Cooperation between nations, associations, businesses, needs much to overcome competition and challenges in highly competitive market

Manufacture high quality items in industrial sector in accord with standard set

Federation needs to lay down long-term plans to surmount with nationalistic fervour new challenges, sanctions intentionally put against nation

Prime Minister addresses 18th AGM of UMFCCI

Arrangements are under way to provide farmers with working capital to produce crops of high quality in cooperation with leading companies, member companies and local merchants.

Prime Minister General Thein Sein delivers address at 18th Annual General Meeting of UMFCCI—MNA

Lectures, exam for B.Ed correspondence courses announced

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — The lectures and exam for the trainee teachers of B.Ed correspondence course for 2008-2009 academic year will be held at Yangon Institute of Education. Lectures will be given for the first year of course No.27 and the second year of course No.26 from 24 April to 15 May. Trainees are to report not later than 23 April and will not be allowed to report three days beyond the target date. The examinations for the courses will be held from 18 to 22 May.—MNA
Strive for turning out educated human resources

The ceremony for opening a new building of Technological University (Mawlamyine) was held on 21 March and it was attended by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council and Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee General Thih Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo.

Now is the time when the entire nation is striving for the emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation. For this, each and every region is trying to turn out educated human resources who will be able to contribute not only to its own development but also to that of the nation as a whole. Moreover, science and technology is gaining greater momentum of development day after day and has come to have a strong influence on every sphere of human society. This being so, it is necessary to produce highly-qualified human resources, especially for the sector of science and technology.

In this regard, the Head of State has given guidance that two main national forces are required for building a peaceful, modern and developed nation and that they are a patriotic force that can safeguard independence, sovereignty and non-disintegration of the Union and human resources that can make the best use of natural resources.

Today is the age of knowledge and sustainable development of human society can be realized only through education. Therefore, the government is taking measures to turn our large numbers of educated human resources.

The government has been opening more and more universities for the national youths, and the government is required for building a peaceful, modern and developed nation. For this, each and every region is trying to turn out educated human resources.

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MOC Chairman’s Cup National Hockey League 2009 goes on

YANGON, 31 March—Myanmar Olympic Committee Chairman’s Cup National Hockey League 2009 continued today. In the morning contest, Defending Champion Central Command team and No.11 LID team were held to a 1-1 draw, and Yangon Command team beat Myanmar Police Force 2-0.

A total of 12 teams including Yangon Youths Team comprising preliminary selected players who will take part in Boys U-18 Asia Cup are competing in the tournament.

No.11 LID team comprising Myanmar selected players led the tournament with 28 points. The tournament will continue up to 5 April, and the prize presentation ceremony will be held that day.

2009 continues today. In the morning contest, Command team beat Myanmar Police Force 2-0.

7th prize presentation ceremony of Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award held

YANGON, 31 March—The prize presentation ceremony for 7th Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award was held at Traders Hotel on Sule Pagoda Road, here this afternoon, attended by Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan.

First, U Tin Kha (Tetkatho Tin Kha), vice-chairman (1) of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association, extended greetings on behalf of the chairman.

U Myo Thant (Maung Hsu Shin) explained points on Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award Scrutiny Committee.

Next, Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan presented Dr Tin Shwe Literary Awards to Dr Kyaw Myint (X-ray) for “Life Story of OG U Soe Myint”, Khin Mya Zin for “Myanmar women painters in three generations” and Ma Theingi for “Shwedagon Mystique”.

Afterwards, Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award winners Dr Kyaw Myint, presented gift to Dr U Thaw Kaung on behalf of the Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award Scrutiny Committee.

Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan presents prize to Dr Kyaw Myint

Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan presents prize to Dr Kyaw Myint (X-ray).—MNA

Next, Daw Aye Thant presented K300,000 for fund of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association through chairman U Hla Myaing (Ko Hsaung). Daw Aye Thant then spoke words of thanks and the ceremony came to an end.

After the ceremony, Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan together with departmental heads, members of Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award Scrutiny Committee, and Dr Tin Shwe Literary Award winners posed for a documentary photo.—MNA

U Thet Oo presents credentials to Nepali President

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April—U Thet Oo, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Dr Ram Baran Yadav, President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, on 20 March 2009 in Kathmandu.—MNA

U Hla Myint presents credentials to Governor-General of New Zealand

NAY PYI TAW, 1 April—U Hla Myint, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to New Zealand, presented his Credentials to His Excellency The Honourable Anand Satyanand, PCNZM, QSO, Governor-General of New Zealand, on 5 March 2009 in Wellington. MNA
Suicide bomber kills seven, wounds 17 in Mosul

Baghdad, 31 March—Iraqi police say a suicide truck bomber killed at least seven people and wounded 17 in the northern city of Mosul.

A police officer in Mosul says the attacker was targeting a police station in the city's centre. Police Maj. Jassim al-Jubouri says those killed include four policemen and three civilians.

Tuesday's bombing is the latest in a string of attacks in Iraq this month that has raised fears insurgents are trying to regroup as the US prepares to withdraw all its forces by the end of 2011.

Nobody has claimed responsibility for the attack. But vehicle bombings are the signature attacks of suspected Sunni militant who remain active in Mosul.

Suicide bomber in police uniform kills nine Afghans

Dund, 31 March—A suicide bomber wearing a police uniform blew himself up inside a police headquarters in southern Afghanistan on Monday, killing nine people and wounding eight, an official said.

Five officers and four civilians died in the attack in Dundi district, about 10 miles (15 kilometres) south of Kandahar city, the Interior Ministry said in a statement.

The attack comes as the United States prepares to send 21,000 additional troops to Afghanistan to bolster the 38,000 American forces already in the country. President Barack Obama last week announced a new strategy for the Afghanistan-Pakistan region with a goal to “disrupt, dismantle and defeat” al-Qaeda.

In total, there are a record 70,000 international forces in Afghanistan.

The international Red Cross warned Monday that more Afghans and Pakistanis will be at risk in coming months as a result of worsening political instability and fighting. It urged the United States and others to consider the plight of civilians as they step up their military presence in the volatile region.

NATO chief accepts Netherlands’ planned withdrawal from Afghanistan

Brussels, 31 March—NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said he would “understand” if the Netherlands reduced its military force in Afghanistan after 2010 in an interview with Dutch daily NRC Handelsblad which was published over the weekend.

“I can well imagine that there comes a point where the resources of the armed forces cannot be stretched any further,” de Hoop Scheffer said just before the international conference on Afghanistan in The Hague on Tuesday.

“The comes a point where you have to give people and material a rest, even for the Netherlands,” said the NATO chief, a Dutch national himself.

British forces to begin Iraq withdrawal

Basra, 31 March—British forces were to launch their official withdrawal from Iraq, a months-long process ending a role that kicked off with the US-led invasion six years ago.

