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The New Light of Myanmar

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■ **To approve the State Constitution is a national duty of the entire people today. Let us all cast "Yes" vote in the national interest.**

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing attend merit sharing ceremony for opening of Jivitadana Sangha Hospital (Mandalay)

***Senior General Than Shwe inspects Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Mandalay.* — MNA**

NAY PYI TAW, 18 April — The merit sharing ceremony for opening of Jivitadana Sangha Hospital (Mandalay) built on Kandawgyi Lake Ring Road in Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Division was held at the Mingalar Pandal in the compound of the hospital this morning.

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing attended the ceremony and offered provisions to members of the Sangha.

It was also attended by State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, member Sayadaws of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, State Central Working Committee of the Sangha and Division Sangha Nayaka Committee and Ovadacariya Sayadaws of Jivitadana Sangha Hospital (Mandalay) and invited Sayadaws, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, Secreatry-1 of the SPDC Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, members of the SPDC Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Soe Thein, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, Maj-Gen Khin Zaw of the Ministry of Defence, Adjutant-General Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, Chairman of Mandalay Division PDC Commander of Central Command Brig-Gen Tin Ngwe, Chairman of Sagaing Division PDC Commander of North-West Command Brig-Gen Myint Soe, the ministers, senior military officers, the deputy ministers, the Mandalay Mayor, departmental heads of the SPDC Office and the ministries, Division/District/Township level officials in Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions, the chairman of management committee of the hospital

(See page 8)

Four political objectives

* Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
* National reconsolidation
* Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
* Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

Four economic objectives

* Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
* Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
* Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
* The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

Four social objectives

* Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
* Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
* Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
* Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.

PERSPECTIVES

Saturday, 19 April, 2008

Grow more trees each year for greening and economic growth

Weather depends much on forests. Stream water can be enjoyed only if forests are lush and green. The mottos of the Ministry of Forestry say so indicating the benefits of forests gained after controlling the climate.

Global warming is causing more and more deforestation, resulting in climate change. Moreover, the world is suffering such natural disasters as soil depletion, floods and desertification.

Therefore, many countries are growing more trees for reforestation. Even some countries are trying to grow trees in deserts in order to prevent desertification. Myanmar on its part is preserving its land, water and forest resources. Forest reserves, wildlife and natural forests are being conserved in accord with the forest rules and regulations. The Ministry of Forestry and related ministries are establishing forest reserves, natural forests and teak plantations region-wise.

As the 13 arid zone greening project is being implemented extensively, there have been thriving forest plantations. Now, the Ministry of Forestry and the Arid Zone Greening Department of the Korea International Cooperation Agency are taking measures to carry out arid zone greening tasks in Central Myanmar including NyaungU Township.

Trees including teak are not only reliable for national economy but also beneficial to the greening of the country. So, extended growing of trees each year under the cooperation between the Ministry of Forestry and the local people will generate temperate climate and help green the natural environment.

***In memory of late Daw Saw Tin of 12th Street in Lanmadaw Township, Yangon, the family donates K 100,000 to the Hninzigon Home for the Aged through a responsible person of the Home recently.*—H**

People's Desire

* **Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views**
* **Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation**
* **Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State**
* **Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy**

Meritorious deeds performed in Mandalay on New Year Day

YANGON, 18 April — People in Mandalay performed meritorious deeds at pagodas in Mandalay yesterday (Myanmar New Year Day).

Members of the Sangha recited Parittas on streets and wards and people set fish and birds free and paid respects to aged people in Mandalay.

Families of officers and other ranks of the Central Command released 100,000 fish into the moat.

Members of the Sangha recited Parittas at the City Hall and Chairman of the Mandalay City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Phone Zaw Han and officials set free 1,000 birds and release 90,000 fish into the moat. They also poured Paritta water into the tank of Malun Water Supply Station.

MNA

***Devotees and monks paste gold foils on Maha Muni Buddha Image in Mandalay.* — MNA**

Myanmar Delegation back from Lao PDR

NAY PYI TAW, 18 April—The Myanmar Delegation led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu arrived back here after attending the Bilateral Consultation Meeting between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar and the Lao People's Democratic Republic from 10 to 16 April 2008 in Vientiane and Luang Prabang at the invitation of Mr Bounkeut Sangsomsak, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Held on 11 April 2008, the meeting covered matters on bilateral cooperation sector-wise, and both sides — Myanmar and Laos—reviewed progress of previous cooperation and explored ways and means to enhance cooperation in the future.

In Vientiane, the Myanmar Deputy Foreign Minister paid a courtesy call on Dr Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR.

The Myanmar delegation also visited Luang Prabang where they participated in the Lao Traditional Water Festival, studied Tourism Promotion and discussed designation of the sister cities between Bagan, Myanmar, and Luang Prabang, Lao PDR, with the Laotian officials concerned.

The Deputy Minister paid courtesy calls on Mr Thongsing Thammavong, President of the National Assembly and Mr Somsavat Lengsavad, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao PDR.

The Myanmar Delegation led by Deputy Minister U Kyaw Thu returned to Myanmar on 16 April 2008. He was accompanied by U Naing Htoon, Assistant Director of Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

MNA

Deputy Minister U Kyaw Thu meeting with Dr Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Lao PDR.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

One in five US veterans suffer from mental problems

WASHINGTON, 17 April —One in five US veterans who returned from the Iraq or Afghanistan war suffered from post traumatic stress disorder or major depression, but only slightly more than half have sought treatment, said a report released on Thursday.

According to a new Rand Corporation report, nearly 20 percent or 300,000 US troops reported symptoms of the mental problems, about 19 percent reported have experiencing a possible traumatic brain injury in the war fields, and 7 percent reported both of the two problems.

However, most veterans said that they do not seek treatment for fear it would harm their careers. Among those who sought help from doctors, only half have received treatment that, however, was inadequate to solve their problems, it said.

"There is a major health crisis facing those men and women who have served our nation in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Terri Tanielian, the co-leader of the first research of its kind. "Unless they receive appropriate and effective care for these mental health conditions, there will be long-term consequences for them and for the nation."

MNA/Xinhua

Residents observe the scene of an overnight airstrike in Baghdad, Iraq, on 17 April, 2008. US helicopters struck a residential complex in Habibiyah, a Shiite dominated area on the edge of the militia stronghold of Sadr City, killing two civilians and wounding 6 others, police said.—INTERNET

In this photo released by the Japan Air Self-Defence Force, supply goods are unloaded from a Japan Air Self-Defence Force transport plane at an airport in Iraq in March 2004. A Japanese court declared on 17 April, 2008, that the country's air mission in Iraq violated the constitution, but rejected a lawsuit against the dispatch.—INTERNET

Mexico, India sign energy, aviation accords

MEXICO CITY, 17 April —Mexico and India signed two cooperation accords Thursday on renewable energy and air transport.

Indian President Pratibha Devisingh Patil began a four-day official visit to Mexico Thursday.

During a ceremony at the Los Pinos presidential palace in Mexico City, Mexican President Felipe Calderon said, "India holds an important place in Mexico's strategy for the Asia Pacific region."

The renewable energy accord sets the basis for sustainable cooperation, while the other accord establishes a juridical framework for air services and will help increase bilateral investment and tourism.

In his speech, Calderon said infrastructure, small- and medium-sized enterprises, automobile production, agriculture, pharmaceuticals and information technology are the sectors in which Mexico is most interested.—*MNA/Xinhua*

Military aircraft crashes in Hungary

BUDAPEST, 17 April — A *MiG-29* military aircraft crashed on Thursday in Kecskemet, Central Hungary while it attempted to land, a Hungarian Defence Ministry spokesman said.

The pilot was catapulted and was in good condition, and he was sent to hospital for observation, Istvan Bocskai, spokesman of the Defence Ministry said.

The pilot was experienced and completed this type of maneuver many times before, he said.

Up to now, a total of three Hungarian *MiG-29* military aircraft crashed.

In 1998, a *MiG-29* military aircraft crashed, killing the pilot. In 2005, another *MiG-29* military aircraft crashed, fortunately the pilot survived.—*MNA/Xinhua*

Air force aircraft crashes in E Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 17 April — An air force aircraft crashed in eastern Pakistan on Thursday and casualties were feared, local TV channel Geo reported.

The *F-7* aircraft came crashed near Faisalabad, a city in the eastern Punjab province, said the report.

The aircraft took off from Risalpur in North West Frontier Province and came down ten minutes later.

The cause of the incident is not immediately known and a rescue team has rushed to the site of the crash.

MNA/Xinhua

ElBaradei says Iran uranium enrichment progress slow

BERLIN, 17 April — Iran is making only slow progress in enriching uranium and centrifuges used in the process are just older-model devices, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in Berlin Thursday.

"The rate of progress so far has not been very fast" at southern Iran's Natanz plant, IAEA General Secretary Mohamed ElBaradei said after talks with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

He said Iran had 3,300 or 3,400 centrifuges of the 1970s vintage P-1 type in the Natanz enrichment hall, up from 3,000 at the end of last year.

"They are not moving very much," ElBaradei said. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on 8 April that Iran had tested more sophisticated centrifuges, which were smaller in volume while the efficiency was five times higher.

MNA/Xinhua

Unidentified explosion kills one, injures two in Egypt

CAIRO, 17 April — An explosion of an unidentified object in northern Egypt killed one and injured two others on Thursday, the official *MENA* news agency reported.

The explosion in the central Nile Delta governorate of Qalyubiya, some 40 km north of Cairo, killed Khaled Hassan Zaki and wounded his two brothers Mohammed and Ibrahim, said the report.

A house collapsed in the explosion and a neighboring building was also damaged.

MNA/Xinhua

A missile is displayed during the military parade marking the National Army Day in Teheran, Iran, on 17 April, 2008. To mark the annual festival, Iranian military forces layed out their elite weapons including dozens of fighter jets, missiles and tanks.
XINHUA

China starts work on Beijing-Shanghai express railway

BEIJING, 18 April — The Beijing-Shanghai high-speed railway with a designed speed of 350 kilometers per hour started construction on Friday.

The 1,318-km line, upon its completion in five years, would reduce the trip between the two metropolitans to five hours and lift the one-way transport capacity to 80 million passengers and more than 100 million tons of cargo annually, said the Ministry ofRailway.

Attending a ceremony here, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao announcedthe formal start of the construction.

With an investment of 220.9 billion yuan (31.6 billion US dollars), the railway was the most expensive construction project China had started since 1949. Trains would run at speeds of 350 km per hour. Last Friday, the country's first domestically produced train, able to reach 350 kilometers per hour, rolled off the production line.

According to the ministry, all the technological equipments for the self-designed line was produced by domestic companies.

