The world’s highest known microbial ecosystems have been discovered by a team of scientists working on the summit of the 19,850-foot-high Socompa volcano in the Andes of Bolivia.

The new study shows how microbes are able to survive and thrive in the extreme conditions of the volcano, which is located near the summit of the Andes mountain range.

The researchers, led by University of Colorado Boulder Professor Steve Schmidt, have found that the microbial communities on Socompa are able to withstand temperatures as low as -15 degrees Celsius, and are able to survive in the harsh environment of the volcano.

The discovery is significant because it provides new insights into how life can exist in extreme conditions, and could have implications for our understanding of microbial life on other planets.

The research is being published in the March 1st online edition of Nature Neuroscience.
**Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views.**

Dr. Aung Pan Taw, President of Myanmar Golf Federation, said that the full support of the government was given to the 2010 Myanmar Master Golf Tournament and the necessary arrangements were made for holding the tournament.

**Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation.**

The coordination meeting was organized on Myanmar Master Golf Tournament 2009, to be held from 28 March to 1 April at the Hlinethaya Township, here, this morning.

**Oppose those trying to destabilize the State and progress of the nation.**

Chairman of the Leading Committee for Perpetual Peace, Mr. Aung Min Aung, gave a speech.

**Oppose those trying to destabilize the State and progress of the nation.**

The coordination meeting was attended by Myanmar Master Golf Federation, the Ministry of Sports and Physical Education Department, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Urban Affairs, the Yangon City Development Committee, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Ministry of Culture.

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Russia allows through US supplies for Afghanistan

MOSCOW, 4 March— Russia has allowed a supply cargo for US forces in Afghanistan through its territory by train, a sign of Moscow’s growing cooperation with Washington on the issue.

The cargo had entered Russia from NATO member Latvia and crossed the country en route to Afghanistan, a spokesman for the US embassy in Moscow said. Russia’s foreign ministry later confirmed the cargo had crossed into Kazakhstan.

NATO is looking for other supply routes for its troops fighting the Taliban as an alternative to using Pakistan, where Western military convoys are attacked by Taliban militants. “It is non-lethal goods, like construction equipment for example,” the embassy spokesman said, adding: “I believe it crossed into Russia on Friday.”

China’s defence budget to rise 14.9 percent in 2009

BEIJING, 4 March— China announced Wednesday its defence spending would rise by 14.9 percent in 2009 but insisted its expanding military power posed no threat to the rest of the world.

“China’s defence expenditure for the year will increase modestly,” the spokesman for China’s parliament, Li Zhaoxing, told reporters.

The defence budget for 2009 is 480.686 billion yuan (70.2 billion dollars), an increase of 62.482 billion yuan from the previous year, he said. The rise is slightly smaller than last year’s increase of 17.9 percent.

The United States, Japan and their allies have long expressed concern about China’s military build-up, warning that the Chinese government has not been transparent on its intent behind the expansion. Li said these concerns were misplaced.

The Kremlin said Afghanistan was an area where it was willing to cooperate with the administration of President Barack Obama, who is sending more troops to fight in Afghanistan.

“The cargo of American non-military goods for Afghanistan yesterday left the territory of Russia and should be in Kazakhstan,” a Russian foreign ministry spokesman told Interfax news agency.—INTERNET

Death threat, bullet mailed to French president

PARIS, 4 March— French President Nicolas Sarkozy and three top government ministers have been sent anonymous death threats in letters stuffed with bullets, a judicial official said on Tuesday.

Counterterrorism agents are investigating the mailings to Sarkozy, Justice Minister Rachida Dati, Interior Minister Michele Alliot-Marie and Culture Minister Christine Albanel — the latest members of the governing conservative party to be targeted by such a letter campaign, the officials said. The two-page, typed form letters feature disjointed messages addressed to “purveyors of freedom-killing and fascist laws,” the judicial official said. She spoke on condition of anonymity because she was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter.

The Associated Press saw a copy of the letter, which speaks of a mysterious “Cell 34” and evokes 1,000 combatants before concluding, “This letter is the last. There will be a black out. Total silence.”

The official said the letters contained 9mm or .38-caliber bullets.—INTERNET

US military deaths in Iraq war at 4,255

WASHINGTON, 4 March— As of Tuesday, 3 March 2009, at least 4,255 members of the US military had died in the Iraq war since it began in March 2003.

The figure includes eight military civilians killed in action. At least 3,417 military personnel died as a result of hostile action, according to the military’s numbers. The British military has reported 179 deaths; Italy, 33; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 21; Bulgaria, 13; Spain, 11; Denmark, seven; El Salvador, five; Slovakia, four; Latvia and Georgia, three each; Estonia, Netherlands, Thailand and Romania, two each; and Australia, Hungary, Kazakhstan and South Korea, one death each.

Iraqi policemen bring in a suspected gang member at a police station in al-Husseiniah, about 30 Km (19 miles) northeast of Baghdad, Iraq, on 3 March, 2009. Iraqi police captured three men accused of the robbery, kidnappings and rape.—INTERNET

Air strikes kill Taleban commander, 14 others in S Afghanistan

KABUL, 4 March— Air raids against Taleban militants in the restive Helmand Province south of Afghanistan claimed the lives of over a dozen insurgents including their commander, spokesman for provincial administration Daud Ahmadi said on Tuesday.

“Fifteen Taleban fighters driving three cars were roaming in Garmsir district on Monday night when aircrafts of international troops dropped precise bombs killing all including their commander Mullah Babrak on the spot,” Ahmadi told Xinhua.

He also said that no civilians were hurt in the raid. Taleban militants have not made any comments on it so far.
US auto sales fall as recession deepens

DETROIT, 4 March—US auto sales dropped by more than 41 percent in February to the lowest level in almost three decades as deepening economic uncertainty drove Americans away from big purchases and new debt despite aggressive discounts from major automakers.

Australia’s economy shrinks in last quarter of 2008

SYDNEY, 4 March—Australia’s economy shrunk 0.5 percent in the last quarter of 2008, the government said on Wednesday in an unexpected announcement that suggested the country may be entering a recession.

The news of the economy’s first contraction in eight years surprised economists who had expected the Australian Bureau of Statistics to report a slight increase in gross domestic product. But the bureau said GDP fell by 0.5 percent in the last quarter in seasonally adjusted terms.

Australia is not yet in a recession—technically two consecutive quarters of contraction—because a narrow rise of 0.1 percent was reported in the third quarter. Growth slowed to just 0.3 percent for the year, underlining how quickly Australia’s resources-based economy has slumped since the US financial crisis sent shockwaves around the globe in the middle of last decade as deepening recession in the United States and slowing global markets have pushed automakers to ratchet back production, ramp up discounts and seek government financing in a bid to survive.

