Work coordination meeting for ensuring smooth and secure transport in Yangon Division held

YANGON, 29 May — A work coordination meeting for ensuring smooth and secure transport in Yangon Division was held at Yangon Command yesterday evening.

Present were Chairman of Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, military region commanders, station commanders, Secretary of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myint Kyi and members, members of Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division, Chairman of District Peace and Development Councils, registrars of universities and colleges in Yangon, officials of the bus lines in Yangon Division. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe delivered a speech. Next, members of Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Smooth and Secure Transport in Yangon Division, registrars of universities and colleges in Yangon, officials of the bus lines reported on related works. — MNA

Tax-free markets inspected

YANGON, 28 May — Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman and Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe arrived at the tax-free market in Dagon Township, Yangon North District, this morning. On arrival, he was welcomed there by No 3 Military Region Commander Col Tint Hsan, local authorities and officials. They also inspected the tax-free markets in Kamayut, Mayangon, Yankin and Tamway townships. At the markets, the commander and party oversaw the shops opened by local battalions and units, companies and organizations, and ministries. In his inspection tour, market officials conducted the commander and party round the markets. In giving instructions, the commander said as monsoon has set in, measures should be taken for proper flow of water in drains and the keeping of garbage cans at shops, and sales of fresh vegetables, meat and fish. He also urged officials to serve the purpose of opening tax-free markets and fulfilled the requirements. — MNA

Minister inspects waterway in Nyaungdon

YANGON, 29 May — Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe, Deputy Minister U Pe Than and officials inspected waterway along the bank of Nyaungdon by boat this morning.

The minister and party inspected the flow of water in Setkawt and near Bo Myat Tun Bridge. They also inspected diversion canal on Kyeinbin Dam and construction of retaining banks.

They inspected change of waterways for the boats. The minister and party went to the briefing hall of Kyeinbin Dam where Head of marine engineering division of Department of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems U Hla Myint Thein reported on arrangements and results.

Deputy Minister U Pe Than gave a supplementary report. The minister then gave instructions. — MNA

Kelenadhammasakaccha, the timely discussion of the doctrines; this is the way to auspiciousness.
Strive for expanding the scope of mechanized farming

Head of State Senior General Than Shwe laid down the five guidelines on industrial development in 1995, resulting in cumulative development in the State’s industrial sector. The industrial sector has been making significant progress year by year with the growing number of industrial zones reaching up to 19.

The Industrial Development Committee held its coordination meeting No 2/2004 at the Ministry of Industry-I on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Yangon on 28 May afternoon, with an address by Chairman of the Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win. The Secretary-1 in his address said that the Government has adopted priority sectors for expanding the scope of the country’s mechanized farming and greater development of industry and energy. And duties have been assigned to respective officials for rapid development of the industrial sector in 2004-2005 fiscal year. Emphasis is to be placed on industrial development on a greater scale, he said.

Endeavours are being exerted with added momentum for establishment of modern foundries in Mandalay, Monywa and Aye Thaya Industrial Zones by 2004. On completion, these modern facilities will help polish the role of the industrial zones in manufacturing such products as parts of power-tillers, reapers, combined harvesters, water pumps and farm machinery on a commercial scale.

The State has given priority to manufacturing of farm implements and machinery to bring about complete mechanized farming. In this regard, the industrial zones, on their part, are to participate in manufacturing farm implements and machinery at full capacity. At the same time, necessary assistance is to be provided to small or medium size factories and mills in the industrial zones, the majority of the enterprises, which are in need of greater capital as well as better technical knowledge.

Besides, combined and united efforts are to be made for rapid development with respect to production of farm implements and machinery, establishment of agro-based industries and assembling of automobiles.

Only when technological universities, colleges and institutes produce competent workers and highly-qualified experts and technicians needed for industrial zones, will there be remarkable development of industries.

The national industrialists are therefore urged to strive in cooperation with the State for greater progress of mechanized farming, increased production of farm machinery and rapid development of industrial zones.

Lecture on women development given

YANGON, 29 May — Working Group for Prevention of Violence Against Women under Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation organized educational talks on women development to the staff under the Ministry of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs at the ministry this morning. Vice-President of MWAF Daw Than Nwe, advisers and members of the federation, officials from the ministry and staff attended it.

Vice-President of MWAF Daw Than Nwe gave an opening address. Working Group for Prevention of Violence Against Women Secretary Daw Hlay Hlay lectured about the Working Group as well as Head of Committee Daw Kyin San, Director of Office of Attorney-General, on the rights of women gained under the law.

Next, Daw Mu Mu Win, wife of the minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs donated K 200,000 to the Working Group. Adviser to the group Daw Marlar Tint accepted the donations. Vice-President of MWAF Daw Than Nwe gave the concluding address and

Junior Karatedo Tournament opens

YANGON, 29 May — The Junior Karatedo Tournament, organized by Myanmar Karatedo Federation and sponsored by Loi Hein Co Ltd, was opened at Aung San Gymnasium, here, this morning. Present were Deputy Director-General Lt-Col Maung Ko of Sports and Physical Education Department and officials, Patron of MKF Col Aung Din (Retd) and President Police Col Khin Maung Tun (Retd), Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the Tournament Dr Ye Naing Win and members, officials of Loi Hein Co Ltd and spectators.

Dr Ye Naing Win gave an opening speech and opened the tournament. Director U Han Min Tun of Loi Hein Co Ltd presented K 1.05 million for the tournament to President Police Col Khin Maung Tun (Retd). Next, selected Myanmar karatedo athletes demonstrated their sports skills. A total of 16 events were held on the opening day. Altogether 144 athletes are taking part in the tournament. — MNA

Dr Ye Naing Win gives an opening speech and opens the Karatedo Tournament. — MNA
### Americans worried, angrier and less hopeful about Iraq situation

**WASHINGTON,** 29 May—Americans are worried, angrier and less hopeful about the situation in Iraq than they were when the war began a year ago, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll.

Sixty-seven percent of the 1,005 adults surveyed May 20-23 said they were worried about Iraq, three percent higher than in late March 2003, when the US-led invasion of Iraq began and there was uncertainty about its outcome.

The tanks of those angry over the current situation, however, rose to 57 percent from 30 percent in March of last year, while the hopeful dropped to 62 percent from 80 percent when the war began.

Fewer Americans were proud of what is going on in Iraq — 41 percent compared to 53 percent in March 2003, and just as many were frightened — 37 percent against 36 percent 14 months ago.

**Bush approval ratings have dropped almost across the board, with 50 percent disproving of how he is handling his job as president against 48 percent who gave him thumbs-up — a three percent change, up and down respectively — from a month ago.**

Of those who are handling the situation in Iraq, 58 percent disapproved, 40 percent approved; the president’s approval rating among those who are handling the situation in Iraq is 57 percent disapproved, 36 percent approved; the economy, 54 percent disapproved, 44 approved.

Only in how Bush is dealing with the fight against international terrorism did Bush’s approval rating fare better, with 58 percent of those surveyed giving his approval against 39 percent who did not.

Delving more specifically on Iraq, the poll found that 65 percent believed the US-led coalition was bogged down, while 33 percent thought some progress had been made. 59 percent thought Bush lacked a clear plan for the future against 38 percent who said he had one.

A frame grab taken from video footage on 28 May, 2004, shows the burnt vehicle of two Japanese freelance journalists in Mahmudiya, 30 km south of Baghdad. The journalists were killed in an attack on their car on Thursday at a well-known danger spot south of Baghdad, said doctors who displayed two incinerated bodies.

### Japanese journalists killed in Iraq

**BAGHDAD,** 29 May—Two Japanese journalists and their Iraqi translator were killed when their car was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade south of Baghdad, hospital and family sources in Iraq said.

In Tokyo, government officials were unable to confirm the deaths in the attack which took place but said they were investigating the hospital’s account.

“One Japanese and his Iraqi translator are in the morgue but the police told me they had the body of a second Japanese,” said Ismail Al-Malaki, a senior administrator at Mahmudiya hospital some 30 kilometres south of the Iraqi capital.

“According to my information, the incident happened at 6pm (2000 AEST) Thursday between Mahmudiya and Latiyia. A rocket was fired at their car. The vehicle was incinerated and their corpses charred,” he added.

Sabah Sabah Najmedin said he had identified his brother as being one of the dead. “One of them is my brother. He was their translator. I recognised his nose, his belt and his jeans,” he said.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda said the hospital had informed Iraqi officials that the bodies were those of Japanese.

“People from the Japanese embassy saw two bodies at a hospital there. Officials from the hospital explained that those were bodies of Japanese nationals. We are still checking facts and details including this information,” Hosoda told reporters.

A Japanese Foreign Min-

istry spokesman in Tokyo said the hospital had found burned fragments of Japanese papers in the dead men’s personal belongings, and the government was considering sending a forensic expert to identify the bodies conclusively.

Earlier Hosoda told reporters two Japanese journalists had been attacked as they headed north from Samawa, where 550 Japanese troops are based.

He identified the two as Shinmune Hashida, a 61-year-old freelance journalist and veteran of warzone reporting based in Bangkok, and his nephew Kotaro Ogawa, 33, a freelance video journalist and former newsman with Japan Broadcast-

### Turk military says Iraq needs strong central govt

**ISTANBUL,** 29 May—Turkey’s powerful military said on Thursday only a strong central government could keep Iraq together, rather than the “weak” federal system envisaged under current plans.

Deputy Chief of Staff General Iker Basbug also said keeping Turkish troops in northern Iraq was vital for Turkey’s national security, repeating Ankara’s complaint that the United States has done little to curb Turkish Kurdish separatists there.

Turkey fears the creation of a federal Iraq, giving substantial autonomy to Iraqi Kurds, could fuel separatist aspirations among its own Kurdish minority.

