 90 feet long, 12 feet wide and 15 feet high, was constructed at a cost of K 10.9 million. At the inauguration ceremony, Director-General U Myo Myint of the DAD and the director of Bago Division DAC formally opened the rural laterite road and bridges.”

While visiting the road section (2), we met with farmer grandpa U Nyaw Si of Kanyinkyo Village. He highly expressed the already opened laterite road and bridge link villages between Nyaunglebin and Kyaukdaga Townships. Moreover, the people from villages of Shweygin and Kyaukkyi townships on eastern bank of Sittoung River can use the road and bridges. At present, the rural people are enjoying the fruits of better transportation with the use of motorcycles, bicycles, three-wheeler motorbikes and Gaungdong trucks in addition to improvement of trading, education, health and social sectors.”

We visited thriving green gram plantation cul-tivated by local farmers through collective responsibil-ity of cultivation system, next to Sittoung River. In an interview, a responsible person said, “We can see the collectively grown plantations. A total of 223 farmers from Kanyinkyo Village grew 1,366.90 acres of green gram. With the investments of IWT Deputy General Manager Major Kyaw Myint (Rtd) and Managing Di-rector U Than Oo of Sun Bar Co, the local farmers cultivated 2,355.90 acres of green gram in total.”

In connection with the collective responsibility of cultivation system, he explained in detail, “The local farmers were disbursed loans without interest, quality strain seeds and farming implements, to grow green gram on full cultivable lands, to collectively take re-sponsibility to pay back the loans, to realize the local unity and to increase the family income.”

“Total cost for cultivation was K 1,48,169,300. Therefore, the committee at different levels were formed on 30-9-2008, and Sun Bar Co from Yangon provided the local farmers with capital without interest. At the harvesting season, all the farmers have to pay back the loans through money or selling of green gram at the prevailing prices to the investor. Moreover, Myanma Awba Co Ltd sold pesticide at cost price to the farmers through loan system. Under the supervision of techni-cians, cultivation of green gram started on 20-10-2008 and it was completed on 30-11-2008. A total of 97 per cent plants grew well. As such, the commander viewed thriving green gram plantations.”

Thanks to utmost efforts of the government in implementing the plans for narrowing the development gaps among all the regions throughout the country, Kanyinkyo Village of Kyaukdaga Township is gaining momentum in the rural development tasks.

Translation: TTA

Myanma Alin: 17-2-2009

**Yangon, 19 Feb**—Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan delivered an address at the 4th Thuta Swesone Literary Award presentation ceremony organized by Thuta Swesone publishing house of Swesone Media Group under the supervision of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association at Sedona Hotel yesterday.

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Next, Dr Tin Tun Oo and wife Dr Khin Moe Moe presented K 700,000 for the association to MWJA Chairman U Hla Maung (Ko Hsang) and Vice-Chairman (1) U Tin Kha (Tektatho Tin Kha).

K 500,000 for UP Kyar memorial Thuta Swesone Library at Nvennava village in Htan Oo Township to responsible persons and gifts to the scrutiny and selection committee. On behalf of the award winners, writer Hmu Than, Chit Swe Myint and Life-time Achievement Thuta Swesone Literary Award winner Dr Khin Maung Nyunt spoke words of thanks and the ceremony came to an end.

MNA
Bangladesh ferry capsizes, 100 missing

Dhaka, 19 Feb—About 100 people were missing on Thursday after a launch capsized in southern Bangladesh following a collision with a cargo vessel, police said.

The ferry was carrying more than 150 passengers when it sank in Kirtontkhola river in Barisal district, nearly 170 kilometres (106 miles) from Dhaka.

The body of one of the victims was found, while about 50 passengers were either rescued or managed to swim to safety, police officer Nuruzzaman Chowdhury said. He said the cargo vessel involved in the collision had been seized.

“We are trying to locate the sunken ferry,” Nuruzzaman said. Ferry accidents kill hundreds of people and leave many unaccounted for in Bangladesh every year, and families of the victims are not compensated.

Officials said some of the passengers had boarded the launch on Thursday without buying tickets—something common across Bangladesh where many river accidents occur due to overloading and inexperience or negligence of the crew.

