Prime Minister attends opening of school buildings in Hlinethaya Township

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party inspect Orchid Garden and Finger Lake housing estates of FMI City in Hlinethaya Township.— mna.

Yangon, 19 June—The new buildings of No 20 Basic Education Primary School, Shwelinban Industrial City Pre-primary School, No 6 Post-Primary School and No 47 Primary School in Hlinethaya Township were launched at the respective schools this morning, attended by Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

These facilities were built with the contributions of the Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development under the Ministry of Construction. Also present on the occasion were the ministers, the Yangon mayor, the departmental heads, local authorities, social organizations, townsenders, wellwishers, members of the school boards of trustees and parent-teacher associations, principals, teachers and students.

The opening of the building of the No 20 BEPS in Hlinethaya Township took place starting at 9.30 am at the school. Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun and Minister for Education U Than Aung formally opened it. The General and party inspected the building and classrooms.

Next, the General and party attended the opening of Shwelinban Industrial City Pre-primary School. Minister Maj-Gen Saw Tun and Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Rehabilitation Maj-Gen Sein Hla formally opened it.

The General and party inspected skill demonstration of the students and gave necessary instructions. The General and party also attended the opening of the building of No 6 Post-primary school in Hlinethaya Township. Minister Maj-Gen Saw Tun and Minister for Education U Than Aung formally opened the building by cutting the ribbon.

The opening ceremony of these buildings was held at the school. Director-General of the DHSHD U Aye Kyaw explained the purpose of the donation and called on students, parents and teachers to maintain these facilities for durability.

Next, Deputy Director General of Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development Col Aung Win handed over the documents related to the buildings to Director-General of No 3 Basic Education Department U Aye Kyaw.

Wellwishers donated cash for basic education primary schools, post-primary schools and pre-primary schools in Hlinethaya Township to the ministers. Headmaster U Win Hla of No 6 Basic Education Post-primary School thanked the donors.

Next, Minister for Education U Than Aung said he was very pleased to see the emergence of new magnificent schools with the assistance of the wellwishers under the supervision of DHSHD. Hlinethaya Industrial Zone is developing rapidly. In the education sector, pre-primary and university were opened there and it can be called Education City. Students in the township can now get full opportunities to pursue education.

He said the government is making efforts to boost human resources and uplift of education and building a modern developed nation. He also thanked entrepreneurs and wellwishers for their cooperation.

Chairman of Myanmar Education Committee Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party inspected multimedia teaching centres.

The Prime Minister and party attended the opening ceremony of No 47 Basic Education Primary School.

(See page 8)
Towards national development

For the equitable development of the Union, the Government is implementing the border areas and national races development project, the project for 24 Special Development Regions and the five rural development tasks harmoniously.

While the Government is providing necessary assistance to each and every region to have a strong economy and for regional development, local people, service personnel and members of social organizations, on their part, are to make concerted efforts for development of the respective regions.

On his tour of Sagaing Division, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt met members of Pale and Будalin Township Peace and Development Councils, departmental personnel, members of social organizations and townswomen on 12 June. According to their reports, the Prime Minister fulfilled the requirements in agriculture, livestock breeding, education, health and transportation.

In meeting members of Township Peace and Development Council, departmental personnel, members of social organizations and townswomen at the Myawady Hall in Будalin, the Prime Minister said that although the country is not rich, the magnitude of investment poured into the development of Sagaing Division is not small, that infrastructures for agriculture, industry, education, health, transport and human resources have been built and that such infrastructures have also been established in other states and divisions.

Local people, in cooperation with departments, are to implement projects for regional development.

There is some weakness in paddy cultivation in Pale and Будalin Townships to meet local food sufficiency fully. Therefore, all-out efforts are to be made for boosting paddy cultivation.

The committees formed are to implement the tasks for local rice sufficiency, rural development, human resource development and greening of environment through collective efforts.

Development of townships and districts means development of the states and divisions. Making effective use of better foundations in Sagaing Division created by the State, officials are to strive for higher development in the region raising whatever role they are in.

The harmonious and equitable development between one region and another, between urban and rural areas and between border areas and the interior will help raise economic and social standards of national races, thereby strengthening national solidarity.

The entire national people, realizing the goodwill of the State, are to strive for boosting regional development thereby ensuring national development.