“The law foresees a solution in the formation of a weak central federal state (in Iraq),” Basbug told an international secu-

### Pentagon blindsided by Bush pledge to demolish Iraqi prison

**WASHINGTON,** 29 May—Pentagon officials said they were taken by surprise by President George W Bush’s announcement on Monday night that the US would demolish Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad and build a modern centre to replace it, the New York Times reported Thursday.

“This office was not aware of any plans to raze Abu Ghraib or build another prison,” the report quoted a Pentagon spokesman as saying. The official insisted on anonymity for fear of being seen as contradicting the President, the report said.

Another senior Pentagon official said that any plans would have to be discussed with the new Iraqi government, as Bush himself outlined in his announcement, and that in any case razing the prison could not happen quickly.

It’s just an idea the President came up with,” the official said. “The Iraqis could decide they don’t want to tear it down. It’s not ours to tear down.”

The report also quoted a White House official as saying on Wednesday that it had been Bush’s idea to insert the prison an-

### Displaced Ugandans get WFP donations

**KAMPALA,** 29 May—The World Food Programme (WFP) has donated over 25 tons of food items to 702 households of people displaced from Lukude camp in northern Uganda.

Head of the WFP in Gulu sub-office Pedro Amulat was quoted Thursday by local media as saying that the food ration was enough to feed the people of Lukude for 15 days.

The people were given yellow beans and some clothes. Amulat also said in Pakag camp in Lamogi Amuru sub-county, the WFP distributed about 268 tons of food items.

A demonstration has also been held outside the British embassy in Teheran — the sixth in less than two weeks.

The embassy is bearing the brunt of Iranian anger at coalition actions.

In Palestine Square, close to where Friday prayers are held at Teheran University, hundreds of Iranians jostled to fill in forms applying as volunteers for what are being called martyrdom operations against coalition forces in Iraq.

Mohammed Khalili, a teacher who was amongst those signing up, said: “My duty today is just teaching, but if it is the duty to be killed in the way of Islam, I am ready.”

Most of those signing up were men of all ages, though there were also a number of women and some young teenage boys.
Russia evacuates more experts from Iraq

MOSCOW, 29 May — A plane on Friday took home from Iraq 89 more technicians of a Russian energy company after the deadly attack against its employees two days ago.

On board the Il-62 plane were 13 Ukrainians and 76 Russians, according to Interenergoservis company that has been rebuilding power stations in Iraq.

A Russian TV crew also returned to Russia aboard the flight. It was the second and last flight arranged by the Emergency Situations Ministry to evacuate the energy company’s staff.

The first such plane brought 90 employees of the company back on Thursday, including the two killed in the attack in Baghdad on Wednesday. However, 59 experts of the company remained in Iraq to complete work at some projects.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Yakovenko expressed the regret on the company’s decision to leave some of its employees in Iraq despite the “extremely dangerous” situation there. The energy firm promised that the experts would be taken home aboard charter flights soon, perhaps at the weekend.

Interenergoservis has withdrawn about 300 of its technicians from Iraq since May 10, when one of its employees was killed and two others were abducted. The two hostages were released a week later.

Three Russians and five Ukrainians working for the company were abducted in Iraq on April 12, but they were released unharmed the next day.

Syria Press slams Bush’s speech on Iraq

DAMASCUS, 29 May — The official English daily Syria Times Thursday slammed the speech of US President George W Bush on improving current situations in Iraq, calling it “throwing dusts in the eyes of the Americans and the world community as a whole”.

The speech was only for election purposes in an effort to improve Bush’s own image, the paper said.

In his Tuesday’s speech, Bush outlined five steps to help the Iraqis achieve freedom and democracy, which includes transferring power to a transitional government, assisting in materializing security and stability in Iraq, rebuilding infrastructure and encouraging garnering further international support and moving into holding free general elections.

Although the proposals can be viewed by some as a plausible project for the war-stricken Iraq, the daily pointed out, whether they can be turned into tangible action still remained a question. Bush had promised liberation, freedom and prosperity in Iraq, but the reality was “killing, destruction and bloodshed at the hands of the occupying forces”, the daily said in a comment.

The daily made particular reference to the scandals in Abu Ghraib Prison, calling them “horrible and disgusting”, which showed an ugly image of the US occupation.

Thai-Vietnamese navies boost Marine cooperation

BANGKOK, 29 May — The Thai and Vietnamese navies agreed to foster closer cooperation and continue solving Marine problems, following a visit to the Royal Thai Fleet by commander of the Vietnamese Navy, the Thai News Agency reported Friday.

Welcoming Vice Admiral Dai Suong Gong to the Sathahip naval base in this eastern province of Chonburi, Admiral Wichai Yuwanangkura, Commander of the Royal Thai Fleet spoke of the need to cement relations between the two navies.

The Vietnamese naval commander who is in Thai-land on an official visit, was also taken to view the Chakri Narueaboon naval craft.

The two navies have a long history of cooperation, and frequently visit one another to exchange information, the agency said.

It is hoped that such visits will not only foster a good relationship between the two forces, but also will lead to joint naval surveillance in the Gulf of Thailand, joint fisheries protection operations, joint operations to combat pirates, and joint assistance to help Maritime vessels in distress.

Admiral Wichai was quoted as saying.

On 21-28 June the Royal Thai Fleet will send a flotilla to visit Ho Chi Minh City, the agency added.

MNA/Xinhua

Australian soldiers injured in Iraq crash

BAGHDAD, 29 May — Six Australian soldiers were injured when their armoured vehicle crashed in Iraq.

The troops were treated for lacerations and minor injuries. Five soldiers were released from hospital while one was admitted overnight for observation. The soldiers were part of a convoy and the light armoured vehicle crashed 10 kilometres north-west of Baghdad.

The accident’s cause is unknown but a defence spokesman says there is no indication it was the result of terrorism.

Brigadier Ash Power says the soldiers were evacuated to a hospital in Baghdad.

“The unit knows them very well,” he said.

“We’ve kept in constant touch with the families who informed them what is going on and ensured them of the welfare of those people who are serving the country so well overseas.

“We’ll continue to do that, so our thoughts are with them all the time.”

The troops from the Darwin-based 1st Brigade are members of the Security Detachment, which protects Australian diplomats in the Iraqi capital.

A car bomb exploded near the detachment’s base on Tuesday but there were no Australian casualties.

NDP Chief praises Chinese poverty reduction experience

SHANGHAI, 29 May — China has recorded tremendous achievements in poverty reduction and its experience was worthy for other countries to learn from, but it is still too early to break up champagne, said Mark Malloch Brown, administrator of the United Nations Development Programme here Thursday.

China’s poverty situation was changed following an end of two decades ago, which was “very difficult” in other countries, Brown said.

Statistics from the UNDP show that of the reduced half population in poverty in Asia during the 1978-2003 period, most were in China and India. Chinese population in extreme poverty declined from 250 million in 1978 to 29 million in 2003 and most of the rural residents have had enough food and clothing.

MNA/Xinhua

Drug trafficker gets 16 years’ imprisonment in HK

HONG KONG, 29 May — A 30-year-old man was sentenced to 16 years’ imprisonment after he was found guilty of trafficking in dangerous drugs at the High Court on Thursday.

According to a government Press release, the court heard that case following extensive investigations.

On July 9, 2003, Hong Kong Narcotics Bureau (NB) officers laid ambush in the vicinity of Hung Ham in Kowloon and intercepted the defendant when he appeared in Kau Pui Lung Street at noon. A search conducted on him revealed that he was carrying a mobile phone box containing 577 grammes of heroin.

MNA/Xinhua

Irresponsible Iraq official says US to suspend offensive in Najaf

BAGHDAD, 29 May — The US military will suspend offensive operations in Najaf as part of a peace agreement with rebel cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in the holy city, Iraq’s US-appointed national security adviser said on Thursday.

Mowaffaq al-Rubaie told a news conference in Baghdad he understood that the US military would respect the deal to end weeks of fighting with Shiite militants in Najaf.

There was no direct confirmation of the deal from the US military.

Earlier on Thursday, Rubaie, quoting a statement signed by Sadr, said the cleric was willing to pull members of his Mehdi Army who are not from Najaf out of the city and had demanded in return that a murder case for which he is wanted be suspended.

“To end the tragic situation in Najaf and the violation...of the holy places, I announce my agreement to the following: an end to all armed demonstrations, the evacuation of government buildings...and the withdrawal of all Mehdi Army fighters,” the statement said.

The US-led coalition has previously said it will not negotiate with Sadr and that to end the confrontation he must disband his militia and agree to face justice.

MNA/Reuters

A US Army soldier stands guard while a busload of former Iraqi prisoners drive out of Abu Ghraib prison, after they were released west of the capital of Baghdad 28 May, 2004. — Internet
US to pay “big price” for Iraq prison abuse

Zinni, speaking at the National Constitution Centre to promote his book, Battle Ready, said the Bush Administration underestimated the scale of the task involved in invading Iraq, had no credible postwar plan and alienated much of the world community through its actions.

The abuse of Iraqi prisoners by US military at Abu Ghraib, depicted in the graphic photos published around the world, were “culturally abhorrent” to Muslim men, he said.

“We couldn’t have done something more horrendous to this culture than what is reflected by these pictures. It would have been better to have shown people being executed,” he said.

On the day Washington warned of credible new threats of a summer terrorist attack on the United States, Zinni warned, “We are going to pay a big price” for the Abu Ghraib abuses.

He did not specify what he meant by paying a big price.

Zinni, who resigned last year as State Department special envoy to the Middle East, co-authored the scathing critique of the Bush Administration’s Iraq policy with best-selling novelist Tom Clancy.

When the book was published Monday, the White House dismissed its critics, saying President George W. Bush did not look for advice from Zinni, who served as commander-in-chief of US Central Command from 1997 to 2000.

