Senior General Than Shwe sends felicitations to Argentine President

YANGON, 25 May — Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Nestor Carlos Kirchner, President of the Republic of Argentina, on the occasion of the anniversary of the National Day of the Republic of Argentina which falls on 25 May 2004. — MNA

Work coordination meeting of National Convention Convening Commission, Work Committee and Management Committee held

YANGON, 24 May — A work coordination meeting of the National Convention Convening Commission, Work Committee and Management Committee was held at Nyaunghnapin Camp in Hmawby Township this morning. Present at the meeting were Chairman of the National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein and members, Chairman of Work Committee Chief Justice U Aung Toe, Chairman of Management Committee Auditor-General Maj-Gen Lun Maung and members.

Joint Secretary of the commission Director-General of the Pyithu Hluttaw Office U Myint Thein acted as master of ceremonies. Chairman of the commission Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein discussed matters on publication of clarifications by Work Committee at the National Convention to delegates, registration of the delegates and arrangements for their convenience.

Next, Secretary of the commission Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan reported on leave of the delegates for unavoidable circumstances and administration of the delegates. Chairman of Work Committee Chief Justice U Aung Toe reported on compilation of papers to be discussed group-wise. Chairman of Management Committee Auditor-General Maj-Gen Lun Maung reported on food and accommodation for the delegates and staff.

Next, those present put suggestions on success of the National Convention. Chairman of the commission Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein fulfilled the requirements and the meeting came to a close with the conclusion remark by the Chairman of the commission. — MNA

Buddha Dhamma Diploma presenting ceremony

YANGON, 24 May — The fifth ceremony to present diploma in Buddha Dhamma and to welcome freshers for 2004-05 academic year will be held at International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University of the Ministry of Religious Affairs on 1 June. Rehearsal will be held on 28 May and students are to report to the meditation hall of ITBMU without fail. — MNA

Fish breeding ponds in Ayeyawady Division inspected

YANGON, 24 May — Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein on 22 May morning inspected Pathwe fish hatchery of the Fisheries Department in Pantanaw Township, Ayeyawady Division, which will hatch over 11 million of fingerlings per year.

In the afternoon, Chairman of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Commander of the South-West Command Maj-Gen Soe Naing and the minister also saw over progress of the digging of 586 acres of fish ponds in Zephyukwin and Thibyutu villages, Thaungma Township.

Moreover, they inspected freshwater fish ponds of Yuzana group in Mingon Village and fish ponds in Uto Village.

The commander and the minister yesterday morning went to cold storage factory of Yuzana Group and fish feedstuff factory and gave necessary instructions.

In the afternoon, the minister inspected progress of the digging of 1,771 acres of fish ponds of the Union Solidarity and Development Association in Pantanaw Township. — MNA

Home Affairs Minister inspects police stations in Ayeyawady Division

YANGON, 24 May — Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing inspected police stations, General Administration Departments, Bureau of Special Investigation and prisons Departments in Hinthada, Pathein and Maubin districts in Ayeyawady Division from 22 to 23 May.

On 22 May, the minister met with officials of the departments under the ministry in Nyangon Town and gave instructions.

Minister Col Tin Hlaing yesterday saw over police stations and staff quarters in Laymyathna Township and Yekyi Township and gave necessary instructions. — MNA

The National Convention is the concern of all our national races.
Minister for Forestry inspects timber shops

**YANGON, 25 May** — Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung, accompanied by officials, viewed timber shops opened by the ministry in Yankin, South Oakkalapa, North Oakkalapa and Shwepanpunckan Townships and inspected the conditions of the distribution and sales of timber here this morning.

In the afternoon, the minister and party proceeded to Htoo, Shweme and Hninsoe private wood-based factories in Wartaya Industrial Zone, Shwepyitha Township. The minister inspected the production process of finished goods at the factory and gave instructions on earning more foreign exchange and minimizing of loss and wastage systematically.

— *MNA*

Training course No 2/2004 on operating of X-ray machine opened

**YANGON, 24 May** — A training course No 2/2004 on operating of X-ray machine was opened at Civil Aviation Training Institute in Mingaladon this morning.

Present were Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe, Deputy Minister Col Nyan Tun Aung, officials of Department of Civil Aviation, Myanmar Criminal Investigation Department, Myanmar Anti-Narcotic Force and Customs Department and trainees. The minister said the course was conducted with the aim of systematic operating of devices and other modern equipment such as X-ray machine which will be used in preventing against smuggling of contraband goods.

After formation of Yangon International Airport Development Supervisory Committee reforms at the airport were carried out like those in ASEAN countries. Customs officers will check the items with the use of X-ray machines as there are no customs counters at departure lounges for external and domestic flights, he said.

The one-week course is being attended by trainees of security units, Myanmar Criminal Investigation Department, Myanmar Anti-Narcotics Force and Customs Department.

— *MNA*

Deputy Director-General Thura U Soe Aung of Development Affairs Department under the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Development Affairs works inspected

**YANGON, 24 May** — Deputy Director-General Thura U Soe Aung of Development Affairs Department inspected construction of gravel filled retaining wall of Chindwin River in Magway.

— *MNA*

**Buddhist delegation leaves for Thailand**

**YANGON, 24 May** — A Myanmar Buddhist delegation led by Sitagu International Buddhist Academy Chancellor Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadha Maha Dhamma Kathika Bahujana Hitadara Dr Bhaddanta Nanissara left here by air for Thailand this morning to attend a ceremony to mark Buddha Day.

The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung and heads of departments and laity. The delegation members comprise Director-General of the Religious Department for Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana U Aung Thein Nyunt.

— *MNA*

Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe delivers a speech at the training course on operating of X-ray machine on 24 May. — *MNA*

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**PERSPECTIVES**

**YANGON, 25 May, 2004**

**Raise momentum of border areas development tasks**

At the meeting of the Central Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races held on 29 March, 2004, Chairman of the Central Committee Head of State Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance, saying that development of some border areas is greater than that of the interior regions, that efforts are to be made for maintaining the momentum of development, that there are tasks that have already been carried out to a considerable extent whereas there are still tasks to be carried out, that strenuous and continued efforts are to be made in order not to lose momentum, that steps will have to be taken for improvement of the living standard of local people and for alleviating poverty and that arrangements are to be made for human resource development to ensure constant development of border areas.

In accordance with the guidance of the Head of State, it is necessary to make continued efforts for the successful realization of development tasks for border areas and national races, aimed at consolidating the national unity.

Under the leadership of and with the assistance of the government and the active participation and cooperation of the national race leaders and local people, villages in the border regions have become modern cities with enormous farms during the past 14 years.

Chairman of the Work Committee for Development of Border Areas and National Races Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attended the coordination meeting 3/2004 of the work committee held at Zeyathiri Beikman (Camp), co-organized by United Nations Solidarity and Development Association (Central) and Commander-in-Chief’s office (Navy) together with course in charge Major Thein Tun and officials as well as officials of Yangon Division USDIA viewed along Yangon River by boat on 22 May.

They also visited Naval Dockyard Command Headquarters. Next, they paid hommage to Kyaiikhaik pagoda in Thaylin and carried out cleaning on pagoda platform with urged to bloom amidst the lake.

With a clean and silvery sheen

The moon ‘Sanda’ comes up

Wind blows against the yellow leaves

In great expectaion, Kumudra

Emerald Lake

* With urged to bloom amidst the lake
* In great expectation, Kumudra
* Banishing the darkness of night
* The moon ‘Sanda’ comes up
* Will the coming of the breeze
* The silvery sheen is added
* As in embrace and petals open up
* The clean and silvery sheen
* Mixed with the golden petals
* ‘Cause it’s the fate to share love
* Emerald Lake presents coincidence
* It excels in emerald tint
* With prettiness it’s proud.

(Hailing the National convention)
Iraq setbacks change mood in Washington

WASHINGTON, 24 May—President Bush is hearing increasingly bleak warnings that the US occupation of Iraq is heading for failure — from Republican and Democratic members of Congress, current and former officials and even some military officers still on active duty.

But so far, at least, the White House says it hasn’t heard anything that makes it want to change course.

Weeks of military and political setbacks have produced a striking change of mood in the capital about the prospects for success in Iraq, where US and allied forces are struggling to establish security to allow a new Iraqi “caretaker government” to begin work June 30. A series of Senate hearings last week showcased the growing fears of many foreign policy experts — a mood some described as “panic.”