Senior American, British and Iraqi officers were expected to mark the occasion in recognition of the 179 British soldiers, airmen and sailors who have died in Iraq since it began in March 2003.

The figure includes eight military civilians killed 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 Romana, two each; and Australia, Hungary, Kazakhstan and South Korea, one death each.

No early exit from Afghanistan

Brussels, 31 March—International forces should not expect to withdraw from Afghanistan in the near future, NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said Monday, adding that a new US strategy for the country was realistic.

Eight years after the US-led invasion to drive out the former Taliban rulers, the United States, NATO and other allies have failed to quell a growing insurgency in the poor Muslim country.

“In my opinion, it is necessary to stay in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future,” de Hoop Scheffer told reporters in Brussels, saying he had so far seen “positive reactions” to a new strategy unveiled by President Barack Obama last week.

Obama set no timetable for his revamped war plan but shifted the focus towards training Afghanistan’s own security forces, and said the United States would not “blindly stay the course.”

De Hoop Scheffer welcomed the decision to concentrate on defeating al-Qaeda militants rather than pursuing the Bush administration’s more ambitious aim of building democracy.

“I think the Obama plan is realistic about what can be achieved… That means we will not be able to change Afghanistan into Switzerland in a few years’ time,” he said.
Medvedev charts path to better Russian-US ties

WASHINGTON, 31 March—Russia and the United States should rebuild their relations and work together on key global issues, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said in an article on Tuesday in the Washington Post.

Medvedev said neither Russia nor the United States can tolerate “shift and indifference” in their relationship.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry denies Iran, US meeting in Moscow

TEHERAN, 31 March—Iran’s Foreign Ministry denied on Monday the meeting between Iranian and the US officials in Moscow, the official IRNA news agency reported.

An informed source in the ministry said to IRNA’s political correspondent on Monday that the Saturday’s news of the Weekly Sunday Times concerning the meeting between Teheran and Washington’s representatives in Russia is baseless and its verity is denied, the report said.

“The Iranian delegation participating in Afghanistan conference in Moscow was not tasked on this subject and no meeting was held,” the source added. — Internet

Argentina, China sign tentative currency swap deal

BUENOS AIRES, 31 March—Argentina and China have tentatively agreed to swap $10 billion worth of their currencies to enable South America’s second-largest economy to avoid using dollars in trade between the nations, banking officials said on Monday.

It is the first such swap between China and a Latin American country, and allows Argentine businesses to buy Chinese imports directly in yuan.

The move aims to help Argentina by cutting trading costs, giving it access to hard currency and strengthening its financial position as it is battered by the global financial crisis, analysts say.

China — which has been pushing to end the dollar’s international dominance as a currency — has struck similar deals to bypass the US currency with South Korea, Malaysia, Belarus and Indonesia, the Xinhua News Agency reported. — Internet

Isrealis, Palestinians clash on Gaza border

GAZA CITY, 31 March

—A Gaza Health Ministry official said two Palestinians have been wounded by Israeli gunfire in a clash along the Gaza-Israel border.

Dr Moaiya Hassanan says it is not yet clear if the men are civilians or militants. Palestinian witnesses say they heard two explosions from the border area on Tuesday morning, after which Israeli helicopters hovered over the fence and fired at targets inside Gaza.

Israeli security officials say troops saw armed militants placing explosive devices along the fence. They spoke on condition of anonymity because the military had yet to release an official comment. — Internet

Fidel Castro criticizes Biden’s embargo remarks

HAVANA, 31 March — Cuban former leader Fidel Castro criticized US Vice President Joseph Biden for being against the lifting of the embargo on Cuba, in a column article published on Monday’s official daily “Granma.”

In the article, Castro said that Biden is “yearning” an internal political transition in Cuba, which “honestly would be counterrevolutionary.”

Castro also writes that the (US) empire faces "insuperable problems and contradictions with the peoples from Latin America.”

Biden said on Saturday that US has no plan to lift its trade embargo on Cuba at a political summit in Chile. — Internet

FAO says food security still problem as hunger rises

BANGKOK, 31 March — A fall in grain prices has led to the impression that food security is no longer a concern, but the number of people without enough to eat is still rising in a world facing recession, the United Nations said on Monday.

“The level of prices is still 19 per cent above the average of 2006...so we’re still in a period of high prices,” Jacques Diouf, director-general of the UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), told reporters at a conference in Bangkok.

In addition, recent FAO studies showed that even though prices had fallen in international markets, retail prices in most developing countries had not.

“No only is the crisis here, but it’s been worsened by the financial and economic crisis,” Diouf said. Stocks for cereals were at a 30-year low, and he described the situation as “very fragile”. — MNA/Reuters
Australian dairy farmers less confident due to crisis

Canberra, 31 March—Confidence in the dairy industry was shaken over the past 12 months due to the global financial crisis, a survey showed on Tuesday. “It is a very tough time for many of our dairy farmers,” Dairy Australia managing director Mike Ginnivan said in a statement. The medium and long-term outlook for the industry has improved despite the current conditions, with commodity prices stabilizing in recent weeks, adding to early indications of a recovery in demand.

“It is expected that as developing markets begin to recover next year and beyond, and dairy becomes more incorporated into developing countries’ diets, consumption should rise,” Ginnivan said.

According to Australian Associated Press, a national survey of 1,000 dairy farmers has found the proportion of farmers feeling positive about the future has dropped by 12 percent in a year, reflecting concerns about the impact of the economic slowdown on milk prices. —Xinhua

Chinese satellites begin UN environment, natural disaster service

Beijing, 31 March—Two environment and disaster monitoring satellites officially began operating Monday, China’s State Administration of Science Technology and Industry for National Defence (SASTIND) said.

The two small optical land observation satellites, Huanjing-1A and Huanjing-1B, would play an important role in providing data as part of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), a UN programme to provide such information universally, an unnamed SASTIND official told Xinhua. With advanced optical, thermal infrared and hyper-spectral remote sensing equipment, the satellites would greatly raise China’s ability to monitor the environment, Wu Xiaojing, Vice Minister of Environmental Protection, said at a ceremony to mark the event. During their trial services since late 2008, the satellites provided images for members of Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation and helped with management of the Australian bushfires, which claimed 210 lives in February. —Xinhua

Brazilian President expects housing package to generate jobs

Rio de Janeiro, 31 March—Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on Monday that he wishes the construction sector to be the propeller of the job generation in the country amid the international financial crisis.

Brazil’s unemployment rate hit 8.5 percent in February, which meant the unemployed population reached 1.9 million, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) announced last Thursday. In his weekly radio show “Breakfast with the President,” Lula said that the recently-launched housing package will reduce 14 percent of the housing deficit in the country and will help minimize the crisis effects.