Echoing concerns raised by the Bush Administration’s former anti-terrorism chief Richard Clarke in his book Against All Enemies, Zinni said the government pursued its Iraq policy at the cost of a more credible drive against terrorism after the September 11, 2001, attacks.

“Though we had a higher priority,” he said. “We had to deal with the people who attacked us on 9/11 and we didn’t want anything distracting us from that mission.” — MNA/Reuters

ADB launches programme to boost regional finance system

MANILA, 29 May — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) unveiled a Trade Facilitation Finance Package (TFFP) of 150 million US dollars to boost liquidity and stability of the trade finance system in the Asia and Pacific Region Thursday.

The ADB said this is the Bank’s first use of its partial credit guarantee (PCG) to support and encourage a large number of international and regional confirming banks to take commercial and political risk on local banks that are in countries vulnerable to crisis.

“More than 40 leading international and regional confirming banks were designated as Founding Partner Banks at the TFFP launch,” the Bank said in a statement.

The ADB aims at involving some 30 local banks in priority emerging markets in the TFFP by the end of the year as issuing banks, making them eligible for ADB guarantee support and direct loans.

These markets include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Mongolia, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam, the Bank said.

The ADB programme, a reflection of the close and growing high-level collaboration between ADB and EBRD, aims to help local banks in challenging markets of the region establish track records with international banks,” said Philip Enquist, Principle Director of ADB’s Office of Co-financing Operations said in the statement.

Alfredo Pascual, Director of ADB’s Private Sector Operations Division, said the TFFP will also encourage confirming banks and exporters to expand their business with local banks they are not familiar with.

“By supporting a large number of issuing banks in developing countries, the benefits will filter down to an even larger number of entrepreneurs and businesses,” he added.

ADB/Reuters

Asia Pacific emerges as major air traffic market

CAMBAY, 29 May — Asia Pacific will grow into a major air traffic market, even surpassing the United States, in the next 20 years,” Sydney Morning Herald daily on Thursday quoted Airbus Vice-President of Marketing Colin Stuart as saying in Sydney Wednesday.

He predicted 60 per cent of the world fleet of very large passenger aircraft will be run by airlines in Asia and Pacific.

He pointed out to a rapid growth of the world’s aviation market, a rapid recovery from a slump in the September 11 terror attack on the United States in 2001.

MNA/Xinhua

Strong quake kills at least 20 in northern Iran

QAZVIN (Iran), 29 May — A powerful earthquake struck the Alborz Mountain chain in northern Iran, killing at least 20 people and damaging scores of villages, officials said.

The quake, which the US Geological Survey said measured 6.2 on the Richter Scale, also shook the capital Tehran on Friday, sending some startled residents running into the streets. Some windows were broken. Details on casualties and damage were thin, but officials in the quake-prone Islamic Republic played down fears of a heavy death toll in the lush region on the Caspian Sea coast that is famed for its exotic ports of caviar. Qazvin Province governor Masoud Emami said about 80 villages in his area suffered damage of 20 to 100 per cent in the quake, which occurred five months after more than 20,000 people were killed by a quake that hit the southeastern city of Bam.

A government official in Tehran, declining to be named, put the death toll from Friday’s quake at 20 and said about 150 people had been injured. — MNA/Reuters

Three killed, 18 wounded in car bomb near Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 29 May — Three Iraqis were killed and 18 others wounded, including a senior police officer, on Wednesday when a car bomb exploded at Baladruz Town, 75 kilometres northeast of Baghdad, Qatar-based AL-Jazeera TV channel reported.

“A car bomb exploded at 7:45 am (0345 GMT) as Colonel Ali Ismail, head of the Baqubah police investigation department, was driving by in a convoy,” the channel quoted local police chief as saying. “Three people were killed and 18 wounded, including four policemen,” he added.

Ismail and three of his aides were among those hurt in the blast, which set four cars and a minibus ablaze.

In a separate incident, the police chief of nearby Al-Khalis Town, who was wounded in an assassination attempt Monday, died in hospital, the US military said.

“The chief of police sustained a gunshot wound and later died at Baqubah Hospital. His driver was also killed,” Brigadier-General Mark Kimmitt told a news conference Wednesday. — MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

U.S. Army soldiers take up position after coming under attack while escorting a convoy of prisoners released from the Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad, Iraq, on 28 May, 2004. — Internet

US pressed to make changes in Iraq UN resolution

UNITED NATIONS, 29 May — UN Security Council members pressed the United States to give Iraqis more authority over their political and military future in a draft resolution endorsing the official end of the occupation on 30 June.

France, after Council consultations on Wednesday, said the US-British-sponsored resolution should not be adopted until two weeks after an interim Iraqi government is chosen.

According to French Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere, the Council should “make sure the government is well accepted by Iraqis” and that Iraqis should have an input on the transition to self-rule.

The draft resolution, presented to the Council members on Monday, would back the formation of a sovereign interim Iraqi government but allow a US-led multinational force to take “all necessary measures” to keep the peace. Several Council members, including Russia, China, Germany, Chile and Nigeria, want the mandate of the foreign troops to be limited rather than reopened, unless the new Iraqi leaders asked for a renewal. But US Ambassador John Negroponte, who will become the American ambassador in Baghdad, said the resolution did not need to be rewritten or micromanage every function of a new interim Iraqi government. He said junior diplomats would meet on Thursday to fine-tune the document.

On France’s proposal, Negroponte said consulting Iraqis might not leave enough time to adopt the resolution before June 30. “I assume our French colleague wants the resolution passed before the transfer actually takes place,” he told reporters.

No vote is scheduled until a report from UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, who is helping to select a president, a prime minister, two vice presidents and 26 ministers. They would stay in office until elections for a national assembly, due in January 2005.

Most members expect the resolution to be adopted, albeit with some changes.

China distributed a three-page paper, including proposals that would give Iraq’s interim government control over its own police and troops. It also said the mandate for foreign forces in Iraq should expire in January 2005, but could be renewed by the Security Council if Iraq requested it. — MNA/Reuters

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US Army soldiers take up position after coming under attack while escorting a convoy of prisoners released from the Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad, Iraq, on 28 May, 2004. — Internet
Resistance to go on after Iraq power transfer

DUBAI, 29 May — Armed resistance groups in Iraq, in a purported statement, have vowed to battle US-led forces and the country’s interim government after the June 30 handover of power to Iraqis.

The Arabic-language statement, dated May 25 and posted on an Islamist web site on Thursday, was not signed by any group but it was attached to a similar statement allegedly by the outlawed Baath Party of ousted Iraqi president Saddam Hussein.

The Islamist site, al-Qu’ad al-Qaraq was, has in the past carried statements by militants in Iraq, including Abu Musab al-Zarqawi accused by the United States of being the leading operator of Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda network in Iraq.

“The Iraqi resistance will carry on the principle of armed struggle before and after June 30,” it said. “The interim government and all members are legitimate targets...as are Governing Council members even after leaving their posts.

“Any foreign troops will be treated as occupation forces and any decisions or agreements that will be issued after 30 June void,” the statement added.

The alleged Baath Party statement, posted on the same site denounced the June 30 handover as illegitimate.

“The resistance and the Baath are the legitimate rep-resentatives (of the Iraqi people),” it said. “The date June 30 means nothing because it was picked by the US Administra-tion as part of its plots against Iraq.”

The US-led occupation forces in Iraq are facing an insurgency by Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims groups in Iraq. US President George W. Bush has said violence may increase during the transition to Iraqi rule.

The deadliest group so far has been the Jama’a al-Fathah and Tawhid headed by Zarqawi, which has claimed a series of suicide bombs and attacks in Iraq on US troops and on Iraqi officials in recent months.

Washington has put a 10-million-US-dollar bounty on Zarqawi’s head.

Confusion over who will actually run Iraq still reigns with just five weeks to go before the US-led coalition hands over power to an interim government.

Iraq’s US-appointed Governing Council, formed by 14 months of occu-pation, wants a clear right to tell the 150,000 US, British and other troops what to do and when to leave.

But a draft UN resolu-tion, proposed by Washing-ton and London, asks for an effectively open-ended mandate for the US-led force which will be renewable in a year.

UN Security Council members France and Russia want changes to strengthen Iraq sovereignty while China has also proposed amendments.

MNA/Reuters

Syria calls for US change of Mideast course

DAMASCUS, 29 May — Syria on Thursday called upon the United States to review its Middle East policy and bear responsibility as a superpower regarding stability and peace in the region.

Syrian Minister of Expatriates Boutros Boutaamane called the move while meeting a visiting delegation of US congress-men, the official SANA news agency reported.

The sanctions imposed by the US Administration against Syria would not work to reactivate and stimulate the Syrian-US relations, Shabaan was quoted as saying.

The ties are currently in need of a more constructive dialogue and cooperation based on mutual respect, she added.

She reiterated that the Syrian policy is “firm and clear” with respect to the establishment of a just and comprehen-sive peace in the region based on relevant international resolutions and the land for peace formula.

Meanwhile, the Syrian minister also urged that the United Nations should play a main role in ending the Iraqi people’s sufferings, calling for more cooperation among world countries to restore sovereignty and end occupation in Iraq. For its part, the US delegation expressed willingness to hold more dialogues with Syria. SANA said.

MNA/Xinhua

Opposition growing to US exemption on global court

UNITED NATIONS, 29 May — The United States may not have enough UN votes to exempt American soldiers from prosecution by a new global criminal court, with China now questioning the action in view of the prison scandal in Iraq, diplomats said on Thursday.

A Security Council draft resolution designed to put US peacekeepers out of reach of the International Criminal Court expires on 1 July. A renewal was delayed last week by China and it is expected to go before the Council again after a resolution on Iraq’s transition is adopted.

Two years ago the Council voted unanimously in favour of the measure when the Bush Administration began to veto UN peace-keeping missions after members hesitated. Nine of the 15 members abstained but four years on there are enough abstentions that could bring the resolution perilously close to defeat.