People’s Desire

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

Sitagu Sayadaw arrives back from England

YANGON, 19 June—Honorary Professor of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Chancellor of Sitagu International Buddhist Academy of Sagaing Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Maha Dhammakabika Hitadhara Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nanissara arrived back here by air this morning after attending the final rites of Buddha Vihara Monastery Presiding Nayaka foreign missionary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Revatadhama Mahathera held in Birmingham, England, on 4 June.

The Sitagu Sayadaw was welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Departmental Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko, Director-General of Religious Affairs Department Dr Myo Myint and departmental officials, Secretary of Lower Myanmar Sitagu Kappiya Karaka Group U Han and disciples.—MNA

Sharp Sale Centre opened

YANGON, 19 June—Sharp Roxy Sale (Si) Pte Ltd and Ambur Electronic opened the Sharp sale centre at 122, Maha Bandoola Park Street, this morning.

Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Mr Hiroiuki Nuzato of Sharp Roxy Sales S’pore, Ambur Electronic Resident Representative Mr Steven Sng, CEO Mr M Fujiki of Sharp Asian Operation and MG Mr S Marsuse of Sharp Roxy S’pore formally opened the centre and inspected it.

Also present on the occasion were deputy directors-general of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Managing Director Director Mr Hiroiuki Nuzato of Sharp Roxy Sale S’pore, employees and journalists.

Hailing the Fourth World Buddhist Summit to be hosted by Myanmar, CEO Mr M Fujiki of Sharp Asian Operation donated K 1.5 million for installation of water purifier at Maha Pasana Cave at Kaba Aye. Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung accepted the donation.

LCD TV, Plasmachuter, Solar Cell, DVD, VCD, Theatre Projector, Digital Video Camera, Hi-Fi cassette, refrigerator, washing machine, air-conditioner, micro-wave oven, vacuum cleaner, air cleaner and others are available at the centre.—MNA

Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Nanissara being welcomed back at the Yangon International Airport.—MNA

National Convention delegates entertained with films at Nyaungnapin Camp

YANGON, 19 June — The Entertainment and Welfare Subcommittee of the National Convention Convening Committee is organizing entertainment programmes for delegates to the National Convention daily at the gymnasium of Nyaungnapin Camp.

Yesterday the delegates were entertained with a film entitled “Myit Toe Ei Maya” (Trickiness of River) directed by Moe Pwe and starring Yan Aung, Ye Aung, May Than Nu and Soe Moe Kyi.

MNA

POEM

Media tree that will ever keep bearing fruit

* In Shan State (North)

Southeastern region

Today there emerges

A media tree for the people.

The huge media tree

The fruit sweet and luscious

Full of nutrition

For people of the region

To share and to enjoy

With new strength and plentiful

Will be fruitful forever.

(Dedicated to the opening today of the Sub-printing House of News & Periodicals Enterprise in Lawtab.)

Po Wa (Trs)

CEO Mr M Fujiki of Sharp Asian Operation hands over donation of K 1.5 million for 4th Buddhist Summit to Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung.—MNA
Report says US officer faced pressure from high up over Iraq prisoners

WASHINGTON, 18 June—The top US military intelligence officer at Iraq’s notorious Abu Ghraib prison testified he was under pressure from the White House, Pentagon and the CIA to glean more information from prisoners, a US newspaper reported.

Steven Jordan said in sworn statements to army investigators obtained by USA Today that in November an aide to National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice visited the prison to discuss “detrainee operations and reporting.”

Jordan, a lieutenant colonel, told investigators that during his time at Abu Ghraib—from 17 September to 22 December—he was reminded “many, many, many times” of the need to improve the intelligence output of the prison.

Abu Ghraib, a dreaded jail under the former regime of Saddam Hussein, shot to notoriety again when graphic images were broadcast around the world of US soldiers physically and sexually humiliating naked Iraqi inmates, in violation of the Geneva conventions.

Jordan’s statements did not shed light on how high up the chain of command was for the US officers to get information, said the daily, but they give new insights into the intensity of the demands on commanders to get information that could reduce the violence against US occupation troops.

Seven prison guards have been charged with abuse at Abu Ghraib. None of their superiors have been held responsible despite statements from the guards that they had received instructions to soften the detrainees for interrogation.