About 50 percent of the investment was from the state-owned Beijing-Shanghai High-Speed Railway Co Ltd.

Xinhua

Workers decorate the construction vehicle during the ground-breaking ceremony of the Beijing-Shanghai high-speed railway in Beijing, on 18 April, 2008.—XINHUA

All items from Xinhua News Agency

Chinese American organization calls for CNN's sincere apology for insulting remarks

WASHINGTON, 16 April — A Chinese American organization Wednesday urged US TV network CNN to sincerely apologize for one of its political commentator's insulting remarks about Chinese.

The Washington-based World Chinese League said in a statement that all Chinese-Americans and Chinese were infuriated by Jack Cafferty's outrageous comments aired on 9 April when Beijing Olympics torch relay was held in San Francisco, California.

The league also called on all Chinese worldwide to participate in the "one person one protest letter" campaign to press the TV network to address the issue in an appropriate way, including taking back the anti-Chinese remarks, making a sincere apology andremoving Cafferty.

Cafferty said in "The Situation Room" program on last Thursday that the United States continues to import Chinese-made "junk with the lead paint on them and the poisoned pet food..." "I think they're basically the same bunch of goons and thugs they've been for the last 50 years," he said, apparently referring to the Chinese people.

Xinhua

A woman falls during a high-heel sprint in Belgrade on 17 April, 2008. Some 90 women took part in the race wearing high-heeled shoes with a required minimum height of 8 centimeters (3.14 inches) to compete for an award of 3,000 euros. —XINHUA

Sri Lankan Air Force bombs rebel targets

COLOMBO, 16 April — The military in Sri Lanka said onWednesday its Air Force carried out separately attacks against Tamil Tiger rebel's targets in the north.

Officials from the Ministry of Defence said Air Force *MI 24* attack craft pounded an LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) bunker line and a mortar position with support of the ground troops operating at Muhamale in the Jaffna peninsula around 6:15 amlocal time (0045 GMT).

Meanwhile, Air Force fighter jets bombed three identified LTTE camps located in Oddusudan area around 11:50 pm (1820 GMT) on Tuesday.

Xinhua

Two possibilities for China's economic development

BEIJING, 16 April — China's economic growth could either further slow or rebound, said Li Xiaochao, spokesman of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) at a press conference on Wednesday.

The world's fourth-largest economy's growth slowed slightly to 10.6 percent in the first quarter, compared with 11.7 percent in the same period last year, according to NBS statistics.

The deceleration was mainly due to the unusually severe winter weather and slowing exports, Li added.

He said the deceleration might continue because of uncertainties such as reduced external demand and the spreading impact of the US subprime mortgage crisis.

However, there was also possibility that the rebound in investment may speed up economic growth, Li said.

Investment in fixed assets reached 2.18 trillion yuan (311 billion US dollars) in the first three months, up 24.6 percent.

Xinhua

Jiang Xiaoyu (C), executive vice president of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2008 Olympic Games (BOCOG), displays the lantern which holds the Olympic flame as he walks out of the plane at an airport in Bangkok, capital of Thailand, on 18 April, 2008.
XINHUA

Iran accuses US of invading Afghanistan, Iraq under pretext of 11 Sept attacks

TEHERAN, 16 April — Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Wednesday accused the United States of invading Afghanistan and Iraq under the pretext of 11 Sept terror attacks.

President Ahmadinejad made the accusation while addressing a large group of local residents in Iran's central city of Qum, the official *IRNA* news agency reported.

Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying that over one million people have so far been killed in the occupied Iraq and tens of thousands of civilians have died in Afghanistan after US forces invaded the two countries.

Over one billion people throughout the globe are living in complete poverty, while more than 100 million people were killed "in the course of conflicts raged by the arrogant power in the 20thcentury," Ahmadinejad said.—*Xinhua*

IEA chief meets UAE officials on stabilizing oil markets

ABU DHABI, 17 April — Senior officials of the oil-rich United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) met here Thursday in a bid to enhance cooperation on stabilizing oil markets, the official *Emirates News Agency* reported.

The meeting was held between UAE Energy Minister Mohammed bin Dhaen Al-Hamili and IEA's Executive Director Nobuo Tanaka.

According to the report, the pair also discussed collaboration on oil data and policies, as well as reducing carbon dioxide emissions and other pollutants emissions resulting from petroleum and natural gas.

Tanaka said in a statement that the meeting with Al-Hamili was "very good" and constructive, adding "I am assured that the UAE will be cooperative on dealing with energy emergency scenarios."

The IEA chief said that the current sky rocketing oil prices have to be confronted through more cooperative efforts between producers and consumers.

He urged oil producing and exporting countries to bring about a supply-demand balance and curb soaring oil prices by maintaining their production levels. Before arriving in Abu Dhabi, Tanaka met in Riyadh Wednesday with Saudi Arabia's Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi and representatives of Saudi state-owned oil company Saudi Aramco.

MNA/Xinhua

A creation by Italian Sawaya & Moroni is on display at "I Saloni", the International Furniture Exhibition 2008 in Milan on 16 April. The Salone Internazionale del Mobile, together with the International Furnishing Accessories Exhibition will be at the Milan Fairgrounds at Rho from 16 to 21 April, 2008.— INTERNET

Worker pick up broken glass in front of a African White Rhino in the Iziko South Africa Museum, the Rhino's horn's were stolen over lasy weekend in Cape Town, South Africa, on 16 April, 2008.
INTERNET

Economic News

Peru confirms over 1 billion barrels of oil reserves

LIMA, 16 April — Petro-Tech Peruana oil company on Wednesday confirmed reserves of 1.132 billion barrels of high quality oil off the coasts of the Peruvian provinces of Piura and Lambayaque.

Exploration chief of the Argentine capital Petro-Tech Peruana oil enterprise, Enrique Gonzalez, said that the San Miguel oil well alone, in Piura, has 323 million barrels of oil.

Some 809 million barrels of oil can be added while including three other maritime oil fields—Santa Rosa, Santa Maria and Pimentel—in Lambayaque.

The location of the reserves is called the Z-6 Allotment, 900 km northwest of the capital Lima, off the coast.

Gonzalez said that the first exploration well, San Miguel-1x, will be drilled in the fourth quarter of this year.

"The San Miguel platform will be transferred to Lambayaque in some 15 or 20 days after obtaining the permit from Peru's Navy," said Gonzalez.

MNA/Xinhua

Nokia records 25 percent profit increase in first quarter

HELSINKI, 17 April — Finnish mobile phone maker Nokia company Thursday released its financial results for the first quarter of 2008, unveiling a 25 percent increase in net profit to 1.2 billion euros.

Nokia's share price dipped by about 10 percent on Thursday after the company released first-quarter results, local media reported.

Nokia said it sold more than 115 million devices from January to March in 2008, an increase of 27 percent in the same period in 2007.

The average selling price (ASP) of the 115.5 million phones sold in first three month was 79 euros, less than the 83 Euro ASP from the fourth quarter of last year.

Nokia CEO Olli-Pekka Kallasvuo blamed the weakened dollar, which lowered the average cost per phone sold, as well as the economic slowdown in the United States.

MNA/Xinhua

Shipyards of Brazil, Singapore sign cooperation agreement

RIO DE JANEIRO, 17 April — Shipyards MacLaren from Brazil and Jurong from Singapore announced Thursday that they have reached a cooperation agreement on the exchange of Jurong's technology for the use of MacLaren's facilities.

Jurong will be allowed to use a large drydock, which is being built by Niteroi-headquartered MacLaren across the Guanabara Bay from the city of Rio, according to the new agreement.

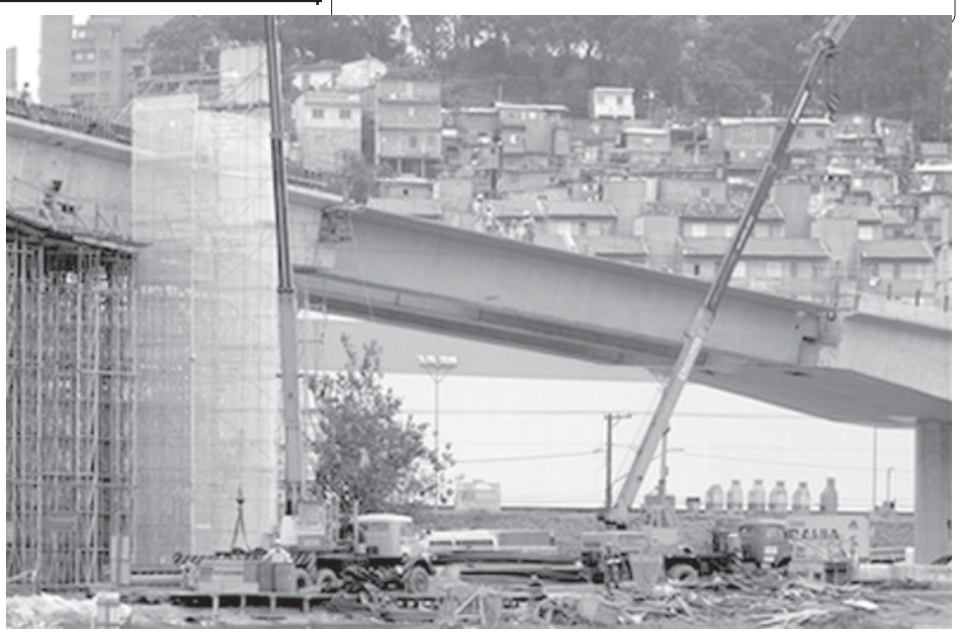
The drydock, which will be 130 metres wide instead of the 70-metre standard, will give space for repairs on large ships.

The facility, whose final cost is estimated at 125 million US dollars, is expected to be completed within 15 months.

In return for the use of the drydock, Jurong will provide its new Brazilian partner with advanced technology and personnel training.

MNA/Xinhua

Workers build a bridge in front of the Real Parque slum in Sao Paulo, on 16 April, 2008. Despite the image that Brazil is on the right track, Latin America's nation is remains home to many problems.
INTERNET



S Korea, US reach agreement on beef import

SEOUL, 18 April — South Korea and the United States reached an agreement on beef imports from the US after holding tough negotiations, said the South Korean government on Friday.

"The two sides agreed on the sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) rules for US beef and are currently working out the details," said Kim Hyeon-soo, spokesman for the Ministry for Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. The agreement was reached after overnight negotiations, he said.

However, the official refused to disclose more details.The agreement is expected to replace the current SPS standards agreement signed in January 2006, which allowed the US to ship to South Korea only boneless beef from cattle under 30 months old,South Korea's *Yonhap News Agency* said.