“In our view, we are in an automotive depression,” said Standard & Poor’s equity analyst Efraim Levy.

“Shell-shocked consumers fearful for their jobs, the value of their homes and stock market assets are wary of making the sizable discretionary purchases,” he said.

Oil steady above $41 as investors eye inventories

SINGAPORE, 4 March—Oil prices were steady above $41 a barrel on Wednesday in Asia as investors looked to a US crude inventory report later in the day for signs of demand amid the worst recession in decades.

Benchmark crude for April delivery fell 22 cents to $41.43 a barrel by midday in Singapore on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Prices rose $1.50 to settle at $41.65 on Tuesday.

Traders awaited on Wednesday’s release of crude inventory data by the US Energy Department’s Energy Information Administration, with analysts expecting oil stocks to rise by 2.2 million barrels for the week ended 20 Feb.

Analysts expected crude stocks would grow by 2.25 million barrels, and the smaller increase helped boost prices to over $45 a barrel before they fell on Monday.

Sudan hails world’s longest dam

MEROWE, 4 March — Squinting amid the dazzling sunshine on the brink of the Sahara Desert, Asem Khalil Idris tried to get a clear view of President Omar al-Bahir, who was addressing a crowd at the inauguration ceremony for Merowe Dam, the country’s largest hydropower project.

“The power from the dam will create a lot of work opportunities,” Asem, 39, a local resident coming from the Wadi Halfa town, said on Wednesday morning.

“Before today, Wehad to rely on diesel-fueled generators, which is noisy and very inconvenient,” he said, adding that “we will have a more colorful life with less blackouts thanks to the president and the dam’s builders, and the fruit trees and vegetable planted in my town will get the badly-needed irrigation.”

Canada cuts rates to record low

OTTAWA, 4 March—The Bank of Canada cut its main interest rate to a record low on Tuesday and signaled for the first time that it may take extra steps to pump money into a system that remains stubbornly short of credit.

The central bank reduced its key overnight rate by a half point to 0.5 percent, as expected, for a cumulative reduction of 400 basis points since December 2007.

As the rate approaches zero, the bank began preparing markets for its next step, which could involve buying securities in the market to drive down longer-term interest rates and help banks expand their lending. This is known as quantitative easing.

Bank of England to cut interest rates again

LONDON, 4 March—The Bank of England is expected to slash its key interest rate on Thursday by half a percentage point to just 0.5 percent — the lowest level in the bank’s 315-year history, analysts said.

Faced with Britain’s first recession in 18 years and falling inflation, the central bank is set to extend a series of sharp cuts since October, when interest rates stood at 5.0 percent.

The BoE’s nine-member monetary policy committee (MPC) may also on Thursday announce plans for quantitative easing — a last-ditch effort to increase money supply — as it becomes clear that lowering rates has failed to stimulate the economy sufficiently.

Internet
**Vietnam tightens measures to fight diseases in poultry and livestock**

HANOI, 4 March—Vietnam’s Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Diep Kinh Tan urged relevant agencies and provincial animal health bureaus to take quick response to the current complicated developments of diseases in poultry and livestock, according to a report of the ministry’s website on Wednesday.

According to the National Steering Committee on poultry and livestock disease prevention, there will be five working groups to be established within this week to supervise the fight against bird flu and foot-and-mouth epidemic ravaging wide in Vietnam.

Vietnamese Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat will lead a group to the five working groups to be established within this week to supervise the fight against bird flu and foot-and-mouth epidemic ravaging wide in Vietnam.

**Cologne building collapses, at least two missing**

BERLIN, 4 March—At least two people remain missing after a building in the western German city of Cologne collapsed on Tuesday, local media reported.

The four-story building, housing archives of Cologne city, collapsed into a pile of rubble and destroyed neighboring houses at around 2 pm local time (1300 GMT), local newspaper Koelner Stadtanzeiger reported. According to the report, seven of the nine people originally missing got in touch with the officials but at least two people are still missing. Many people inside the building managed to flee to safe places.

City officials told German media that rescue work could only start on Wednesday at daytime. Stephan Neuhoff, director of Cologne fire department said hope for finding more survivors is becoming slim.

The building collapsed onto a street in which subway construction work was reportedly being carried out, but a spokeswoman for the city of Cologne said the work had finished before the building collapsed.

**All items from Xinhua News Agency**

**Deforestation in Brazil’s Amazon rainforest down in Nov-Jan**

RIO DE JANEIRO, 4 March—The deforestation of the Brazilian Amazon rainforest has eased somewhat, although the loss in its area is still considerable, statistics showed on Tuesday.

A total of 754 square kilometres of rainforest disappeared between November 2008 and January 2009, said a study by the country’s National Institute of Space Research (Inpe). It represents a drop of 21.8 percent compared with the 964 square kilometers lost from August to October 2008, and 70.2 percent from the 2,527 square kilometers that disappeared in the corresponding period in the previous year.

However, the area devastated between November and January is still equivalent to half the size of Sao Paulo, the largest city in South America.

The Para state in northern Brazil was responsible for 42 percent of the deforestation in the period, or an area of 318.7 square kilometres.
Israeli aircraft fire on Gaza smuggling tunnels

JERUSALEM, 4 March—The Israeli military says its aircraft have fired upon three smuggling tunnels along the Gaza-Egypt border.

The military says on Wednesday’s airstrikes were in response to rocket attacks on Israel the day before.

Palestinian officials in Gaza say no one was injured.

Militants use the tunnels to smuggle arms and ammunition into Gaza from Egypt.

The military says Palestinians have fired more than 130 rockets and mortar shells at southern Israel since Israel ended a three-week offensive against Gaza militants on 18 Jan.—Internet

Helicopter accident kills four in Colombia

BOGOTA, 4 March — Four people were killed on Tuesday when the police helicopter they were aboard fell in a jungle zone in the department of Putumayo in southern Colombia.

“The helicopter we have lost this morning fell down some 10 km to the municipality of Villa Garzon. All its occupants were found dead,” General Alvaro Caro, anti-drug police commander, told a press conference.

The cause of the accident has been investigating, Caro said.

The four people were the pilot, the copilot, and two artillerymen, according to a police report.

The helicopter took off from an anti-drug base in Putumayo near the border with Ecuador and Peru, said the report.—Internet

Russian senior officer says satellites collision possibly manipulated by US

NEW DELHI, 4 March — A Russian senior officer on Tuesday suspected that the collision between a US Iridium satellite and a Russian military satellite last month was manipulated by the United States intentionally.