“I believe we are absolutely on the brink of failure,” retired Marine General Joseph P. Hora, a former commander of US forces in the Middle East, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. “We are looking into the abyss. We cannot start soon enough to begin the turn around.” If the current situation persists, we will continue fighting one form of Iraqi insurrection after another — with too little legitimacy, too little will and too few resources.

warned Larry Diamond, a former advisor to the US occupation authority in Baghdad. “There is only one word for a situation in which you cannot win and you cannot withdraw: Quagmire.” Hour and Diamond’s assessments were grimmer than most. But the two men were far from alone. Maj. General Charles H. Swannack Jr., commander of the Army’s 82nd Airborne Division, which returned from Iraq in April, has given reporters an equally blunt view. “We are winning tactically, but have made a few tactical blunders [which] created strategic consequences in world opinion,” Swannack said in an e-mail message. “We are losing public support regionally, internationally and within America — thus, currently, we are losing strategically.” — Internet

Gunmen kill police captain near Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 24 May—Gunmen killed a police captain and a university student who were headed by car to Baghdad from Baquba on Sunday, a hospital official said.

Capt Haidar Hadi, who was based in the capital, was giving the student a lift when the gunmen opened fire. The attack occurred in the Hadida area of Baquba, north of Baghdad. A police sergeant in the car was injured, said Nasser Jawad of Baquba General Hospital.

Guerrillas routinely target police and other

Study boosts case for folic acid supplements

LONDON, 24 May—Scientists urged women trying to conceive to take folic acid supplements after finding that half of the population has an increased risk of having a child with a serious birth defect.

Dr. Peadar Kirke, a public health expert at the Health Research Board in Dublin, and colleagues in Ireland and the United States identified an altered gene that raises the odds of neural tube defects such as spina bifida after studying nearly 400 people born with a defect and more than 800 healthy volunteers.

Iraqis who are working with the US-led coalition governing Iraq in southern Iraq, a mortar shell landed on a house in an Islamic district of Basra on Sunday, killing one woman and injuring five men, said Khalid Abdelallah, an official at Mawanei Hospital. It was unclear who fired the mortar round. —Internet

The demonstrators also took the US-led coalition to task for the abuses inflicted by its troops on detainees in Iraqi prisons, demanding that US and British leaders ap- pear on television to “formally apologize to Muslims”.

The Iranian foreign ministry said everyone reasonable precaution had been taken to protect the British Embassy but insisted nothing could be done to limit the right of free assembly. — Internet

Hundreds of police formed a cordon a block away to prevent the 400 or so student demonstrators approaching the embassy compound.

But at least two powerful firecrackers exploded against the building as a steady hail of stones breached the defences to rain home the message of anger, an AFP correspondent witnessed.

“Close the embassy.”

“Send home the lucky envoy,” chanted the protesters, marshalled by members of the Basij volunteer militia, an alternative police force controlled by the regime’s hardliners.

“We’ll take the White House from President George W Bush, the Kremlin from the Russians and Downing Street from the British, we only need orders from the guide,” a cleric speaking from a podium by loudspeaker told the crowd, referring to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

“We want the United Nations to condemn the attacks against the holy places and set a date for the withdrawal of the occupying forces from Najaf and Karbala,” said a statement circulated by the protest’s organizers. Shiite Islam is the majority denomina- tion in Iran as it is in Iraq and the twin Iraqi Shiite cit- ies are widely revered here.

The genetic variation puts half the population at an increased risk of neural tube defects, according to the researchers.

“Our study provides new data under- scoring the importance of public health programmes of folic acid supplementation and food fortification targeted at all women of childbearing age to prevent neural tube defects,” Kirke said in a report published online by the British Medical Journal on Friday.

A study of 40 per cent of the population have one copy of the altered gene and 10 per cent have two copies. “The genetic variant is very common,” Kirke said in an interview.

He advised women to take supplements of folic acid before getting pregnant and afterwards to prevent neural tube defects.

Folic acid is a synthetic compound of folate, a B vitamin found in green leafy vegetables and liver. Women are advised to take supplements before conceiving and during the early months of pregnancy.

Neural tube disorders occur during the early development of the foetus when the spine does not close properly. Spina bifida, a defect of the spinal column, is the most common of them.

The United States started fortifying flour with folic acid several years ago after its role was established in reducing birth defects. Since then the number of babies in the United States born with spina bifida or another serious defect called anencephaly has fallen by about 26 per cent.

Kirke said his findings provide further evidence for food fortification with folic acid.

Scientists have also found that daily sup- plements of folic acid or food fortified with it can help to prevent heart disease, stroke and blood clots.

Folic acid breaks down a substance in blood called homocysteine which is a cause of heart attack and stroke. — MNA/Reuters

Iran wants US out of Iraq

THEHAN, 24 May—The Iranian government has criticized US policies in Iraq and says it wants coalition forces to leave as soon as possible.

The BBC reported Sunday Iran wants, “the departure of the occupation forces as quickly as possible and the restitu- tion of authority to the Iraqi people.”

Since diplomatic ties between the United States and Iran have been severed for some time, Iran delivered its message via the Swiss Embassy.

The BBC said although Iran has officially thrown its weight behind moderate cleric Ayatollah Ali Sistani, some elements have sympathy for the younger and more militant Moghaddas Sadeghi.

In a separate Sunday development, Iran denied it released confidential information from Ahmed Chalabi, a senior mem- ber of the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council.

However, Iran has acknowledged it had a “continuous and permanent dialogue” with Chalabi, who is accused of passing US secrets to Teheran.

Chalabi has fallen out of favour with the United States since reports on Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction provided by his informants have proved false. — Internet

British Embassy under repeated attack as Iran vents anger over Iraq

TEHERAN, 24 May—The British Embassy here came under attack by stone-throwing protestors for the fourth day in a week, as Iranian opponents of the US-led occupation of neighbouring Iraq vented their fury on the key coalition partner in the absence of a US mission in Teheran.

The demonstrators also took the US-led coalition to task for the abuses inflicted by its troops on detainees in Iraqi prisons, demanding that US and British leaders appear on television to “formally apologize to Muslims”.

The Iranian foreign ministry said every reasonable precaution had been taken to protect the British Embassy but insisted nothing could be done to limit the right of free assembly. — Internet

PNA expects donations from Arab summit

GAZA, 24 May—Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat said Saturday that he expects the Arab summit to agree on sending urgent donations to Palestinians in the southern Gaza Strip town of Rafah.

Erekat told “Voice of Palestine” radio that “we hope that the Arab countries will present initiatives in order to assist and relief all those who were affected by the Israeli military raid in Rafah”.

MNA/Xinhua

US Marines survey the site where a US military convoy was ambushed near Fallujah, Iraq on 23 May, 2004. Two servicemen were reported dead and at least five injured after four vehicles in the convoy were attacked, according to witnesses at the scene. — Reuters

TV Image shows metal parts, allegedly from a US missile, being held up in the remote desert area near Mogr el-Deeb, Iraq, 5 miles (8 km) away from the Syrian border, on 19 May 2004. — Reuters

Internet
Iran sends diplomatic warning to US over Iraq

TEHERAN, 24 May— Iran said Sunday it had sent a formal message of warning to the United States about its actions in neighbouring Iraq.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi also denied suggestions made by some US officials in recent days that Iraqi Governing Council member Ahmad Chalabi had passed sensitive US intelligence about Iran to Iraq.

“We have warned the Americans about Iraq,” Asefi told a weekly news conference. “It is natural for two countries which do not have diplomatic relations to exchange messages.”

Asefi did not comment on the contents of the warning, but officials and religious leaders in Shi’ite Muslim Iran have expressed outrage in recent weeks about the presence of US-led forces in the holy Shi’ite Iraqi cities of Najaf and Kerbala.

Asefi said the diplomatic message was sent via the Swiss Embassy in Teheran, which represents US interests in Iran. Washington broke ties with Iran in 1980.

Asefi described as “baseless” accusations made by unnamed US officials in some US media that Chalabi — whose Baghdad headquarters were raided by US troops and Iraqi police last week — had leaked information to Iran that the officials said could “get Americans killed.”

“We have not received any classified information, neither from Chalabi nor any member of the Iraqi Governing Council,” he said.

“What is going on between us and members of the Iraq Governing Council and all groups in Iraq is negotiation, the exchange of views and clear and transparent cooperation,” Asefi said. “The Americans have to prove them,” he said. “It seems that lying is becoming institutionalized in American policy.”