Fran Townsend, Rice’s aide who visited Abu Ghraib, told USA Today that Jordan’s statement that she pressured him to extract more information from prisoners was “ridiculous,” Townsend, who is deputy national security adviser for combating terrorism, said she visited the prison for two hours in November but did not discuss with Jordan interrogation techniques or the need to obtain more information.

Jordan also told investigators that his immediate superior, Army Colonel Thomas Pappas, told him at least twice “that some of the (intelligence) reporting was getting read by (Secretary of Defence Donald) Rumsfeld, folks out at Langley (Central Intelligence Agency head-quarters in Virginia), some very senior folks.”

He said Pappas told him the pressure to get more intelligence began well before October 2003, when the documented abuses at Abu Ghraib took place.

China will not back US on immunity from new court

UNITED NATIONS, 19 June—China said on Friday it would abstain on a resolution giving the United States immunity from the new International Criminal Court, a decision that may leave Washington short of votes to pass the resolution.

“I said to my colleagues we will abstain,” Beijing’s UN ambassador, Wang Guangya, told Reuters after a lunchsum among the 15 Security Council members and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Wang said earlier the resolution would send a wrong signal in light of the Iraqi prisoner abuse scandal.

China’s abstention could deprive the Bush Administration of the nine “yes” votes required to adopt a resolution. So far only Britain, Russia, Angola and the Philippines are considered sure votes in favour. All other members are contemplating an abstention or are undecided, following a rebuke by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who said on Thursday the resolution was “wrong,” would “discredit the Council” and was of “dubious judicial value.”

He said that resolution “would be a very unfortunate signal to send at any time— but particularly at this time”.

On Friday Annan distributed a memorandum to council members, “strongly” urging them not to renew the measure.

“The Secretary-General believes that extending the exemption once more would contradict the efforts of the United Nations — including the Council itself — to promote the rule of law in international affairs,” the memorandum said. — MNA/Reuters

Bangladesh to expand medicine export market

DHAKA, 19 June—Bangladesh is making an effort to expand its medicine market as the trade and individual property regulations allowing it to imitate world famous pharmaceutical products at a cheaper price will end in 2016.

This competitive advantage should be utilized to the maximum by diversifying the pharmaceutical companies and diversifying the export basket, The Financial Express said Friday.

A delegation of Bangladesh Association of Pharmaceutical Industries left Dhaka Wednesday to explore market for Bangladeshi products in four African countries—Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Mali. The pharmaceutical in-

Vietnam spends more money to curb HIV/AIDS

HANOI, 18 June—To curb the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Vietnam is spending more money on buying and producing HIV/AIDS drugs, and raising public awareness about preventive measures, according to local media on Thursday.

HIV carriers are found in almost all districts of Vietnam, with 81,206 victims, mainly in the age of 20-29, reported by late May. Of the sufferers, 12,684 developed into AIDS and 7,208 people died of the disease.

Vietnam has allocated 80 billion Vietnamese dong (VND) (5.1 million US dollars) for HIV/AIDS prevention programmes this year, of which 10 billion VND (637,000 dollars) is to be spent on buying medicines. — MNA/Xinhua

India won’t send troops to Iraq

LONDON, 17 June—Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said he has accepted India’s decision not to send troops to the multinational force in Iraq following a meeting with his Indian counterpart, says AP.

“I didn’t make any request at all to the foreign minister about the ... issue of troops because we know and respect the position of the government of India,” Straw said Wednesday after meeting Indian Foreign Minister K Natwar Singh for 45 minutes in London.

Singh, on his first visit to Britain since the surprise election victory of his Congress party last month, said the question of sending Indian troops to Iraq did not arise during his talks with Straw.

The Indian government “position on the issue is based on the national consensus which was reflected in the unanimous resolution just last year in both houses of the Indian Parliament,” Singh said.

Britain and the United States hope to persuade other nations to share the burden of peacekeeping in Iraq following the handover of sovereignty to the interim government in Baghdad at the end of this month.

Singh welcomed the recent UN Security Council resolution regarding the turnover in Iraq, calling it “a first step in restoring sovereignty to the Iraqi people and leading to stability and peace and reconstruction.” — Internet

British soldier among wounded in southern Iraq mortar attack

AMARA, 18 June—A British soldier and two Filipino security guards were wounded in a mortar attack on a coalition base in southern Iraq earlier this week, officials said.