The president announced a 34 billion reais (14.5 billion US dollars) housing sector package last week, which aims at building 1 million units of houses for the country’s poor people in the coming two years. Besides improving the living conditions for the poor, the housing programme is designed to boost public spending, which will generate as many as 1.5 million job opportunities and increase the purchasing power of the poor as a measure to tackle the financial crisis, said Lula at the programme’s launching ceremony last Wednesday. —Xinhua

Students ride bicycle against snow on a street in Rushan City, east China’s Shandong Province, on 30 March, 2009. A sleet hit the city on Monday, with precipitation at 4.7 millimetres by 8 am on Monday.—Xinhua

Mani stones are seen on the Jiana Mani Stone Mound in Xinchai Village, Yushu County, northwest China’s Qinghai Province, on 24 March, 2009.—Xinhua

People of Dong ethnic group attend a celebration for the traditional festival “Sanyuesan” in Sanjiang Dong Autonomous County, southwest China’s Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, on 29 March, 2009. —Xinhua

More rural short-term teachers wanted to boost employment, rural education

Beijing, 31 March—The Ministry of Education (MOE) has lifted its recruitment target for short-term rural teachers by 300 percent in just two weeks, in a move to both raise standards and siphon off some of the vast army of graduate jobless.

The latest target is 150,000 more than the ministry announced two weeks ago, when it said 50,000 short-term teachers, to be paid by a special central budget fund, were wanted in the rural areas in 2009.

The newly added teaching posts would be paid by local authorities, the ministry said Monday in a report posted on its website. It said the job opportunities would be mainly open to fresh college graduates.

The move was aimed at improving the quality of rural teachers, and to resolve the paradox that colleges graduates were facing gloomy employment prospects, whereas primary and middle schools in rural areas were desperately in need of qualified talents, the ministry said. —Xinhua

GM to consider option of bankruptcy protection

Chicago, 31 March—General Motors (GM) said on Monday it does not rule out the possibility of filing for a bankruptcy protection. US President Barack Obama announced details of the auto industry rescue package at the White House Monday, giving the biggest US auto maker 60 days to restructure further. “Our strong preference is to complete this restructuring out of court. However, GM will take whatever steps are necessary to successfully restructure the company, which could include a court-supervised process,” GM said in a statement. Obama said that company creditors, shareholders, workers, dealers and suppliers will be expected to make more sacrifices. His administration may use bankruptcy filings to purge the ailing companies of their biggest problems, including bondholder debt and retiree health-care costs. —Xinhua

Australian Associated Press
China’s manned space flight team rewarded US Space Achievement Award

COLORADO SPRINGS, 31 March — The team of China’s Shenzhou-7 manned space flight mission, which marked a number of “firsts” for the Chinese space programme in a single mission, was rewarded Monday the 2009 Space Achievement Award from the US Space Foundation. A delegation from China led by Dr Zhou Jianping, chief designer of the China Manned Space Program, and Taikonaut Zhai Zhigang accepted the award at the opening ceremony of the 25th National Space Symposium, a Space Foundation-sponsored annual gathering of the global space community, in Colorado Springs. Dr Zhou will also participate in the symposium’s panel discussion on 2 April where he will discuss China’s current and future plans for manned space flight.

“Shenzhou-7 mission was a significant leap ahead for China’s space program,” said Elliot Pulham, chief executive officer of the Space Foundation.—Internet

Three killed, one injured in US shooting

WASHINGTON, 31 March—At least three were killed and one injured in a shooting incident in Largo, Florida, on Monday, said police.

According to the sheriff office in Pinellas County, police arrived in a house near Tampa Bay as response to a report and found a woman inside calling for help. Police officers broke into the house from the back door and found three bodies whose identities remained undisclosed.

The woman, who suffered at least one bullet wound, has been transported to hospital, said police, without releasing other details.

However, police suspected that the shooting was a possible murder-suicide.

It was the third shooting incident since this week, following a shooting spree a nursing home in Carthage, North Carolina on Sunday morning, leaving eight dead and three others wounded, and another case in a townhouse in Santa Clara, California, on Sunday night killing six, including two children.—Internet

Wisconsin jewellery robbers fleeced as they flee

Two robbers leaving a Milwaukee jewelry store with cash and gems didn’t get far with the loot — another group of thieves robbed them as the pair left the crime scene. Police Lt Thomas Welch says a fight broke out in the street on Wednesday before the groups got in vehicles and a chase ensued.

Welch says police officers pulled over both vehicles and arrested four people, including the original two robbers, ages 40 and 31, and two men from the second group, of ages 22 and 27. All four are from Illinois.

But he says police didn’t recover any cash or jewellery and are searching for more suspects.

A mostly empty train runs in the tourism tunnel in Shanghai, China. Communist leaders worry about rising job losses amid a trade slump that saw Chinese exports fall 25.7 percent in February from a year earlier. They have promised to spend heavily to create jobs and boost exports.

A mostly empty train runs in the tourism tunnel in Shanghai, China. Communist leaders worry about rising job losses amid a trade slump that saw Chinese exports fall 25.7 percent in February from a year earlier. They have promised to spend heavily to create jobs and boost exports.

Six shot dead in murder-suicide in Silicon Valley city

SAN FRANCISCO, 31 March — Six people, including three children, were shot and killed with a seventh critically injured late Sunday evening in an apparent murder-suicide in Santa Clara, a city in the Silicon Valley, local media reported on Monday.

The identities of the victims have not been released although an Indian passport was found inside the home.

The suspected shooter, a man in his 40s, was found dead inside the house and there were two handguns used in the killings, Santa Clara Police Captain Mike Sellers was quoted as saying.

“It does appear as though they (the victims) were related,” Sellers said. “But don’t exactly know how. We’re trying to sort out who is who.”

A Colorado couple says they have so much natural gas in their water they can light it on fire, reports CBS4 Denver’s Shaun Boyd. Jesse and Aimee Ellsworth, of Ft Lupton, a tiny city north of Denver, say the gas has been leaking into their water well from a nearby gas well for the last six months.

Ellsworth. Her home is located in a rural area within a half mile of eight natural gas wells.

The Colorado Oil and Gas Commission says it’s tried to find the origin of the leak. Director Dale Neslin says "We’ve looked at well compilation matches, done pressure testing and we’ve not been able to find the well that appears to be causing the problem."

A mostly empty train runs in the tourism tunnel in Shanghai, China. Communist leaders worry about rising job losses amid a trade slump that saw Chinese exports fall 25.7 percent in February from a year earlier. They have promised to spend heavily to create jobs and boost exports.