In a US air attack in Afghanistan’s southeastern province of Khost early on Friday, an official said.

The Pakistan-based AIP, based in forward posts, in the al-Qaeda network it once broke ties with Iran in 1980.

“We are not interested in terrorist activities in Iraq.”

The memo also mentioned two options being considered — deployment of more British troops to Iraq or the dispatch of a British-led NATO headquarters group.

“If we go down either route we should ensure that we use it to maximize our influence over American military decisions, and that we can prevent US action, either at the strategic or operational levels, which would jeopardize our objectives,” the memo said.

Asefi described as “baseless” accusations made by unnamed US officials in some US media that Chalabi — whose Baghdad headquarters were raided by US troops and Iraqi police last week — had leaked information to Iran that the officials said could “get Americans killed.”

“It's been raining a lot, the topsoil was loose,” the White House spokesman noted.

Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the nation must prevent terrorism from taking root around the world by “repairing and building alliances,” increasing trade supporting democracy, addressing regional conflicts and controlling weapons of mass destruction.

“Unless the country commits itself to such measures, “we are likely to experience acts of catastrophic terrorism that would undermine our economy, damage our society and kill hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people,” the Indiana senator said during an appearance at the Fletcher School at Tufts University.

Lugar said military might alone isn't enough to eradicate terrorism. “Terrorism is necessary to defeat terrorism, the United States must assign US economic and diplomatic capabilities the same strategic priority that we assign to military capabilities,” he said.

He later added, “Military action is necessary to defeat serious and immediate threats to our national security. But the war on terrorism will not be won through attrition — particularly since military action will often breed more terrorists and more resentment of the United States.”

Lugar, who was awarded the Dean’s Medal for distinguished service in international affairs, said it’s still unclear how much control the Iraqi people will have over their nation’s security when power is transferred to them June 30. “I am very hopeful that the president and his administration will articulate precisely what is going to happen as much as they can, day by day, as opposed to a generalized, generic statement,” he said.

It’s not the first time that Lugar has criticized Bush, a fellow Republican. In 2003, Lugar and Senator Joseph Biden, the committee’s top Democrat, warned that the Bush administration had not given enough consideration to what would happen in Iraq after the fighting ended.

Also Saturday, Lugar blamed the Bush and Clinton administrations for not adequately funding the foreign affairs budget, noting that the military’s budget is more than 13 times what the nation spends for diplomacy.

Bush suffers minor abrasions in fall from bicycle

CRAWFORD (TEXAS), 24 May— US President George W Bush suffered minor abrasions after falling off a mountain bike on his Texas ranch on Saturday, the White House said.

The 57-year-old Republican president had cycled 16 miles of a 17-mile afternoon bike course when he toppled over while riding downhill on soil loosened by recent rainfall, White House spokesman Trent Duffy told reporters.

“The president’s top priority is now the health and safety of all the troops and Iraqi police in Iraq. “The Americans have in recent months lied about several issues and failed to prove them,” he said. “It seems that lying is becoming institutionalized in American policy.”

Bush is to make a major televised speech Monday night on his strategy for Iraq ahead of the 30 June deadline for transferring sovereignty to Iraqis.

Bush, who was wearing a safety helmet and mouth guard during the bike ride, declined the offer of a car ride home from Secret Service agents and instead pedalled the remaining mile to his house, Duffy said.

“It's been raining a lot, the top soil was loose,” the White House spokesman noted.

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GOP Senator rips Bush for failing to offer solid plans for Iraq’s future

MINNEAPOLIS, 24 May— Republican Senator Richard G Lugar on Saturday said the United States isn’t doing enough to stave off terrorism and criticized President Bush for failing to offer solid plans for Iraq’s future.

Lugar, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the nation must prevent terrorism from taking root around the world by “repairing and building alliances,” increasing trade supporting democracy, addressing regional conflicts and controlling weapons of mass destruction.

“Unless the country commits itself to such measures, “we are likely to experience acts of catastrophic terrorism that would undermine our economy, damage our society and kill hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people,” the Indiana senator said during an appearance at the Fletcher School at Tufts University.

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Also Saturday, Lugar blamed the Bush and Clinton administrations for not adequately funding the foreign affairs budget, noting that the military’s budget is more than 13 times what the nation spends for diplomacy.
**US Marine dies in non-hostile incident in Iraq**

**Baghdad, 24 May** — A US Marine died in a non-hostile incident while conducting security and stability operations, US military statement said on Saturday.

The US military said that the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force died Friday near Camp Fallujah west of Baghdad, in a non-hostile incident, the statement said.

The death was under investigation and the name of the Marine was withheld pending notification of next of kin.

The latest casualty brought the US military death toll in Iraq to at least 793 since the start of the US-led invasion in March 2003. Among those about 577 were killed in combat action.

— MNA/Xinhua

**UN rights boss concerned over US “wedding” strike in Iraq**

**Geneva, 24 May** — The top United Nations human rights official voiced concern Friday over a US airstrike in Iraq which killed around 40 people near the Syrian border, saying security fears were “no licence to commit carnage”.

In a statement, Bertrand Ramcharan, acting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed shock over the deaths of “some 40 civilians at a wedding party” in Quim on Wednesday.

The US military said it had attacked a “suspected foreign fighter safe house” near the Syrian border, killing around 40 people. But witnesses said the victims were celebrating a wedding.

In Baghdad, US military spokesman Brigadier-General Mark Kimmit told a news conference the military was investigating reports that those killed were at a wedding, and that four to six of the dead were women.

Ramcharan said it was the occupying forces’ responsibility to ensure the safety of Iraqi civilians and to “refrain from excessive use of force and indiscriminate attacks”.

— MNA/Reuters

**Study warns against spread of narcotics in Baghdad**

**Baghdad, 24 May** — An Iraqi health study warned against the spread of narcotics among the Iraqis, especially the unemployed, said an Azman newspaper Saturday.

The phenomenon of narcotics is considered a new thing in our Iraqi society,” said the study made by the social care department.

The newspaper pointed out that there is a market for these materials, and demanded an immediate solution to such a problem.

The study pointed out that heroin and morphine, and other materials derived from them are widely used among youngsters, and warned of the dangers of these materials, for they, containing hazardous and even lethal, are more dangerous than hashish.

It also pointed out that there are closed areas for addicts, which is considered a security breach and a real confusion, for they lie down on the sidewalks and disturb the passersby, but the study did not name these areas.

The study called on educational institutions to enlighten young people about the dangers of narcotics to the young, and called on families to take their role in preserving their children from dealing with narcotics in any way.

— MNA/Xinhua

**Saudi Arabia ups stakes on OPEC oil output increase**

**Amsterdam, 24 May** — Leading OPEC producer Saudi Arabia on Friday upped the stakes in the cartel’s bid to tame runaway oil prices, proposing a bigger-than-expected oil output increase.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said OPEC should raise production quotas by more than two million barrels per day from existing limits of 23.5 million barrels daily.

“Saudi Arabia will prove an increase in OPEC’s production ceiling by more than two million barrels per day and has already allocated its customers around nine million barrels per day as of June 2004,” the statement said.

Oil prices fell after the statement, slipping briefly below 40 US dollars for US crude which by 1710 GMT was off 65 cents on the day at 40.15 US dollars a barrel.

A Saudi delegate said the nine million BPD figure was not entirely for export and included oil used domestically for Saudi refineries.

OPEC’s most influential member, Saudi Arabia holds the only significant volumes of spare capacity in the 11-member group.

— MNA/Reuters

**Pakistan to continue efforts for peace, stability in South Asia**

**Islamabad, 24 May** — Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Zafarullah Jamali Saturday reiterated that Islamabad would continue its efforts for the promotion of peace and stability in South Asia, according to the Associated Press of Pakistan.

The two leaders made these remarks while attending a comprehensive briefing in Rawalpindi, twin city of Islamabad, given by Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar on the international and regional situation with particular focus on South Asia.

Both Musharraf and Jamali welcomed the recent statement by the Indian Prime Minister-designate Manmohan Singh that the Congress-led coalition would continue with furthering of the peace process with Pakistan. In this connection, the two leaders attached importance to the forthcoming commencement of a composite dialogue on all outstanding issues. In early January, Pakistani and Indian leaders agreed to start dialogue designed to solve their bilateral disputes.