Major general Leonid Shershner told the daily Moskovskii Komsomol that the US may be testing a new technology designed to intercept and destroy satellites from other countries.

Although the US Iridium 33 satellite was designed for peaceful purposes, yet it could be transferred for military purposes, the officer said.

He explained that the Iridium 33 satellite was equipped with a navigation system, which can detect any targets getting close to it and send signals back to the control center on the ground, so that the ground center can change the satellite’s orbit timely to avoid such accident.

Unfortunately, such preventive measures did not occur, Shershner added.

The Russian satellite and the privately owned US communications satellite collided in space on 10 Feb, shooting out a pair of massive debris clouds.

NASA believed that the risk caused by the collision to other spacecrafts is low.

India test-fires new version of Brahmos cruise missile

NEW DELHI, 4 March — India on Wednesday successfully test-fired the new version of Brahmos supersonic cruise missile at a firing range near Pokhran in Rajasthan desert, Western India, said Indian defence ministry sources.

The Brahmos, a tactical supersonic cruise missile, may play a definitive role in cross-border “surgical strike” against terrorists, according to Indian defence officials.

This is the second time for India to test fire the missile since January.

$7,000 in stolen jewelry found in Cheetos bag

Bet you can’t steal just one. Three teenage boys from central New Jersey have been charged with breaking into an apartment and stealing $7,000 worth of jewelry, then hiding the loot in an empty Cheetos bag. The bag was later found inside a swing set in a local park in Freehold. The boys, ages 15 and 16, have been charged with attempted burglary, burglary and trespassing. Police recovered most of the stolen jewelry.

Police said the boys unsuccessfully tried to break into one unit at a condominium complex, they barged into a second unit and took the jewelry while the resident was at church services. The boys have been released to their parents.

Man uses fake money to buy fake drugs

A man was been arrested after police said he used counterfeit money to purchase fake OxyContin pills from an underserver officer.

Unicoi County Sheriff’s deputies arrested a 21-year-old man on Tuesday and charged him with criminal conspiracy with schedule II drugs, forgery and criminal simulation.

Detective Frank Rogers said the officer met with several people at a mobile home park and arranged for the suspect and another man to come to Unicoi to buy 10 OxyContin pills for $4,875.

Officials said it was “obviously bad money” with some bills printed on just one side. Authorities also tracked down the device believed used to make the counterfeit money.

Girls faint en masse in Nepali school, teaching halted

Teaching and learning activities have been halted in a hilly district of western Nepal after several girls started falling unconscious daily.

It is already a couple of months since the problem started, at the Lokraj Adarsha High School located at Karkilanda, Lamjung, some 110 km west of Kathmandu. Till Monday, more than three dozen girls from nursery to grade 10 have fallen unconscious, local newspaper The Rising Nepal reported on Monday.

The problem, however, has not affected the boys, according to the report. Pratap Raj Silwal, a teacher of the school, said that when a student loses her consciousness, all others have to take care of her. “As teachers and students gather to help the patient, this creates disturbances in all the classrooms.”

Monarch butterflies gather on top of flowers at the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, near the town of Chincua, Mexico. The Monarchs are not endangered, but scientists say deforestation could threaten their existence.

Man tries to steal laptop to check facebook

Sheriff’s officers said a 19-year-old man snatched a Starbucks customers laptop after being told he could not use it to check his Facebook account.

According to officers, the man then grabbed the customer’s laptop and ran out of the coffee shop, located in an outlet mall. Two people in the parking lot tackled the man and held him there until a mall security guard arrived.

The victim got his laptop back and the man was charged Saturday with robbery by sudden snatching, a felony.

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Industry-2 Minister visits Ponnagyun, Rathedaung

NAYPYITAW, 4 March—Minister for Industry-2 Vice-Admiral Soe Thein met with departmental officials, NGOs and social organization members in Ponnagyun Township, Rakhine State and fulfilled the needs for five rural development tasks.

During his tour, the minister met with residents of Rathedaung Township and called for making efforts for five rural development tasks.

The minister donated machines for farm, nine Sokir generators for monasteries and schools and cash for power supply in the townships.—MNA

Junior Davis Cup Tennis Competition opened

YANGON, 4 March—Junior Davis Cup By BNP Paribas Asia Oceania Zone Group IV Tennis competition was held at Theinbyu Tennis Court here today.

First President of Myanmar Tennis Federation U Zaw Zaw made a speech and on behalf of International Tennis Federation (ITF), Mr Suresh Memon spoke words of thanks.

YANGON, 3 March—Villagers of Yekhalar Village in Thongwa Township, Yangon South District, learnt how to use the bio-gas to generate power on 25 February.

Managing Director of Shwe Khaing Win Co Ltd U Tin Shwe briefed on construction of the bio-gas tank and employees of the company demonstrated how to run the diesel- and petrol-powered engines with the use of bio-gas.

A petrol-powered engine can generate 2000 kilowatt with the use of bio-gas and can supply power to 13-watt 153 lamps.

A bio-gas tank can be constructed on 17x17 ft plot of land and can be used for 20 to 30 years. It takes about a week to construct the tank and droppings from cattle and decayed leaves can be used to produce the bio gas.

It is cost-effective for workshops, hostels and restaurants to use bio-gas.

The company will see to construction of the gas tank until it can be used and will present a bio-gas-powered oven, a bio-gas-powered rice cooker and a bio-gas-powered lamp.

Those wishing to construct the bio gas tank may contact Shwe Khaing Win Co Ltd, No 19-A, Aye-yeik-kabar, Shwetaunggya Street, Bahan Township, Ph 01-511074; 09 99 21729, 09 507 3629.—MNA

Minister Vice-Admiral Soe Thein meets with residents of Rathedaung Township.—MNA

Use of bio-gas demonstrated

Villagers view demonstration on cooking rice with the use of bio-gas at house of farmer U Maung Win in Yekhalar Village, Thongwa Township.—MNA

NAYPYITAW, 4 March—A bomb explosion took place inside Padomma Park in Shinsawpu Ward, Sangyoung Township, Yangon, about 9.40 pm yesterday.

The bomb blast left an eight-inch-diameter and four-inch-deep crater in the ground about five feet to the fence of the park, and broke the left windscreen of nearby light truck with the number plate 8D/5962. The sharplyn of the bomb hit a nearby Yatama (cedrela febrifuga) tree and the fence. Sixteen six-millimeter diameter steel balls and two bottom covers of nine-volt dry cell batteries were found out around the scene.

In another case, a bomb went off under the bench of Hledan bus stop on Insein Road in Ward (1), Kamayut Township, at about 11.05 pm the same day.

Both blasts claimed no casualties.