"It crashed, made noises. I thought this isn’t normal." She says tests found explosive levels of the gas in her basement, bathroom and by her water well. “I’m jittery all the time” says...
Buthidaung Township enjoys economic growth

Inspired by the information that Buthidaung Township's summer paddy sown acreage reached over 1200, accounting for one-third of that of the whole Rakhine State, we made a tour of the state recently.

It was considered previously that Buthidaung Township being surrounded by high and long Mayyu mountain range along with a salty river, cultivation of summer paddy, cold season crops and kitchen crops would not prove successful in the region. Just as we arrived at the foot of the mountain range, we were greeted by the 200-acre summer paddy field, which was like a huge green carpet.

We also found green and lush plantations of edible oil crops, kitchen crops and hemp. Among the paddy and egg-plant pitches were live canals. Mayyu mountain range is a rocky one and its soil is only about two inches thick. So, the Irrigation Department and NGOs in collaboration constructed 17 dams and 178 lakes in the township for the agricultural purpose. Now, the township can grow crops on a commercial scale all-year round.

We learnt that a farmer with a two-acre farmland could grow monsoon paddy, then cold season crops, and summer paddy on his farm, so it meant he had a six-acre farmland; and that 353 farmers grew crops in 600 acres with the triple-cropping pattern in Letwe-det Byinshei village.

A local farmer said that he had 20 acres of farmlands and conducted a triple-cropping pattern; that the year before, the per acre yield of his summer paddy fields stood at 123 baskets; and that the per acre yield of his summer paddy yield was expected to meet at least 130 baskets that year.

On our way to Sai-Tin Hydropower Project, we found thriving plantations of cold season crops and summer paddy along the Sai-Tin River. The chairman of Sittway District Peace and Development Council explained that the project on completion would be able to generate 75.5 megawatt or 236 million kilowatt hours a year. Due to the project, many local people in Kanyinchaung village-tract and Yaybu village will get job opportunities and will be able to enjoy better living conditions.

The manager of the township Myanmar Agriculture Service said that Buthidaung Township had cultivated 11,228 acres of summer paddy, exceeding the target of 11,178 acres; that some more fields would be put under paddy; that mostly, the farmers chose local species of Yadana Aung paddy strain; that the summer paddy per acre yield was 78 baskets the year before, and it would increase in 2009; that the per acre yield of 79,706 acres of monsoon paddy was 73.08 baskets; that the region grew various crops through the triple-cropping pattern.

Agriculture Service said that Buthidaung Township so far has grown 18,942 acres of beans and pulses, 12,083 acres of edible oil crops, 7398 acres of kitchen crops, and 6572 acres of vegetables. The region grows various crops through the triple-cropping pattern. The potato and kitchen-crop plantations in Dahbaing Saya village of Dahbaing Saya village of Dahbaing Saya village-tract were found thriving thanks to the river water pumping project.

On our tour of Buthidaung Township, we witnessed a large potato and kitchen crop plantations in Dahbaing Saya Village.
Cooperation between nations, associations, businesses, …
(from page 1)

Myanmar witnessed unprecedented natural disaster “Nargis cyclone” in May 2008. Moreover, it had to experience the financial crisis to a certain extent which caused a great impact on global nations since October 2008. Both the volume of export and prices have been on the decline as demand for the goods has become lower. Meantime, there has been a change in the currency exchanges in the nation, thereby resulting in destabilizations. Despite such difficulties and hardships, trade of the nation is making remarkable progress, he added.

Progress made in trade can be attributable to the concerted efforts of farmers and industrialists who are engaged in farming and productions sectors, he said.

Amidst the global financial crisis, the government has taken steps for traders to be able to do their business in a swift and smooth manner by issuing export and import licenses as early as possible and by relaxing procedures. Modernization was introduced in the border trade for traders to largely engage in border trade in addition to mercantile trade. And encouragement is being given partial export in order not to harm goods to be exported, for the demand for goods has been on the decrease.

Memorandums were drawn systematically in the process of bringing about right commodity and right prices after setting up of the purchasing depots in the nation, he disclosed.

Efforts are also being made for the private sectors to widely engage in export of rice which is an important item of agricultural produce. In the process, seeking of rice market and offering of foreign companies is being carried out through Myanmar embassies abroad while permission is being granted for export of rice to neighbouring though the border, he noted.

Therefore, traders should not be content with doing business with foreign companies and are to strive to be able to export Myanmar goods, deliver goods right down to end users and to actively take part in the task for boosting the export by sending the market seeking groups abroad. He said only when there is regular operation in cultivation, production and trading in the respective regions will the products be exported smoothly. He pointed out that there should be coordination and cooperation among producers, local merchants and major exporters. He said normally crops produced by farmers in their own ways are purchased from the market and they are exported. Arrangements are under way to provide the farmers with working capital to produce crops of high quality in cooperation with leading companies, member companies and local merchants. High quality crops and value-added products can be exported to the international market in the near future, he said. He urged the entrepreneurs to take part in the efforts to launch the good programme that benefits all the people.

Organic crops grown naturally get high price in the international market. Therefore efforts are to be made for more and more export of Myanmar organic crops. Most of the cultivable lands in Myanmar are normally organic and there is a better condition for production of organic crops. He spoke of the need to set targets for export of those crops in accord with the standard set accepted in the international market.

He urged the officials to make efforts for export of beans and pulses, rice, long staple cotton, rubber and physic nut as main export items. The government is building a basic foundation on surplus of food and boosting production of foodstuff and agricultural produce plays an important role in export sector of the State. The Prime Minister spoke at length on:
- extended cultivation and production of good quality rice, beans and pulses and other crops,
- establishment of seed companies that will distribute marketable high quality crops/seed,
- building of new rice mills and measures undertaken for improved milling process,
- export of value-added beans and pulses and other crops and
- distribution of cultivation methods and post-harvesting technology.

He said the government has been building economic infrastructures and giving encouragement to ensure participation of national entrepreneurs. Industrial zones have been established in important regions of the country. The government allows private industrialists to run the State-owned factories and workshops for development of the industrial sector, he continued.

He said Myanmar actively participates in international organizations such as ASEAN, BIMSTEC, GMS and ACMECS and promotes regional and international economic cooperation. Myanmar will join ASEAN Free Trade Area in 2015. Therefore it is necessary to manufacture high quality items in the industrial sector in accord with the standard set.

He urged the officials concerned to make endeavours for seeking new markets, boosting new export items and producing marketable products.

It is to avoid importing substandard goods and improper goods in the time of the global financial crisis, which can hurt public interest, he said, calling for boosting import of quality goods produced with advanced technologies apart from boosting production of import-substitute products for industrial development of the nation.