— MNA/Xinhua

**Paper says Ad rates rise on Arab TV channels**

**AEKHDAR, 24 May** — Advertising rates on Arab satellite programmes skyrocket due to reality TV programmes and can be up to 130 per cent of regular prime time rates, the Gulf News reported here Saturday.

A new report from Arab Advisers Group said that the prime time on Arab television channels extends from 9 p.m. to midnight, with Saudi Arabia as the reference time zone.

Saudi Arabia’s weight as the region’s largest market dictates its dominance in regionally specific advertisements. Buying television commercial spots in the Arab world has grown over the past years with the development of Arab satellite TV stations, according to the report titled TV Advertising Rates in the Arab World.

With the huge success of regional Arabic stations, the TV advertising rates increased dramatically, especially with the adoption of hit programmes that attracted a huge number of audience. Examples are LBC’s Star Academy and Miss Lebanon with a rate of 11,000 US dollars, MBC’s Fear Factor with a rate of 10,000 dollars, and Future’s Superstar with a rate of 11,500 dollars for a 30-second commercial spot, the report showed. TV advertising rates depend on various factors that all determine the audience are time of the day, the local channel has a rate of 3.000 dollars while the local channel has a rate of 3.000 dollars during the same time.

As for the BBC satellite television stations, they are usually higher than the rates for local. For example the rate for Future satellite TV’s prime time reaches 5,500 dollars while the local channel has a rate of 3,000 dollars during the same time.

— MNA/Xinhua

**Iran Shites clear the rubble from their shops which were shelled by mortars during a fight between militiamen and US troops in Karbala, Iraq, on 23 May, 2004.**

—INTERNET
Seven year-old Iraqi boy Akil is attended by his father in the hospital in Ramadi, Iraq, on 23 May, 2004, after his family house was hit by a rocket five days ago.

The family's home in the southern city of Basra was struck by a mortar shell on 23 May, 2004, killing five Iraqis, including two children.

An Iraqi mother Suad Hashim with her daughter Fatima and son Ali, right, are treated at al-Mawani hospital in Basra, Iraq, on 23 May, 2004, after a mortar shell landed next to their house.

Iraqi girl Khooloud, 2, lies in a bed in the hospital in Ramadi, Iraq, on 23 May, 2004. Khooloud was injured by shrapnel in her back when US helicopters fired on a wedding party, killing more than 40 people, on 19 May 2004. Khooloud lost her parents and four of her brothers and sisters during the attack.

Iraqis check the damage caused by a mortar shell that hit the roof of a house in Baghdad’s central Salabiyah neighbourhood on 22 May 2004.

Smoke bellows over central Baghdad, Iraq, on 24 May 2004 after several strong blasts were heard in the center of the city.

An Iraqi youth surveys damage to his shop in a battered area in the city of Karbala, south of Baghdad on 23 May 2004.

An Iraqi man points a mortar shell struck a house in the southern city of Basra on 23 May 2004. Five Iraqis, including two children, were killed by the explosion.

An Iraqi woman walks in front of a damaged hotel in the city of Karbala, south of Baghdad on 23 May 2004.
Border and rural area developments

Kyeinkharankha hydro power station built in Myitkyina, Kachin State, is generating 25 kilowatt and supplying electricity to villages in the township.

People living in Haka of Chin State are now having an opportunity to enjoy TV programmes broadcast from TV retransmission station built in the region.

Under the rural area development programme, a library of Information and Public Relations Department has been opened in Ywadaw Model village in Kalaw Township, Shan State (South).

The government is striving day in, day out for better transportation throughout the country and people are now enjoying fruitful results of these endeavours. The photo shows the Union Highway at the entrance to Kengtung, Shan State (East).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education school</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>At least 3 schools in 5 villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural health centre</td>
<td>1337</td>
<td>1404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural housing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural water supply (village)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural roads</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and livestock breeding (chicken and pig)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>34 camps in two to four townships in each state and division</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Entertainment presented to delegates of National Convention

YANGON, 24 May — The entertainment and welfare committee of the National Convention Convening Management Committee presented entertainment programmes to delegates to the National Convention at the hall of the stadium at Nyaungnhapin camp in Hmauby Township here starting at 7 every evening. With Myint Myint Kyi and Khai Thazin Thin as dancers and Panthee, Pankusi and Gyothein as comedians, the Anyeint troupe of the Department of Fine Arts of the Ministry of Culture entertained the delegates yesterday evening. Among the spectators were National Convention Convening Commission Chairman and also State Peace and Development Council Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Khin Aung Myint, members of the work committee, the management committee, subcommittees, and delegates to the National Convention. After the entertainment, NCCC Joint-Secretary-1 Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint presented a cash award of the NCCC and Yangon Division delegate to the National Convention Dr Khin Shwe also presented a cash award. Myint Myint Kyi, leading dancer of the Anyeint troupe, accepted the cash awards. — MNA

Myanmar delegation leaves for PRC

YANGON, 24 May — A Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Cooperatives Maj-Gen Han Hoo left here by air for the People’s Republic of China this afternoon to attend the 5th West China International Economic Trade Fair to be held in Changdu, People’s Republic of China.

The Myanmar delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min, Office Chinese Counselor to Myanmar Mr Yu Boren, Chinese Economic and Commercial Counsellor Mr Tang Chao, heads of departments of the Ministry of Cooperatives, and families of the delegates.

The Myanmar delegation comprised Director of the Cooperatives Department U Kyaw Hlaing, Deputy Director of the Directorate of Trade U Myat Tun Kyaw, and Eo Gyi Shop Chairman U Aye Min Oo.

Secretary of the NCCC Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hlaing presents reports. (News page 1) — MNA

Chairman of National Convention Convening Management Committee Auditor-General Maj-Gen Lan Maung presents reports. (News page 1) — MNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs sends felicitations to Argentine Foreign Minister

YANGON, 25 May — On the occasion of the anniversary of the National Day of the Republic of Argentina which falls on 25 May 2004, U Win Aung, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Dr Rafael Bielsa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Argentina.

Chairman of National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Maj-Gen Thein Sein enjoys entertainment programmes presented to the delegates of National Convention at Nyaungnhapin, Hmauby. — MNA

Seminar on National Globalization and Industrial Relations held

YANGON, 24 May — The opening ceremony of Myanmar, ASEAN, Japan, National Seminar on Globalization and Industrial Relations, jointly organized by the Labour Department of the Union of Myanmar, ASEAN, Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Welfare of Japan was held at the Traders Hotel on Sule Pagoda Road here at 9 am today. It was attended by Deputy Minister for Labour Brig-Gen Win Sein, heads of departments under the Ministry, Ambassadors and officials of Japan and ASEAN countries to Myanmar, experts from Japan, Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Myanmar Industrial Producers Association, delegates from Industrial Zones and observers.

The deputy minister and Vice President of the ILO Association of Japan Mr Tadashi Nakamura gave speeches.

The seminar continues tomorrow at the same venue. — MNA

Rural development tasks inspected in Magway

YANGON, 24 May — Deputy Director-General U Khin Lt of the Department of Development Affairs under the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs, together with Magway Division Development Affairs Director U Soe Tint, inspected measures being taken for rural development tasks in Aunglan and Taungdwingyi townships, Magway Division, on 20 May.

Next, they inspected progress of rural housing projects being implemented by Development Affairs committee Aunglan Township Development Affairs built a total of 20 houses during 2003-2004 fiscal year. They also inspected construction of village-to-village road built by Taungdwingyi Township Development Affairs Committee. — MNA

Deputy Minister for Labour Brig-Gen Win Sein makes a speech at opening ceremony of Myanmar, ASEAN, Japan, National Seminar on Globalization and Industrial Relations. — MNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs sends felicitations to Argentine Foreign Minister

YANGON, 25 May — On the occasion of the anniversary of the National Day of the Republic of Argentina which falls on 25 May 2004, U Win Aung, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Dr Rafael Bielsa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Argentina.

Chairman of National Convention Convening Commission Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Maj-Gen Thein Sein enjoys entertainment programmes presented to the delegates of National Convention at Nyaungnhapin, Hmauby. — MNA
Regional development measures...