Authorities concerned have reminded the people to provide information to those responsible in time if there is something or someone suspicious of committing destructive acts in their societies.—MNA

Bomब explosions occur in Sangyoung, Kamayut townships

No casualties in the blasts

People reminded to call authorities if they see anything suspicious of destructive acts

NAYPYITAW, 4 March—A bomb explosion took place inside Padomma Park in Shinsawpu Ward, Sangyoung Township, Yangon, about 9.40 pm yesterday.

The explosion left an eight-inch-diameter and four-inch-deep crater in the ground behind the passengers shelter, tearing a small piece off the concrete bench, making some small holes in the roof and destroying the plywood ceiling of the shelter and a piece of the glass window of the nearby desktop printing and copying shop. Two AA-sized Power Brand dry cell batteries and eight six-millimeter diameter steel balls were found nearby.

Both blasts claimed no casualties.

Responsible persons are now conducting investigation into the cases.

Authorities concerned have reminded the people to provide information to those responsible in time if there is something or someone suspicious of committing destructive acts in their societies.—MNA

Minister Vice-Admiral Soe Thein meets with residents of Rathedaung Township.—MNA

Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and officials open Junior Davis Cup By BNP Paribas Asia Oceania Zone Group IV Tennis competition.—YCDC
Namsang Township urged to manufacture value-added tea products

NAY PYI TAW, 4 March—Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo held a meeting with township level officials in Namsang, Kyaukme District, Shan State (North) yesterday afternoon.

On the occasion, Chairman of the township PDC U Than Lwin gave an account of education, health, social and economic conditions and the tea enterprise of the township.

Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint reported on programmes to upgrade Namsang-Hsipaw and Namsang-Kyaukme, and ongoing work to provide electricity in Shan State (North); Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo, on health plans, construction of more hospitals and health care centres across the nation, and adding staff and medical equipment to medical facilities to improve national health standard, and health educative talks and control measures against malaria, TB and HIV to raise the health standard of rural folks; and Deputy Minister for Education Brig-Gen Aung Myoe Min, on importance of cooperation of teachers, parents and students to improve the education standard.

Assessing the reports, the Secretary-1 said that he had fulfilled the requirements for regional development in meeting with service personnel on his tour of Kyaukme and Hsipaw townships yesterday and he inspected some places.

His current inspection tour was to attend to the needs through coordination with departmental officials, he said, adding that Namsan Township needs a 50-bed hospital to provide better health care to local people as the township is difficult of access.

He stressed the importance of upgrading Namsang-Kyaukme, Namsang-Hsipaw and Namsang-Manton roads to all-weather facilities. Tea leaf is used to make not only green tea but also raw materials for cosmetics and personal goods.

doctors and nurses at People’s Hospital in Namsang.—MNA

Tea leaf is used to make not only green tea but also raw materials for cosmetics and personal goods.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo delivers speech at meeting with township level officials in Namsang, Kyaukme District, Shan State (North).—MNA

Seminar on NIM 7 March

YANGON, 4 March—The education seminar of Myanmar Institute of Management (NIM) will be held at Myanmar Search International (MSI) Education Consultancy Services Co. Ltd on 7 March (Saturday).

Daw Cho Cho Win (Assistant Country Manager) of NIM will give accounts of the institute. Two students who worked in Australia as Paid Industrial Attachment after they completed Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (DTHM) Program at NIM will explain their work experiences.

Courses on Tourism and Hospitality Management, Casino Management, Early Childhood Education and Master of Business Administration will be conducted at NIM in Tanjong Pagar Tamoske Tower (8 Shenton Way) in Singapore.

Those who want to join DTHM Program and Casino Management Program must have IELTS-5.0 or TOFEL-500 and IELTS-6.5 for Early Childhood Education. MBBS degree holders with two years work experiences in related fields have to get IELTS-6.5 to join Master of Business of Administration. Students who are not qualified to join above programs may sit for English Proficiency Test (EPT) at Myanmar Search International (MSI) Education Consultancy Services Co. Ltd free of charges in advance.

NIM will offer two full scholarship awards in DTHM Program to Myanmar students. Applicants for scholarship are to submit their forms not later than 15 March.

MSI Company is a service company which was presented as top representative award for 2007-08 in Myanmar by NIM. Enthusiasts who want to attend the seminar may contact MSI Co Ltd, No. (234), Shwebontha Street, Pabedan Township (Ph: 389915, 09 51 03915 and 250929) in advance.—MNA

Also present on the occasion were Maj-Gen Aung Than Htut, town sealers of Namsang Township, and town sealer U Aik Mone and party.

After the meeting, the Secretary-1 cordially greeted the attenders. MNA
Commander meets managers of Indian Armed Forces football/volleyball teams

YANGON, 4 March — Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Brig-Gen Win Myint met with Lt-Col A K Dey and Lt-Col Gurubaksh Singh, managers of Indian Armed Forces football and volleyball teams of the Republic of India at Zeyathiri Beikman Hall on Konmyinttha, here, yesterday. The teams will compete in friendly football and volleyball matches.

The commander and the managers presented souvenirs reciprocally and had the documentary photos taken. — MNA

Local people enjoy entertainment of Moe Min theatrical troupe staged in commemoration of hoisting Htidaw, Seinbudaw atop Uppatasanti Pagoda and consecration ceremony.

NAY PYI TAW, 4 March — In commemoration of hoisting Htidaw (umbrella) and Seinbudaw (diamond orb) atop Uppatasanti Pagoda and the consecration ceremony, the entertainments continued for the third day at the field near Yazahtani Road, south of the pagoda, yesterday evening.

Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Wai Lwin, Chairman of the Entertainment Sub-committee Director-General U Yan Naing Oo of the Fine Arts Department, departmental officials and over 10,000 local people enjoyed the entertainments.

Mandalay Nann Anyeint troupe performed entertainment and the Documentary Film Division of Myanma Motion Picture Enterprise showed academy award winning movies entitled “Hmyaw-lint-gyin-myar-swar” and “Apyin-sar-yaik-chet”.

This evening, Moe Min theatrical troupe will present performances and Documentary Film Division present two movies “Gon-shein-pyin-de-chit-chin-theikkha” and “Apyaung-ale”.

MNA

Entertainment on Ngwehsaung Beach on 7, 8 March

YANGON, 4 March — As part of efforts for development of tourism in Myanmar and for attracting visitors to Ngwehsaung Beach, festivities will be held at Ngwehsaung Beach on 7 and 8 March.

The entertainment programme is jointly conducted by Myanmar Hoteliers Association and Ngwe Hsaung Zone Hoteliers Association. Entrance fees for the entertainments are K 1000, K 1500 and K 2000. — MNA

Multiplier course on taking farm censuses for 2010 opened

NAY PYI TAW, 4 March — Multiplier course on taking farm censuses for 2010 was held at Settlement and Land Record Department in Maubin on 20 February. Officials of Settlement and Land Record Department gave lectures.