The UMFCCCI has to mobilize greater participation of its members in the economic activities the government is implementing in cooperation with its partners from the international community.
Cooperation between nations, associations, businesses, …

(from page 8)

The UMFCCI has to mobilize greater participation of its members in the economic activities the government is implementing in cooperation with its partners from the international community, and to get the members to keep in touch with international trade law, rules and regulations, code of conduct, and information about business and trade, he said.

The federation has been a strong one, as it has been able to mobilize 29 product-wise and category-wise associations, 16 state/division associations, and nine border merchants associations, totalling 54 brother associations and 18,333 members, he said, calling for sharpening the ability, business management skills and innovative calibers of the members in order that they will be able to catch up with international economic changes.

In particular, in the time of the global financial crisis, the federation needs to lay down long-term plans to be able to surmount new challenges, and sanctions intentionally put against the nation, and to safeguard the interest of the nation and the people and national entrepreneurs, he said.

He said that the government is implementing the democratic transition process step by step, as inspired by the people. The elections, the most important step for the future nation, will be held soon. He expressed his belief that the Road Map laid down for emergence of the Union of Myanmar will soon be brought to fruition with harmonious participation of national entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister urged the federation and members to preserve their integrity, to participate in the activities with a sense of nationalistic spirit for the economic growth of the nation, and strengthen the federation into a reliable organization with consolidated unity of the members with a natural aptitude for doing business.

Prime Minister General Thein Sein posed for a documentary photo together with the commander, the ministers, the deputy ministers, the president, CEC members, executives and advisers of the federation.

He cordially greeted the attendees.

The Prime Minister and party and guests observed the photos on activities of the federation and brother associations.

MNA

Yangon Command Commander Brig-Gen Win Myint and wife being welcomed by Ambassador of Bangladesh Major General Abu Roshide Rokonuddawla, ndc, psc, at the reception to mark the 38th Anniversary National and Independence Day of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh in Yangon on 31st March, 2009.—MNA

Industry-2 Minister receives HMT officials

Minister Vice-Admiral Soe Thein receives Mr. P. Prakash and Mr. I. G Kandaraji of Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT) International Ltd.—MNA

U Nyan Lynn presents credentials to ASEAN Secretary-General

Nay Pyi Taw, 31 March—Myanmar Permanent Representative to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) U Nyan Lynn, currently Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Union of Myanmar to the Republic of Indonesia, presented his Credentials to His Excellency Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General of the ASEAN, on 23 March 2009 at the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta.—MNA

Technical Meeting on Mainstreaming Ageing begins

Yangon, 31 March—The Help Age International organized Technical Meeting on Mainstreaming Ageing at the Park Royal Hotel here this morning.

Deputy Director-General U Aung Tun Khang of the Social Welfare Department, Resident Representative of the Help Age International Mr Eduardo Klein, Chairperson Professor Dr Myint Myint Khin of the group for supporting elderly physicians, Expert Ms. Jo Wells, Policy and Programme Advisor on Ageing of UNHCR Ms Susan Erb, and representatives from 20 local and international social organizations on elder care attended the meeting.

Mr Eduardo Klein gave talks on elder care; Deputy Director-General U Aung Tun Khang, on programmes on national elder care in Myanmar; and Ms Jo Wells, on elder care methods.

The meeting continues tomorrow.

MNA
Boom in trade in 105th Mile Border Trade Zone

Article: Htein Lin (Myanma Alin); Photo: Aung Than (Mingala Taungnyunt)

(from page 16)
Chairman U Tun Min Zaw told the Myanma Alin daily, “Without mentioning Muse 105th Mile Border Trade Zone, I don’t think I can tell you about the development of Muse. The zone generated a lot of job opportunities for local people, so they are getting along in their businesses with higher living standard.”

U Than Win, Deputy Director, Border Trade Department.

In 1998, in compliance with the guidance of the Head of State on boosting the volume of Myanmar-China border trade, it was upgraded to a border trade zone with car parks, checkpoints and warehouses; and that on 11 April 2006, it became Muse 105th Mile Border Trade Zone.

He added that the purpose of the zone was to establish a large market in the nation; to export goods at handsome prices; to boost foreign exchange income by exporting value-added products; and to systematically transform the border trade into regular trade.

The 105th Mile Border Trade Zone is constituted with the offices of the Border Trade Department, the Internal Revenue Department, the Ministry of Immigration and Population, the Myanmar Economic Bank, and the Myanmar Police Force.

He said, “The annual turnover increased from over 500 million US dollars in 2005-2006 to over 800 million dollars in 2006-2007 and over 900 million dollars in 2007-2008.”

He said that thanks to the assistance of the North-East Command and local administrative bodies, and the effective management of the Ministry of Commerce, the zone would meet the targeted permission. So far, tens of thousands of tons of rice have been exported through the border trade. Export of corn has been doubled if compared with over 100,000 tons last year. The Myanmar-China border trade is making a good headway due to the management of the government. This financial year, the trade turnover has touched over 1800 million US dollars.

As a result, there has been a large number of job opportunities; regional development tasks are gathering momentum; and local people are in a position to enjoy higher living standard. The taxes and duties on goods to the nation are on the increase.

Border areas are now enjoying the taste of progress in the health, education, social and economic sectors in proportion to the development of the border trade.

In the zone, I found the fruit wholesale centre, and the marine products wholesale centre on the Myanmar side. When 10-wheel and 12-wheel trucks loaded with goods got under the substantial steel stage, traders bought the goods through the competitive bidding.

In interview, Chairman U Sai Maung Nyunt of the Fruit Wholesale Centre said, “We sell our goods at auction. We open our centre at 8 o’clock in the morning. Local and Chinese merchants come and buy goods. This season, watermelon, grape and musk melon are plentiful. We are trying for the convenience of both the sellers and the merchants. On average, 30 to 40 trucks of goods are on trade a day.”

Owner of Taw Win Fruit Wholesale Centre U Naing Tun said, “We sell our goods by the ton. Watermelon fetches about 1800 yuns if one ton amounts to about 3000 units, and it fetches only about 1400 to 1500 yuns if one ton amounts to about 4000 units. So, here, I would like to remind the growers to choose quality species to get good prices. There are 27 fruit wholesale centres in Muse 105th Mile Border Trade Centre.”

Deputy Director of the Border Trade Department U Than Win said that Myanmar-China border trade began at Kyugok, Pansai, Namkham, and Muse on 1 December 1988; that to boost trade volume and expedite the commodity flow, the government formed the Border Trade Department, and the border checkpoints in Kyugok, Pansai, Namkham, and Muse were shifted to 105th Mile in Mongyu Village, a strategic place.

The development of the border trade is in fact the results of the government’s manage-ment, close supervision of the North-East Command and local administrative organs, and stability and peace.