Giving instructions, the
commander said measures
are under way to seasonally
cultivate paddy, beans and
grocery vegetables on a com-
mercial scale so as to keep the
30-mile radius of Yangon
International Airport green
and lush all the year round.
He continued that as now is
the rainy season, mono-
soon paddy is to be grown without
leaving a single inch of
farmland till the sown acreage
exceeds the target. He pointed
out that the Government is
rendering technical assistance in
every approach to local
farmers with the aim of fur-
ther boosting the agricultural
production so that local
farmers will earn more
income and enjoy higher
living standard.

Later, departmental
officials reported on
conditions in which assistance
needs to be provided for
regional development.
In response to the reports, the
commander saw to the
requirements. — MNA

Steffen's Desire

* Oppose those relying on external
income as stings, 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

Efficient use of electricity

* Use daylight as the main source of light
* Use the least possible amount of elec-
tricity only if there is not enough
natural light
* Use the least possible amount of elec-
tricity required in production and
service enterprises
* Preventing waste of electricity benefits
the user and others

There are about 500,000 households us-
ing electricity in Yangon. Thus, saving a
two-foot fluorescent lamp everyday by
each household amounts to saving power that
is equal to the capacity a 20-megawatt power
station can supply.

Efficient use of fuel

* Saving one gallon of fuel per car per
month will save the nation one US dollar
* Thus, a total of 455,822 cars in Myanmar
can save US $ 5.5 million in a year
* The amount, US $ 5.5 million, can build
a major bridge across Ayeyawady River

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever
intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appreciated

4.95 kilos of heroin seized in
Kutkai Township

A combined team
comprising members of local
intelligence unit, local
Tatmadawmen and MPF,
acting on information, on 5
May, in laying in wait at the
road side about three miles
south-west of Tima Village,
Kutkai Township and
intercepted three suspicious-
looking persons who were on
their way from Tekkangai Village
for inspection. The three
managed to flee leaving their
nucksacks which contained
heroin weighing 4.95 kilos
concealed in 330 soapcases.

Action is being taken in
connection with the
seizure of the drugs under the
Narcotic Drugs and
Psychotropic Substances
Law by the police station
concerned. — MNA

Chairman of National
Convention
Convening
Work Committee
Chief Justice
U Aung Toe
gives clarifications.
MNA (News page 1)

Minister for Industry 1 tours Mon State

YANGON, 24 May —
Chairman of Myanmar
Industrial Development
Committee Minister for
Industry U Aung Thaug,
accompanied by Deputy
Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw
Win and officials, inspected
the first chosen project site
for Construction of
Myawady Industrial Zone
in Myawady Township and
the second chosen site
between Myawady and
Thin-gannyinaung on 22
May morning. Then, the
Minister and party inspected
the development of Myawady and the
friendship bridge linking Myanmar and Thailand.

The minister and party then inspected the site for
Special Industrial Zone on east of Mawlamyine
Industrial Zone. Chairman of Mawlamyine District
PDC Lt-Col Tin Aung and Secretary of Mon State
PDC Lt-Col Soe Myint Aung reported on the
project. The minister
instructed to choose the plots far from farmland.

The minister, the
department and party visited No 1 Sittaung Paper
Mill of Myanmar Paper and
Chemical Industries in Sittaung. Mon State and
inspected project site for
Tayaw Dam, 2 miles far from the mill.

Next, the minister and
the deputy minister arrived at
newly built Chipper Factory
by China National Machinery
and Equipment Import and
Export Corporation and
inspected repairing of
chemical tankers, installation of transformer,
cutting machines and crane.

The minister then presented a
basket of fruit to Chinese
technicians of CMC before he
gave necessary instructions on paper production.

The minister and party visited Winthuzar
shop of Bago in the afternoon and inspected the
sale of products of the ministry. — MNA

MMPE hosts dinner to
China Film Association

YANGON, 25 May —
Visiting study delegation
members led by Secretary-
General Mrs Liu Xiwen of
Film Association of People’s
Republic of China were
honored a dinner by Myanmar
Motion Picture Enterprise at
Grand Plaza Park Royal
Hotel in Alanpya Phaya.
Read here yesterday evening.

Present on the
occasion were Deputy
Minister for Information
Brig-Gen Aung Thein, the
directors general and
managing directors under the
ministry and officials.

Before the dinner, the
department and
study-delegation members
exchanged the souvenirs.

MNA

MRCs to hold meeting

YANGON, 24 May —
The Myanmar Red Cross
Society will hold its 55th
Central Council’s meeting at
the Institute of Nursing
(Yangon) on 24 and 25 June.
Invitations have been sent to
members of the MRCs
Central Council, chairman
(state/division health
officers) of state/division
Red Cross supervisory
committees, state/division
Red Cross brigade
commanders (state/division
police officers).

NC delegate groups...

(from page 16)

Other invited delegate
groups attended the
coordinating
meeting at the meeting
hall at 8.50 am Chairman U
Sai Aung Tun of Myanmar
History Committee presided
over the meeting together
with members of panel
of chairmen and delegates to
the National Convention
U Paik Lakh of Shan State
(North) Special
Region-2 Vice-Chairman of
MHC U Tun Aung Chain.
Deputy Director U Aung Kyi
of the group-10 under the
National Convention
Convening Work Committee
assisted by Director of
Civilian Affairs and Regional
Affairs Dr Myo Thant Tin.

Discussion on the
classification of the
National Convention
Convening Work Committee
and matters related to
compilation of papers.
Next, NC delegates U
U Aung Tun, Phado Aung
San of Phayagon Special
Region, Dr Ma Nan Tuja of
Kachin State Special Region
2, U Chan Lan of Kachin
Special Region-1, Naing
Aung Naing of New
Mon State Party, U Woo Se Kyaw,
Kyaw of Kayinna National
Progressive Party (KNPP)
(Splinter, Hoya), U Saw Do
of Burma Communist
Party (Rakhine Group) and
U Sai Khwan Hein of
Shwepyiaye MTA Group.

Discussion of the
compilation of papers
and submitted some
papers to the chairman.
Then, the meeting ended at
9.45 am with concluding remarks
by the chairman.

MNA

YANGON, 24 May —
Chairman of Myanmar
Academy of Arts and Science
Held its 3rd meeting, held in
Mechanical Hall of the
Academy of Arts and Science
U Than Oo and members,
officials and guests attended
the meeting. The minister
gave an address and the chairman
of the academy greeted those
present. Then, Secretary of
work committee Inspector
General of Department of
Higher Education (Lower
Myanmar) U Saw Lwin
explained a brief annual report
before Vice-Chairman of
work committee Dr Hla Wai
reported on the programmes
to be discussed by 5 subject
groups. In the afternoon, five
groups of Myanmar Academy of
Arts and Science discussed
tasks on respective subjects
and future plans. — MNA

YANGON, 24 May —
Chairman of Myanmar
Academy of Arts and Science
Dr Myo Thant Tin of Yangon Division makes an address at delegate group of workers’
group-wise discussion. — MNA

Minister of Myanmar
Industrial Development
Committee commends
delegates.
MNA

People’s Desire

* Oppose those relying on external
income as stings, 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

Dr Myo Thant Tin of Yangon Division makes an address at delegate group of workers’
group-wise discussion. — MNA

ICRC concerned for detainees in secret US jails

Geneva, 24 May — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on Friday voiced renewed concern about an unknown number of detainees, rounded up in the US global war on terror and being held secretly in various countries.

It is the only detention centre which ICRC visits in Afghanistan, but it remains concerned that detainees are being held elsewhere, according to the spokesperson.

“We have insisted that the ICRC be notified of all people arrested in Afghanistan and that they quickly be transferred to places fit for detention where they can be visited and registered upon arrival,” Bossois said.

ICRC officials also regularly visit detainees held at Guantanamo Bay since January 2002, when number 600. A visit is due later this month.

US authorities are responsible for ensuring that ICRC detainees at Guantanamo Bay are treated in accordance with international humanitarian law, according to the ICRC. It has repeatedly called for their legal status be clarified.

ICRC concerned for detainees in secret US jails

Many suspected al-Qaeda and Taleban fighters captured in the so-called war on terror are being held at US facilities in Bagram, Afghanistan, and Guantamano Bay, Cuba, but some are “held incommunicado at undisclosed locations,” according to the ICRC.

“The permission has not been granted yet. For us having access to them is very important humanitarian prior-

Don’t smoke

Manuel Villar Jr., chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Saturday ordered the indefinite suspension of the deployment of Filipino workers who intend to work as drivers in volatile Iraq after a Filipino truck driver was killed in a roadside bombing in April. He also directed the government to provide workers with a “mortal war in a US military camp last week.