A minimum of nine votes in favour is needed for adoption in the 15-member Coun-cil. Brazil, Spain, France and Germany have signalled they would abstain and Chile, Romania and Benin as well as China are considering abstaining.

But some diplomats said the resolution would squeak through because no one wanted to see Washington kill UN peace-keeping missions. “The British say they are holding their noses and voting for it and others may do the same,” said one envoy.

But China’s position is an unusual one as Beijing has neither ratified nor signed the treaty establishing the court.

Several diplomats said that China was bargaining with the United States over Tai-wan’s status in the World Trade Organiza-tion, one of the few international bodies that admit both Beijing and Taipei.

However, China’s UN ambassador, Wang Guangya, denied this was the case and said the resolution was “a very bad signal at this time”, especially in Iraq.

Of the 15 Security Council members, Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Brazil, Romania and Benin are among 94 nations that have ratified the 1998 treaty creating the court. Russia, Chile, Angola, Algeria and the Philippines are nations that signed the treaty. China and Pakistan have neither signed nor ratified and the Bush Administration rescinded the US signature.

MNA/Reuters

US-led coalition troops in Afghanistan endure aid workers

BRUSSELS, 29 May — The European Commission accused Thursday the US-led coalition troops in Afghanistan of enduring the lives of aid workers.

We would have liked to do more but the security situ-ation in the country clearly remains an important con-straint,” said European Com-mission spokesman Jean-Charles Ellermann-Kingombe when announc-ing the donation of 42.56 million US dollars in hu-manitarian aid for Afghani stan.

He said that elements in coalition forces, through their behavior, contribute to a situation where the distinc-tion between humanitarian and military personnel is becoming blurred.

“This undermines the perception of the humanitar-ian aid workers being impor-tant, being neutral, and makes it difficult to carry out what they are meant to do — that is bringing vital humanitar-i-an aid to those in need,” Ellermann-Kingombe said.

The coalition’s 20,000 troops, who are overwhelm-ingly American, are de-ployed mostly in the trou-bled southeast of Afghani stan in a hunt for al-Qaeda militants and remnants of the Taleban regime.

The spokesman con-trasted their behavior with that of a separate, NATO-led peacekeeping force that is largely confined to the Afghan capital, Kabul.

“TheSpokeman Con-trasted their behav-iour with that of a separate, NATO-led peacekeeping force that is largely confined to the Afghan capital, Kabul.

Members of the 6,500-strong International Security Assistance Force are always clearly identified as military personnel, he said.

MNA/Xinhua

UNCTAD says poverty reduction requires development-led trade

GENEVA, 29 May — A new report launched Thursday by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Devel-opment (UNCTAD) says that poverty reduction requires development-led trade since trade alone is not enough.

According to UNCTAD’s Least Developed Countries Report 2004, persistent mass poverty in the least develop-ed countries (LDCs) is not due to lack of integration into the global economy, nor to insufficient trade liberaliza-tion, but is rather the conse-quence of underdevelop-ment.

The report argues that the links between international trade and poverty vary between countries according to their production structure and level of development. In the 50 LDCs, most of the popula-tion lives on less than one US dollar a day, making ex-treme poverty a mass phe-nomenon.

The report identifies seven major reasons why trade expansion is so rarely associated with sustained poverty reduction in the LDCs.

The factors are slow ex-port growth, falling aid flows, low level of invest-ment and low investment efficiency, high rates of population growth and the consequent need for high rates of employment gener-a- tion, the trade-off between domestic resource mobiliza-tion and poverty reduction, weak linkages between ex-port sectors and the rest of the economy, as well as civil conflict.

MNA/Xinhua

An Iraqi takes cover as fighting continues in the centre of Najaf, Iraq, between US forces and Shiite militiamen in Najaf, on 25 May, 2004. — Reuters
Tobacco Control and Poverty

Nyo Nyo Kyawng

World No-Tobacco Day 2004

Every year, member countries of World Health Organization celebrate World No-Tobacco Day on the 31st of May. To encompass various aspects of tobacco control, different slogans and themes had been selected for every year. The theme of this year’s World No-Tobacco Day is “Tobacco Control and Poverty”. This year, World No-Tobacco Day will be celebrated throughout the country with awareness campaigns at local levels to strengthen development and implementation of various appropriate measures to reduce tobacco consumption among the poor.

Many studies conducted in the area of tobacco use reveal that expenditure on tobacco for poor people is very high. A study revealed that expenditure on smokeless tobacco as high as (33%) of their daily income was as high as (33%) of their daily income on tobacco. For those who smoked as well as chewed betel with tobacco, the expense was (13.4) times higher than that for education cost and (34.6) times higher than health cost.

In addition to the expense borne by the use of smokeless tobacco, another issue of major concern was that about (90%) of respondents stated about dangers of smoking tobacco, but (73%) of them said that the price of less tobacco was higher than that for cheroots. It was revealed that expenditure on smokeless tobacco was much more difficult to quit betel with tobacco than to quit smoking.

Tobacco can worsen poverty among users and their families since tobacco users are at much higher risk of falling ill and impose additional cost on health care. At the national level, costs of tobacco use include increased health care costs, lost productivity and environmental damage.

It is evident that tobacco is posing a major challenge to the low income group in Myanmar. Following the ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, measures will be sought to reduce the economic burden of tobacco on the poor households. Enhancing the community awareness campaigns with the aim to reach the poor and the uneducated is vital. Appropriate price and tax measures should aim at increasing prices harmoniously for all tobacco products both local and imported in order to prevent consumption.

Anti-Tobacco developments in Myanmar

Myanmar became a proud signatory to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the first public health treaty, on the 23rd of October 2003 and ratified the Convention on the 20th of April 2004 and became the 11th Party to the Convention.

Myanmar has been implementing tobacco control measures for many years, mostly through the providing health education to the public via all forms of media and health talks. Myanmar officially launched the National Tobacco Control Programme in the year 2000. Strong political commitment became more evident when the Office of the State Peace and Development Council officially formed the National Tobacco Control Committee in March 2002 which is headed by the Minister for Health and includes heads of departments and local NGOs as members. The Committee has set guidelines for the tobacco control measures to be implemented in the country.

The Ministry of Information has prohibited advertisement of tobacco on television, radio and all electronic media since 1997. Following the guidelines set by the National Health Committee and National Tobacco Control Committee, tobacco advertising billboards had been banned from the vicinity of schools, hospitals, health facilities, sports stadiums and maternity homes since May 2002 and after the completion of contracts between the tobacco industry and the city development committees, all tobacco advertisements had been banned from all over the country since April 2003. According to the instructions issued by the General Administration Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs, tobacco advertisement had also been banned from the newspapers, journals and magazines since early 2003.

The Ministry of Health is in the process of endorsing the Convention and this is mainly concerned with protection of non-smokers’ health from exposure, to tobacco smoke. In the meantime, on the 21st of May 2001, the Director-General of the Department of Health issued a statement that prohibited smoking in all hospitals and health departments in the entire country, in commemoration of World No-Tobacco Day. 2001. Measures have been undertaken to ensure that health care workers and institutions set a good example by not smoking themselves, make their institutions smoke free and through their own training, counselling and advocacy activities emphasize the benefits of a smoke free life.

The joint collaboration between Tobacco Free Initiative Project and School Health Project of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education had also achieved most of the basic education schools in Myanmar to be tobacco free. The facts on dangers of tobacco are already in the school curriculum and the life skills education training for students. Frequent essay and quiz competitions on tobacco among the students were held which increased their knowledge on tobacco.

In commemoration of the World No-Tobacco Day 2002, the Ministry of Sports declared all its sports stadiums and sports fields tobacco free and issued standing orders that prohibits smoking among athletes. The Ministry of Information and Myanmar Film Association jointly celebrated the World No-Tobacco Day 2003 with the theme “Tobacco-free Film, Tobacco-free Fashion, Action!”Advocacy workshops on tobacco free initiative were being conducted at State and Divisional levels followed by training workshops at township level. The advocacy workshops were ceremoniously attended by Patrons or Heads of the State and Divisional Health Committees and participated by representatives of related departments and NGOs.
Tailoring Course opened at Youth Secular House (Pazundaung Township)

YANGON, 29 May — A ceremony to open the tailoring course under the arrangements of Yangon Division Maternal and Child Welfare Association was held at Yangon Division Youth Secular House (Pazundaung Township) of Solomon Housing Estate on Maha Bandoola Street in Pazundaung Township this morning.

Present were Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife Daw Khin Thet Hlay, patron of Yangon Division Supervisory Committee for MCWA, No 4 Military Region Commander Col Yan Naing Oo, authorities and wellwishers.

First, Daw Khin Thet Hlay explained the purpose of opening the training courses. Next, the commander and wife, No 4 Military Region Commander Col Yan Naing Oo and Chairman of Yangon Division MCWA Supervisory Committee Head of Division Health Department Dr Hla Myint accepted the donations and presented certificates of honour to the wellwishers.

Later, the commander and wife and party inspected practical works of the trainees.— MNA

Competition to mark International Day for Control of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking held

YANGON, 29 May — An opening ceremony of painting, poster, cartoon and computer painting competitions to mark International Day for Control of Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (2004) was held at No (9) Basic Education High School in Mawlamyine, Mon State on 22 May morning, attended by Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council South East Command Commander Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, Secretary of Mon State PDC Lt-Col Soe Myint Aung, officials, social organizations, nurses and members of Red Cross brigade.

First, the commander made a speech as to the competition. Next, he presented the prizes to those who won in the central level competition in 2003. After the ceremony, the commander and officials looked round the competition and paid homage to Sutaung Pyae Buddha image in Kyakmaw and inspected all-round renovation of the image.— MNA

Small plane crashes in Indonesia

JAKARTA, 29 May — A small plane with five people onboard crashed in Pontianak, the capital of Indonesia’s West Kalimantan Province, on Thursday, but all passengers survived. The plane, which departed from the nearby town of Sengkawang, crashed on the road only four kilometres from the Sapidio Airport in Pontianak at around 15:30 local time (08:30 GMT), reported Detikcom online news service.