At least one mortar hit an accommodation block on the base in the city of Amara, 365 kilometres (220 miles) southeast of Baghdad, late on Wednesday, a British military spokesman said.

“There were three casualties ... none of them are life-threatening,” the spokesman told AFP.

One British soldier and a Filipino security guard were taken to a nearby British-run hospital for treatment, while a second Filipino guard was treated at the scene, the spokesman said.

Later that night and again on Thursday night more mortar rounds were fired at the base without causing casualties.

“It happens quite a bit,” said the spokesman for the British army, which is in charge of southern Iraq and has between 100 and 150 troops in Amara.

A local police official said Shi’ite Muslim militiamen loyal to radical cleric Moqtada Sadr were behind the attacks.

“At 11:00 pm (1900 GMT), four mortars hit the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Amara” late Thursday, police colonel Ali Hussein told AFP.

“After that there was shooting between British forces and the Mehdi Army (Sadr’s militia force). There were no injuries.”

The latest mortar rounds fired hit a security wall outside the coalition base but failed to damage the actual building, said the British military spokesman, adding that British forces were investigating the attacks.

Sadr commands some support in Amara, which has been dogged by frequent anti-coalition attacks. — Internet
**Crews struggle to fix Iraq oil pipelines**

Baghdad, 18 June—Crews struggled Friday to repair sabotaged oil pipelines in southern Iraq, hoping to resume vital exports by the end of next week. A senior US officer said Iraqis themselves must provide information on insurgents if the attacks are to be stopped.

US soldiers clashed with guerrillas for a second straight day in a town outside Baqouba, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad.

Guerrillas also attacked US troops at a police station in Samarra, firing rocket-propelled grenades and rifles after warning shopkeepers to close, witnesses said. US troops returned fire, wounding two attackers, residents said. There was no report on US casualties.

In the south, British solders traded small arms fire overnight with Shiite fighters loyal to radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in Amarah, witnesses said. There were no British casualties; two insurgents were killed.

A coalition spokesman said the smaller of two oil pipelines blasted by insurgents this week had nearly been repaired but engineers were still examining the larger one. Spokesman Dominic d'Angelo said tests could begin on the smaller pipeline Saturday but full exports probably won’t resume before June. Iraqis exports were suspended Wednesday because of the attacks on the pipelines, which carry crude oil from the southern fields to tankers in the Persian Gulf.

Exports from Iraq’s other field near Kirkuk were halted last month due to sabotage on the pipeline to the Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, Turkey.

The attacks against the pipeline were part of a stepped-up campaign of violence before the June 30 transfer of sovereignty to the new interim Iraqi government. The attacks appear aimed at undermining public confidence as the handover approaches.

In the boldest attack in months, a car bomber smashed into a crowd seeking jobs at a military recruitment center Thursday in Baghdad, killing at least 35 Iraqis and wounding 145. Another car bomb that same day killed six Iraqis civilian defense fighters and injured four others in Balad, north of Baghdad.—Internet

**Martial law being considered in Iraq**

Baghdad, 18 June—In the wake of two car bombs that killed 41, Iraq’s new government is considering temporary martial law in the country’s most dangerous areas.

“A decision to impose martial law could be taken if the attacks continue,” Defense Minister Hazem Shaalan said.

National security adviser Muwaffaq Rubaie told the Financial Times martial law had not yet been discussed substantively with US forces.

A new law would have to be passed because the temporary constitution, which is the basis of the new Iraqi government, does not have provisions for emergency rule.

**Saudi oil firm boosts security for staff**

An-Nasir, 18 June—Saudi state oil giant Aramco was strengthening security for workers and families unnerved by a wave of deadly militant attacks on expatriate workers in the country, the Arab News reported Thursday.

The paper quoted Aramco officials as saying that the protection was part of ongoing security measures and not a knee-jerk reaction to the recent spate of violence which had rocked the kingdom.

Saudi Aramco was doing everything within its power to ensure the safety and security of its employees and their dependents, the company facilities and communities in which they work and live.

The company was continuously upgrading the equipment and infrastructure available to its industrial security personnel and was also stocking up on bullet-proof vests, according to the officials.