So far, a total of 57 “disappeared, but healthy” Filipino workers have returned since the government announced the setting up of evacuation centers in Iraq.

However, Roy Cimatu, head of the Team, recommended Friday that the government allow Filipino civilian workers to be deployed in Iraq but only in select areas where security could be guaranteed, including Camp Victory in Bagh-

don’t lift ban on deployment of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Iraq before the peace order are restored.

Philippine Senate opposes plan to deploy workers in Iraq

Mandaluyong City — The Philippine Senate Friday said that the government should not lift ban on deployment of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in Iraq before the peace order are restored.

“We are in favour of the Kyoto Protocol. We support it. We have a few worries about the obliga-

Putin says Moscow moving towards backing Kyoto

Moscow, 24 May — Russian’s President Vladimir Putin on Friday came out in favour of rapid moves to approve the Kyoto Protocol on global warming, Russian news agencies said.

“We are in favour of the Kyoto Protocol. We support it. We have a few worries about the obliga-

…” ITAR-TASS quoted him as telling a news conference.

The fate of the Kyoto Protocol has depended on Russian approval since Washington pulled out in 2001, since it cannot come into force without the backing of developed nations responsible for 55 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions.

“The fact that the EU has met us halfway in negotiations on the WTO (World Trade Organization) entry

AL urged to recognize NFLI as legitimate representative

DUBAI, 24 May — An Iraqi group fighting US-led occupation forces has called on the Arab League to recognize it as the legitimate representative of Iraq and allow it to attend an Arab summit in Tunis.

The National Front for the Liberation of Iraq (NFLI) said the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council had no right to speak for Iraqis and also called for Arab support in its fight against occupation forces to hasten Iraq’s independence.

“The right of holding the seat of the Republic of Iraq can only belong to a representative of the National Front for the Liberation of Iraq because it is the legitimate representative of the Iraqi people as it is struggling to win back freedom, independence and sovereignty,” the statement said.

The statement was posted on an Islamist web site on Sunday but seemed to have been written earlier this month because it was addressed to an Arab foreign ministers meeting ahead of the two-day summit which began on Saturday in Tunis.

Governing Council members (expected to) fail to be considered as foreign relations, for an end to occupation as soon as possible.

“We call on you to consider the NFLI as a national liberation movement to allow an NFLI member to represent Iraq in the Arab League until the Iraqi people regain their freedom, independent and full sovereignty and until the creation of a legitimate national government,” the NFLI statement said.

It said the group was formed last July and was an umbrella group for “resistance factions” throughout Iraq.

In November, NFLI distributed leaflets with a list of “spies” it said it had uncovered and warned Iraqis not to cooperate with US forces or they would be killed...

…” ITAR-TASS quoted him as telling a news conference.

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The fate of the Kyoto Protocol has depended on Russian approval since Washington pulled out in 2001, since it cannot come into force without the backing of developed nations responsible for 55 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions.
Kerbala street life revives as US troops withdraw

Kerbala (Iraq), 24 May — Iraqis ventured back onto the streets of Kerbala on Saturday after US forces withdrew, giving the holy city a fresh look after weeks of clashes between US troops and Shiite militia fighters.

There was no official word from US command- ers, but residents said US troops, including tanks and armoured vehicles, began pulling out early on Friday. On Saturday the streets were once again busy with traders and shopkeepers after weeks of subdued activity.

Despite the withdrawal, residents said they expected fighting to resume in the days ahead and said militia- men and Sadrist fighters had already holed up in the city centre, even if they were less visible than last week.

Militia fighters, who referred to themselves as the Mehdi Army, said they were ready to resume fighting at any time.

“We are awaiting any moment for the resumption of fighting and it’s possible we may start it,” said a fighter called Abu Karar, leader of a group of about 250 gunmen positioned near the Imam Hussein Mosque, a central Kerbala landmark.

In recent weeks, US forces and the Mehdi Army have fought fierce street-to- street battles not far from the mosque, one of the most im- portant shrines in Shiite Islam.

Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most revered Shiite cleric in Iraq, called on US troops and Shiite militiamen this week to withdraw from Kerbala and from the nearby city of Najaf, home to an- other major Shiite shrine, the Imam Ali Mosque.

Some Kerbala residents saw the US withdrawal as an invitation to Sad’r’s fighters to quit the city as well — a prospect the guerrillas said was out of the question.

“We are clearing the debris left by the Americans and in a week we’re ready to get back to fighting,” said Kadhim Ibrahim, one of around 2,000 fighters hiding out in buildings in the Qusayyim area that saw the heaviest fighting last week and is not far from the Imam Hussein shrine.

Schools, which had been shut during the fighting, reop- ened, and witnesses said US-backed Iraqi police, overwhelmed by Sadr’s fighters when the uprisings against the US-led occup- ation erupted last month, were back on the streets.

MNA/Reuters

Global poverty conference to be held in Shanghai

SHANGHAI, 24 May — The World Bank-backed global poverty reduction conference will be held in Shanghai from May 25-27.

Yukon Huang, the country director of the World Bank Beijing-Office, heralded the conference as the first global confer- ence for poverty eradication.

“This is the first such conference that only fo- ces on poverty reduction in the world,” said Huang in an interview with Xinhua.

According to Huang, experience of some 50 suc- cessful poverty reduction models selected from di- verse countries will be intro- duced and exchanged during the conference, which will be attended by over 1,000 representatives from dozens of countries and regions as well as from international institutions all over the world.

MNA/Xinhua

Japan, US, IEA agree on need for oil production to meet demand

tokyo, 24 May — Japanese Trade Minister Shoichi Nakagawa, US Secretary of Energy Spen- cer Abraham, and Interna- tional Energy Agency (IEA) Executive Director Claude Mandel said Saturday that oil-produc- ing countries should sup- ply enough oil to meet the global market demand, Kyodo News reported Sun- day.

During separate meet- ings on the sidelines of the International Energy Fo- rum in Amsterdam, the three agreed such oil sup- ply is necessary to stabilize rising oil prices, Kyodo said.

From the standpoint of consuming countries, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Nakagawa said “we hope to strongly call on oil-producing countries for plentiful supply to meet rising demand.”

On Friday, leading OPEC producer Saudi Ara- bia called for the cartel to raise daily quotas by more than two million barrels in an effort to curb price rises.

MNA/Xinhua

Italy introduces carbon fund to Chinese enterprises

BEIJING, 24 May — The Ministry of the Envi- ronment and Territory of Italy organized a promo- tion drive here Saturday to introduce its fund for aging reduction of carbon dioxide emissions.

China’s Ministry of Science and Technology co-sponsored the back- ground on the Italian Carbon Fund.

An official with the Chinese ministry said that the two countries have agreed to cooperate on emissions reduction and cli- mate change research.

The Italian Government joined several international funds with similar environ- mental efforts.

Few Chinese enter- prises knew much about international funds for emis- sions reduction, but most enterprises and re- search institutes attended the meeting. — MNA/Xinhua

WTO optimistic about restoring Doha talks

KAMPALA, 24 May — A senior World Trade Or- ganization (WTO) official said Saturday morning in the Ugandan capital Kampala that the WTO is optimistic about resuming the Doha Round of global trade talks and sees a substantial chance for Africa to benefit from the talks.

Director-General of the WTO Kipkori Aly Azad Rana said at the Economic Commission for Africa’s meeting of African finance and economy minis- ters that the international trade body is now negotiat- ing “positively” with part- ners to restore the talks aimed at agricultural and non-agri- cultural market access into the developed world.

Rana said WTO reported to the African decision makers that the WTO hopes to see signifi- cant improvement in July and resume the “momentum” to the talks.

The deputy said there is a great chance for Africa, the continent, to benefit from the restoration of talks if a “fair, market-oriented sys- tem in agriculture” is set up.

Inland Water Transport Authority officials say about 1,000 people die in ferry ac- cidents in the country on av- erage every year, but the number of missing is far more.

MNA/Reuters

Bangladesh ferry sinks with 300 passengers

DHAKA, 24 May — A ferry carrying up to 300 peo- ple sank in a Bangladesh river during a storm on Sunday and eight bodies have been recovered so far, police said.

The double-decker ferry was sailing to Dhaka on the Meghna River from the southern Madaripur area when it was swamped by a sudden storm near Chandpur, 106 miles from the capital.