Nestle donates twenty-thousand formula milk packets to Children in Bahan Township

YANGON, 29 May — Nestle donated twenty-thousand formula milk packets to children in Bahan Township, which is one of the most endangered districts in Yangon Division.

Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein delivers an address at the ceremony to mark the school enrolment week in Bahan Township. — MNA

School enrolment week launched in Bahan

YANGON, 29 May — The No 3 Basic Education Department (Yangon) launched school enrolment week activities for all school-age children in Bahan Township at Basic Education High School No 1 in Bahan Township this morning.

It was attended by members of the Central Committee for Ensuring Enrolment of All School-Age Children Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries U Aung Thein and Deputy Minister for Labour Brig-Gen Win Sein, Pro-rector of Dagon University Dr Myint Swe, Deputy Director (Academic) of No 3 BED (Yangon) U Nu, officials, local authorities, principals, members of school boards of trustees, teachers, members of social organizations, students and their parents.

Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein delivered a speech on the occasion.

Secretary of Township Leading Committee for Ensuring Enrolment of All School-Age Children Township Education Officer Daw Kyu Kyu Shwe briefed those present on the activities.

The deputy ministers and officials handed over school textbooks and stationery donated by wellwishers to the schools through officials.

On behalf of the wellwishers, Daw San San Myint explained the purpose of the donation. — MNA
Maritime Courses concludes

YANGON, 29 May— The Advanced and Basic Maritime Course No 1/2004 (Pathein Camp) for New Generation Youths of Tatmadaw (Navy) jointly sponsored by the Union Solidarity and Development Association (Central) and Tatmadaw (Navy) concluded at the Ayeyawady Shwewa Hall in Pathein on 28 May morning.

It was attended by Chairman of Ayeayawady Division Peace and Development Council Commander of South-West Command Maj-Gen Soe Naing, Captain Aye Pe of the local station, Secretary of Ayeayawady Division USDA U Aung Tin Myint and departmental officials, commanders of battalions and units under Pathein Station, social organizations, trainee nurses, course instructors and trainees.

Next, Joint Secretary of Ayeayawady Division USDA U Aung Tin Myint presented completion certificates to trainees and the ceremony ended.—MNA

Arrangements for school enrollment in Yedashe inspected

YANGON, 29 May—Chairman of Bago Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Southern Command Maj-Gen Ko Ko, accompanied by departmental officials, on 26 May afternoon, met with school heads, teachers, members of the School Board of Trustees and town elders at Yenzi Basic Education High School in Yedashe Township, where Headmaster U Saw John Rawkho reported on salient points of the school and arrangements for school opening.

The commander gave necessary instructions and inspected school enrollment, school buildings, classrooms and furniture.

Next, the commander looked into Huatry Jetty and left instructions to officials concerned. Later, the commander and party proceeded to Myohla BEBS where Headmaster U Ye Myint reported on arrangements being made for school opening.

Afterwards, the commander gave instructions, calling on parents and teachers to make concerted efforts for promotion of education standard of students, physical, spiritual and moral development of students and getting students imbued with sharp and dynamic patriotism and attended to the needs. Next, the commander arrived at Thagara BEBS and Swa BEHS and met school heads, teachers and members of the School Board of Trustees and gave instructions on making efforts for promotion of education standard of students. Next, the commander inspected the schools and fulfilled the requirements. Afterwards, the commander proceeded to Yedashe BEBS where Headmaster U Tan Aye reported on salient points of the school. The commander gave instructions on sanitation measures and inspected classrooms and school enrollment and attended to the needs.—MNA

Aviation Courses for New Generation Youths conclude

in Myitkyina, Toungoo, Mekitkla

YANGON, 29 May— The Basic Aviation Course No 1/2004 for New Generation Youths, co-organized by the Union Solidarity and Development Association (Central) and the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Air), concluded at Myitkyina, Toungoo and Mekitkla camps from 29 May to 28 June.

At Myitkyina camp, Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Chairman of Northern Command Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe and Commander of Myitkyina Air Base Col Zaw Tun gave speeches at the concluding ceremony. Next, the commander presented prizes to outstanding trainees. Col Zaw Tun presented certificates to the trainees.

Similarly, the concluding ceremony of the basic aviation course was held at Mekitkla Camp. Commander of No 99 LID Col Tin Dtin Tin, Commander of Ground Training Base Col Thura Khin Maung Win and Secretary of Mandalay Division USDA U Khin Maung Oo gave speeches. Next, officials presented prizes and certificates to respective winners and the trainees. —MNA

Seminar on Living Donor Liver Transplant

YANGON, 29 May— The seminar on Living Donor Liver Transplant and A New Cartilage Transplant in Osteoarthritis, co-organized by GI and Liver Society and Orthopaedic Society of Myanmar Medical Association and Parkway Group Healthcare Pte Ltd of Singapore, was held at the Traders Hotel, Sule Pagoda Road here this afternoon.

Present at the seminar were chairman of the societies and member, doctors, the assistant general manager and officials of Parkway Group Healthcare Pte Ltd, liver specialists and orthopaedists and officials of pharmaceutical companies and Win Myanmar Co Ltd, observers and guests.

President of GI & Liver Society Professor U Khin Maung Win of Liver Unit, Yangon General Hospital, and President of Orthopaedic Society Professor U Kyaw Maitin Naing of Orthopaedic Unit, Kymyinjine Orthopaedic Hospital, chaired the seminar.

First, Prof U Khin Maung Win made an opening speech and Assistant General Manager Mr Samuel Tan from Parkway Group Healthcare Pte Ltd extended greetings.

Next, Dr Tan Kao Chah and Dr Tan Jee Lim of Gleneagles Hospital of Singapore explained facts about 'Living Donor Liver Transplant' and ‘A New Cartilage Transplant in Osteoarthritis' and answered the queries put by those present.

Then, Prof U Kyaw Maitin Naing gave a concluding speech. Those wishing to have an operation for liver transplant and new cartilage transplant may contact Win Myanmar Co Ltd, No 44, Latha Street.

WANTED: Seas and Oceans — Dead or Alive?

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Sunday, 30 May, 2004

RIDING TEAM LEAVES FOR MALAYSIA: To participate in the Malaysian National Horse Show 2004 to be held in Penang from 3 to 6 June, the Myanmar team led by U Nyein Kyaw of the Myanmar Equestrian Federation left Yangon by air on Saturday. The Myanmar athletes seen at the Yangon International Airport. (n)

EXAM FOR IT DEVELOPMENT: With a view to developing Information Technology in Myanmar, the Japan-Myanmar Cross Certification (JTEC) examination was held at the MICT Park in Yangon Saturday under the sponsorship of the Myanmar Computer Federation. Altogether 172 persons sat for the examination. Photo shows the exam in progress (n)

Don't smoke

Prof Dr Khin Maung Win speaks at the seminar. — MNA
India, China to consult each other on Iraq issue

BEIJING, May 29 — China and India have decided to consult each other on Iraq issue and step up bilateral ties using the various mechanisms set up for this purpose, the Foreign Ministry said here on Thursday.

Briefing reporters on Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing’s first telephonic talk with the new Indian External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh late Wednesday night, Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said that apart from discussing bilateral ties, they also exchanged views on Iraq issue.

“The two countries also discussed the Iraqi situation in Iraq, Singh expressed willingness to have “further consultations and contacts” with the Chinese Foreign Minister,” the spokesman said.

He said the Chinese side was willing to strengthen cooperation and consult on the issue, and that the two countries would, following up on the meeting in Sihanoukville, Cambodia from June 3 to 4, said Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing on assuming the post on Monday.

The spokesman said the Chinese side also firmly adhered to the five principles of peaceful coexistence with India, and the development of bilateral relations to the two countries and New Delhi is willing to promote the bilateral ties with Beijing in an all-round way under the guidance of the five principles of peaceful coexistence, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Singh said China and India are both important countries in the world and have long-term interests.

MNA/Prv

China, ASEAN to begin 10th Senior Officials’ Consultation

BANGKOK, May 29 — China will attend the 10th China-ASEAN Senior Officials’ Consultation held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia from June 3 to 4, said Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Jianchao here Thursday.

China’s Assistant Foreign Minister Kong Guanyu is scheduled to lead a Chinese delegation meeting the meeting.

Li said at a regular press briefing that the consultation was launched in 1995 as an important annual political consultation mechanism for the two sides.

During the upcoming meeting, the two sides will exchange views in an in-depth dialogue on the China-ASEAN strategic partnership for peace and prosperity as well as international and regional issues of common concern.

Li said the meeting will also make preparation for the informal foreign ministers’ meeting between China and ASEAN and the China-ASEAN summit at the end of this year. He said that the meeting will discuss ways to promote cooperation and development.

MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia to sign LNG supply contract with US company

JAKARTA, May 29 — Indonesia will sign liquefied natural gas (LNG) supply contract with California-based Sempra Energy scheduled for the end of June, a leading economic newspaper reported Friday.

Under the contract, Indonesia will deliver 3 million tons of LNG per annum to Sempra at 4 US cents per million British thermal unit (MMBtu), reported Bisnis Indonesia newspaper. The contract will be for a 20-year term starting in 2007.

Sempra and Indoszenia, which was represented by the government agency for upstream oil and gas activities (BP Migas) and British Petroleum (BP Plc), signed the Heads of Agreement on LNG supply in Washington last December.