Iran urges global nuclear disarmament

Teheran, 19 Feb—Iran called on Thursday for global negotiations aimed at total nuclear disarmament, saying that the elimination of atomic weapons was the only guarantee against their use or threatened use.


“The existence of nuclear weapons simply means that all states will continue to live with a permanent sense of insecurity,” Moaiyeri told the Conference on Disarmament (CD).

“A long that line, the primary goal for the CD should be to remove this source of insecurity and to establish a world free of nuclear weapons.” The Geneva disarmament forum has failed to reach consensus needed to launch talks on any issue since clinching a disarming forum has failed to reach consensus.

Israel warplanes strike on Gaza-Egypt’s border

Gaza, 19 Feb—Israeli F16 war jets struck on Thursday afternoon the border area between southern Gaza Strip town of Rafah and Egypt, no injuries reported, witnesses in the town said.

Residents said F16 warplanes struck the border area, apparently targeting underground tunnels which were used for smuggling goods from Egypt into the Gaza Strip. Hamas security sources in Gaza said the Israeli warplanes carried out three separate airstrike on the border area between Rafah and Egypt.

Several tunnels were damaged.

The Israeli airstrike on the tunnels area came shortly after Palestinian militants fired two homemade rockets from the Gaza Strip at Israel. According to Israel’s Radio, no injuries were reported.

The airstrikes were carried out as two US congressmen arrived here on Thursday, marking the highest-level visit by U.S. officials to the territory since Hamas movement seized control of the enclave nearly two years ago.

British lawyer sentenced in Berlusconi bribe case

Milan, 19 Feb—British lawyer David Mills has been sentenced to more than four years in prison for corruption over accepting a 600,000 US dollar bribe from Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in 1997.

The sentence of four years and six months imprisonment was read put by a judge a Milan court. Prosecutors had called for a sentence of four years and eight months in prison for Mills.

Berlusconi currently has immunity in the case, in which he had been charged with paying Mills the bribe from alleged “secret funds” held by his Mediaset SpA—Italy’s largest private broadcaster—to withhold incriminating details about his business dealings. His government introduced the law which gave him, alongside the head of state and the presidents of both chambers of Parliament, immunity while in office in July 2008. Its validity is currently being decided by Italy’s Constitutional Court.

Bird Flu hits 9 Vietnam’s Provinces

Hanoi, 19 Feb—Bird flu is plaguing in nine provinces in Vietnam with a newly-reported coastal province Khanh Hoa was also found the virus, according to Department of Animal Health under Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on Wednesday.

In Khanh Hoa Province of south central Vietnam, bird flu has killed 27 fowls raised at a local farm, said the department, Vietnam watchdog of bird flu. Samples of dead ducks found in the province tested positive to H5N1 virus, said the department.

So far this year, nine provinces of Vietnam nationwide have been hit by avian flu, including four provinces in Mekong Delta, namely Ca Mau, Soc Trang, Hau Giang and Bao Lien, two northern provinces of Bao Ninh and Quang Ninh, two central provinces of Nghe An and Quang Tri, and the newly-confirmed southern Khanh Hoa, said the department.

Kyrgyz partl. passes bill on closure of US air base

Almaty, 19 Feb—The ruling AK-Zhol party of the Kyrgyz Parliament on Wednesday unanimously passed a bill on closing a US air base that provides support to military operations in Afghanistan, according to reports from Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek.

The bill will then be handed to a plenary session of the Parliament for a vote on Thursday, Interfax reported. A simple majority of votes is needed to pass the bill in Parliament, that is 46 out of 90 seats, while the ruling AK-Zhol party holds an overwhelming majority of 71 seats.

Three soldiers killed in bomb attack in S. Thailand

Bangkok, 19 Feb—Three Thai soldiers were injured on Wednesday in a bomb attack in Baeng-jang village of Krung-bhi-nang District in Thailand’s restive southernmost province of Yala, the website by Thai-language newspaper Thai Rath reported.

According to local police’s investigation, the bomb exploded while Thai security were about to reach a targeted area in Baeng-jang village, from where they did hear several gun shootings in early Wednesday morning.