MNA/Xinhua

People visit an exhibition celebrating the 50th anniversary of Brussels' 1958 world fair, next to the so-called Atomium building, one of Belgium's best known landmarks, Brussels on 17 April, 2008. The Atomium, a giant molecular structure of metal balls which was built for the 1958 world fair, reopened recently.—INTERNET

Putin issues instructions on relations with Abkhazia, South Ossetia

MOSCOW, 16 April — Russian President Vladi-mir Putin has issued instructions to the government regarding his country's relations with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a Russian Foreign Ministry statement said Wednesday.

The instructions are aimed at providing assistance for the population of the two regions and Russian citizens living there inaccordance with international law, a Russian Foreign Ministry official said.

"Our actions with regard to Abkhazia and South Ossetia do not mean that Russia has made a choice in favor of confrontation with Georgia.

We support the lifting of all sanctions and restrictions,which hamper the socio-economic development of the region," the *Itar-Tass* news agency quoted the Russian diplomat as saying.

Putin's orders came after Russia moved to lift trade restrictions on Abkhazia and after the State Duma, the lower houseof parliament, recommended the government consider recognizing the self-proclaimed republics, which are breakaway regions of Georgia.

MNA/Xinhua

A survivor of the Hewa Bora Airlines DC-9 jet crash looks up to a relative at a hospital window on 16 April, in Goma, Congo.—INTERNET

Al-Qaida No 2 dubs US war on Iraq as "failure and defeat"

CAIRO, 17 April — Al-Qaida's No 2 leader, Ayman al-Zawahri, has said that five years of US occupation of Iraq had brought only "failure and defeat," according to a new audio tape released Thursday on a website known for militant messages.

US President George W Bush will pass on the "problem" to his successor, al-Zawahri added.

The militant leader said Bush's decision to accept advice to postpone further troop withdrawals from Iraq until after July was just a cover-up for his failure.

Bush announced last week that he has adopted top US commander in Iraq David Petraeus' proposal to suspend further US troop withdrawals from Iraq beyond July.—*MNA/Xinhua*

Palestinian children wearing green bandanas with Islamic script protest in the Palestinian refugee camp of al-Beddawi near Tripoli in northern Lebanon, against the Israeli violence in the Palestinian Gaza Strip. Palestinians have held demonstrations across the occupied West Bank in honour of Prisoner's Day and more than 11,000 Palestinians held in Israeli jails.—INTERNET

Israel talking biggest defence contract with India

JERUSALEM, 16 April — Israel is likely to acquire the biggest defense contract in its history following India's interests to purchase another three Phalcon systems from the Jewish state, local daily *The Jerusalem Post* reported Wednesday.

The news of buying intention came four years after Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) signed a deal of 1.1 billion US dollars with India to supply its air force with three Phalcon Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWACS), which were to be built on Russian *Ilyushin-76* airplanes, the report said.

According to the report, the Indian Defense Ministry is currently holding internal debates over the possibility of purchasing another three aircraft and the new deal would involve the same configuration as the one in 2004.—*MNA/Xinhua*

Paraguayan president accuses opposition candidate of backing violence

BUENOS AIRES, 16 April — Paraguayan President Nicanor Duarte Wednesday accused leftist presidential candidate Fernando Lugo of promoting violence prior to Sunday's elections.

Social "rioters from Venezuela and Ecuador came (to Paraguay) and are lodged in hotels to tarnish the elections," said Duarte, according to press reports reaching here from Paraguay.

The groups "plan to burn properties, service stations and other resources to muddle social peace," he said.

Duarte held Lugo and his "clan of criminals and kidnappers" responsible for the violence in the run-up to the elections.

MNA/Xinhua

Norway to send officers to southern Afghanistan

STOCKHOLM, 16 April — Norwegian Defence Minister Anne-Grete Stroem-Erichsen, on a visit to Afghanistan, has stated that Norwegian officers may be sent to the most troubled region of the country, according to reports reaching here from Oslo Wednesday.

From October, 50 Norwegian officers are to begin service training Afghani forces, after which they will be expected to lead the forces in fighting. Anne-Grete Stroem-Erichsen has confidence in the officers. She said that they may be sent anywhere in the country in which the Afghani forces are fighting, including the agitated area in southern Afghanistan.

"This is a very challenging job and I emphasize that the officers we are sending out are very experienced people," the Norwegian public broadcaster NRK quoted the defense minister as saying.

MNA/Xinhua

● For ratification of Constitution
Let's go to polling booth to cast "Yes" vote.

● Towards the new nation
Will ratify Constitution.

No other choice but to cast "Yes" vote for new constitution

Maung Aung (LBVD)

I was born in 1953. In my childhood, I learnt that the Revolutionary Council took over the State duties. And private enterprises were nationalized in 1964. I noticed that at that time in my native town, cooperative sales centres with sales clerks were set up, and households bought goods from those centres through family unit lists and purchasing books.

What I remembered most among the experiences in my school days was presenting outstanding student awards. The Ministry of Education selected those students who were most outstanding in various sectors for outstanding student awards. Such students were sent to resort centres such as Ngapali and Inlay in summer vacation.

A student was selected from each of four standards starting from seventh to tenth standards in the whole district for outstanding student awards. According to the strength of students, a student was selected from two standards at the Institute of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Science. We students valued the outstanding student award, and tried our best for the award. In my school days, my ultimate goal was to achieve outstanding student award.

When I studied in the fifth year in the institute in 1974, the State constitution was approved. Being senior students, we had come to take interest in national affairs. I studied the forthcoming constitution. The 1947 constitution was based on Parliamentary democracy while practicing Parliamentary democracy system, and the 1974 constitution, on Socialism while practicing Myanmar way to Socialism.

To my knowledge, the 1947 constitution was formulated according to the situations of the nation in the pre-independence period, so it had many defects and loopholes. The worst defect was the federal principle, under which states had the right to secede from the Union ten years after the approval of the constitution. Those who drew the constitution had to give priority to regaining independence from the British while yielding to the wishes of some national race feudalists.

Similarly, the 1974 constitution was designed to safeguard the practice of Socialism and for the Myanmar Socialist Programme Party. So, the 1974 constitution is no longer in conformity with the prevailing situations of the nation.

The nation saw the 1988 unrest due to the fact that Socialist economy was no longer acceptable to the people. In consequence, the one-party system was defunct, and the Myanmar Socialist Programme Party met its end.

The old systems have gone over, and they have to be replaced with stronger ones.

All national races are to remain united forever for ensuring non-disintegration of the Union, home to more than 100 national races. Only then, will the sovereignty of our nation be perpetual.

Whatever system the nation exercises: Socialism, Parliamentary democracy system, or multi-party democracy system, what is the most important for Myanmar is to uphold Our Three Main National Causes. Moreover, the people have to put that in the fore forever.

The constitution due to be approved through a referendum on 10 May 2008 was drawn through thorough discussions by over 1000 delegates representing the people from all walks of life and taking into consideration the weak points of the previous constitutions.

In the process, the people's representatives adopted the principles that are the most appropriate for the nation considering the prevailing situations of the nation.

A voting demonstration in progress in Nay Pyi Taw Pyinmana.—MNA

As far as I am concerned, the delegates took time and judged things from all points of views to draw the constitution. So, the constitution will make the history of the nation, and will be the most suitable one for our country and the people.

Like other people, I will have to cast vote in the referendum for approval of the constitution. However, I don't want to cast vote without knowing the salient points about the draft constitution. So, I studied the constitution (2008) that is like the lifeblood of the nation and the people.

- It guarantees non-disintegration of the Union because under the principle of the State structure it prohibits any attempts to secede from the Union.
- It prescribes three branches of sovereign powers. Under the reciprocal control system, the President responsible for executive, Pyidaungsu Hluttaw responsible for legislature and the Supreme Court of the Union responsible for administration of justice can never become three dictators. And it prohibits monopoly on power.
- Not only the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw consisting of the Amyotha Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw but also seven state hluttaws and seven region hluttaws have the rights to make laws. National races can exercise sovereign power on a wider scale. So, that reflects the essence of democracy.
- The constitution prescribes greater number of national race delegates and they will have the rights to exercise sovereign powers.
- The constitution prescribes market economy, allows national race economic forces to take part in the enterprises, and protect public interests. It guarantees that private enterprises will not be nationalized or the currency in circulation will not be demonetized, thereby winning the trust of local and foreign investors and contributing towards economic growth of the nation.
- Regarding the foreign policy, Myanmar never starts aggression against any nation, and any foreign troops shall not be permitted to be deployed within the borders of the Union, thus enhancing the essence of the Myanmar foreign policy.

To my knowledge, the new constitution prescribes more principles about the rights of citizens.

Therefore, I think that the entire people have no other choice but to cast "Yes" vote for the new constitution that guarantees perpetuation of Myanmar.

Translation: MS

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing…

(from page 1)

and members, the medical superintendent of the hospital and specialists, doctors, nurses, townselders and well-wishers.

Staff Officer of the Religious Affairs Department Saddhamma Jotikadhaja U Thura acted as master of ceremonies and read out the meeting agenda.

Next, Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and the congregation received the Five Precepts from State Ovadacariya Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Bhaddanta Agghiya of Maha Withudayon Taikthit Waso Monastery.

In his supplication, the Secretary-1 said that the Lord Buddha allowed members of the Sangha to accept four kinds of donations such as 'soon', robes, monasteries and medicines. In addition to giving advice to the disciples for providing medical treatment, the Lord Buddha Himself gave treatments to a monk patient. Indeed, the disciples who treated the ailing members of the Sangha can obtain the merits with the equal term of providing medical treatment to the Lord Buddha.

He added that members of the Sangha will be guilty of breaking the Vinaya rules if they sleep with lay persons at the same building under single shelter. Hence, the Vinaya Garuka Sayadaws gave advice to build the hospital for the Sangha separately. On the inspection tour of PyinOoLwin in April 2007, Head of State Senior General Than Shwe heard reports presented by the Commander of Central Command on situation of providing health care services to members of the Sangha and nuns at Sangha Hospital in Mandalay similar to that of Yangon, Mandalay, Sagaing and Taunggyi. The commander reported that a Sangha hospital (40-bed) built by local wellwishers is giving medical treatment to the monks in Mandalay. The present Sangha hospital is located on 7 acres of land, and it is difficult to extend the area. The hospital is providing health care services to 200 out-patient monks in minimum and 500 in maximum and from four to over 60 in-patient monks daily. There are over 44,000 members of the Sangha and over 3,400 nuns in Mandalay, over 5,000 monks and over 300 nuns in Amarapura, over 5,700 monks and over 5,000 nuns in Sagaing. About 113,000 monks and over 6,300 nuns are residing in Mandalay Division and 53,400 monks and 7,500 nuns in Sagaing Division.