Translation: MS
Myanma Alin: 30-3-2009
French workers hold bosses at Caterpillar plant

PARIS, 31 March—Angry French workers facing layoffs at a Caterpillar factory briefly detained four of their bosses Tuesday at the US manufacturer’s plant in the Alps to protest job cuts, a regional official said.

It is the third time in the past few weeks that French workers have seized their bosses to protest job losses stemming from the global economic crisis.

Last week, workers at a 3M plant south of Paris held the company boss for two days, and earlier this month workers at a Sony plant held a similar protest.

In a new twist, the mayor of the small town of Pont-Saint-Esprit in southern France was prevented from leaving city hall by townspeople angry over municipal management amid the economic downturn. Phone calls to the mayor’s office went unanswered, but the local police confirmed there was a “crisis.”

Workers occupied parts of the Caterpillar plant in Grenoble on Tuesday morning and detained the managers. Police later moved in to clear out the seized areas and the managers were freed, said Chrystele Aubert, chief of communication for the regional government.—Internet

G20 summit to see various proposals to tackle financial crisis

BEIJING, 31 March—On the eve of the G20 summit slated for Thursday in London, major developed and developing countries have come up with a host of proposals for tackling the current financial crisis and economic downturn.

At the summit, participating leaders are expected to seek agreement on what fiscal and monetary measures should be adopted to restore growth, what regulatory changes are needed to make to the financial system, and how to reform such international organizations as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. While the two major economies in the G20 bloc, the US and the European Union (EU) share consensus over the above issues, they differ over which goes first and how to implement the measures.—Internet

Migrant boat sinks off Libya, hundreds feared dead

TRIPOLI (Libya), 31 March—An overcrowded boat packed with migrants capsized in stormy seas off the coast of Libya, killing at least 20 and leaving 200 missing and feared dead four days after the accident, officials said Tuesday.

The boat, which a Libyan police official said had a capacity of just 50, overturned Friday in high winds with about 250 on board. The bodies of six migrants pulled from the water on Sunday, at least three of them women, were laid out among piles of nets and frayed ropes on the deck of one of the fishing boats that took part in rescue efforts.

The boat capsized in 60-degree waters about 30 miles off the Libyan coast on the most heavily traveled route for illegal migrants trying to reach Italy. Laurence Hart, an official of The International Organization for Migration, told The Associated Press.—Internet

Seven babies sit in tummy tubs filled with water to cool down after a baby massage class held for young mothers at the tiny Italian island of Lampedusa on 24 March, 2009. The “cooling down” segment is to simulate a womb-like environment for the infants to experience the warmth and comfort.—Internet

Britain, Mexico seek financial crisis coordination

LONDON, 31 March—Britain and Mexico committed themselves on Monday to coordinating a response with other countries to restore growth, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Mexican President Felipe Calderon said in a joint statement.

“We commit to a continued effort to ensure a swift and strong recovery, stimulating our economies in the most effective ways possible in coordination with other key economies across the globe,” they said after meeting in London. “We recognize that such interventions should promote job creation, protect the interests of taxpayers and savers, and avoid undermining the principles of free trade and open markets.” Brown and Calderon said they wanted to see a commitment made by global policy-makers in Washington in November not to raise any new trade barriers reaffirmed and strengthened at the Group of 20 (G-20) summit in London this week.—Internet
GM CEO Rick Wagoner to step down

NEW YORK, 31 March—General Motors Corp Chief Executive Rick Wagoner will resign from the top job at the struggling automaker, a person familiar with the matter said on Sunday, just a day before the US Government makes a key announcement on whether it will extend more aid.

The person, who declined to be identified because the decision has not been made public yet, did not provide further detail. Wagoner came under fire for his stewardship of GM late last year when US lawmakers provided further detail. Wagoner came under fire for his stewardship of GM late last year when US lawmakers said he intended to stay on, and GM’s board has undergone a groundswell of criticism over its lack of action.

The Department of Transportation spent $75 billion to rescue GM in 2008, according to the report by Automobile Club ACI and road agency ANAS, the result of controls run on 22 Italian tunnels so far showed a “critical scenario”, only one of three met safety standards, compared to eight out of ten in the rest of Europe.

The report said 78 percent of Italian tunnels are hazardous compared to 36 percent in other European countries.

Lack of security in the tunnels is mostly attributable to inefficient fire and ventilation systems, badly identified escape tunnels, poorly managed traffic flows, missing traffic lights and ineffective management in case of emergencies.—Internet

Ten injured in US firetrucks collision

HOUSTON, 31 March—Ten people, including eight firefighter, were injured after two firetrucks collided and one of them flipped onto a car in Houston, Texas, local media reported on Monday.

The crash occurred around 11 am when the trucks were on their way to the site of a possible fire, according to newspaper Houston Chronicle. The pumper truck, which was northbound, struck the ladder truck, which was heading east, from the side and the ladder truck rolled onto the front half of a white Infiniti sedan, witnesses said.

A firefighter was thrown from one of the trucks and suffered serious injuries, and an occupant of the sedan also was seriously injured, said District Chief Tommy Dowdy.

All the injured were taken to hospitals, he said.—MNA/Xinhua

US report says Online crime surging in recession

BOSTON, 31 March—Fraud on the Internet reported to US authorities increased by 33 per cent last year, decision for the first time in three years, and is surging this year as the recession deepens, federal authorities said on Monday.

Internet fraud losses reported in the United States reached a record high 264.6 million US dollars in 2008, according to a report released on Monday from the Internet Fraud Complaint Centre, run by the FBI and the National White Collar Crime Centre.

Online scams originating from across the globe—from mostly from the United States, Canada, Britain, Nigeria and China — are gathering steam this year, after a nearly 50 per cent increase in complaints reported to US authorities in March alone. “2009 is shaping up to be a very busy year in terms of cyber-criminal activities,” the report’s author, John Kane, told reporters in a telephone briefing. —MNA/Reuters

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Fish oil capsules “no remedy” for heart attack

BEIJING, 31 March—Fish oil pills don’t reduce the risk of heart attack! They don’t make any difference to heart patients, says a German study.

The study, released Monday at an American College of Cardiology conference, tested a 1-gramme daily dose of a prescription version of highly purified omega-3 fatty acid — the “good fat” contained in certain oily fish that is thought to lower risk, Senges said.

Researchers led by Dr. Jochen Senges of the University of Heidelberg gave fish oil or dummy capsules to more than 3,800 people who had suffered a heart attack in the previous two weeks. About 90 percent were already receiving all the medicines recommended to prevent a second attack, including aspirin, anti-clotting and cholesterol drugs.

After a year, it made no difference whether these patients took fish oil or dummy capsules. In both groups, fewer than 2 percent had suffered sudden cardiac death, 4 percent had another heart attack, and fewer than 2 percent had suffered a stroke.