The police believed the bomb attack was done by suspected militants.

Young sea gypsies play in the water in the centre of their neighbourhood in the Sulawesi Sea in Malaysia’s state of Sabah on the Borneo island on 17 Feb, 2009. A community of 30 families of the indigenous ethnic group of sea gypsies are still maintaining a nomadic and sea-based life without fresh water supply, TV nor electricity, and only go to land to bury the dead. —INTERNET
**TRADE MARK CAUTION NOTICE**

**Reg. No. 473558/08**

Used in connection with tobacco, including cigars, cigarettes, cigarillos, cut tobacco for pipes; smoker’s articles including ashtrays, cigar-cutters, cut boxes, cigar cases, matches. Any fraudulent imitation or unauthorized use of the said trademarks or other infringement whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

Soo Win Advocate
4002 Level 5 Sakura Tower Ph: 25505
ForHiborne,Hawkin & Co.

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Htin Lin Co (LLB) Advocate
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e-mail: dandni@vini.co
India.

Planes are able to go longer distances without stopping.—INTERNET

**CLAIMS DAY NOTICE**

**MV SUPA BHUM VOY NO (127)**

Consignees of cargo carried on MV SUPA BHUM VOY NO (127) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 20.2.2009 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.P where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

**SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT**

**MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY**

**AGENT FOR:** M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

*Phone No: 256908/378316/376797*
Elaine Hess, 63, whose husband Stuart
died days before returning the award for
a smoker who died of lung cancer
in Russia’s far eastern city of Khabarovsk told Xinhua on Wednesday.
The Chinese embassy in Russia and the consula
tion in Khabarovsk have asked the Russian side to
provide the sailors with necessary aid and con
continue rescue efforts shortly after the incident, said Sun Yujie, consul
general of the Chinese consulate in Khabarovsk.
According to the Chi
inese Foreign Ministry, three Chinese crew mem
bers were rescued and seven others were miss
ing in the sea accident. Eight sailors died after
the Sierra Leone-flagged
dry cargo vessel New Star sank in the Sea of
Japan near the port of Nakodka on Sunday morning. Russian news
agencies reported.
Morris was ordered by a jury Wednes
day to pay $8 million to the widow of a smoker who died of lung cancer.

Solar power plant to supply
30,000 homes by 2010
Beijing, 19 Feb —
China is planning to con
struct a domestically de
signed solar thermal power
plant which is ca
pable to power at least
30,000 households. China Daily reported Thursday.
The plant, to be Asia’s
first 1.5-megawatt solar thermal power station,
will start construction in Beijin
g’s sububt as soon as
next month, said Wang Zhifeng, chief of
the plant.
 Designed by the Chi
inese Academy of Sciences, the plant is ex
pected to cost 100 million yuan (14.7 million US
dollars) and will start op
erating in 2010.
Covering 13 hectares, the plant will be funded from the Ministry of Sci
ence and Technology, the Beijing municipal gov
ernment and the academy.
Wang, also laboratory director for solar thermal power at the academy, said the experimental
power plant would be de
signed and operated by 10
Chinese institutions and companies, including the academy, Xi’an Jiaotong
University, Huadian Corp. and Himin Solar Group.
The plant is expected to generate up to 2.7 million kwh of electricity per
year, equivalent to elim
inating 2,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions from conventional power
plants, Wang said.
Its solar tower is de
signed to be 100-meter
tall and is surrounded by 100 heliostats composed of curved mirrors which
track the sun and redirect
its rays to a receiver at the top of the tower.
The receiver would convert concentrated so
lar thermal power from the heliostats into thermal
power. Steam from the re
ceiver outlet would be sent directly into the tur
bine for electricity gen
eration.—Internet

Florida smoker’s widow gets $8m in damages
Fort Lauderdale, 19 Feb —
Philip Morris was ordered by a jury Wed
nesday to pay $8 million in damages to
the widow of a smoker who died of lung cancer.
The six jurors deliberated over two
days before returning the award for
Elaine Hess, 63, whose husband Stuart
Hess died in 1997 at age 55 after decades
of smoking women in the top two social
classes, regardless of gender, have a much
higher risk of premature death than non-smokers. Smoking kills — irrespective of class
Glasgow, 19 Feb —
Smokers of all social
classes, regardless of gender, have a much
higher risk of premature death than non-smokers. Smoking kills — irrespective of class