MNA/Xinhua

Oil, gas sector contributes $10.85b to Indonesia in 2003

JAKARTA, May 29 — The oil and gas sector contributed 10.85 billion US dollars in 2003 (VND 49.86 million US dollars) into the Indonesian Government in 2003, above the government income from the sector as much as 9.63 billion US dollars in 2002 and 10.10 billion in 2001, a senior official said Thursday. Rahmat Sudibyo, head of Oil and Gas Upstream Business (BP Migas), told the House of Representatives’ Commission VIII on energy and mine that oil production suffered a decline during the last five years but oil and gas production in the last three years was stable.

He said the government has found reserves of 1.9 billion barrels of oil and 7.9 trillion cubic feet of gas during the last two years.

Rahmat also said that the government in 2003 signed a contract to export gas to Singapore through Sumatra pipe as much as 100 million cubic feet per day.

MNA/Xinhua

Vietnam builds second North-South grid

HANOI, May 29 — Vietnam is pouring 7.80 trillion Vietnamese dong (VND 496.8 million US dollars) into the second 500-kv transmission line running from the South to the North.

Construction of the 1,050-kilometre grid, starting from the central highlands province of Dak Lac, will be completed by late 2005.

The country invested 5.313 billion VND (33.4 million dollars) in building its first North-South grid which became operational in 1994. Its investor, the Electricity of Vietnam (EVN), recovered the capital just three years after the grid was put into operation.

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese regions seek closer cooperation for faster growth

GUANGZHOU, May 29 — Government officials and specialists of nine southern Chinese Mainland regions, and Hong Kong and Macao, will gather for a forum on cooperation and development from 1 to 3 June.

Xu Shangwu, secretary-general of the Organizing Committee for the Forum on Regional Cooperation and Development in the Greater Pearl River Delta, said the forum will discuss the Pearl River Delta, which is composed of Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hunan, Hainan, Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan provinces and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, as well as Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

He said that the government has found reserves of 1.9 billion barrels of oil and 7.9 trillion cubic feet of gas during the last two years.

Xu said the conference will be convened to promote cooperation and development in the Greater Pearl River Delta, which is composed of Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi, Hunan, Hainan, Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan provinces and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, as well as Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

The greater Pearl River Delta has a fine foundation for regional cooperation and prospects in this regard will be even better in the wake of China’s admission into the World Trade Organization, establishment and expansion of the Sino-ASEAN Free Trade Area and the Sino-Arabian Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement (CEPA) agreed upon between the Chinese Mainland and Hong Kong, Macao, and Macao, said Xu.

Promoting cooperation and development in the Greater Pearl River Delta will be conducive to prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and Macao, to helping the eastern, central and western Chinese Mainland regions realize economic integration and balanced growth while complementing each other with their advantages and to enhancing their overall strength and competitiveness, Xu said. It is expected to help expand cooperation between China and ASEAN, and within Asia, Xu said, who is also deputy secretary-general of Guangdong provincial government.

MNA/Xinhua

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Rahmat also said that the government in 2003 signed a contract to export gas to Singapore through Sumatra pipe as much as 100 million cubic feet per day. He said the contract will last for 15 years and 12 years respectively.

MNA/Xinhua

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MNA/Xinhua
China to become world’s largest “IT” market

BEIJING, 29 May — China is expected to become the largest information technology (IT) market in the world in the next five years, according to an official from the Ministry of Information Industry (MII).

Guo Fuhua, deputy director of the policy regulating department under the MII, said earlier this week that China’s IT industry has the potential for rapid growth as the demand is everywhere.

China will become the world’s largest market for computer and accessories in the next five years, said Guo, acknowledging that computers will be popular in Chinese families in that period.

In 2004, China would likely turn out 48 million computers, a rise of 29 per cent over last year. The figure is expected to reach 90 million in 2008.

Meanwhile, the demand for electronic hold-up appliances will soar. Although household appliances are very popular in China, most of them are in need of upgrading or repairs. The new generation of digital electronic products will enter Chinese homes in large quantities in the years ahead, said Guo.

Guo also expects a booming telecommunication industry. China now ranks No. 1 in the number of telephone subscribers and No. 2 in Internet subscribers. But owing to China’s large population, the country’s telecommunication market still has great potential.

Statistics show that every 100 people now have 21 fixed phones in China, while the ownership rate of mobile phones for Chinese people is 20.9 per cent, both lower than those of developed countries.

The fact that China will become the largest automobile market will also stimulate the development of the IT industry, said Guo, citing that the automobile industry has a close relationship with information technology. The utilization of advanced information technologies in the auto industry will promote the use of intelligent automobile systems like fuel, chassis and trunk-mounted systems. Information technology has been utilized in almost all sectors of China’s economy. E-business, e-government and technical upgrading of state-owned enterprises will all provide more opportunities for the development of the industry, said Guo.

UN says Too many Asian leaders ignoring “AIDS”

SHANGHAI, 29 May — AIDS remains taboo among leaders of too many Asian nations where China had been making strides to catch up with an openness exemplified by Thailand, a UN special envoy said on Thursday.

Cultural conservatism was rife in the region and had to be addressed if the epidemic was to be contained, said Nafis Sadik, the special UN envoy for HIV/AIDS in Asia.

“Asian leaders view it as a risk to themselves to talk about HIV/AIDS. Many people in these countries still live in denial to the problem,” she told a press conference at the Information Technology (IT) market council in the eastern Chinese city of Shanghai.

But China had made significant steps to bolster awareness at the highest level in recent months, she said.”China has declared that this is a problem in their population,” Sadik said.

China had decided to launch a national public information programme, was trying to rehabilitate drug users rather than penalize them, and was trying to educate sex workers. “China is definitely moving in the right direction. They are not at the level of Thailand yet but they will be.”

AIDS activists in China have been muzzled or detained in the past for speaking out, but UNAIDS executive director Peter Piot said this week there had been a “sea change” in how China is confronting the disease, making it less likely there will be 10 million people infected by 2010, as the United Nations once feared.

Official figures in China, the number of people infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, at 840,000, about 10 per cent of whom suffer from AIDS.

Activists estimate the extent of the outbreak is far higher, saying more than a million Chinese are potentially infected in the central province of Henan alone.

Henan, with a population of more than 95 million people, has been in crisis since the 1990s when ill-conceived rural blood selling schemes led to the infection of entire villages. A clear picture has only started to emerge in the past few years.

Singapore’s business receipts index rises by 6.9% in 1st quarter

SINGAPORE, 29 May — Singapore’s overall business receipts index grew by 6.9 per cent in the first quarter of this year from a year ago, according to a statement by Singapore’s Department of Statistics (SDS) on Thursday.

The figure is higher than the growths of 2.6 per cent and 4.8 per cent respectively, in the third and fourth quarters of last year respectively.

Water transport services jumped by 27.9 per cent while the air transport industry rose by 8.3 per cent in the first quarter of this year over last year.

The overall post and telecommunications services industry increased by 5 per cent in the first quarter as compared with the same period last year, but the financial and insurance services reduced by 1.6 per cent and 14.5 per cent respectively.

In Singapore, the services sector accounts for 63 per cent of the 95 billion Singapore dollar economy and more than half of the country’s total employment.

Singapore students sing “tea for toe, and toe for tea”

SINGAPORE, 29 May — Does your nose wrinkle when your toes twinkle?

If you’re hoping to stave off the lingering scent of sweaty shoes, traditional Chinese green tea could be the answer to sweaty feet and their malodorous consequences.

A student project at Singapore’s Temasek Junior College found that green tea—a popular drink in Asia—dribbled into the insoles of shoes reduced the stench caused by sweaty feet. Singapore’s Straits Times newspaper reported on Friday, “We used tea as we heard it prevents microorganisms from growing,” said Michelle Low, the project’s 16-year-old team leader who group experimented with 10 types of tea leaves before settling on green tea.

Made from the steamed leaves of the camellia sinensis shrub—a shrub native to Asia—green tea has been known in Asia for centuries as a herbal disease-fighter, mainly because of its natural chemicals known as polyphenols which have antioxidant properties.

A study by the University of Kansas in 1997 found that green tea contained twice the antioxidants credited with helping to prevent cancer, heart disease and other illnesses than red wine and was more effective in protecting cells than Vitamins C and E.
Premier calls for sustainable development in Shanghai

SHANGHAI, 29 May—Premier Wen Jiabao called for sustainable economic and social development in Shanghai during his recent inspection tour of the city. The Premier visited factories, high-tech firms and local residents on May 24-25.

During his visit to the East China Power Grid Company and Waigaoqiao Power Plant, the Premier said that the development of the power industry should be combined with energy saving efforts, as power supply was still a knotty problem in China’s economic development.

“We should focus on the construction of both power plants and power grids, and devote more in the combination and coordination between the supply and management power, so as to ensure stable and sure power supply,” Wen said. While visiting a high-tech development zone in Shanghai, Wen said the development of science and technology should rely on the market and talents. He urged setting up market-based platforms for research, development and incubation of high technologies.

He also encouraged innovation, hoping more talents would develop promoting and competitive technologies with their own intellectual property rights (IPR). He reminded Shanghai to implement the “scientific concept of development” all the way in its development and to strengthen macro-economic control and optimize industrial structure, deepening of reforms and improve economic growth. “It is necessary to handle correctly the relations among knowledge-intensive, skill-intensive and labor-intensive industries and the relations between pillar industries and other social causes including education, culture and sanitation, which are all indispensable for realizing comprehensive and sustainable social and economic development,” he said.  — MNA/Xinhua

Singapore Deputy PM optimistic about China’s economy

SINGAPORE, 29 May—Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Thursday voiced his optimism about China's economic growth, saying that China’s growth and transformation have been phenomenal.

Speaking at a conference on Asian economies and financial markets here on Thursday night, Lee said that a major development in recent years is the emergence of China as an economic powerhouse.

He said that China’s buoyant exports, supported by low-cost manufacturing capabilities, and its huge domestic market have created strong competition as well as immense opportunities for the rest of the world.