Under the guidance of the Head of State, we are assigned duty to draw the scale models of hospitals and to choose the sites of 40 acres for the construction of Parahita Sangha hospitals including in-patient wards to care for and provide treatment to about 200 monks and 50 nuns in addition to the present Sangha hospital (40-bed). Therefore, the commander chose this site being surrounded by healthy environment and nearby Sagaing, Mandalay and Amarapura and submitted the area to the Head of State, who made field trip to the site and approved it.

(See page 9)

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing present offertories to a Sayadaw at a ceremony to open Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Mandalay. — MNA

To maintain the hospital for its durability, the Group of Ovadacariya Sayadaws and the Hospital Board of Trustees comprising the Chairman of Mandalay Division PDC, the Mandalay Mayor and townselders have been formed for supervising the tasks of the hospital in providing health care services to the monks and nuns.

Congregation led by Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing share merits at a ceremony to open Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Mandalay. — MNA

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing…

(from page 8)

Under the supervision of the commander of the Central Command, the Mandalay Jivitadana Sangha Hospital was built with the contribution made by departments concerned, Mandalay City Development Committee, townselders and well-wishers. The Head of State made arrangements for building of the hospital to provide health care services for the monks who can have difficulties in receiving medical treatment in the people's hospitals.

In addition to the monks and the nuns of Mandalay and Sagaing regions, those from upper Myanmar can receive medical treatment of the specialists at the Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in line with Vinaya rules.

construction of the hospital with goodwill. The con-struction contract was given to Eden Group of Companies to build the hospital. The construction company started con-struction tasks on 10 July 2007 and it made efforts for completion of the tasks on 31 March 2008. In its tasks, the construction company built 14 medical wards, two 36-bed nun patient wards and one 25-bed nun patient ward, the operation theatres, the intensive care units and the laboratories for the monks and the nuns.

At the same time, about 250 in-patient monks and 100 nuns can be warded at Jivitadana Sangha Hospital (Mandalay). In addition, the hospital was equipped with office furniture, hospital equipment, water and power supply, medical equipment as much as possible. Furthermore, local retired surgeons and specialists will provide health care services to the patients on schedules.

To maintain the hospital for its durability, the Group of Ovadacariya Sayadaws and the Hospital Board of Trustees comprising the Chairman of Mandalay Division PDC, the Mandalay Mayor and townselders have been formed for supervising the tasks of the hospital in providing health care services to the monks and nuns. Moreover, the management committee, the work committees and the subcommittees have been set up to run the tasks of the hospital systematically. Upholding the advice of the Sayadaws, the local wellwishers will contribute to the hospital for its durability.

The departments concerned and people were invited to donate cash and kind to the funds of the hospital for its expenses. At present, the cash donated by departments, wellwishers and entrepreneurs were set up as the trust-funds of the hospital, and arrangements are being made for use of the funds in line with the financial rules and regulations.

In conclusion, he briefly supplicated on the management and participation of the departments and local people in establishment of the hospital to provide health care services to the monks and nuns in accord with the goodwill of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe. Later, he urged local people and entrepreneurs to maintain the hospital for its durability with cash and kind donations.

Mandalay Division Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Shwewahwin Kyaung Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sasanabhivamsa of Myataung Monastery gave Sammodaniya Saraniya Ovadakahta.

Mayor Brig-Gen Phone Zaw Han handed over documents related to the land of the hospital and Eden Group of Companies Managing Director U Chit Khaing, documents related to the building of the hospital to Jivitadana Sangha General Hospital (Mandalay) Management Committee Chairman retired medical superintendent Dr U Ko Lay.

Next, Financial Committee Chairman U Maung Ko of Htawara Company accepted cash donated by local people of Mandalay through U Sein Myint (Donbyan Flour Mill) and cash donated by other wellwishers through Managing Director U Chit Khaing.

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing donated alms to members of the Sangha led by State Ovadacariya Shwegyin Sangharaja Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Maha Withokdayon Taikthit Waso Kyaung Sayadaw Bhaddanta Agghiya.

General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, SPDC members, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence, the commanders and the ministers offered provisions to members of the Sangha.

Chancellor of Sagaing Sitagu In-ternational Buddhist Academy Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Maha Dhammakahtika Bahujanahitadhara Dr Bhaddanta Nanissara delivered a sermon. Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and party together with the congregation shared merits gained.

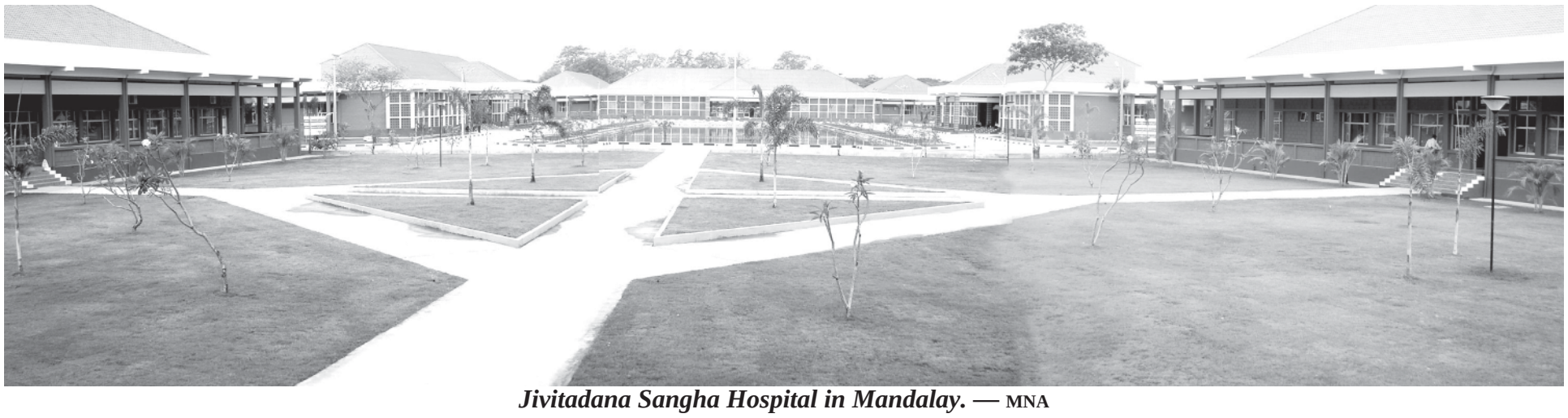
Next, the Senior General and wife and party offered 'soon' to members of the Sangha. After the ceremony, the Senior General and party inspected the hospital and cordially conversed with officials, wellwishers, doctors and nurses.

(See page 10)

General Thura Shwe Mann presents offertories to a Sayadaw. **MNA**

Sayadaw Bhaddanta Sasana-bhivamsa. **MNA**

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo presents offertories to a Sayadaw. **—MNA**



Jivitadana Sangha Hospital in Mandalay. **— MNA**

*** Let's get democracy By voting at polling booth**

*** For flourishing of democracy Ratify Constitution**

***Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo supplicates on religious matters.*—MNA**

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing…

(from page 9)

Before sharing the merits gained, the ceremony to unveil the bronze plaque of the hospital was held at the administration office.

Officials unveiled the bronze plaque and the emblem of the hospital. Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, SPDC member Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung and Mayor Brig-Gen Phone Zaw Han sprinkled scented water on the bronze plaque.

Jivitadana Sangha Hospital (Mandalay) was built on 39.84 acres of land in front of Pyigyimon decorated barge on Kandawgyi Lake ring road in Mandalay. — *MNA*

Commission for Holding Referendum meets sub-commissions…

(from page 16)

Commission members U Tin Aye, U Saw Win Aung and Dr Hmu Htan and party inspected the sample of polling station and process of casting vote at Chin Usee Basic Education Primary School in Zaythit Ward of Haka. The book 'State Constitution (Draft)' can be studied at the libraries of Township Information and Public Relations Departments across the nation, the libraries under the Ministry of Culture, libraries of universities, colleges and institutes, and copies are available now at the bookstalls of News and Periodicals Enterprise, Sarpay Beikman Book Centre, and private book shops.

MNA

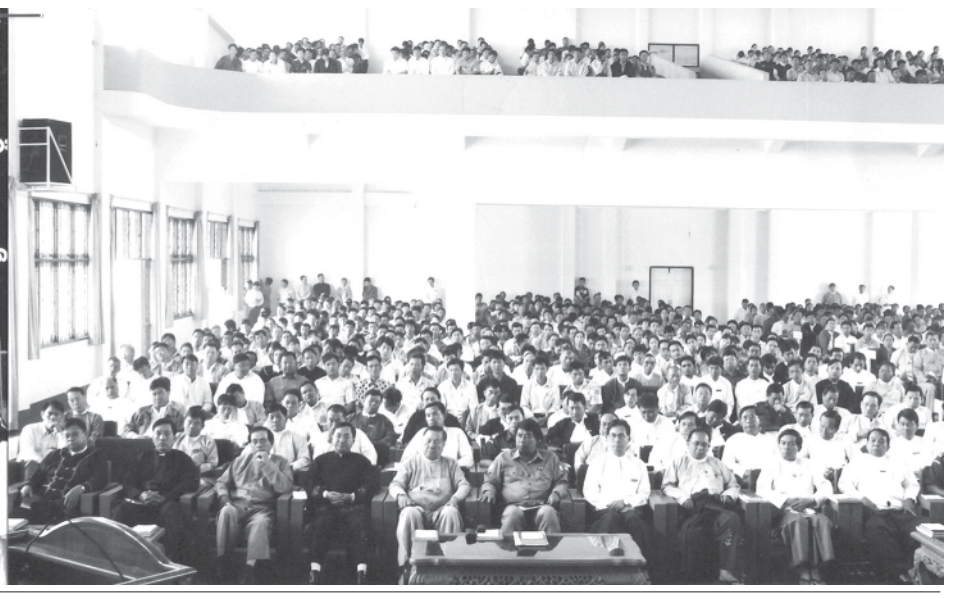
Commander attends harvesting and ploughing ceremony in Hlegu

NAY PYI TAW, 12 April—Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Hla Htay Win attended the ceremony to harvest summer paddy and to grow first monsoon paddy at 25-acre model farm of Farmer U Aung Lwin in Thanatpyin Village of Hlegu Township on 11 April.

First, Chairman of Hlegu Township PDC U Phone Myat Thu and officials reported on harvesting of summer paddy and growing of monsoon paddy in the township, agricultural methods and advantages and benefit of the use of modern farm equipment to the commander.

Next, the commander delivered an address.