If recent heart attack patients are already getting good care, “there is almost nothing you can do better on top of this” to further lower risk, Senges said.

The prescription version used in the study, sold as Omnacor and Lovaza in the United States and as Zodin in Europe, is a highly purified and standardized form, different from what many consumers buy off the shelf.—Internet

China shines at world’s largest audiovisual market

CANNES, 31 March — China is taking a high profile at the 46th MIPTV which opened in this Riviera city Monday, with a delegation comprising more than 40 companies striving to break into the European and American market for television programmes.

MIPTV trade fair, the world’s largest audiovisual market, spotlights China, organizing industry panels, events and private receptions in a “Focus on China” programme on Tuesday, the China Day.

CCTV-CITVC, CTV-Media, Hunan Satellite TV and several excellent independent producers including Jiang Toon Animation and Zhejiang Huace Film and TV, have made up of a powerful Capital TV Drama Producers Association and are jointly participating in MIPTV. Many of these companies will launch new international catalogues at MIPTV, including TV drama “The Legend of Bruce Lee,” documentary “Dun Huang, The Pearl on the Silk Road” and animation “Monkey King.”

“Our major aim at MIPTV is to develop television program exchanges and cooperation with other countries,” Tian Jin, deputy director of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) said in an interview with MIPTV News.—Internet

New snowstorm hammers northern Plains states

BISMARCK, 31 March—The second major snow storm to hit the northern Plains in a week dropped more than a foot of snow on Monday, closing hundreds of miles of highway and shutting government offices and schools. At least five deaths were blamed on the storm.

High wind expected from the storm was the biggest worry for flood-weather Fargo on the eastern edge of North Dakota.

The National Weather Service posted blizzard warnings across sections of the Dakotas, Wyoming and Montana. It said more than 16 inches of snow had fallen by early Monday night in the Bismarck area, only about 2 inches away from tying the record 101.06 inches set during the winter of 1996-1997.

“it’s wrapping around. We’ll get a lot more,” weather service meteorologist Len Peterson said in Bismarck. “It’s not moving very fast in any direction.”

Bismarck closed nonessential city offices on Monday and schools were closed there and in nearby Mandan.—Internet

Computer security community braces for possible worm attack

SAN FRANCISCO, 31 March—Government and private security teams are in a rush to get tooled up for possible new attacks by a computer worm that threatens to carry on disruptive activities on 1 April.

The Conficker worm, also known as Downadup or Kido, first appeared last November and is estimated to have infected millions of computers worldwide.

By exploiting a vulnerability in Microsoft’s Windows operating system, the worm can infect users’ computers and spread to other computers across a network automatically, without human interaction.

Computer security experts believed that a new variant of Conficker, which surfaced this year, on 1 April could contact 500 of 30,000 randomly generated domain names to receive updated copies or other malicious commands.

A domain name is the address of a website that can help connect computers on the Internet. Previous Conficker variants were written to connect to 250 domain names.

In preparation for the threat of Conficker, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on Monday released a tool that can detect whether a computer is infected by the worm.

The tool can be used by federal government, commercial vendors, state and local governments, and critical infrastructure owners as well as operators to scan their networks for the Conficker worm, the DHS said in a statement.

4,000 isolated in Australia by flood waters

Canberra, 31 March—Australian emergency services said on Tuesday almost 4,000 people are expected to be isolated by rising floodwaters following heavy rain on the New South Wales’s (NSW) mid-north coast.

“A band of torrential rain has hit the area now and is expected to clear later tonight, before returning again tomorrow,” Emergency Services Minister Steve Whan told parliament.

Up to 100 State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers were assisting, Whan was quoted by Australian Associated Press as said.

Whan said the Bellinger Valley communities of Kalang and Darkwood, both with populations of about 500, have already been cut off.

Bellingen and North Bellingen, which boasts a combined population of just under 3,000, are expected to become isolated on Tuesday with rain continuing to fall. The same area was hit by floodwaters only six weeks ago.—Internet

Man killed in Puerto Rico tourist zone

SAN JUAN, 31 March—A 21-year-old man died after being beaten, tied up in public and choked with a belt in a tourist district of Puerto Rico, police said on Monday.

Three men were arrested but authorities were seeking “many more” who apparently either witnessed or took part in the attack, detective Angel Rivera Casillas said. The other suspects fled before police arrived.

Rivera said several aggressors beat and tied Omar Rodriguez Almodovar in front of witnesses outside a bar, then dragged him into the restroom of the 101 Lounge and choked him with a belt. The motive behind the attack on the Puerto Rican man was unknown, Rivera said.

The killing took place about 2:30 am Saturday in Isla Verde, a beach-side strip in the San Juan suburb of Carolina that has some of Puerto Rico’s top hotels.

Police were called but authorities blamed security guards and bystanders for not doing more to halt the slaying or provide more information to investigators.—Internet
**SPORTS**

**Terrific’ Barcelona impress Ferguson**

**MANCHESTER, 31 March**—Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson has highlighted Barcelona as the biggest threat to his side’s chances of retaining their Champions League title.

Both sides have managed to avoid one another in the quarter-finals, with United up against Porto and Barcelona facing Bayern Munich, and cannot now meet until the May 27 final in Rome.

Also through to the last eight are United’s English rivals Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool.

But although Liverpool thrashed United 4-1 in the

**Premier League this month and saw off Real Madrid in the last 16 of the Champions League, Ferguson said Barcelona were the team to beat.**

**Van der Vaart denies Chelsea rumours**

**MADRID, 31 March—Real Madrid’s Dutch midfielder Rafael Van der Vaart on Monday denied rumours linking him with Chelsea.**

“I hear there are rumours about me wanting to go to Chelsea. But I have never said that. I have not yet decided on my future. I don’t know anything about it,” he said on his official website.

“At Real Madrid a lot of things are going to happen in the summer. A new president and maybe a new coach. So I’ll just wait and see,” British press reports have linked the 26-year-old playmaker with a move to Stamford Bridge this summer.

Real signed the Dutch international from Bundesliga side Hamburg last summer in a deal reportedly worth 249 million euros.