China’s growth has driven the rapid increase in intra-regional trade, and fuelled economic expansion in the region, if not worldwide, said Lee.

As for the decision made by Chongqing’s economy recently, Lee said that China’s economy is showing signs of overheating, but the

Russia to take back uranium fuel from other countries

Moscow, 29 May—Russia and the United States signed an agreement here on Thursday to remove nuclear fuel from Soviet-built research reactors worldwide to keep it away from terrorists.

Under the deal, Russia will use more than 100 million dollars of US funds to back take back some 500 kilos of uranium fuel from research reactors in 17 Commonwealth of Independent States, Eastern European and South-east Asian countries, ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

The agreement was signed by the head of the Russian Atomic Energy Agency Alexander Rumyantsev and visiting US Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, is part of the 450-million-dollar US project aimed at fighting against the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

It is the first “concrete step” being taken by the two Cold War foes to prevent nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorist, Rumyantsev was quoted as saying. — MNA/Xinhua

China to continue its endeavour of poverty reduction

SHANGHAI, 29 May—China would continue its endeavor of poverty reduction, fundamentally improving the life of its one-sixth population, said Jin Rengping, Chinese Minister of Finance.

Speaking at the conclusion ceremony of the Global Conference on Scaling Up Poverty Reduction, Jin said underdeveloped countries had exchanged and learnt advanced experience in terms of poverty reduction at the conference through case studies and dialogues. He said the Shanghai Agenda on Poverty Reduction issued at the conference was an indication of world’s determination of poverty alleviation.

Jin said every country would have its unique way to reduce poverty, which deserved respects of the international community.

The economic development was the most efficient way to reduce poverty, the official said. Economic growth would not only financially support the government’s poverty reduction endeavor, but also provide more employment opportunities to the poor, as to improve their life qualities.

A powerful and efficient government could bring about social and political stability, which was the prerequisite for poverty reduction, he said. — MNA/Xinhua

Putin rules out return of authoritarian regime in Russia

Moscow, 29 May—Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday ruled out restoration of an “authoritarian” regime in the country and vowed to build a liberal and free society based on a democratic system.

In his annual State of the Nation address before the Federal Assembly—the bicameral Parliament, Putin reviewed the outcome of his first four-year term and elaborated the priorities of his second term in office, which began on 7 May. He categorically disagreed with his liberal opponents at home who fear that due to his policies of strengthening the administrative system and law enforcement, Russia’s transition to a liberal democracy after post-Soviet turmoil Russia might stray from democratic principles.

“There will be no review of the fundamental principles of our policy,” Putin said amidst

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Paulius Matana elected new PNG governor-general

CABERNA, 29 May—Paulius Matana, a former diplomat and teacher, was elected to be Papua New Guinea’s (PNG) new governor-general on Thursday.

He was chosen in the Parliament’s fourth attempt to fill the position, which has been left vacant since last November. The previous elections were marred by legal challenges and accusations of bribery.

He beat five other candidates, including the country’s first female candidate Nahau Rooney, to win the position, the Australian Associated Press reported.

His predecessor, Sirias Atobarie, finished his six-year term last November.

Former PNG prime minister Bill Skates has been the acting governor-general since last November. — MNA/Xinhua

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Japan offers $100,000 flood aid to Dominica

HAYANA, 29 May—Japan announced Wednesday to offer 100,000 US dollars in equipment and materials to the victims of the floods that devastated the Dominican Republic’s border region of Jimani, reports reaching here said.

A Japanese official said the aid, including tents, water purification systems, satellite phones and cardboard boxes, would reach Thursday the Americas International Airport, east of the capital Santo Domingo.

“The government of Ja- pan is very interested in send- ing the materials as soon as possible to relieve the pain of the suffering people,” the official was quoted as say- ing.

Non-stop flight to be launched between Singapore, Chongqing

CHONGQING, 29 May—The non-stop air flight from Chongqing, a metropoli- lis in southwest China, to Singapore is to be launched on June 16. The air service will be operated by Singa- pore’s Silk Air with two flights every week and is expected to greatly increase the convenience for passen- gers, who now have to trans- fer in Chengdu, capital of southwest Sichuan Province, and other big cities in China.

Silk Air has opened five non-stop flights to China, to Macao, Xiamen in eastern Fujian Province, Fuzhou, capital of Fujian Province, Chengdu and Kunming, capital of southwest Yunnan Province.

Over 100 modern art classics destroyed in London fire

LONDON, 29 May—More than 100 so-called modern art classics representing some of the cream of the “Britart” movement of celebrated modern conceptual artists have been destroyed in a warehouse fire in Lon- don, local media reported Wednesday.

The works, including some owned by British modern art collector Charles Saatchi, were burned in the fire at the warehouse of art storage firm Momart in Leyton, east London.

A spokesman for Saatchi said the cost was likely to run into millions of pounds.

He confirmed that works by Tracy Emin — including the tent called “Every- one I have ever slept with 1963-95” and her piece known as “The Hut” — and pieces by Damien Hirst Sarah Lucas, Gary Hume, Patrick Caulfield, Craigie Horsfield and Martin Maloney were lost in the fire.

He added that “Hell” by brothers Jake and Dinos Chapman who were on the short list for the Turner Prize last year, may also have perished.

Saatchi reportedly paid 500,000 pounds (about 900,000 US dollars) for “Hell,” which he displayed at his gal- lery on the south bank of the river Thames.

Zambia bans use of cellular phones while driving

LUUSA, 29 May—The Zambian Government has banned the use of cellular phones while driving, the official Times of Zambia newspaper reported Thursday.

Communications Minis- ter Bates Nanyamwasa was quoted as saying that the move is aimed at reducing traffic accidents in Zambia, adding that later in the year, a new system would also be introduced for public serv- ice vehicle drivers, in which traffic offenders would lose points deducted from their license upon being con- victed.

Mozambican AIDS hot line answers 300 calls a day

MAPUTO, 26 May—A free AIDS hot line set up by one of Mozambique’s most prominent non-governmental organizations, the Community Development Founda- tion (FDC), is now answering 300 calls a day.

The FDC told Press that there was a steady rise in the number of people using the hot line in January, when it took 2,631 calls. And in Feb- ruary the number rose to 6,184, and in March the total was 8,100.

These numbers show an evident growth in public de- mand for clarification of doubts concerning AIDS,” the FDC said.

The questions most fre- quently raised by callers con- cern the symptoms of AIDS and of other sexually trans- mitted diseases, how the HIV is transmitted, and where HIV tests can be obtained.

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Drive safely

JN Dixit appointed as India’s National Security Adviser

NEW DELHI, 29 May—India’s former Foreign Secre- tary J N Dixit was on Wednesday appointed as new National Security Adviser, a post held by Brajesh Mishra in the preceding Vajpayee government, in the rank of Minister of State (Junior Minister), for three years.

An official notification here said that “Dixit has been appointed as National Securi- ty Adviser in the Prime Minister’s Office for a pe- riod of three years, renewable for three years, whichever is earlier.”

“During his charge as National Security Adviser, Dixit will enjoy the rank of Minister of State,” the notification said.

A seasoned diplomat, Dixit had held several key positions while in the For- eign Service, including High Commissioner to Pakistan and Sri Lanka. He was In- dia’s first High Commissi-
Valdano to resign as Real Madrid sporting director

MADRID, 29 May — Real Madrid sporting director Jorge Valdano said on Thursday he would be resigning to allow club president Florentino Perez to plan for the future.

The former Argentine international, who said his resignation would take effect from June 11, took up the post four years ago when Perez was elected. Valdano’s decision comes three days after the club’s decision to sack coach Carlos Queiroz and appoint former player Jose Antonio Camacho as his replacement.

Real ended a miserable season last week with a fifth league defeat in a row, a result that meant they finished fourth in the Primera Liga. Valdano did not make it clear if he would be prepared to take up another post at the club in the future.

Perez said earlier this week that he would be calling an Extraordinary General Meeting of the club’s members on June 11th at which a date for this year’s presidential elections would be fixed. — MNA/Reuters

Euro 2004 could cure Portugal’s inferiority complex

LISBON, 29 May — Porto’s Champions League win could be the cure for Portugal’s self-esteem blues and a perfect springboard into next month’s European championships.

That was the head of a group formed to boost low national pride said on Thursday.

“This kind of victory shows that we must have trust in our capabilities,” said Joao Paulo Sousa, of the “Portugal Positive” campaign. “I spoke in an interview with Reuters after Porto beat Monaco 3-0 on Wednesday.

“We need this kind of achievement to improve people’s self-confidence and if the results are good (at Euro 2004), it will empower the country.”

Sequeira, an advertising executive, and other business leaders formed “Portugal Positive” in February. They aim to find examples of success stories and come up with ways to counter the negative mentality.

“It’s not an inferiority complex. It’s a crisis of self-esteem,” Sequeira said. “Portugal in the past has had a legacy of this characteristic of (lacking) self-esteem and it became part of our personality.”

A recent survey showed that about a third say they have little pride in being Portuguese.

The main reason cited being the persistent economic woes and divergence with other European Union countries. Portugal had the worst-performing economy in the 15-nation European Union (EU) last year and its productivity is only 60 per cent of the EU average. Portugal has skyrocketed amid austerity measures aimed at closing a budget deficit that broke euro zone rules in 2001.

Regardless of the case of the problem, things are looking up for Portugal as it prepares to host Euro 2004, Sequeira said.

“The fact that Portugal will be in front of the world’s eyes will give Portuguese pride,” he said.

The country has spent more than 600 million euros (734 million US dollars) preparing for the June 12 to July 4 tournament with as many as 1.5 million visitor expected to attend.

MNA/Reuters

Bayern confirm Lucio joining from Leverkusen

MUNICH, 29 May — Bayern Munich confirmed on Thursday that Brazil defender Lucio was joining them from Bundesliga rivals Bayer Leverkusen.