First reports available with police said no pas- sengers, including women and children, had been found. No other details were immedi- ately available.

Bangladesh is strug- gling to clean up one of the world’s deadliest ferry in- cidents in nearly a month, when hundreds are killed every year in shipping disas- ters on the country’s turba- lent rivers.

The government has banned night sailing by small ferries and issued warnings to owners of larger vessels not to take on excess cargo untill the rainy season next month, when hundreds are killed every year in shipping disas- ters on the country’s turba- lent rivers.

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Claims Day Notice

MV KOTA MULIA VOY NO (527)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV KOTA MULIA Voy No (527) are hereby notified that the vessel arrives on 25-5-04. Cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T. where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority
Agent for: MS Advance Container
Phone No: 2569837/378316/376797

Claims Day Notice

MV GEE HONG VOY NO (410)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GEE HONG Voy No (410) are hereby notified that the vessel arrives on 25-5-04 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T. where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

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

Shipping Agency Department
Myanmar Port Authority
Agent for: MS Eagle Corporation
Phone No: 2569837/378316/376797

Guangdong to establish AIDS prevention zones

GUANGZHOU, 24 May — South China’s Guangdong Province sets to establish three demonstration zones in the counties of Doumen and Yangdong and the city of Taishan, where Methadone treatment is planned to be used in AIDS care.

Lately statistics show that by the end of March, Guangdong had recorded 5,182 HIV/AIDS cases, ranking fifth in China, including 190 HIV patients and 53 deaths from AIDS.

Experts say that the de facto number of HIV-positive people in Guangdong is over 30,000, mainly concentrated in the Pearl River Delta.

Ll Jiahong, an official of the provincial department of health, said Guangdong has submitted the plan to the Ministry of Health and started to investigate and count people in the high-risk group and to train related medical staff.

Ll says patients who receive Methadone treatment will be charged no more than 10 yuan (approximately 181 million US dollars) this year on purchasing ambulances, in-car equipment, and devices for testing and treating infectious diseases.

Another 573 million yuan (some 70 million US dollars) will be used to buy outlets for medical personnel, emergency rescuing equipment, laboratory devices for provincial and municipal disease control centres, vehicles with special purposes and testing machines for AIDS and schistosomiasis (commonly known as snail fever), according to Zhao Zulin, deputy director of the ministry’s finance department.

MNA/Xinhua

China increases government spending on medical equipment

BEIJING, 24 May — The Chinese Ministry of Public Health announced here Friday that it would spend 1.5 billion yuan (approximately 181 million US dollars) this year on purchasing ambulances, in-car equipment, and devices for testing and treating infectious diseases.

Another 573 million yuan will be used to buy outlets for medical personnel, emergency rescuing equipment, laboratory devices for provincial and municipal disease control centres, vehicles with special purposes and testing machines for AIDS and schistosomiasis (commonly known as snail fever), according to Zhao Zulin, deputy director of the ministry’s finance department.

MNA/Xinhua

Beer-drinking

BRUSSELS, 24 May — Belgian producers of the world’s most renowned beers, now prefer to uncork a bottle of wine when they get home from work, according to a survey published by national newspaper De Morgen on Friday.

Three in five Belgians opt for wine over beer when they have a drink at home, and 94 per cent choose wine at a restaurant, De Morgen said after surveying 5,000 people. Now you have people sitting in the sun at a pavement cafe with a glass of wine. Ten years ago that was unthinkable,” De Morgen’s wine critic Frank van der Auwera said.

“Not so very long ago wine was just something that the solicitor, priest, doctor or notary drank behind closed doors,” van der Auwera added. Belgium is the home of Interbrew, makers of premium lager Stella Artois and soon to become the world’s biggest brewer after a tie-up with Brazil’s AmBev.

The country also brews hundreds of niche beers, many high-strength monastic recipes with roots in the Middle Ages.

MNA/Reuters

Belgians gaining taste for wine

UN chief warns of consequences of bio-diversity loss

UNITED NATIONS, 24 May — The consequences of failing to stop the loss of biodiversity are too awful to contemplate, UN Secretary-General Koofi Annan said Friday in his message for the International Day for Biological Diversity.

Annan called for national policies and new additional financial and technical resources to support international treaties such as the Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity, which seeks to protect natural biological diversity from organisms modified by modern biotechnology.

“Our highest priority should be to guarantee the health and effective functioning of the earth’s life support systems — on land, in the seas and in the air,” he said, stressing that biological diversity is crucial to the basic goods and ecological services on which all life depends.

He noted that biological diversity has now been recognized as crucial to sustainable development and the eradication of poverty, which is important to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The goals, adopted by the UN summit in 2000, set targets to reduce poverty and hunger by at least half and manage the environment for the benefit of present and future generations by 2015.

MNA/Xinhua

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**Putin urges further efforts in implementing Mideast roadmap**

MOSCOW, 24 May—Russian President Vladimir Putin said Saturday that further efforts must be taken in implementing the Middle East roadmap peace plan.

“Coordinated efforts are needed to improve the situation in the Middle East and ensure the implementation of the roadmap peace plan,” Putin said in a letter to Arab leaders who kicked off a four-day scheduled two-day summit in Tunisia on Saturday.

The Kremlin Press service quoted Putin as saying that there is no alternative to the roadmap for settling the conflict in the region.

“Any unilateral steps must not predetermine the final settlement, which can be reached only through direct negotiations and mutually acceptable agreements between the parties on a firm international legal basis stipulated primarily in UN Security Council resolutions,” Putin said.

Putin also expressed Russia’s concern that the provisions of the road-map, which was approved by both parties to the conflict and has an international legal status, have not been put into practice.

Russia is a member of the international Quartet on the Middle East, along with the EU, the UN and the United States, which has drawn up the roadmap peace plan aiming to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The roadmap peace plan requires reciprocal steps toward peace from both Israel and the Palestinians and envisages a full Palestinian statehood by 2005.

Putin in his letter expressed the hope that decisions made by the participants of the ongoing Arab summit would have a positive impact on further developments in the region.

“It is my hope that the decisions to be made at the summit will facilitate the implementation of the full road-map peace plan,” he said. Putin also called for the role of the United Nations in Iraq.

“It is the UN that must become the principal partner of the Iraqis in reviving their country after the occupation period is over,” Putin said.

“The fact that the situation in Iraq has not been settled remains a factor of destabilization in the region,” he said—MNA/Xinhua

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**Vietnamese PM visits Hubei Province**

WUHAN, 24 May—Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai visited Hubei Province in central China on Saturday.

Khai and his party toured the Economic and Technology Development Zone of Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province.

The Economic and Technology Development Zone of Wuhan has attracted a total investment of nearly 50 billion yuan (6.04 billion US dollars) from 21 countries since 1993, sources said.

Luo Qingguang, governor of Hubei, said friendship between Wuhan and Vietnam has been strengthened with increased economic and cultural exchanges between the two sides. Luo expressed his belief that Khai’s visit to Hubei will upgrade the economic, trade and cultural exchanges between the two sides to a new level.

During Khai’s Hubei tour, the entrepreneurs from the two sides held meetings to exchange views on information technology, finance, infrastructure construction, tourism and trade.

Khai said his trip is aimed to strengthen cooperation and mutual trust between Vietnam and China.

Vietnam has sent many delegations to China to learn the experience of China and welcomes more Chinese delegations and entrepreneurs to visit Vietnam, he said.

Khai and his party will leave Wuhan for Shenyang, capital of Liaoning Province in northeast China, Sunday, MNA/Xinhua

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**OPEC “concerned” but no deal yet on more oil**

AMSTERDAM, 24 May—OPEC on Saturday expressed “deep concern” about high-high world oil prices, saying it wanted to cut fuel costs to support world economic growth.

But the president of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Parnomo Yuyongtianto, said no decision was made during informal talks in Amsterdam on raising crude supplies.

OPEC will set policy in Beirut on June 3, he said.

“Ministers even declined to make a recommendation for Beirut on a Saudi proposal to lift oil quota limits,” he said. “At least 8.5 per cent, two million barrels a day, to top US crude prices from US dollars a barrel.

Producers face heavy pressure from big petroleum importers who fear rising energy costs could slow strong economic growth.

The Group of Seven economic powers, meeting this weekend in New York, is expected to call for swift OPEC action.