Fears about security at oil facilities have been sparked by the recent killing of Westerners in the oil hub of Yanbu on the Red Sea coast and Khobar, near Dhahran on the east coast.

Aramco officials say they have no plans to hire outside security forces to strengthen protection, but its own guards might get additional and specialized training.

Some 5,000 Aramco guards, as well as physical barriers, cameras and government security forces have already been deployed to protect its facilities and employees.

The new measures could help calm the nerves of some of the 8,500 workers and families living on the heavily fortified Aramco complex in Dhahran who have been shaken by the recent bloodshed.

So far there has been no sign of foreign oil workers fleeing the kingdom. But it was impossible to predict the impact of a mass exodus of Aramco expatriates, who make up about 14 percent of the oil giant’s 54,000 workforce.—MNA/Xinhua

**Iraqi experts warn against blockage of Tigris River**

Baghdad, 18 June—Iraqi experts warned against the possibility of blockage of the Tigris River in the next 10 years due to the rise in the rate of sedimentation in the bottom of the river at the turn of Jadiriyah Bridge in central Baghdad, Al Ithihab newspaper reported Wednesday.

“The flow of the river is very slow at the turning of Jadriyah, in addition to the widening banks of the river. This led to the accumulation of clay sedimentation that might lead to the blockage of the river in the future, if it is not be neglected,” the local newspaper quoted the experts.

Specialists at the Iraqi Ministry of Water Resources admitted that they are facing many obstacles to remove the accumulating clay because the turn is inside the city and the machines are needed for handling this sedimentation.

After the US-led war on Iraq in April 2003, water resources has not been paid proper attention in a country containing two rivers, most of the attention was directed to other institutions, which resulted in a number of problems that would develop into serious one in the future, experts warned.—MNA/Xinhua

**Lebanese hostage freed in Iraq**

Beirut, 18 June—Lebanese hostage Habib Samour has been freed in Iraq after almost a month in captivity, a Lebanese Government source said on Wednesday.

The source said the Lebanese diplomatic mission in Baghdad confirmed Samour was in good health and had left Baghdad for the Jordanian capital Amman. On Tuesday, Al Arabiya television station showed footage of Samour appealing for his release and said it had a statement from a group called the Islamic Angry Brigades which said it held Samour for the United States.

The Lebanese news agency said he was released without a ransom being paid.

Kidnappers took two other Lebanese men hostage in Iraq at the weekend, according to Foreign Ministry officials in Beirut. Another Lebanese hostage, Hussein Ali Ayyan, was killed and dumped by a road along with two of his Iraqi colleagues.—MNA/Reuters

**Vietnam sentences drug gang members to death**

Hanoi, 18 June—A Vietnam appeals court has sentenced a US citizen and four other members of an international drug ring to death, rejecting their requests for clemency.

The five were among 11 members of the gang who were convicted and bring to nine the number in the case who will face the firing squad.

Four of the 11 had been sentenced to death in an earlier court hearing.

The gang was charged with trafficking 39.45 kilos (87 pounds) of heroin, 50 kilos of marijuana and 6,000 ecstasy pills between Cambodia, Vietnam, Japan and the Netherlands from 1993 to 2002.

Among the five sentenced on Wednesday were US passport holder John Nguyen, or Nguyen Nhu Hung, who had originally been ordered to serve a life prison term, an official at the appeal court in southern Ho Chi Minh City told Reuters on Thursday.—MNA/Reuters

**US soldier killed, contractor wounded in Iraq mortar attack**

Brampton, 18 June—A US soldier has been killed and a contractor for a US firm wounded in a mortar attack on a US-led coalition base on Friday, the US military said.

“One Task Force Baghdad Soldier died and a Kellogg Brown and Root contractor was wounded when six mortars hit a coalition base at about 2:30pm,” a statement said.

KBR is a subsidiary of US construction giant Halliburton.

The statement did not reveal the nationality of the contractor, who only received minor injuries.

The death raises to 614 the number of US soldiers killed in action since the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, according to numbers from the Pentagon.—Internet
Turkish, Egyptian hostages released in Iraq

ISTANBUL, 18 June — Suspected Iraqi guerrillas on Thursday released a Turkish truck driver and an Egyptian man taken hostage earlier this month, Turkey's state-run Anatolian news agency said.