Bayern said the 26-year-old, part of Brazil’s 2002 World Cup-winning team, had agreed to sign a three-year contract.

It becomes Bayern’s second major signing for next season after Iranian striker Vahid Hashemian, who is joining from VFL Bochum. The four-times European champions will also have a new coach in Felix Magath, who is leaving VfB Stuttgart to replace Ottmar Hitzfeld.

Bayern, who finished second in the Bundesliga behind Werder Bremen to qualify for the Champions League again, might also release German midfielder Michael Ballack in whom Barcelona has expressed an interest. — MNA/Reuters

Vieri says Italy strike force best in Europe,

MINOCA, 29 May — Italy striker Christian Vieri believes his partnership with Francesco Totti will be the best on show at Euro 2004.

“Their chemistry will be better than ours,” he said. “Totti and I are the best,” he added.

Totti and Vieri’s appearances together in the past two years have been limited due to injuries but when they have lined up alongside each other, as in the qualifying games against Finland last year, they have swiftly clicked up a good understanding.

“I have a special relationship with Francesco and we don’t have the need to train together to understand each other. It is enough to look at those few times we have played together for the national side,” said Vieri.

The burly striker has endured another difficult and disappointing season with Inter Milan but is looking forward to next month’s finals in Portugal and believes Italy can go far if he and Roma forward Totti get the right service.

“To win the European championship two players aren’t enough. Even we can’t do well if we don’t have the support of all the team. A couple of players can win you a match but not a major tournament like this,” said Vieri. He has also struck up a swift friendship with another Roma player, young forward Antonio Cassano.

“He sends me up for morning till night,” said Vieri. “It’s one joke after the other. He talks to me in the Bari dialect and I don’t understand a thing. So I reply in English so he won’t understand either,” said Vieri who grew up in Australia.

“We call him Roman, after Totti, often with a header. The way we played on Thursday they should never be ruled out of contention for a major tournament.

“You need games like this to build confidence,” said Germany coach Rudi Voeller. “The way we played was satisfying but we are not getting carried away.”

Malta played the last 12 minutes with 10 men after goalkeeper Mario Muscat was sent off for bringing down Germany striker Miroslav Klose outside the box.

Ballack opened the scoring with a leave-foot drive 15 minutes into the match then doubled the lead two minutes later with a header from a Philipp Lahm cross.

Four-goal Ballack helps Germany crush Malta

BERLIN, 29 May — Four goals from Michael Ballack helped Germany restore pride with a 7-0 demolition of Malta in a Euro 2004 warm-up in Freiburg on Thursday.

Midfielder Ballack, who has been criticized for below-par performances for Bayern Munich this season, shone throughout Germany’s first outing since an embarrassing 5-1 defeat by Roma last month in Bucharest.

“That was important,” said Ballack. “Even against such opponents scoring seven goals is an achievement.”

Defender Jens Nowotny, midfielder Torsten Frings and striker Fredi Bobic also contributed to a convincing performance against opponents lining up outside the top 100 in the world rankings.

The 2002 World Cup finalists, who have struggled recently, need to be tested against tougher opposition.

Serena dejected after surviving Paris scare

PARIS, 29 May — Serena Williams survived a second-round scare against Russia’s Maria Kirilenko on Thursday but sounded more dejected than relieved by her 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 win.

The second seed had very few answers on court to her 17-year-old opponent’s “well-rounded game”, as she put it, but she had lots of questions marks over her own performance.

“I think I made tons of errors. I was spraying the ball. I wasn’t moving up to the ball. I was hitting short balls. You know, you name it,” she said. Despite scoring her first ever pink outfit in a lacklustre match lasting two hours, Williams’ mood was dark.

“I’m a little disappointed. Actually, I’m terribly disappointed,” she said.

“I just had a bad day. I couldn’t keep a ball in. In practice I kind of felt a little weird going into the match.”

MNA/Reuters

Capriati survives slow start at French Open

PARIS, 29 May — American Jennifer Capriati survived a slow start to reach the third round of the French Open, beating Kvetra Peschke of the Czech Republic 7-5, 6-3 on Thursday.

The 2001 champion had a slow start to lag 3-5 after dropping her serve in the fifth game, but geared up in time to win four games in a row to take the first set in 40 minutes against Peschke who only played in her second tournament in 18 months after a knee surgery.

In the second set, Capriati went 2-0 up before Peschke broke back to level at 2-2. In the battle of the 28-year-olds, Capriati made the decisive break in the eighth game to lead 5-3 and served out for the match.

Capriati is seeded to meet No. 2 seed Serena Williams in the quarterfinals. — MNA/Xinhua

France’s Louis Saha, left, dribbles past Andorra’s Oscar Soneje during their friendly soccer match in Montpellier, southern France, on May 28, 2004. France won the match 4-0. Both countries are qualified for the European Championship next month in Portugal.

INTERNET

Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

1 Bracket person
5 Prepared
8 Tack in sewing
9 Irish county
10 Feline female
11 Turn on axis
12 Aircraft shed
14 Totting up
17 Inundate
19 Retrieve
22 Sell to highest bidder
23 Bohemian dance
24 Song
25 A nobleman’s dominion

DOWN

1 Revolt
2 Suspended garland
3 Girl’s name
4 Nature
5 Renovated
6 Point of view
7 Xmas fuel (4,3)
12 Manage thriftily
13 Increase sound
15 Null
16 Cowor
18 Racebook
20 A frisk
21 Domain

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**THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR**
Sunday, 30 May, 2004

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**WEATHER**
Saturday, 29 May, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours

MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been cloudy in Taninthayi Division. Rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Chin, Kayah and Kayin States, Lower Sagaing and Magway Divisions and scattered to widespread in the remaining areas with isolated heavyfalls in Shan State and Mandalay Division. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Pindau (4.21) inches, Nyang-U (2.91) inches, Kyaukse (2.60) inches, Shwebyin (1.97) inches.

Maximum temperature on 28-5-2004 was 32.8°C (91°F). Minimum temperature on 29-5-2004 was 20.5°C (69°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 29-5-2004 was 85%. Total sunshine hours on 28-5-2004 was (6.1) hours approx. Rainfall on 29-5-2004 was 11mm (0.43 inch) at Yangon Airport, 28mm (1.1 inches) at Kaba-Aye nil at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 373 mm (14.66 inches) at Yangon Airport and 372 (14.65 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 470mm (18.50 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 12 mph from South at (17:30) hours MST on 28-5-2004.

Bay influence: Yesterday’s the low pressure area over Southwest Bay has still persist. Monsoon is weak in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 30-5-2004: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Mon State and Taninthayi Division, scattered in Kayin and Shan States, Mandalay, Bago, Ayeyawady and Yangon Divisions and isolated in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Thundery conditions in lower Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 30-5-2004: One or two rains or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 30-5-2004: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).
Commander, mayor inspect sanitation tasks downtown

Yangon

Yangon, 29 May—Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin this morning inspected sanitation tasks being carried out in Yangon City by Tannadawmen, members of Myanmar Police Force, employees of YCDC and local people. The commander and the mayor inspected dredging of drains for proper flow of water and sanitation tasks in roads, wards, drains and creeks in townships of Yangon East District, Yangon South District, Yangon West District and Yangon North District. Officials conducted them round the work sites.

In their inspection tour, the commander and the mayor gave necessary instructions to officials.— MNA

Enhanced Diplomatic Skills Course concludes

Yangon, 29 May—The Enhanced Diplomatic Skills Course No 2/2004, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, concluded at the hall of the ministry this morning, with an address by Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win, directors-general of departments under the ministry, departmental officials, Myanmar ambassadors, senior diplomats, rectors and professors of universities, officials of the Attorney-General’s Office and Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development.

The subjects on international laws, international trade, political matters related to the mine and future tasks by Assistant Director U Tin Nu of Department of Geological Survey and Minerals Exploration, and gave instructions on systematic exploration and work site safety.

On arrival at the briefing hall of 1,000 acres Highland Reclamation Project at the junction of Tanyan Road near Lashio, the commander heard reports on arrangements for cultivation of paddy, pigeon pea and Hsinshweli maize strain at the project area being carried out by regiments and units of Lashio Station by Lt-Col Khin Maung Win of North-East Command.

The commander inspected completion of cultivation matters in the project area. — MNA

Win Thuza, GEC shops open at Nyaungnhapin Camp

Yangon, 29 May—Under the arrangements of the Welfare and Entertainment Sub-committee of the National Convention Convening Management Committee, Win Thuza Shop of the Ministry of Industry-1 and shops of Government Employee Cooperative keep open at Nyaungnhapin Camp in Hmaubry Township daily to enable the delegates to National Convention to purchase their needs at the shops conveniently.


Likewise, GEC shop sells foodstuff, personal goods, textile, stationery and periodicals and others.

At Myanmar Spectacles Shop, retired employees give services to the buyers. Similarly, the beauty salon is being opened for the women delegates to the National Convention. The Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries opens the saleroom, barber shop, photo shop and canteen.

Commander inspects development tasks in Lashio

Yangon, 29 May—Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing attended the harvesting ceremony of 150 acres of Hsinshweli summer paddy in Nampaung Village-tract, Lashio Township, on 27 May morning.

Col Khin Maung Myint of Tanyan Station presented cash prizes to three farmers who actively participated in cultivation of 150 acres of summer paddy.

Minister for Commerce inspects production of small rice mills

Yangon, 29 May—Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, accompanied by Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Tun and Managing Director U Min Hla Aung, arrived at the office of Chief Engineer of Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading in Setsan, Pazundaung Township this morning.

Chief Engineer U Ni Paw of Engineering Division of MAPT reported on manufacturing of the rice mills with audio-visual aids and explained about 10-ton rice mill to the minister.

The minister gave instructions on production of small rice mills, durability of the machine parts, installation of home-made equipment and quality of milled rice.