Leading OPEC producer Saudi Arabia, acting unilaterally, is not stalling on efforts to cut prices which it considers too high for the long-term health of world fuel demand.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi released a statement on Friday saying Riyadh was already committed to output of nine million barrels a day next month.

That is up from about 8.3 million BPD in April and a rise of nearly 18 per cent over existing OPEC quotas of 7.64 million, raising eyebrows among some fellow cartel members, even though they can pump no more.

“This is all about what Saudi Arabia wants to do,” said consultant Gary Ross of New York’s PIRA Energy.

“At the end of the day Saudi Arabia is the only country with significant spare capacity and they are not going to be constrained by others with none,” MNA/Reuters

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**Sri Lankan former FM crosses over to government**

COLOMBO, 24 May—Sri Lankan former foreign minister Tyronne Fernando has crossed over to the government and become a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), headed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga, the official Daily News said on Saturday.

On the invitation of President Kumaratunga, Fernando joined the SLFP and received the SLFP membership from the president at a simple ceremony held at the President’s House in capital Colombo on Friday.

The SLFP and the leftist JVP or People’s Liberation Front are the two main constituents of the United People’s Freedom Alliance government led by President Kumaratunga.

Fernando quit the UNP three weeks ago in protest over what he called “a great injustice” for exclusion from the 13th Parliament while being included in the UNP national list for the April 2 parliamentary elections.

Fernando, an Oxford University educated veteran politician, had been a member of the UNP led by former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe for 30 years.

He has been an elected member of Parliament for 27 years and has held a variety of ministerial positions for 20 years—MNA/Xinhua

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**Ship carrying 4,000 cars sinks off Singapore**

SINGAPORE, 24 May—A ship carrying 4,000 cars sank after colliding with an oil tanker south of Singapore, port officials said on Sunday.

The collision between the oil tanker MT Kamalstein, which was loaded with 279,949 tons of crude oil, and car carrier MV Hyundai No 105 occurred on Saturday just before midnight, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) said in a statement.

“Fill the cans but there is no spill of crude oil from the tanker,” said MPA spokesman Theresa Pong—MNA/Reuters
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PORTS

Olszade seals title for Panathinaikos

ATHENS, 24 May — Panathinaikos lifted the Greek league trophy for the first time in eight years on Saturday with a final day 1-0 win over PAOK.

The team ended the season on a high as the hosts defeated PAOK with a 3-2 victory. Panathinaikos are now the champions of Greece for the first time in eight years.

Euro 2004 stadiums cost more than doubled

LISBON, 24 May — Six stadiums hosting the European championships cost more than twice their estimate. Portugal’s public audit agency said on Thursday.

Euro 2004’s six smaller stadiums have sent their host cities’ debt soaring. The Public Accounts Court said.

The biggest cost overshoot happened on a 300-seat stadion in Braga, a city of about 70,000 people some 350 kilometres north of Lisbon, which cost 83.9 million euros, 180 per cent higher than the initial estimate. Seventy-eight per cent of Braga’s debt is related to Euro 2004 spending.

The high debt thus caused Braga and another city Leiria to face serious spending cuts for 20 years, although Braga’s mayor, Mesquita Machado promised that the city’s spending will not be affected.

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9:25 Tu Hna Thwe
15:30 Signature Tune
15:40 Headline News
5. 7:40 am
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MRTV-3
25-5-2004 (Tuesday) (Programme Schedule) Morning Transmission (7:00 - 10:00)
9:00 Signature Tune
9:02 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sites “Mingalabar”
9:06 Welcome to Bagan
9:10 Headline News
9:12 Travelogue (Kalaw)
9:15 National News
9:20 The National Museum (II)
9:25 Tu Hna Thwe
9:30 National News
9:35 A Day in the life of the Po Le Family
9:40 “Song: "A Day in the life of the Po Le Family”
9:45 Tour in Myanmar “Mingal Bell”

5:45 National News
5:50 Greening of the Hills and Ranges, in order to achieve climate change (Shimtaung) (Ma-
gaw Division)
5:58 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sites “Come and See Myanmar”

5:25-5-2004 (Tuesday) Evening Transmission (17:30 - 22:00)
15:30 Signature Tune
15:32 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sites “Myanmar Panama & Myanmar Sentiment”
15:40 National News
15:45 National News
15:50 Headline News
15:54 National News
15:55 Tu Hna Thwe
16:00 National News
16:10 Day in the life of the Po Le Family
16:45 National News
16:52 Tour in Myanmar “Mingal Bell”
16:15 National News
16:20 Greening of the Hills and Ranges, in order to achieve climate change (Shimtaung) (Ma-
gaw Division)

8:45 am
9. Grammar Made Easy
4:00 pm
1. Martial song
4:15 pm
2. Songs to uphold
National Spiritual
4:30 pm
3. English For Everyday Use
4:45 pm
Musical programme
5:00 pm
1. 2. To be healthy exercise
7:30 am
3. Morning news
7:40 am
4. Nice and sweet song
7:55 am
5. Likes
8:10 am
6. Song of Yesterday
8:20 am
7. 8:30 am
8. International news
Tuesday, May 25
View today:
7:00 am
1. Recitation of Patittas by Missionary Sayadaw U OttamaHata
7:25 am
2. To be healthy exercise
7:30 am
3. Morning news
7:40 am
4. Nice and sweet song
7:55 am
5. Likes
8:10 am
6. Song of Yesterday
8:20 am
7. 8:30 am
8. International news
5:00 pm
1. 8:05 pm
2. Songs to uphold
National Spiritual
7:30 pm
1. 17:00
2. 17:30
3. 17:40
4. 17:45
5. 17:50
6. 17:55
18:00
17. News
18. International news
19. Weather report
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Regional development measures inspected in Hlinethaya and Htantabin townships

YANGON, 24 May — Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Maj-Gen Myint Swe inspected regional development activities in Hlinethaya and Htantabin townships in Yangon North District this afternoon and attended to the requirements after giving instructions to officials.

The commander arrived at the Panhlaing river-crossing bridge construction project in Hlinethaya at 3:30 pm. At the briefing hall there, the commander heard reports on construction of the bridge and availability of construction materials and gave instructions on efforts to meet the set standards, minimizing loss and wastage, and speedy completion.

Next, engineers and officials conducted the commander and party round the project. The minister then urged officials concerned to work hard for speedy implementation of the project as the completion of the bridge would accelerate the development pace of roads and villages between Panhlaing river and Twantay canal.

Panhlaing bridge now under construction is 1,940 feet long, with a 500-foot-long main bridge and a 1,440-foot-long approach structure. It also has a 28-foot-wide motor road and a 4-foot-wide pedestrian lane on both sides. It is of reinforced concrete type with a 75-foot-wide clearance. And it can bear 60 tons of loads.

Later, the commander and party went to the Kokkowa estuary near Anyaw village in Htantabin. They inspected measures being taken there for prevention of erosion by the Director of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems and the laying of sandbags. After giving instructions, the minister fulfilled the requirements.

 Afterwards, the commander and party met with departmental officials at township level, social organizations, town councillors and local farmers at the office of the township peace and development council. On the occasion, local authorities reported on arrangements for extended cultivation of monsoon paddy and assistance to be rendered.

NC delegate groups hold coord meetings on compilation of papers

YANGON, 24 May — The delegate group of workers and other invited delegate groups to the National Convention held coordination meetings on compilation of papers on respective sectors that are included in writing the State Constitution at the designated meeting halls of Nyaungshinpin Camp this morning.

The workers delegate group held its coordination meeting at the meeting hall-5 at 8.45 am. Present were Alternate Chairman Dr Myo Thant Tin of Yangon Division, members of panel of chairmen U Bo Thein of Shan State (East), U Kyaw Myo Win of Bago Division (West), U Khin Maung Aye of Sagaing Division, U Kyaw Win Tun of Mandalay Division and delegates of workers. Dr Myo Thant Tin gave an opening speech regarding the compilation of papers, and those present made discussions. Next, five paper compilation sub-groups were formed. The sub-group-1 is to compile the paper on defence, security and foreign affairs sector; the sub-group-2 the paper on financial and planning sector; the sub-group-3 the paper on economic, agricultural and transport sector; the sub-group-4 the paper on energy, electric, mining and industrial sector; and the sub-group-5 the paper on social, management and judicial sector. The delegate group of workers will start compilation of papers tomorrow. (See page 9)