Brazilian police seize 423 kg of cocaine
Rio de Janeiro, 19 Feb — Th
e Brazilian Federal Police announced on
Wednesday the seizure of 423 kg of cocaine in the southeastern state of Sao Paulo.
Two people were arrested in the operation on the SP-330 state road on the
outskirts of Ribeirao Preto, the police said.
Two rifles and four machine guns were also seized. The cocaine was found
hidden in a truck carrying corn.
The police said they started investigating the case two weeks ago and fo
cused on one of the arrested who organized the shipment.
The person was also suspected of smuggling weapons to one of the largest
gangster groups in the country.
SPORTS

Don’t crown us champions yet warns Ferguson

MANCHESTER, 19 Feb—Sir Alex Ferguson insists it is too soon to crown Manchester United as Premier League champions despite watching his side move five points clear of Liverpool with a 3-0 victory over Fulham.

The league leaders, who can open up an eight-point lead with victory over Blackburn on Saturday prior to Liverpool’s Anfield clash with Manchester City on Sunday, cruised past Fulham thanks to goals from Paul Scholes, Dimitar Berbatov and fit-again Wayne Rooney on Wednesday.

The win was United’s ninth on the bounce in the league and goalkeeper Edwin van der Sar racked up his fourteenth consecutive Premier League clean sheet, taking his shut-out run to 1302 minutes.

But United boss Ferguson admitted that there are still possible pitfalls taking his shut-out run to 1302 minutes. “We are delighted to have signed such a world-class, creative attacking talent,” Breakers president Joe Cummings said. “Kelly has been playing at the top level this year and with Boston both serving well with a remarkable impact, not only on our team, but also the league.” —Internet

Villa offer tough baptism for Chelsea’s Hiddink

LONDON, 19 Feb—Chelsea’s stuttering season starts afresh on Saturday when Guus Hiddink takes them to Aston Villa, with the improving Midlands looking down from third spot in the Premier League at the fourth-placed Londoners.

That is not a situation owner Roman Abramovich envisaged when he recruited Luiz Felipe Scolari as manager before the start of the season.

Abramovich would have considered the prospect of trailing Manchester United by 10 points with 13 games remaining but that is the situation Chelsea are in after sacking Scolari last week.

New manager Hiddink, who took his first training session on Monday, will be expected to turn things around quickly, having been encouraged by the display in last weekend’s 3-1 FA Cup win at Watford.

Hewitt ousts Blake as Roddick drops Darcis at ATP/ WTA Memphis

MEMPHIS, 19 Feb—Australian veteran Lleyton Hewitt sent third-seeded American James Blake tumbling out of the first-round of the 1.22 million-dollar ATP and WTA hardcourt tournament in Memphis.

Hewitt notched the upset of the day with a 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 triumph over Blake. Hewitt, a former world number one, bounced back from a sloppy first set to improve to 8-1 lifetime in head-to-head matchups with Blake.—Internet

Rooney on target as United go five points clear

LONDON, 19 Feb—Wayne Rooney scored on his return from injury as champions Manchester United crushed Fulham 3-0 at Old Trafford on Wednesday to surge five points clear of Liverpool at the top of the Premier League.

The England striker, back in action after a month out with a hamstring injury, came on as a 61st minute substitute and scored from close range with his first touch of the game barely two minutes later to send United 3-0 up. Paul Scholes had volleyed United into the lead off a Michael Carrick corner in the 12th minute, with Fulham keeper Mark Schwarzer getting down to the shot only for the ball to bobble over the line.

Dimitar Berbatov then doubled the tally 17 minutes later with a tap in. United now have 59 points to Liverpool’s 54 and third placed Aston Villa’s 51 after 25 matches. Chelsea, their title chances dismissed by United manager Alex Ferguson in the pre-match programme, are fourth on 49 with 13 games remaining.—Internet

Djokovic makes winning return in Marseille

MASSILLES, 19 Feb—World number three Novak Djokovic celebrated his return to action with a 7-6 6-4 victory over France’s Jeremy Chardy in the first round of the Marseille Open on Wednesday.