**Hull lodge Fabregas case with FA**

**LONDON, 31 March—Hull said Monday they had submitted their case to the Football Association regarding allegations that assistant manager Brian Horton was spat at by Arsenal club captain Cesc Fabregas.**

**Hull’s case relates to the aftermath of their 2-1 loss to Arsenal at the Emirates Stadium in an FA Cup quarter-final.**

**Arsenal club captain Cesc Fabregas**

**Buenos Aires, 31 March—Lionel Messi said that after Juan Roman Riquelme had resigned to the Argentine soccer national team, he does not feel he is the “leader” of the team, local press said on Monday.**

**Messi denies he is the leader of Argentine national team**

**Buenos Aires, 31 March—Lionel Messi looks at his shot during a World Cup 2010 qualifying soccer match against Venezuela in Buenos Aires on 28 March, 2009.**

**Internet**

**Argentina’s Lionel Messi looks at his shot during a World Cup 2010 qualifying soccer match against Venezuela in Buenos Aires on 28 March, 2009.**

**Internet**

**Serena moves on, Dementieva out of Miami WTA tennis**

**WASHINGTON, 31 March—World number one Serena Williams fought to full sets to down China’s Zheng Jie 7-5, 5-7 and 6-3 for a quarter-finals spot at the Miami WTA hard court tennis tournament on Monday.**

**However, Russian fourth seed Elena Dementieva made a surprise exit at the hands of Danish teenager Caroline Wozniacki 7-5, 6-4.**

**Serena’s sister Venus came from a set down to beat Poland’s Agnieszka Radwanska 4-6, 6-1 and 6-4, keeping alive the chances of all Williams semi-final.**

**Serena broke Zheng’s first two serves to take a 5-0 lead in the first set, but she lost control of the court since then and gave up two serves to level at 5-5, before she won the set with her powerful serve.**

**Both players again struggled to hold serve in the second set and it was level at 5-5 when Zheng produced another break and held serve to even the match at one set all.**

**Serena finally found form in the deciding match to finish in style with three aces to win the final game to love and claim her place in the last eight.**

**The 18-year-old Wozniacki came back from a break down in each set to reach her sixth quarter-final of the season.**

**Europe’s fight for 13 World Cup places**

**PARIS, 31 March—Europe’s fight for 13 World Cup places is hot up on Wednesday with seven months to go before the end of qualifying for South Africa 2010.**

**Nine group winners and four runners up from a two-leg play-off slot into place at the momentous, 32-nation football jamboree from June 11 to July 11 next year, the first finals to be held in Africa.**

**Reigning world champions Italy have a top-of-the-table clash with Republic of Ireland in Bari, 1998 winners France complete a double-header at home to Lithuania and European champions Spain meet Turkey in Istanbul.**

**England, fresh from their 4-0 friendly thrashing of Slovakia at the weekend, return to World Cup action with another Wembley date against Ukraine.**

**Holland, who impressed on Saturday with a 3-0 win over Scotland in Amsterdam, host Macedonia.**

**Italian coaching legends Marcello Lippi and Giovanni Trapattoni will be on opposite benches as Italy host Ireland.**

**Italy lead group eight by two points from Ireland following Saturday’s matches in which the world champions won 2-0 in Montenegro and a late own goal from Kevin Kilbane cost the Irish a home win against Bulgaria.**

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The space shuttle Atlantis approaches the launch pad after leaving the Vehicle Assembly Building at Kennedy Space Center in Canaveral, Fla on 31 March, 2009. Atlantis is scheduled for launch 12 May on a mission to service the Hubble Space Telescope.—INTERNET

Oil spill spotted in Finnish Baltic

Helsinki, 31 March—A slick of light fuel oil dozens of miles (kilometres) long has been found in the Baltic archipelago in southwestern Finland, officials said on Monday.

Reijo Salminen, division head of the Finnish Rescue Services, said ship traffic was the likely source given the slick’s location in shipping lanes stretching from the harbour of Naantali to the Aland Islands.

“The oil is in the ice, but it has not hit shore yet,” Salminen said, adding that the lightness of the oil grade should help once a clean-up begins. He also said sunshine should help to make it evaporate. A spokesman for the coast guard said the service would make a surveillance flight later in the morning to assess the situation.—MNA/Reuters

WEATHER

Tuesday, 31 March, 2009

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hr MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Kachin, Shan State, and upper Sagang, Mandalay and Taninthayi Divisions, weather has been partly cloudy in remaining areas. Day temperatures were (6°C) below March average temperatures in Kachin State and upper Sagain Division, (3°C) below March average temperatures in lower Sagain Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above March average temperatures in Kayin, Mon States, Bago and Ayeyawaddy Divisions and about March average temperatures in the remaining areas. The significant Day temperatures was Minbu (41°C). The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Putao (0.63) inch, Machanbaw (0.39) inch and Lashio (0.12) inch. Maximum temperature on 30-3-2009 was 102°F. Minimum temperature on 31-3-2009 was 70°F. Relative humidity at (09:30) hours MST on 31-3-2009 was 68%. Total sunshine hours on 30-3-2009 was (10.2) hrs approx.

Rainfall on 31-3-2009 was (Nil) at Mingladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2009 was (Tri) at Mingladon, (0.20) inch at Kaba-Aye and (0.04) inch at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) mph from Southwest at (21:30) hours MST on 30-3-2009.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 1st April 2009: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Kachin, Chin, Shan, Rakhine and Mon States, Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway, Bago and Taninthayi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions. Degree of certainty is (60%). State of the seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

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

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 1-4-2009: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 1-4-2009: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 1-4-2009: Occasional rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (40%).
Shwepyitha Industrial Zone-3 operating in high gear

Lt-Gen Myint Swe of Ministry of Defence visits Shwepyitha Industrial Zone-3 and gives instructions on its development.

YANGON, 31 March — Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence visited Shwepyitha Industrial Zone-3 in Insein Township yesterday and gave instructions to responsible personnel on development of the zone, improvement of technology and boosting the manufacturing of import-substitute items.

During the visit to the factory of Fair Sun Industry Co Ltd in the industrial zone, the director of the company reported to Lt-Gen Myint Swe on production of machines and patterns for foundry business. After hearing the report, Lt-Gen Myint Swe gave necessary instructions to officials concerned and inspected the production process of the factory.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Myint Swe went to the biscuit factory of Myanbisco Food Industries Co Ltd and gave instructions on production of quality biscuits meeting the set standard.

At Toyo Battery Factory of Proven Technology Industry Co Ltd, Lt-Gen Myint Swe heard reports presented by responsible personnel of the factory on manufacturing various kinds of batteries and export of the items, and conducted Lt-Gen Myint Swe and party around the factory. On his tour of inspection, Lt-Gen Myint Swe discussed with responsible personnel matters related to boosting production of batteries.—MNA

Boom in trade in 105th Mile Border Trade Zone

Chinese merchants purchasing watermelons at auction in Muse 105th Mile Border Trade Zone.

On arrival at Muse, I gazed awestruck at the remarkable progress of Muse, a border town, with fine houses, buildings, large hotels, lodging houses, supermarkets, and shops on both sides of the road. The road was found very busy, coping with a heavy traffic the whole day. Muse night bazaar was bustling with shoppers.

When asked about the town, Muse District Peace and Development Council (See page 10)