Assistant staff officers and 55 clerks are attending the course. Maubin Township farm censuses of 44653-household in 442 villages will be taken. — MNA
Rural roads put into service in two townships in Rakhine State

YANGON, 4 March — Hailing the 64th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, Chairman of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Commander of Western Command Maj-Gen Thaung Aye and Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt attended an opening ceremony of Mingala Manaung new gravel rural road in MraukU Township on 2 March.

The road, 4,840 feet long and 12 feet wide, was built at a cost of K 13.4 million in 2008-2009 fiscal year. Rural people from Yadanabon, Tezayama, Hsinchaseik and Ywahaung-taw Villages can now go to MyaikU any time.

The commander and the minister met with local people from five villages at Hsinchaseik village.

The Winzar-Ngapukwa gravel rural road was opened in Minbya Township hailing the 64th Anniversary Armed Forces Day.

The road, 4,300 feet long and 12 feet wide, was built at a cost of K 12.6 million in 2008-2009 fiscal year.

The commander and minister met with local people from five village tracts at Ngapukwa village.

Myanmar-India friendly football match held

YANGON, 4 March — The 8th Myanmar-Indian Armed Forces friendly football match was held at the football ground of Youth Training Centre (Thuwanna), here, yesterday afternoon.

Among the spectators were military personnel from Ministry of Defence, the Chairman of Tatmadaw Football Committee the Commandant of Defence Services Self-defence and Sports Institute and members of the committee and officials concerned from Indian Embassy.

The Chairman of Tatmadaw Football Committee and the manager of Indian Armed Forces football team greeted all the football players.

After an exchange of friendly flags by the players, the two football teams played the match.

After the match, souvenirs were presented to Indian Armed Forces football players. — MNA

Objectives of the 64th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

1. To work hard together with the people to accomplish the State’s seven-step Road Map in building a peaceful, modern and developed nation
2. To uphold Our Three Main National Causes as the national policy at risk to life
3. To crush, in cooperation with the people, internal and external subversive elements that are disrupting stability, peace and development of the nation
4. To build a strong and patriotic modern Tatmadaw capable of safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the nation

Myanmar-India friendly volleyball match held

YANGON, 4 March — The 8th friendly volleyball match between Myanmar and Indian Armed Forces took place at National Indoor Stadium-1 in Thingangyun Township this afternoon.

Among the spectators were senior military officers of Ministry of Defence, the chairman and members of Myanmar Tatmadaw Volleyball Committee and guests.

Before the match, the chairman of Myanmar Tatmadaw Volleyball Committee and the manager of the volleyball team of Indian Armed Forces greeted the players from both teams.

After the match, gifts were presented to Indian Armed Forces volleyball team. — MNA

Senior military officers, officials concerned, diplomats from Indian Embassy, guests and football fans enjoy 8th Myanmar-Indian Armed Forces friendly football match.

MNA
China opens political advisory session

BEIJING, 4 March—The Second Session of the 11th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the country’s top advisory body, started in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday afternoon.

A total of 2,160 CPPCC National Committee members coming throughout the country attended the opening meeting. They will undertake major concerns of the nation’s development during the annual session scheduled to conclude on March 12.

CPPCC National Committee Chairman Jia Qinglin delivered a report on the work of the CPPCC National Committee’s Standing Committee over the past year. The top political advisor said the year 2009 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of New China and the CPPCC and is crucial for properly responding to the global financial crisis and promoting further development of the cause of the Party and the country.—MNA/Xinhua

China urges smoking doctors to quit the habit

BEIJING, 4 March—China has offered its male doctors, more than half of whom smoke, some urgent medical advice to quit the habit and set an example to the hundreds of millions of other smokers.

China is the world’s largest cigarette producer and Chinese are the world’s most enthusiastic smokers, with a growing market of about 320 million making it a magnet for multinationals and focus of international health concerns. Chinese cigarettes are also among the cheapest in the world, with a packet costing as little as a few cents.

“Medical workers and those who take the decisions regarding people’s health should take the lead to quit smoking and completely ban indoor smoking to set a good example for their patients and others who look up to them,” Health Minister Chen Zhu was quoted by the China Daily as saying.

About 56.8 per cent of male doctors were smokers, it added. “It is the highest rate in the world,” the newspaper said, citing the China Preventive Medicine Association. “International experience has it that when doctors give up smoking, it encourages a lot of others to kick the habit,” Chen was quoted as saying.

Chavez reshuffles cabinet, taps new defence minister

CARACAS, 4 March—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced on Tuesday a Cabinet reshuffle, tapping a new defence minister and cutting two ministries.

Vice President Ramon Carrizalez will replace General Gustavo Rangel Briceno as Defence Minister while keeping his current position, said Jesse Chacon, Minister of Information and Communication. The Housing Ministry and the Social Protection Ministry are to be merged with smaller ministries to improve efficiency.

The reshuffle came after the February 15 referendum that approved a constitutional amendment lifting the limit on presidential terms, allowing Chavez to run anew in the presidential election in 2012. Under the changes, Eduardo Saman, director of Venezuela’s consumer protection agency, was appointed Minister of Commerce, and Maria Cristina Iglesias was named Minister of Labour and Social Welfare.—MNA/Xinhua

Mongolian parliament approves economic rescue plan

ULAN BAatar, 4 March—The Mongolian Parliament on Tuesday approved the government’s 1.5-trillion-Togrog (around one billion US dollars) economic rescue plan amid the global financial crisis.

Prime Minister Sanj Bayar said under the plan the government would enhance efforts to ensure stability in the finance sector, increase job opportunities and promote the development of agriculture.

The government will explore increased revenues and seek for support from other countries and financial institutions to honor the plan, the Prime Minister said. Due to impacts of the global financial turmoil, the export-driven economy of Mongolia has seen shrinking foreign exchange reserves and growing trade deficit since the third quarter of 2008.

Kuwait ruler plans to dissolve parliament

KUWAIT, 4 March—Kuwait’s ruler has decided to dissolve Parliament, Al Jazeera television reported on Tuesday, after Islamist lawmakers asked to question the Prime Minister over his government’s handling of the economic crisis.

Frequent Cabinet changes usually do not affect the oil policies of OPEC-member Kuwait, the world’s seventh-largest oil exporter, which are set by a high state energy council. Al Jazeer’s correspondent in Kuwait quoted parliamentary sources as saying Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah, who has the last word in politics, would issue a decree to dissolve parliament.