Djokovic was playing his first match since retiring against American Andy Roddick during their Australian Open quarter-final last month.

“If took some rest after the Australian Open,” Djokovic told reporters. “It was hard to get some rhythm today because I played against a big server and we were both serving well with a high percentage of first serves.” —Internet

Milan foiled by late Diego equaliser for Werder

LONDON, 19 Feb—A late equaliser from Werder Bremen’s Brazilian international Diego denied AC Milan victory in their UEFA Cup first knockout round first leg tie in Germany on Wednesday.

Midfielder Diego rewarded a strong second-half display from the Bundesliga side six minutes from time by controlling Hugo Almeida’s header with his chest before firing past Dida to secure a 1-1 draw.

Filippo Inzaghi had put competition favourites Milan ahead on 36 minutes, the striker firing in a rebound after his own header from Mathieu Flamini’s cross had been blocked.—Internet

Williams sisters within an ace of Dubai tennis date

DUBAI, 19 Feb—The Williams sisters moved within one match of another meeting when Serena Williams produced a performance of firm commitment and heavy hitting to reach the quarter-finals of the Dubai Open here on Wednesday.

The world number one from the United States won 6-4, 6-2 against Zheng Jie, the Wimbledon semi-finalist from China seven hours after her elder sister Venus Williams also reached the last eight. Serena had to fight hard in the first set, capturing it thanks to one break of serve chiselled painstakingly out in a 12-point ninth game full of great ground-strokes from both players.

After closing out the set without fuss, Serena broke again at once and dominated the second set, though she was not especially satisfied with her performance. “My intensity was high, but I think I can play a lot better, to be honest,” she said.—Internet

England women’s star signs with Boston

BOSTON, 19 Feb—Kelly Smith, the England forward who was a finalist for FIFA Women’s Player of the Year in 2008, signed a multi-year contract on Wednesday with the Boston Breakers of Women’s Pro Soccer.

The seven-team US league will open its inaugural season in April with US rosters joined by top international talent such as Smith, who has 33 goals in 76 matches over a 14-year career with England’s national squad.

“We are delighted to have signed such a world-class, creative attacking talent,” Breakers president Joe Cummings said. “Kelly has been playing at the top level for a long time, and I feel she will have a tremendous impact, not only on our team, but also the league.” —Internet

RoverBrenn's Diego celebrates after scoring against AC Milan during their UEFA Cup match at the Weser stadium in Bremen on 18 Feb, 2009.

Manchester United's Wayne Rooney celebrates after scoring during their English Premier League match against Fulham in Manchester on 18 Feb, 2009.

Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to France's Jeremy Chardy during their men's singles match at the Marseille Open ATP tennis tournament on 18 Feb, 2009.
Deforestation causes extinction of 26 species in Amazon

RIO DE JANEIRO, 19 Feb—Deforestation in the Amazon Rainforest region by 2006 has led to the extinction of 26 animal and plant species, according to a UN agency report released on Wednesday.

At the same time, another 644 species of animals and plants, including the red-faced spider monkey, the spectacled bear and the otter, were in danger of extinction.

According to a UN Environmental Program report, by 2005 the region lost 17 percent of its forest—a total of 857,666 square kilometers, nearly equal to the territory of Venezuela.

Meanwhile, deforestation in the region was still going on at an accelerated pace.

Internal and external factors led to the deforestation in each of the nine countries straddling the Rainforest region, UNEP said, including urbanization and the exploitation of natural resources, as well as global warming, which affects the rainy seasons and ecological balance.