Afterwards, the commander and party looked into thriving summer paddy, harvesting summer paddy with the use of bio-ethanol-run harvesters, ploughing first monsoon paddy with the use of Leya-16, 12 and 22 and power tillers and broadcasting natural fertilizer.—*MNA*



Member of Commission for Holding Referendum U Sai Yi meets members of district, township, ward and village commissions in Shan State (East).

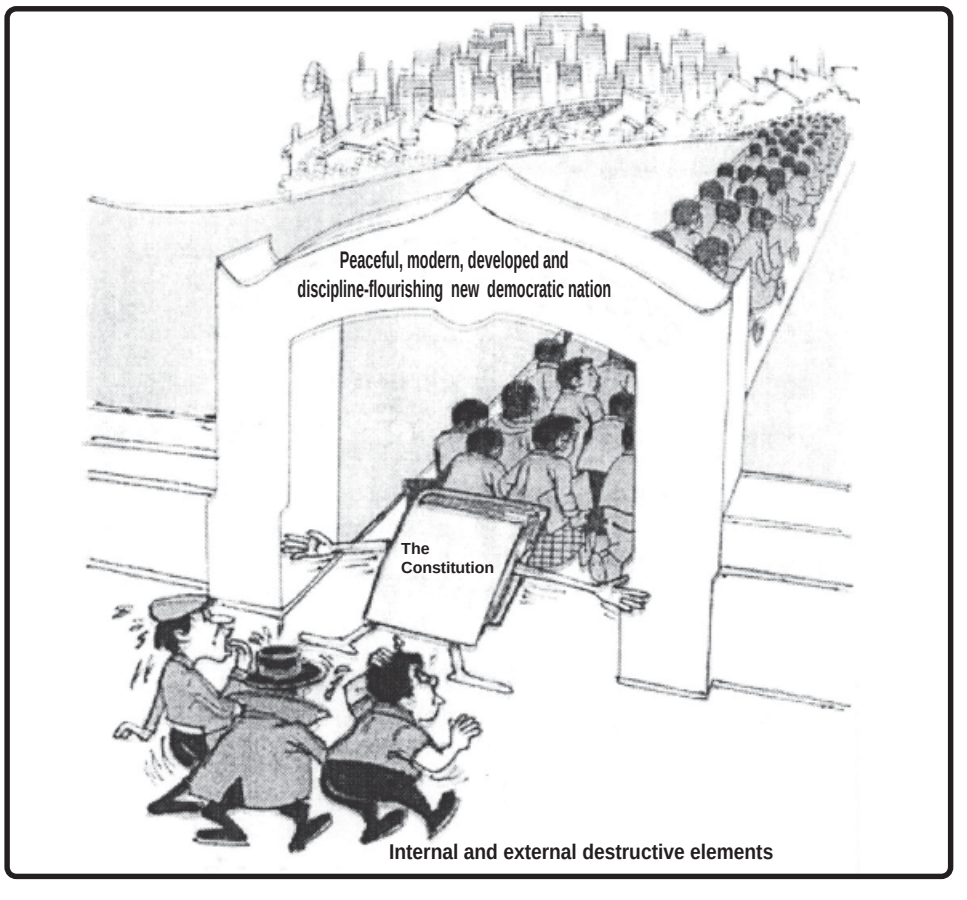
MNA

Yangon Mayor inspects upgrading of road

YANGON, 18 April — CEC member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (Yangon Division In-charge) Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspected upgrading of Thumalar road being implemented under the leadership of North Okkalapa USDA in Ward 2 of the township this morning and fulfilled the requirements.

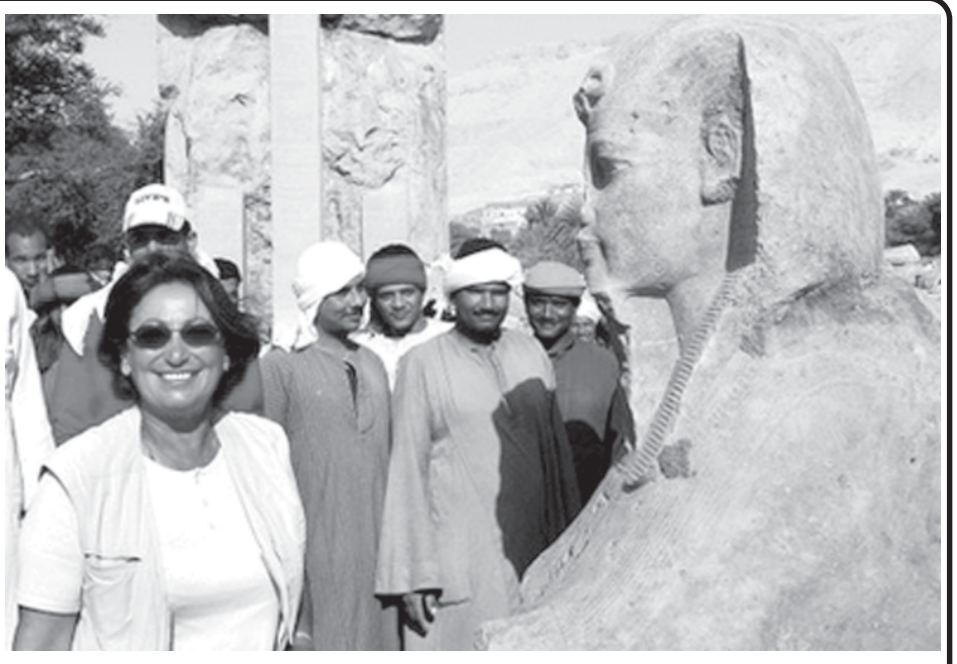
Thumalar road which links to Artherwady and Thuzita roads is an important one for the ward. Upon completion, it will be 1,650 feet long, 12 feet wide and people can have access to smooth transportation.

MNA

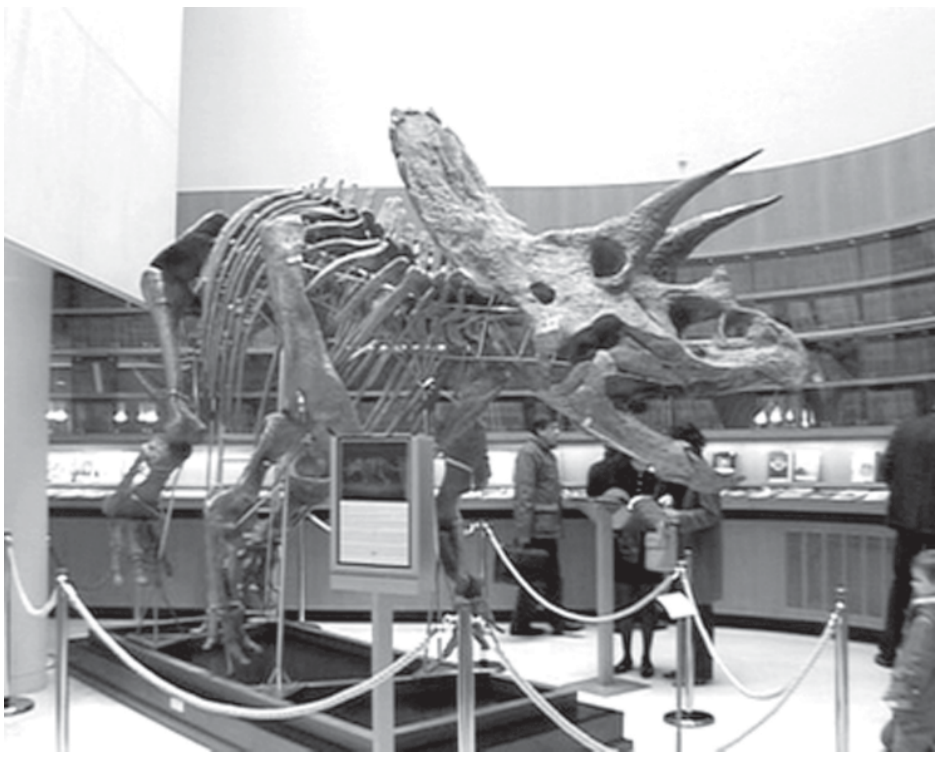


Images of the Day

An undated handout photograph shows a man standing by a replica of a Neanderthal.—INTERNET



Armenian archaeologist Hourig Sourouzian, director of the Menmon-Amenhotep excavation project, poses next to a recently discovered sphinx at the site of the Colossi of Memnon, on the western bank of the River Nile, close to the southern Egyptian town of Luxor, on 13 March, 2008 file photo.—INTERNET



The rare skeleton of a triceratops is the star attraction at a Christie's auction in Paris on Wednesday, only the second dinosaur fossil of this size ever to go under the hammer. The rare skeleton failed to find a buyer Wednesday when the 490,000-euro (780,000-dollar) final bid at Christie's auction house in Paris fell short of the reserve price.—INTERNET

A student walks in the ancient city of Petra on 7 April, 2008. Petra in Jordan was named among the modern day seven wonders of the world chosen in a poll of 100 million online voters.—INTERNET

People's reflections in a mirror on a Singapore street. The stressed-out city is preparing to welcome "Singapore's Happiest Person" on Thursday at a conference that aims to make people feel better.—INTERNET

A girl smiles while seated on a float decorated with flowers during a parade at the Madeira Island Flowers Festival in Funchal ,Portugal early this month. Madeira celebrates spring every year by decorating the streets and parading floats with thousands of flowers on the streets of Funchal.—INTERNET

Obama reports 4.2-million-dollar income in 2007

WASHINGTON, 16 April — US Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama and his wife reported on Wednesday an income of 4.2 million US dollars in 2007 as a new national poll showed his lead has widened over his Democratic rival Hillary Rodham Clinton.

According to the tax returns released by Obama's campaign, the Illinois senator and his wife, Michelle, saw their income surge last year due to Obama's best-selling books "Dreams From My Father" and "The Audacity of Hope," profits from which amounted to around 4 million dollars.

The Obamas earned 991,296 dollars in 2006, according to the official record.

Other income sources included Obama's annual salary as a senator of 157,102 dollars, and Michelle's salary of 103,633 dollars as an executive officer at the University of Chicago Medical Center.

His campaign also said that the couple paid 1.4 million dollarsin federal taxes and donated more than 240,000 dollars to charities.

However, their fortune falls far behind that of the Clintons, who have reported 20.4 million dollars in 2007, almost half of which were earned from former president Bill Clinton's speeches.

The total amount of the Clintons' income since they left the White House in 2001 has reached nearly 109 million dollars.