“Parliamentary sources say that a decree will be issued to dissolve Parliament and call for elections within two months and that the decree would be issued within 48 hours,” said Saad al-Anzi, the head of Al Jazeera’s bureau in Kuwait. There was no confirmation of the report on state media and officials could not be reached to comment. The emir last dissolved Parliament a year ago to end a row between MPs and the Cabinet.

MNA/Reuters

Iran signs deal to supply crude to Kenya

NAIROBI, 4 March—Iran will supply Kenya with four million metric tons of crude annually as part of a range of deals signed last week, Kenyan officials said on Tuesday.

The agreed supply from Iran, the world’s fourth-largest oil exporter, is roughly equivalent to 80,000 barrels per day (bpd) by Reuters calculations. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad visited east Africa’s biggest economy last week, where he and his Kenyan counterpart, Mwai Kibaki, also signed a grant and loan agreement totalling 800 million shillings (10 million US dollars) among others.

Kenya, like other African countries, is increasingly turning east and strengthening trade and investment links with countries such as China and India. Commercial dealings with Iran have not been welcomed by the United States, which is embroiled in a row with the Islamic Republic over its disputed nuclear programme. But US Ambassador to Kenya, Michael Ranneberger, was quoted by local media last week as saying his country was not alarmed by the Iranian leader’s visit as the two countries were sovereign and free to make bilateral deals.

This undated photo released by BMW shows the 2009 BMW X5 SUV.—INTERNET

A cat named ‘Buddy’ sits upright Monday, March 2, 2009 to survey the snowfall around his house n North Haven, Conn., as a late winter storm hit Connecticut Sunday and Monday.—INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Thursday, 5 March, 2009
THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR   Thursday, 5 March, 2009

Bank Holiday
All Banks will be closed on 10th March (Tuesday) 2009, being public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

Central Bank of Myanmar

Worst of Australian wildfire season declared over
SYDNEY, 4 March—Australian authorities Wednesday declared the worst of the deadly wildfire season over, telling thousands of people who fled their homes it was safe to return.

Fire-fighting authorities began scaling back their operations after cooling rains fell almost a month after a savage firestorm swept through Australia's southeast, killing 210 people.

"We see a very bright light at the end of the tunnel now," said Victoria state's emergency services commissioner Bruce Esplin.

"There's an opportunity for the communities of Victoria to start their process of rebuilding, without the ever-present threat of fire," he said. The search for bodies would continue for another three weeks, but the rain had greatly reduced the fire threat and Esplin said it was time for firefighters from overseas and other states to return home.—Internet

United Nations Development Programme
VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is seeking applications from dynamic and highly motivated Myanmar nationals for the following vacancies with UNDP Yangon.

Detailed terms of reference are available at the bulletin board at No. 8, Natmauk Road, Taung Tin Township, Yangon.

1. Administrative Analyst — ICS-9 (Re-advertised)
   Requirements: Master's Degree in Business Administration, Public Administration, Finance, Economics or related field. Background and experience in legal and contracting services and procurement essential. Minimum 5 to 7 years experience in operations with emphasis in procurement and contracting. Experience in handling of web-based management systems. Excellent communications skills in English an English-language requirement.

2. Administrative Assistant (Common Services) — ICS-8
   Requirements: Bachelor's degree preferable in Business or Public Administration/Technology. Minimum 5 years of experience in general administration and building management. Strong interpersonal skill and ability to establish and maintain effective relations with people in a multicultural environment with sensitivity and respect for diversity. Excellent team spirit. Experience in the usage of computers and office software packages (MS Word, Excel, etc.). Experience in handling of web-based management systems and good knowledge in ATLAS. UNDP's corporate working tool an added asset. Very good communications skills in English, both written and spoken an absolute requirement.

Candidates should clearly indicate the Post Title in their applications, and should submit them together with complete biodata stating personal details, academic qualification, work experience and a recent passport sized photograph. Candidates applying for both the positions should submit separate applications. Applications should be addressed to Deputy Country Director (Deafness & Disability) Attention Human Resources Unit, No. 8, Natmauk Road, UNDP, Yangon.

Note: For Post No. 1: those who have applied for Admin Analyst, ICS-9 advertised on 7th October 2008 need not apply.

For Post No. 2: those who have applied for Administrative Associate (Common Services—Level ICS-7) advertised on 7 October 2008 are invited to apply.

Only those candidates in whose qualifications and experience the Organization has further interest will be contacted for subsequent interview(s).

UNDP engages retaining the right to perform hiring of persons currently engaged by Government services or who left Government service during the past 6 months.

UNDP is an equal opportunity employer.

UNDP regrets its inability to reply individually or attend to telephone queries on the advertised posts.

Closing Date: Wednesday, 18 March 2009 (COB)

Drive with care

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.
CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV HANSEDUO VOY NO (104)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV HANSEDUO VOY NO (104) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 5.3.2009 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 MAXICON CONTAINER LINES

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Dated 5 March 2009

Internet

Apple unveils updates to its desktop computer line

SAN FRANCISCO, 4 March—Apple Inc on Tuesday took the wrap off a new line of its desktop computers with highlight on their cheaper prices in a reflection of the current economic condition.

The new line of iMac includes a 24-inch product starting at 1,499 US dollars, which Apple said is priced more affordably than ever before.

For the same price as its previous generation 20-inch iMac, the new flagship 24-inch iMac delivers a 30-percent larger display, twice the memory and twice the storage, the company said.

Apple also introduced two new models of Mac mini, its tiny desktop computer. One of them is priced at $299 dollars.

The Mac mini has been updated with better graphic performance and higher energy efficiency, drawing less than 13 watts of power when idle.

"The Mac mini is not only our most affordable Mac, it’s also the world’s most energy efficient desktop computer,” Tim Cook, Apple’s chief operating officer, said in a statement.

The company also unveiled updates to its high-end Mac Pro desktop computer.

Internet

Swedish scientists discover new protein in lower air way

STOCKHOLM, 4 March—Researchers from Uppsala University in Sweden reported that they have discovered a previously unknown protein in the cells of lower air ways, which brings new potential for early diagnosis of serious lung disease. The findings, published in the latest web edition of the US journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, can also provide new knowledge of the cause of common diseases like asthma and chronic bronchitis.

The newly discovered protein, called KCNRG, occurs in cells in the lower air ways found on the surface of the bronchia.

The protein is important to the immune system in an autoimmune lung disorder that is often fatal, according to the Uppsala research team.

The protein enables researchers to study more closely the first phase of the autoimmune disease, that is, when the immune system erroneously attacks the body’s own tissues instead of attacking foreign organisms like bacteria or viruses.