Bulent Yanki from Turkey was being supplied with supplies from Kuwait to the US forces in Iraq when he was taken hostage in the Iraqi city of Fallujah at the beginning of June.

Kadafi rejects foreign interference in African affairs

CAIRO, 18 June — Libyan leader Moammar Kadafi said Thursday that he rejected any foreign interference in African affairs, according to a report by Libyan official news agency JANA.

"We in Africa are willing to deal with UN forces, but we reject any external forces that harm our independence, our sovereignty and our dignity. We will never allow any nations or alliances to interfere in African affairs, unless they are under the UN leadership," the report quoted Kadafi as saying.

The released Egyptian was named Victor Tawfag, according to the Egyptian news agency Menu.

Turkish diplomats had earlier said that Yanki was released last week. A Foreign Ministry spokesman on Thursday could not confirm Yanki had been let go on Thursday.

Private Turkish television station CNN Turk said on its website Yanki and Tawfag were turned over to journalists from Turkey's Ihlas news agency in Fallujah.

"Whoever is thinking of coming here, don't work in Iraq," Yanki was quoted as saying by CNN Turk. He said his captors had treated him well.

After his release, Yanki, a 35-year-old father of three, was brought from Fallujah to Baghdad and was now with Turkish diplomats, CNN Turk said.

US soldier dies of wounds

BAGHDAD, 18 June — A US soldier died of wounds sustained during a rocket attack on a military base north of Baghdad on Wednesday, bringing the number of American troops killed in the strike to three, the US military said.

One soldier was killed at the scene of the attack while the other two died of their wounds at a field hospital, according to a military statement issued on Thursday.

The attack, which targeted the Anaconda Base near Balad, wounded 23 other people at the base, including at least 12 soldiers, the statement said.

Since last year's invasion to oust Saddam Hussein, at least 610 US troops have been killed in action in Iraq.

MNA/Reuters

Syrian MPs propose sanctions against US interests

DAMASCUS, 19 June — More than half of the members of Syria's legislature have signed a bill that seeks curbs against US interests, a month after Washington imposed sanctions against Damascus, Syrian sources said on Friday.

The measure comes in response to economic sanctions imposed by Washington against Damascus mainly for supporting anti-Israel militant groups, the sources said.

It also is a reaction to "US policies in the region and its unlimited support and bias toward Israeli policies and practices," one source said. The measure was signed by about 130 of Parliament's 250 members seeks the imposition of unspecified "strict restrictions on US interests in Syria," said a source familiar with the bill. The proposed law that is expected to be debated by the House on June 27 would authorize the government to decide appropriate measures against US interests, the sources said without giving further details. The volume of trade between non-OPIC oil exporter Syria and the United States is modest with transactions between the two sides amounting to around 300 million US dollars last year.

Syria has said it has a deal with a Petro-Canada-lead consortium, including US Occidental Petroleum, on developing the 600-700 million US dollars Palmyra gas project could be closed within months. The biggest current US investment in Syria is ConocoPhillips' Deir Ezzor gas project, in which it has a 50 per cent share of a service contract with France's Total.

MNA/Reuters

Iraq to launch new traffic law

BAGHDAD, 18 June — An official at the Traffic General Department said that a new traffic law would be applied in Iraq starting Saturday, local newspaper Al Taakhi reported Wednesday.

"The new law would include new fine rates, and would be applicable starting Saturday," the official was quoted as saying.

"The fine would at least be 20,000 Iraqi dinars (15 US dollars) for the vehicles with no registration plates and the vehicles with the steering wheel on the right side," added the official.

He also pointed out that the drivers who do not abide by the traffic rules and regulations would also be fined and that this would be considered the first traffic law to be applied for more than a year.

"The department has many plans to eliminate all kinds of breach of traffic laws, rules and regulations," emphasized the official.

Since the US-led war on Iraq ended in 2003, absence of clear law and order and deteriorating security conditions caused the streets to be crowded and unsafe.

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese, Russian presidents meet in Tashkent

TASHKENT, 18 June — Chinese President Hu Jintao made a three-point proposal to Russian President Vladimir Putin here Thursday when they met after the summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Hu proposed that the two countries make an outline on implementing the China-Russia Friendly Treaty on Good-Neighbourly Cooperation as soon as possible with the aim to strengthen China-Russia cooperation on major projects.