MNA/Xinhua

***People stand at the counter in Spain's first sports betting shop in Madrid, on 17 April, 2008. The shop opened for business on Wednesday, one of thousands that foreign bookmakers hope to launch in the football-crazy nation which already bets more than any other European country.—*INTERNET**

Turkey seizes tons of drugs during past 24 years

ANKARA, 16 April — Turkey confiscated tons of illicit drugs belonging to various insurgent groups during its operations in the past 24 years, the security department said on Wednesday.

Security forces have seized a total of 4 tons heroin, 22 tons hashish and 710 kg cocaine from rebellious groups during their operations against illegal trafficking from 1983 to 2007, the department said in a report.

According to the report, some 783 people were arrested in 350 operations staged in the period, and the involved groups include the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C).

In 2007 alone, the security forces staged seven operations against drug trafficking which links with the PKK and up to 307 kg heroin and 947 kg hashish was seized, said the report.

Turkey is a key transit route for smuggling drugs from Asia andthe Mideast to western European markets.—*MNA/Xinhua*

Sri Lanka moves to control rice prices

COLOMBO , 16 April — The Sri Lankan government on Wednesday moved to control the retail prices of rice, the staple diet of the 19 million people in the island.

"A special gazette notification has been issued and there will be controlled retail and wholesale prices for all varieties of rice with effect from mid-night (Wednesday)," Trade Minister Bandula Gunawardena told reporters.

The government's action comes in the wake of consumer grievances of high retail prices for rice.

A kilogram of rice in some varieties have exceeded 100 rupees (about 0.9 US dollar) and the government gazette seeks to keep the retail prices of all varieties under 100 rupees.

A scarcity in the local market prompted the government to look for rice imports mainly from Myanmar after India banned export of rice.

Gunawardena said the government was concerned on a systematic campaign by unscrupulous traders to create an artificial rice shortage.—*MNA/Xinhua*

International Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Exhibition opens in Iran

TEHERAN, 16 April — The 13th International Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Exhibition opened here Wednesday.

Iran's Oil Minister Gholam-Hossein Nozari was present at the opening ceremony of the exhibition slated for 16-20 April.

Some 505 foreign and 860 Iranian companies are participating inthe fair, local Press TV satellite channel reported.

The foreign participants from 30 countries, including China, are active in the fields of oil, natural gas and petrochemical industries.

Last exhibition, held in April 2007, attracted over 1,250 companies at home and abroad as well as 103,000 visitors.

MNA/Xinhua

Don't Smoke

HK, Macao to strengthen tourism ties

HONG KONG, 16 April — Hong Kong and Macao will strengthen ties in the development and promotion of multi-destination itineraries, especially amid the adoption of new holiday and paid leave policies in the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong tourism official said Wednesday. Hong Kong and Macao tourism officials on Wednesday discussed honest and quality tourism and joint efforts in the development and promotion of multi-destination itineraries, as well as the impact on Hong Kong and Macao tourism of the new holiday and paid leave policies in the Chinese mainland.

Hong Kong and Macao are part of a larger tourism area, and have unique appeal to their visitors, Commissioner for Tourism of Hong Kong Au King-chi said.—*MNA/Xinhua*

Turkey's unemployment rate rises to 11.3 percent

ANKARA, 16 April — With a sharp slowdown in growth and less new investments due to global financial turmoil, the unemployment rate in Turkey reached 11.3 percent, local newspaper *Today's Zaman* reported on Wednesday.

The latest Household Labor Survey released by the Turkish Statistics Institute (TurkStat) shows the unemployment rate in the December-February period reached 11.3 percent, 0.3 point rise over the same period last year, said the report.

According to the report, the number of jobless people increased 59,000 to a total of 2.57 million.

The urban unemployment rate hit 13 percent with 0.1 point rise, while in rural areas it rose by 0.7 point to 8.6 percent.

In the three-month period, the number of actively working people dropped to 20.1 million by 278,000 compared with the same period of last year.

People employed in agricultural sector fell by 527,000 and in non-agricultural sector increased by 249,000.

MNA/Xinhua

What's left of a home in Ordway, Colo, smolders after a grass fire destroyed a number of houses in the small southeastern Colorado town on 15 April, 2008. The fire burned one house on a block while leaving others untouched.

INTERNET

Singapore sends KC-135 tanker aircraft to Gulf region

SINGAPORE, 16 April — A Singapore Air Force *KC-135* tanker aircraft with 36 men left here on Wednesday morning for the Gulf region for a three-month deployment.

The Defence Ministry said in a statement that Singapore's such move is the country's latest contribution in support of the multinational reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The *KC-135* tanker aircraft will conduct air-to-air refuelling missions in support of the coalition forces.

Singapore has since 2003 made four deployments of *KC-135* tanker aircraft, four deployments of Landing Ships Tank and one deployment of a *C-130* transport aircraft to the Gulf region.

MNA/Xinhua

Palestinian cameraman killed in Israeli attack on central Gaza

GAZA, 16 April — A local cameraman working for *Reuters* Television was killed in an Israeli attack on central Gaza Strip on Wednesday afternoon, Palestinian witnesses and medics reported. Witnesses said an Israeli artillery shell hit the white armaured jeep of Faddel Ouda Shana'a in the neighborhood of Johr el-Deik east of al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza Strip.

Medics at al-Aqsa Hospital in central Gaza Strip said Shana'a was killed in the shelling and his body was brought to the hospital. Earlier, nine Palestinians were killed and 20 others wounded in an Israeli strike in the same area, according to Mo'aweya Hassanein, chief of emergency and ambulance services in the Palestinian health ministry.

Hassanein said women and children were among the nine victims, adding that 20 more people were injured, five of them in critical conditions.

Palestinian residents said an Israeli helicopter fired at least four air-to-ground missiles at a mosque and two neighboring houses in Johr el-Deik neighborhood east of al-Bureij refugee camp.

The same neighburhood was stormed by several Israeli army tanks, armored vehicles and bulldozers earlier in the day, and witnessed an exchange of fire between Palestinian militants and Israeli soldiers.

MNA/Xinhua

Women from the Eritrean Red Sea village of Hirgigo feed their sheep and goats with mangrove cuttings harvested from the shore, where thousands of the salt water plants have been replanted. The low-tech pilot project is designed as a model to improve the lives of desert coastal communities by using the salt-water trees to increase fish numbers, provide feed for livestock and combat desertification.—INTERNET

Geological disasters claim more than 1,000 lives in China each year

CHANGSHA, 16 April — Geological disasters have left more than 1,000 people dead or missing cross China each year over the past 12 years.

Addressing an ongoing workshop on management of land and resources here on Wednesday, Wang Ruisheng, a senior official in charge of training at the Ministry of Land and Resources, said geological disasters left 13,650 people either dead or missing and resulted in 71.7 billion yuan (about 10.2 billion U.S. dollars) in property losses nationwide from 1995 to 2007.

According to Wang, 65 percent of the country's landmass is prone to geological disasters, such as landslides, rock and mud flows, ground collapse and cracks, as well as sinking land.

The number of sites with hidden geological disaster hazards across the country totaled 230,000.

Wang stated the importance of mobilizing ordinary people in participating in geological disaster prevention and control efforts.

MNA/Xinhua

Small plane crashes in Los Angles area, two wounded

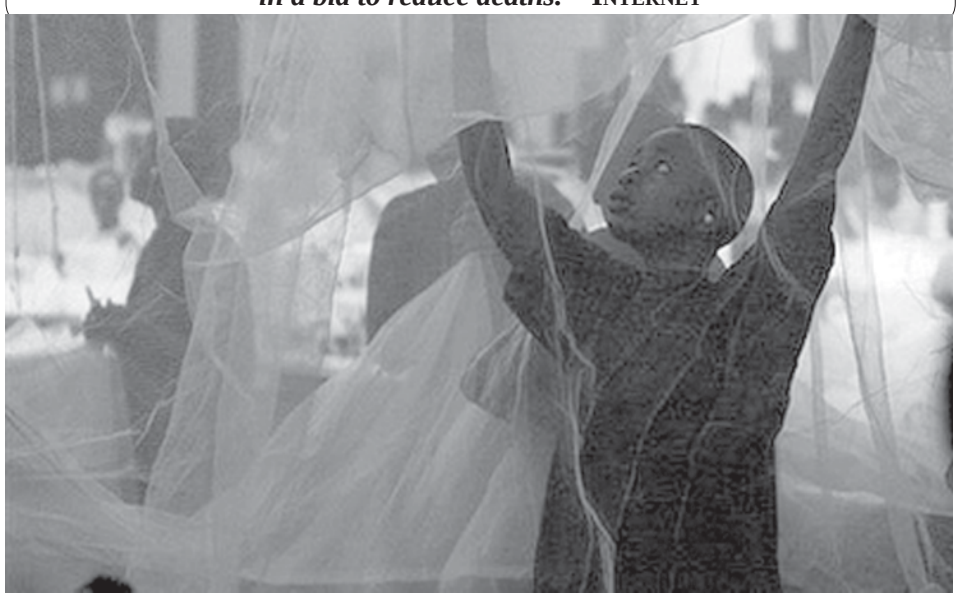
LOS ANGELES, 16 April — A small plane went down at a public park near Los Angeles overnight, injuring the pilot and his only passenger, autho-rities said on Wednesday.

The twin-engine *Piper Aztec* crashed around about 8:50 pm local time Tuesday in the camping area of the Frank G Bonelli Regional Park in San Dimas, more than 40 kilometers east of Los Angeles, according to a Los Angeles County Fire Department dispat-cher.

The plane went down on the side of a hill in the park's camping area, injuring the aircraft's two occupants, said Los Angeles County Fire Inspector Darryl Jacobs.

An investigation was underway Wednesday to determine what caused the crash, authorities said.—*MNA/Xinhua*

A worker inspects a mosquito bed net in February 2008. Kenya announced plans Thursday to broaden access to anti-malaria drugs with the general sale of artemisinin-based therapy (ACT) — currently only available in hospitals — in a bid to reduce deaths.—INTERNET



Thai New Year road deaths rise to 276

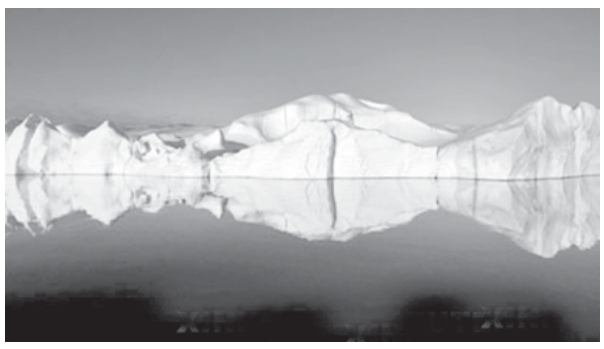
BANGKOK, 16 April — The death toll from road accidents occurred during the last five days of Thai News Year —Songkran festival— has risen to 276, while some 4 injured, authorities announced Wednesday.