The report pointed out three key factors that will influence development of the region in the future: public policies, the market, and the development of new technologies.—Internet

British zookeeper Alex Larenty gives Juma, the lion a relaxing massage.—INTERNET

WEATHER

Thursday, 19 February, 2009

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hr MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Mon State, Taninthayi Division and generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below February average temperatures in Chin State and Bago Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above February average temperatures in Kachin, Shan, Kayah and Kayin States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Divisions, (6°C) above February average temperatures in Mon State and about February average temperatures in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were Haka (2°C), Lashio and Namhsan (6°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 18-2-2009 was 97°F. Minimum temperature on 19-2-2009 was 69°F. Relative humidity at (09-30) hours MST on 19-2-2009 was 80%. Total sunshine hours on 18-2-2009 was (6.6) hrs approx. Rainfall on 19-2-2009 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2009 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (4) mph from Northwest at (17:30) hours MST on 18-2-2009.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 19th February 2009: Weather will be partly cloudy in Kachin and Mon States Yangon, Bago and Taninthayi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions.

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

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


Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 20-2-2009: Generally fair weather.
Kanyinkyo Village of Kyaukdaga Township witnesses thriving green gram plantations

The Government is trying to realize the objective: Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well which is one of four economic objectives. In undertaking agriculture and regional development tasks, progress can be witnessed in the cultivation of green gram in Kanyinkyo Village of Kyaukdaga Township.

Under the arrangements of Patron of the Village All-round Development Committee Deputy General Manager Major Kyaw Myint (Rtd) of Inland Water Transport and Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council U Myo Tin, we, the news team arrived at Kanyinkyo Village by motorbike on 2 February.

We were welcomed by Deputy General Manager Major Kyaw Myint (Rtd), Executive Officer U Lun Tin of Township Development Affairs Committee, Chairman of Village-tract PDC U Aung Win Shwe, Junior Assistant Teacher U Myint Thein and local people.

In an interview, Chairman of Village PDC U Aung Win Shwe said, “Kanyinkyo Village-tract, (See page 10)

Identity cards for matriculation candidates

YANGON, 19 Feb—The Myanmar Board of Examinations today issued an announcement that students who will sit for the matriculation examination to be held from 11 to 20 March 2009 may take out their identity cards from the supervisors of respective examination centres as of 27 February.

The list of roll numbers and examination centres for the candidates in Yangon municipal area will be posted at the offices of respective Township Education Officers starting from 3 March.

The candidates of Basic Education High Schools, branches and affiliated schools in Yangon municipal area may get their identity cards from respective school heads and external candidates, from the supervisors of respective examination centres beginning 5 March.—MNA

Researchers cast doubt on role of free radicals in aging

MONTREAL, 19 Feb — For more than 40 years, the prevailing explanation of why we get old has been tied to what is called oxidative stress. This theory postulates that when molecules like free radicals, oxygen ions and peroxides build up in cells, they overwhelm the cells’ ability to repair the damage they cause, and the cells age.

An industry of “alternative” antioxidant therapies—such as Vitamin E or CoQ10 supplements in megadose format—has sprung up as the result of this theory. However, clinical trials have not shown that these treatments have statistically significant effects.

And now researchers at McGill University, in a study published in the February issue of the journal PLoS Genetics, are calling the entire oxidative stress theory into question. Their results show that some organisms actually live longer when their ability to clean themselves of this toxic molecule buildup is partially disabled. Collectively, these molecules are known as reactive oxygen species, or ROS for short.

Dr. Siegfried Hekimi of McGill’s Department of Biology, said most of the evidence for the oxidative stress theory is circumstantial, meaning oxidative stress could just as easily be a result of aging as its cause. “The problem with the theory is that it’s been based purely on correlative data, on the weight of evidence,” explained Hekimi, McGill’s Strathcona Chair of Zoology and Robert Archibald & Catherine Louise Campbell Chair in Developmental Biology.

Top soccer players dissatisfied with physique

MADRID, 19 Feb—Body composition, anthropometrical dimensions and morphological characteristics play a key role in the success of soccer players.

The objective of the new study was to evaluate the body composition and body image of a group of top-flight soccer players and compare the results with those of a group of university students used as control subjects.

Marta Arroyo, lead author of the study and researcher at the University of the Basque Country explained to SINC that “the initial hypothesis was that athletes in general and, in this case, soccer players, have a better perception and are more satisfied with their body image than young men their age with similar weights who do not play sports professionally”.

Match between Real Sociedad and Gimnastic de Tarragona.