The two sides should increase investment in the other side and expand local cooperation, Hu said.

The two sides should also handle any trade problems with the spirit of mutual benefit, mutual concession and friendly consultation, Hu added.

"China views its relations with Russia as one of its most important foreign relations," he said. "China treasures its traditional friendship with Russia and the strategic partnership relations with Russia." The Chinese President said China and Russia should enhance their strategic partnership relations under current world situation.

Putin said Russia and China have increased mutual political trust and their cooperation in trade, military technology and culture has also grown rapidly.

The Russian President said he agreed with Hu’s three-point proposal, and that Russia will work with China to lift the level of trade and economic ties between them.

Putin pledged that Russia will give “full consideration” of China’s interest when making decisions on any projects related to China as China is the biggest neighbour and a strategic partner of Russia.

MNA/Xinhua

UNSC should not give US troops exemption from ICC prosecution

UNITED NATIONS, 18 June — United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged the Security Council on Thursday not to grant US troops serving with peacekeeping missions, either authorized or established by the UN, an exemption from prosecution and investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

"For the past two years, I have spoken quite strongly against the exemption, and I think it would be unfortunate for one to press for such an exemption, given the prisoner abuse in Iraq," Annan told reporters upon his arrival at the UN Headquarters in New York.

He was referring to the horrible abuses of detainees in Abu Ghraib Prison, near Baghdad, controlled by US troops. The US military has launched investigations into the scandal, which was revealed last month by the US media.

In this circumstance it would be wise to press for an exemption, and it would be even more unwise on the part of the Security Council to grant it," said Annan.

"It would discredit the Council and the United Nations that stands for rule of law and the primacy of rule of law," he warned.

The United States had pushed the 15-nation Council to pass a resolution before July 1, which would renew the immunity given to US peacekeepers. But the draft resolution was withdrawn early this month in face of stiff opposition from many Council members amid the prisoner abuse scandal.

The Council first gave US peacekeepers such immunity in July 2002 by adopting Resolution 1422, after the United States threatened to veto UN peacekeeping operations one by one. The immunity was renewed as one year later.

The RCC, which currently has 94 state parties, started to function in March 2003. It is the first permanent world court capable of trying individuals accused of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes when national courts are unwilling or unable to do so. — MNA/Xinhua

A protester holds an anti-war placard outside the Cabinet Ministers Office in Tokyo on 18 June, 2004. —INTERNET

A US soldier holds an anti-war placard outside the Cabinet Ministers Office in Tokyo on 18 June, 2004. —INTERNET

An Iraqi militia member mans a window position in a war damaged building in the village of Buhruz, Iraq, near Baqouba, 50 kilometres (35 miles) northeast of Baghdad, on 18 June, 2004. —INTERNET

In this context, the United Nations and the African Union (AU) summit said he would not attend the meeting, which was revealed last month by the US media.

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An Iraqi militia member mans a window position in a war damaged building in the village of Buhruz, Iraq, near Baqouba, 50 kilometres (35 miles) northeast of Baghdad, on 18 June, 2004. —INTERNET
A boy walks on the debris of a damaged vehicle following clashes between US troops and militiamen in Sadr City, a northern district of Baghdad on 18 June, 2004.

Iraqis sort through the wreckage from the scene of an explosion in central Baghdad, Iraq on 17 June, 2004.

An Iraqi woman is calmed at a hospital after a car bomb explosion outside a recruiting centre in Baghdad on 17 June, 2004.

Iraqi oil workers repair a pipeline near Faw, Iraq, on 17 June, 2004, after saboteurs blasted the oil lines halting Iraq’s oil exports.
New and fast developments throughout Myanmar

Thazi-Minhla-Kokko-Mayway road construction project in Thazi Township, Mandalay Division, is being implemented for better transportation in rural area.— (425, Thazi)

Lapin Bridge in Kalaywa Township, Sagaing Division.