Thailand's Road Safety Monitoring Center re-ported a total of 677 road accidents on Tuesday, killing 47 people and injuring 677 others.

Anucha Mokkhawes, director general of the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department, said a total of 3,537 road accidents occurred nation-wide from Friday (11 April) to Tuesday (15 April), killing 276 people and injuring 3,992 people.

MNA/Xinhua

Global land temperature in March sets record



The global land surface temperature was the warmest on record for March.—XINHUA

WASHINGTON, 17 April — The global land surface temperature was the warmest on record for March, 1.83 degrees Celsius above the 20th century mean of 4.89 degrees, according to a new report released Thursday by US federal agency.

Global ocean surface temperatures were the 13th warmest in March, as the cooling influence of La Nina in the tropical Pacific continued, said the analysis report by US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Combining the land and the ocean temperatures, the overall global temperature ranked the second warmest for the month of March, 0.71 degrees above the 20th century mean of 12.72 degrees.

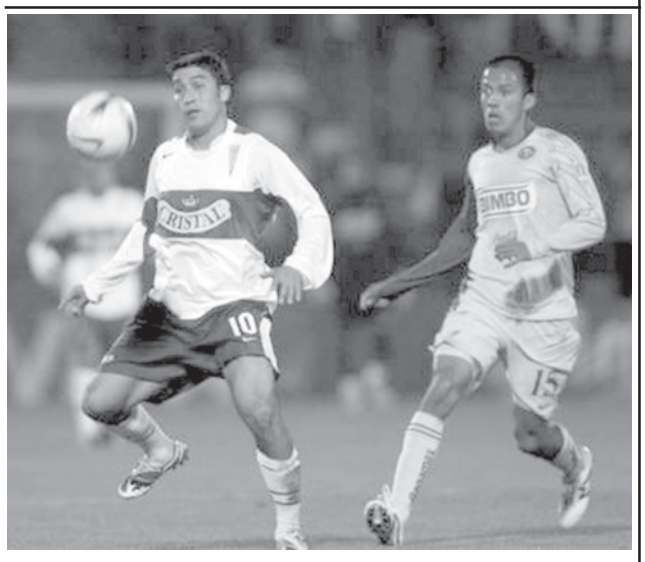
Global emperature averages have been recorded since 1880, and the warmest March on record occurred in 2002.

In March, temperatures more than 4 degrees above average covered much of the Asian continent.

Two months after the greatest January snow cover extent on record on the Eurasian continent, the unusually warm temperatures in March led to rapid snow melt, and March snow cover extent on the Eurasian continent was the lowest on record.

MNA/Xinhua

SPORTS



Jesus Sanchez of Mexico's CF America (R) fights for the ball with Luis Nunez of Chile's Universidad Catolica during their Copa Libertadores soccer match in Santiago on 17 April, 2008.—INTERNET

Leading scorers of English Premier League

LONDON, 17 April— Following are the leading goal scorers of English Premier League on Thursday:

28 -Cristiano Ronaldo (Manchester United)
22 -Fernando Torres (Liverpool)
20 -Emmanuel Adebayor (Arsenal)
15 -Roque Santa Cruz (Blackburn Rovers)
14 -Robbie Keane (Tottenham Hotspur), Dimitar Berbatov (Tottenham Hotspur)
13-Yakubu Aiyegbeni (Everton), Benjamin Mwaruwari (Manchester City)
12-Jermain Defoe (Portsmouth), Carlos Tevez (Manchester United)—*MNA/Xinhua*

Soccer-Euro 2008 referees to tackle dissent and violent play

REGENSDORF, (Switzerland), 17 April — Referees atEuro 2008 will come down hard on players who use excessive force or show dissent if they follow instructions they were given onThursday.

The 12 referees who will officiate at the June tournament inAustria and Switzerland were handed a six-point list of instructions at the end of a four-day workshop at their Euro2008 base near Zurich.

The instructions, compiled by European soccer's governingbody UEFA, order referees to "act firmly (red card) against challenges involving excessive force...including the illegal use of arms and elbows."

MNA/Reuters

Athens Olympic bronze medallist Reiko Nakamura fails to defend the women's 100-metre backstroke at Japan's national swimming championships, but still earned a place at the Beijing Olympics. —INTERNET

Essien keeps Chelsea in title hunt

LIVERPOOL, 18 April — Michael Essien kept Chelsea's Premier League title hopes alive as Avram Grant's side all but ended Everton's hopes of qualifying for next season's Champions League with a 1-0 victory at Goodison Park on Thursday.

Essien's second goal in as many games saw the London club move two points behind leaders Manchester United with three games to play.

Reigning champions United will re-establish a five point lead at the summit if they win at Blackburn Rovers on Saturday and this was a crucial win for Chelsea, who face the leaders at Stamford Bridge on 26 April.

Essien struck four minutes before half-time as he capped off a fine move involving Shaun Wright-Phillips. Chelsea just about did enough to deserve all three points on an evening when they suffered much frustration at the hands of an Everton side which started with hopes of securing a top four finish.

Yet David Moyes's side can forget about Champions League football for another season with neighbours Liverpool now clear favourites to secure the fourth and final qualifying spot on offer to England's leading quartet.

Chelsea's Shaun Wright-Phillips (R) has his shot at goal blocked by Everton's Phil Jagielka (C).
INTERNET

Having surprisingly been held to a 1-1 draw at home to lowly Wigan on Monday, the pressure was well and truly on Grant and his side. Yet they responded with a performance which keeps the title race bubbling for another week at least. Chelsea did not have it all their own way.—*Internet*

Roger Federer of Switzerland returns a ball to Romania's Victor Hanescu during their second round match at the Estoril Tennis Open in Oeiras, outside Lisbon recently. —INTERNET

One point worth Dutch League title for PSV

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands, 18 April — PSV Eindhovenneed a point on the final day of the Dutch season to clinch a fourth successive league title at Vitesse Arnhem on Sunday.

PSV are top with 69 points, three above Ajax Amsterdam who host Heracles Almelo. Ajax would claim their first title since 2004 if they won at home and Vitesse were to beat PSV. It will be the second year in a row that the Dutch championship race has gone down to a nerve-racking final day.

A year ago, AZ Alkmaar needed a win for their first title since 1981 but lost at Excelsior Rotterdam. PSV, 5-1 winners over Vitesse, climbed from third place to the top—pipping Ajax to the title on goal difference of a single goal.

Though they are in a better position in the table this time, PSV's recent form has been shaky. They have won only two of their last nine matches, including the double header against Fiorentina in the UEFA Cup quarter-finals. With four matches remaining, PSV had a commanding seven-point lead at the top, only to let Ajax back in the race by drawing against NEC Nijmegen and Twente Enschede.

"The pressure is on PSV now and the only thing we can do is beat Heracles on Sunday, and that will happen," Ajax coach Adrie Koster told reporters after a 2-1 midweek win at Groningen. *MNA/Reuters*

Ajax wins crucial game to keep alive Dutch title hopes

BRUSSELS, 16 April — Ajax won the crucial match against hosts Groningen 2-1 on Wednesday night to keep alive its hopes of clinching the Dutch premier league title in the last match of the season four days later.

Playing at Euroborg stadium in Groningen, Ajax, ranked second after defending champions PSV Eindhoven with six points adrift, was determined to tear apart its opponents. At the 19th minute, Swedish midfielder Rasmus Lindgren's headerput Ajax in front, but at the last minute of the first half, Argentine defender Matias Cahais equalized for the hosts.

At the 66th minute, Uruguayan striker Luis Suarez scored from close range in the box zone to give Ajax the much-needed victory.—*MNA/Reuters*

Title in United's grasp but Ferguson still wary

LONDON, 18 April— Manchester United can take another step towards a second consecutive Premier League title if they beat Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park on Saturday.

While the title race is not yet over, Alex Ferguson's side can stretch their lead over Chelsea to five points with a victory at Ewood Park. After that game both United and Chelsea will only have three matches left to play, including one against each other at Stamford Bridge on April 26.

Chelsea, though, stayed in the hunt for a third title in four seasons with a 1-0 win at Everton in a dour match at Goodison Park on Thursday, cutting United's lead to two points.

United have 80 points from their 34 games, Chelsea trail with 78 points from 35 but United will secure the title with two matches to spare if they win at both Blackburn and Chelsea.

However, United manager Ferguson has seen enough of English football to know that strange results can lurk just around the corner.

"We're in a good position, but with my experience in life you don't take things for granted," Ferguson told the club's Web site (www.manutd.com).—*MNA/Reuters*

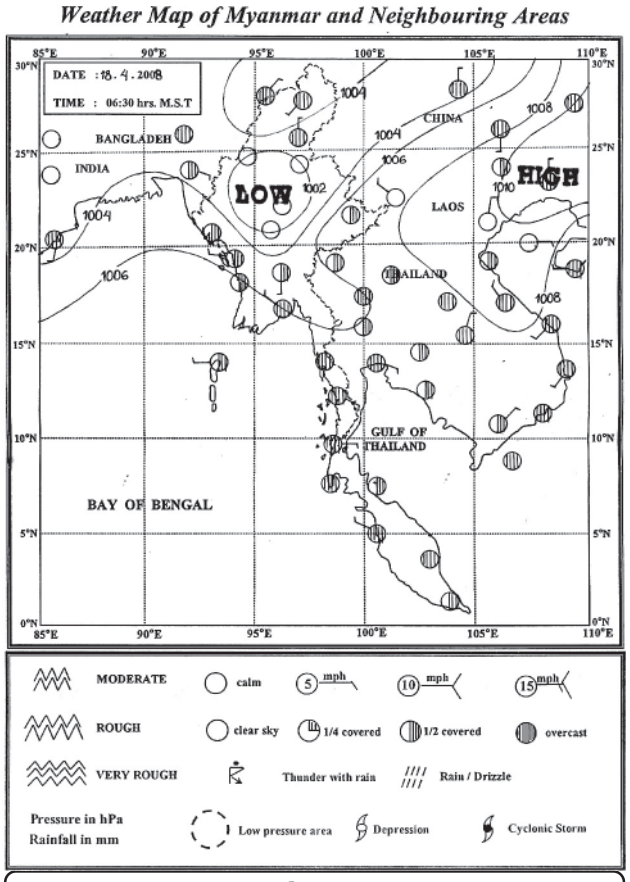
A member of the Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project (CWBMP) of the Environment Ministry of Bangladesh releases baby turtles in Cox's Bazar beach, in the Bay of Bengal, on 11 April, 2008.—INTERNET

13 dead in El Salvador after bus plunges off cliff

MEXICO CITY, 16 April — An overloaded bus plunged off a cliff in western El Salvador Wednesday morning, killing at least 13 people and injuring 40 others, according to news reaching here from San Salvador, the Central American country's capital.