Internet

Four Indonesians die of bird flu; toll climbs to 119

JAKARTA, 4 March—Four Indonesians have died of bird flu, bringing the death toll in the country hardest hit by the disease over the past several years to 119, an official said on Tuesday.

Bayu Krisnamurthi, chief of the National Bird Flu Commission, said all the victims were believed to have been infected after coming into contact with sick poultry. They were from Java island and died in January and February.

Indonesia, which has been criticized in recent months for refusing to immediately make public news of human deaths and in some cases hiding them up all together, has been worst affected by bird flu since it started ravaging Asian poultry stocks in late 2003.

It accounts for nearly half the 256 human fatalities tallied worldwide, according to the World Health Organization.

Internet

World War Two bomb safely handled at Singapore’s construction site

SINGAPORE, 4 March—A World War Two relic bomb was found and safely handled at a Singapore construction site, local media reported on Tuesday.

According to Channel newsasia’s report, the war relic bomb was discovered on Monday evening at a construction site in southern Singapore.

The broadcaster said experts believed the relic was a Japanese aerial bomb dating from World War Two Bomb disposal specialists on Tuesday deci-ded to dispose the bomb at the site since the fuse had already been activated, the report said, adding that the bomb un-

expectedly exploded at about 5:30 pm (0830 GMT) and no harm was done.—Internet

Students salvage items in a flooded teacher’s room of their school in Lamongan in East Java Province on 2 March, 2009.

Internet

Apple Inc on Tuesday took the wrap off a new line of its desktop computers with highlight on their cheaper prices in a reflection of the current economic condition.—INTERNET
Hiddink backs Drogba to lead Chelsea charge

PORTSMOUTH, 4 March—Chelsea manager Guus Hiddink believes Didier Drogba is the man to wrestle the Premier League title from Manchester United’s grasp after rediscovering his best form since the Dutchman’s arrival at Stamford Bridge.

Drogba scored his first league goal since December but Hiddink believes he has helped rekindle Drogba’s enthusiasm for the Blues. “Didier has made a difference in the last few games,” said Hiddink. “As long as he is so committed, and I am convinced he will be, we do not put the pressure on him. Automatically, he will score goals.”

“From my first day at the club Didier has been working hard and enjoying himself.” Hiddink, also the manager of Russia, added after a win which saw Chelsea close to within four points of United. “When players just play their efficiency goes down but when I see them enjoy everything in training it will help raise their game.”

Season starts now, says Fergie

MANCHESTER, 4 March—Sir Alex Ferguson has insisted that Manchester United’s race for glory starts now after claiming that the season will only be a success if his players land the “big” trophies between now and the end of May.

United, who added the League Cup to the FIFA Club World Cup trophy by defeating Spurs at Wembley last Sunday, have the chance to take another step towards sealing a hat-trick of Premier League titles by claiming three points at Newcastle on Wednesday evening.

Ferguson’s men are still on course for an unprecedented quintuple this season, with the team going strong in the league, Champions League and FA Cup.

But the United manager insists the real trophies are still up for grabs and that the silverware already collected this season will not be sufficient. “The only way we hope this season ends is with us winning the big ones,” Ferguson said. “Winning the Club World Cup in December was an exceptional achievement, but the League Cup was fourth in our list of priorities at the start of the season.”

“Now we have won it, we just move on, because, for me, the Premier League and Champions League are the major trophies, with the FA Cup in third place. “If we win one major trophy a year, then I am happy with that.”

Wenger’s faith in Bendtner gets Baggies reward

WEST BROMWICH, 4 March—Arsene Wenger believes that Nicklas Bendtner is finally starting to prove his class after the striker inspired a 3-1 rout of West Bromwich Albion.

The Dane has been subjected to stinging criticism from sections of the Arsenal support this season thanks to some lacklustre performances, but the travelling fans at the Hawthorns here on Tuesday were believing his name by the end of an evening in which he pulled Albion’s dreadful defence to pieces. Bendtner ratted in two first-half goals – one curled into the bottom corner and another crashed past Scott Carson from an acute angle – and was only denied the match-ball when his low shot struck the post in the second period.

That took his season’s tally to 11 and Wenger believes the young striker could now be running into form at the perfect time, with Arsenal’s Champions League last 16 decider at AS Roma looming large next week.

Virus rules Nalbandian out of Davis Cup tie

BUENOS AIRES, 4 March—World number 14 David Nalbandian has been ruled out of Argentina’s Davis Cup first-round tie against the Netherlands here after a win, team captain Modesto Vasquez announced on Tuesday.

“Nalbandín won’t participate in the match against the Netherlands,” Vasquez said. “He trained on Monday but he’s still suffering from a virus which means he isn’t in the right condition to play.”

“King David”, as he’s known in his home country, was the figurehead of an Argentine team also containing Juan Monaco, Juan Ignacio Chela and doubles specialist Lucas Arnold Ker. They play the Netherlands at the Parque Roca claycourt arena between Friday and Sunday.

Nalbandian’s possible replacements include world number seven Juan Martin del Potro, Jose Acasuso, ranked 45th in the world, and world number 50 Martin Vassallo Arguello.

Lazio beats Juventus 2-1 in Italian Cup 1st leg

BEIJING, 4 March—Goran Pandev and Tommaso Rocchi scored as Lazio rallied to beat Juventus 2-1 in the first leg of the Italian Cup semi-finals yesterday.

Marco Marchionni scored for Juventus in the 34th minute from the edge of the area, Pandev equalized in the 65th and Rocchi gave Lazio the lead in the 78th.

Pandev took a rebound and spun around before finding the target from the center of the area, while Rocchi beat defender Giorgio Chiellini to a ball inside the area and shot under goalkeeper Alexander Manninger.

Juventus forward Vincenzo Iaquinta had a goal annulled for a questionable offside call in the 18th and Manninger made a leaping save on a free kick from Cristian Ledesma in the 39th.

Juventus captain Alessandro Del Piero and goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon sat out.

Inter Milan visits Sampdoria in the other semifinal today. The return legs are scheduled for 21 and 22 April, with the final on 13 May in Rome.

Swiss don’t fault Federer for Davis Cup injury pullout

BERN, 4 March—Swiss players are determined to make do without the imposing presence of Roger Federer for the country’s third meeting with the US at the Davis Cup World Group first round tie this weekend.

Beijing Olympic gold medal doubles partner Stan Wawrinka said that it had to be tough for Federer to skip the World Group number two works to get his hobbled back in shape.

“We know it wasn’t an easy decision,” said Wawrinka, 16th in the world after reaching the Top 10 last spring with a final in Rome.

“But it’s very important for his career that he make this decision.”