The bus, from El Salvador's public transportation Route-225, skidded down the 80-meter-high cliff along the Metapan-Santa Ana highway. —*MNA/ Xinhua*

Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas



WEATHER

Friday, 18 April, 2008

Summary of observations recorded at 9:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Kachin State, weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions. Day temperatures were (3ºC) to (4ºC) above April average temperatures in Southern Shan, Kayah and Kayin States and Mandalay Division, (5ºC) above April average temperatures in Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions (6ºC) above April average temperatures in Kachin, Chin States and magway Division and about April average temperatures in the remaining areas. The significant day temperatures were Chauk, Minbu, Magway and Aunglan (44ºC) each, Monywa, Myingyan, Pakokku and NyaungU (43ºC) each. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded was Putao (0.08) inch.

Maximum temperature on 17-4-2008 was 103ºF. Minimum temperature on18-4-2008 was 76ºF. Relative humidity at (09:30) hours MST on 18-4-2008 was 75%. Total sunshine hours on 17-4-2008 was (8.0) hours approx.

Rainfall on 18-4-2008 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2008 was (1.69) inches at Mingaladon, (1.85) inches at Kaba-Aye and (0.83) inch at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (8) mph from southwest at (09:30) hours MST on 18-4-2008.

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

Forecast valid until evening of 19-4-2008: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions, weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

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

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 19-4-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 19-4-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 19-4-2008: Partly cloudy.

Weather Outlook for forth weekend of April 2008: During the Coming weekend, weather will be partly cloudy in Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Mandalay Divisions.

China issues warning against all-time-early typhoon Neoguri

BEIJING, 17 April — China's National Meteorological Center (NMC) issued a warning against typhoon Neoguri on Thursday afternoon, forecasting it was likely to land along the southeastern coast of Hainan Province or skim over the offshore areas between Friday afternoon or Saturday morning.

The latest forecast at 5 p.m. showed that the center of Neoguri was 350 kilometers southeast of the Sanya city in southern Hainan, packing winds up to 136.8 kilometers per hour.

Typhoon Neoguri would affect southern Hainan and Guangdong provinces, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region and southeastern Fujian Province, according to the China Meteorological Administration (CMA).

Chen Lei, Minister of Water Resources, said on Thursday,"This strong typhoon is coming at an unexpectedly early time and it is a great challenge for the country's anti-typhoon undertakings."

MNA/ Xinhua

Heavy smoke blankets Buenos Aires

BUENOS AIRES, 17 April — Heavy smoke caused by the burning of farmland has smothered Buenos Aires, Argentina's capital, and its surrounding region for days, leading to traffic accidents and closure of ports and airports.

The smoke clouds have caused traffic accidents, flight delays and paralyzed ports in Buenos Aires, La Plata, Zarate and Campana, officials said Thursday. Main highways out of Buenos Aires have been shut due to low visibility.

Officials blamed the smoke on farmers burning fields to renew farmland in the Delta del Parana region.

On Wednesday, at least three people died and 14 were injured on highway 9 in a 14-vehicle crash that occurred due to low visibility.

The smoke led to a surge in people seeking hospital treatment for respiratory and eye irritations. The health services are on alert to attend any emergency that may arise due to the high levels of carbon monoxide caused by the smoke, the Buenos Aires' mayorship said. —*MNA/ Xinhua*

Cholera hits one more Vietnamese province

HANOI, 17 April — Cholera has hit northern Hoa Binh province, raising the total number of Vietnamese localities currently affected by the disease to 18, according to local newspaper Vietnam Agriculture on Thursday.

A total of 1,790 people in 18 cities and provinces have been infected with acute diarrhea, of whom 323 have been tested positive to cholera virus since early last month, said Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Health Trinh Quan Huan.

Most of acute diarrhea sufferers are from capital Hanoi, Hai Phong city and the two provinces of Ha Tay and Thanh Hoa in the northern region. —*MNA/ Xinhua*

TV Myanmar

Saturday, 19 April
View on today

7:00 am
1. တောင်တန်းသာသနာပြု ဆရာတော်ဘုရားကြီး၏ ပရိတ်တရားတော်

7:30 am
2. To be healthy exercise

7:40 am
3. Morning news

8:00 am
4. Orchard families (Part-1)
Orchard families (Part-2)

8:30 am
5. International news

11:00 am
1. Martial songs

11:35 am
2. Round up of the week's TV local news

12:05 pm
3. နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ "စစ်သူကြီးဆွန်ကြီး" (အပိုင်း-၁၇)

12:45 pm
4. "ဒါဒို့ရွာ"

2:45 pm
5. International news

4:00 pm
1. Martial songs

6:00 pm
2. Evening news

6:30 pm
3. Weather report

7:30 pm
4. "စိတ်အားထက်သန်ဆန္ဒအမှန်"

7:50 pm
5. "ဗုဒ္ဓဘာသာသနာရောင်ဝါ နေသို့လင်းစေသော်ဝ်"

8:00 pm
6. News
7. International news
8. Weather report
9. "သပြေကုန်းမှရွှေအပြိုးများ"
10. နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ "မာယာထောင်ချောက်" (အပိုင်း-၁၅)

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Let us all

* **who are equipped with ardent patriotism,**
* **who cherish genuine independence,**
* **who aspire perpetuation of sovereignty,**
* **who loathe foreign interference and manipulation, and**
* **who oppose puppet government with strings of colonialists,**

VOTE "YES" for ratification of the Constitution.

*** To ratify Constitution**
Let's go to the polling booth

*** We remain ever united**
whoever tries to divide us
And will cast "Yes" vote

● Democracy cannot be achieved by anarchism or violence, but by Constitution.

● Let's approve Constitution to shape our future by ourselves.

Commission for Holding Referendum meets sub-commissions in Shan State (East), Chin State

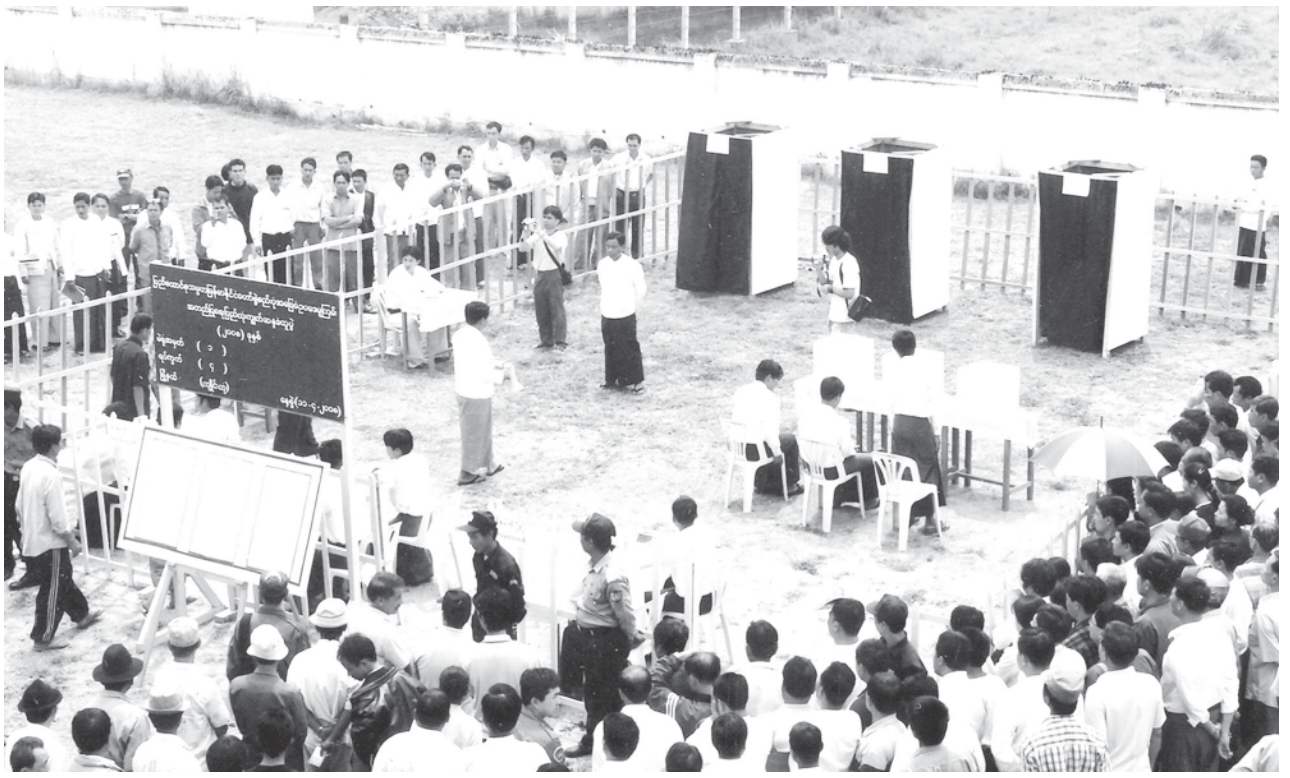
NAY PYI TAW, 18 April – The Commission for Holding Referendum held meetings with members of sub-commissions of Shan State (East) and Chin State, District, Township, Ward and Village-tract on 10 and 11 April.

At the city hall in Kengtung on 11 April, the Commission for Holding Referendum met with sub-commission members of Shan State (East), District, Township, Ward and Village-tract. It was attended by Commission members U Sai Yi and U Ahlal, Chairman of Shan State (East) Sub-commission U Mya Aung and party, sub-commission members of District, Township, Ward and Village-tract, those in charge of the polling booths and members.

Commission members U Sai Yi and U Ahlal and Chairman of Shan State (East) Sub-commission U Mya Aung gave speeches. The Chairman of Shan State (East) Sub-commission replied to the queries raised by those present. Next, they viewed the demonstration of casting vote at No 1 polling booth.

At the city hall in Haka on 10 April, Commission member U Tin Aye delivered an address at the meeting with members of the sub-commissions at different levels in Chin State. Chairman of Chin State Sub-commission U Tin Myint reported on seeking approval for the draft constitution, the Referendum Law and Rules. Commission member U Tin Aye replied to the questions raised by those present.

(See page 10)



A voting demonstration in progress in Kengtung, Shan State (East).— MNA

No other choice but to cast "Yes" vote for new constitution

MAUNG AUNG (LBVD) PAGE 7