Swiss skipper Severin Luethi is a long-time friend of Federer and travels the circuit as an advisor and sounding board for the 13-time Grand Slam winner.

“We will try and win there,” said Benitez after Liverpool’s first win in three league outings.

Victory at United vital for Benitez

LIVERPOOL, 4 March—Liverpool manager Rafael Benitez has told his side to forget their faint Premier League title hopes if they fail to win at Manchester United on 14 March.

Benitez saw his team move to within four points of Sir Alex Ferguson’s leaders with a 2-0 win over Sunderland at Anfield here on Tuesday.

Liverpool, who have 10 league games remaining, have played two more matches than United but visit Old Trafford in their next league encounter with confidence sky high following goals by young French striker David Ngog and Yossi Benayoun.

Benitez knows that his side’s domestic season will be over if they do not win at Old Trafford for the first time in five years later this month.

“We will try and win there,” said Benitez after Liverpool’s first win in three league outings.

Internet

Internet

Internet

Internet
Japan’s DPJ leader’s secretary arrested

TOKYO, 4 March—The secretary of Ichiro Ozawa, head of the main opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) and a leading candidate for the next premier, was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of accepting illegal donation from scandal-tainted Nishimatsu.

Takanori Okubo, who also serves as chief accountant of Ozawa’s political body, “Rikuzankai,” was allegedly received illegal corporate donations from Nishimatsu Construction Co., according to investigative sources. It is alleged Rikuzankai received the donations totalling 14 million yen (144,000 US dollars) from two groups headed by a former Nishimatsu official in violation of the political funds control law, NHK said in its news reports. Under the law, corporate donations, except for political parties or their political fund-managing organizations, are prohibited.

Ozawa is tipped as the next premier if his party takes power from the troubled Prime Minister Taro Aso in the next general election to be held by autumn.

MNA/Xinhua

Pemba, a four-month-old red panda cub makes his first public appearance at Sydney’s Taronga Zoo, Australia, Wednesday, March 4, 2009. Pemba is the 44th red panda cub bred in the zoo’s international breeding program for the endangered species since 1977.—INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Thursday, 5 March, 2009
Instead of making false allegations at other nations US should concentrate on uplifting own human rights records

**MOFA rejects US State Department’s human rights report (2008)**

NAY PYI TAW, 4 March—An announcement was issued today that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs categorically rejected the 2008 Country Report on Human Rights Practices of over 190 countries including Myanmar released by the State Department of the United States of America on 25th February 2009.

The full text of the announcement is as follows:—


It is saddening to find that the report contained the usual sweeping accusations of human rights abuses in Myanmar without verification of the validity and accuracy of the information and reliability of its sources. Instead of making false allegations at other nations regarding human rights matters, the United States should concentrate on uplifting its own human rights records.

Myanmar has long been a victim of a systematic disinformation campaign launched by anti-government elements, generously funded by their foreign supporters. The rootless allegations of human rights violations which invariably emanated from anti-government elements have found their way into the reports of the US State Department. Thus, there is a need to verify all information before it is judged fit for inclusion in official reports.

Myanmar believes that the promotion and protection of human rights should be conducted in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law. Human Rights issues must be addressed based on cardinal principles of objectivity, respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States. There should be no double standards or politicization of human rights issues. It is only cooperation, rather than politicization of human rights that can bring about improvement in human rights situations around the world.

Pursuant to its Foreign Policy, Myanmar has been cooperating with the United Nations in many fields including promotion of human rights. Myanmar has welcomed the visits of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr Ibrahim Gambari for a total of seven times. Likewise, the current Human Rights Rapporteur for Myanmar, Thomas Ojea Quintana has already visited Myanmar twice since his appointment last year. The Supplementary Understanding on the Treatment of Complaints regarding Forced Labour between the Government of the Union of Myanmar and the ILO was also extended again on 26 February 2009. Like other developing countries, Myanmar accords high priority to the right to development. It has been striving for the all-round development of the country, paying attention to narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas, especially the border areas where the majority of the ethnic nationalities reside. The report ignored such positive developments taking place in the area of promoting the right to development of the people in Myanmar.


Myanmar’s national efforts in combating drug problem carried out with little or no external assistance

**MOFA categorically rejects International Narcotics Control Strategy Report**

NAY PYI TAW, 4 March—An announcement was issued today that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs categorically rejected the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report on over 100 countries, including Myanmar released by the US State Department on 27th February 2009.

The full text of the announcement is as follows:—

The US Department of State on 27 February 2009 released an International Narcotics Control Strategy Report on over 100 countries, including Myanmar. The report has groundlessly identified Myanmar as one of the three countries in the world that had “failed demonstrably” to meet its international counter narcotics obligations. It is regrettable that such an unfair categorization was made, ignoring Myanmar’s strenuous efforts in combating narcotic drugs.

Myanmar has been waging a relentless war against illicit narcotic drugs for decades. A comprehensive 15-year National Plan was laid down in 1999. Myanmar’s national efforts against the drug problem are based on two strategies: (1) eradication of narcotic drugs as a national task and (2) total eradication of opium poppy cultivation through the promotion of living standards of all the national races residing in the border areas where opium poppy was cultivated. These strategies are supported by three tactics: to reduce supply of drugs, to reduce demand and to increase enforcement measures.

Amphetamine-type stimulants pose a new and ominous threat because they are extremely easy to produce. The best way to counter this threat is to deny the traffickers of precursor chemicals required in the production of these drugs. Myanmar neither produces nor imports any precursor chemicals.

At the regional level, Myanmar is working together with other members of ASEAN to reach its common goal of making the region free from drugs by 2015. Myanmar has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with six countries for the creation of a Greater Mekong Sub-Region Drug-Free Zone. Myanmar aims to rid the country of narcotic drugs by 2014, one year ahead of the date set by ASEAN.

The problem of drugs is closely linked to transnational crimes including terrorism. It is a global problem which can only be addressed through close international cooperation. National efforts must be complemented by cooperative efforts both at the regional and international levels.

The allegations of money-laundering leveled against Myanmar are also unfounded and politically motivated. Myanmar joined the UN Drugs Convention in 1988 and became a member of the Asia Pacific Group on Anti-Money Laundering in March 2006. Due to Myanmar’s Anti-Money Laundering Projects in accordance with international regulations, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) deleted Myanmar from its list of Non-Cooperative Countries and Territories on 13 October 2006.

Myanmar’s national efforts in combating drug problem were carried out with little or no external assistance. It is a sad fact that these sincere efforts have not received the full acknowledgement and support that they deserve.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar therefore categorically rejects the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report issued by the US Department of State as inaccurate and politically motivated assessments. —MNA