The scenic view of 34-mile long Thitsar Road linking Sonnathamyuang Swe Myodaw (Myainggyingu Region) and Hpa-an in Kayin State. — mna

Rural housing built for development of rural area in Okkan village, Gyobingyauck Township, Bago Division (West). — PBANRDA

Telephone exchange built in Swa, Yedashe Township, Bago Division. — IPRD

Minywa river water pumping station benefits 3,000 acres of farmland in Yezagyo Township, Magway Division. — mna

Border and rural area developments

Lapin Bridge in Kalaywa Township, Sagaing Division. — mna
Prime Minister attends opening of school buildings ...  

(continued)

Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun and Minister for Education U Than Aung formally opened the new building. The Prime Minister and party inspected Dabinshwehti Road extended into four-lane concrete one and construction of 138-foot Hlinethaya Creek Bridge and 208-foot Shweinban Creek Bridge. They also inspected Orchid Garden and Finger Lake housing units built by FMI Garden Development Ltd. The Prime Minister and party left there later in the morning. — MNA

CB Bank officials meet journalists

YANGON, 19 June — The meeting between officials of the CB Bank (public bank) and journalists was held at Traders Hotel on Sule Pagoda Road this morning. Present were officials of News and Periodicals Enterprise and private periodicals. Chief Executive Officer U Khin Maung Aye of CB Bank, members of the board of directors and officials.

Vice-Chairman-I of CEO U Khin Maung Aye and Director U Kyaw Lin explained matters related to the bank and answered queries raised by journalists.

The CB Bank (public bank) was been jointly formed with Cooperative Promotion Bank Ltd and Peasants Bank Ltd based on the CB Bank Ltd for giving full monetary service to the public. — MNA

Efficient use of electricity

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

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

Efficient use of fuel

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

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bothered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appeased

Nursery Market Festival continues

YANGON, 19 June — The Nursery Market Festival continued at Myay Padetha Park in Bahan Township here today with the aim of providing necessary assistance to growers and attracting the public to be interested in agriculture, horticulture, livestock breeding and vegetable farming. Kitchen crops, fruits and saplings of herbal plants are being shown at the festival. — MNA
Culture Minister inspects archaeological tasks in Mandalay Division

YANGON, 19 June—Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, accompanied by officials concerned, on 16 June, inspected carving work of Archaeological Department (Upper Myanmar) in Mandalay to be included in rebuilding of the palace King Anawrahta in Bagan.

Next, the minister proceeded to the National Theatre in Mandalay where he met departmental personnel of Fine Arts Department. He told them that arrangements are being made for upholding and promoting traditional arts under the aegis of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character.

On 15 June afternoon, the minister inspected Man-U gate, the north gate of the palace which has fallen into ruin and gave necessary instructions to the officials.

On 17 June morning, the minister inspected the site chosen for construction of Archaeological Museum and Mound No 29 and Mound No 30 excavated by the Archaeological Department (Upper Myanmar) and gave instructions. In the evening, the minister attended the cash donation ceremony and accepted over K 1.3 million, and briefed the wellwishers on renovation tasks to be carried out in old Tagaung.

Implementation of industrial zone upgrading projects discussed

YANGON, 19 June—Chairman of Myanmar Industrial Development Committee Mandalay Industrial Zone in-charge Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung yesterday morning met chairmen and secretaries of industrial development committees of Monywa, Mandalay and Ayeyarwady Industrial Zones, members of industrial zone supervisory committees and industrialists at Kanaung Hall in Mandalay Industrial Zone in connection with the implementation of the industrial zones upgrading project.

In his discussions, Minister U Aung Thaung said the government is making endeavours for development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well.

Myanmar delegation arrives back from Brazil

YANGON, 19 June — The Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone arrived back here by air this afternoon after attending the 11th UN Trade and Development Conference held in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The delegation was welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, Minister for Cooperatives Maj-Gen Huay Oo, Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun, departmental heads of the Ministry of Commerce and families of the delegation.

Indonesia hopes FTA will boost export to China

JAKARTA, 19 June—The Indonesian Government said its exports to China could double in three years following the gradual implementation of a free trade agreement (FTA), official said.

The director general of international cooperation at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Pos M. Hutabarat, said Thursday that Presidential Decree No. 48/2004 was issued on Tuesday, ratifying the FTA between the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China.

"After the ratification, we target to double our export value to China from 2.9 billion US dollars last year to 5.8 billion dollars in 2007," he was quoted Friday by The Jakarta Post as saying.

China, with its fast growing economy and huge population, is increasingly becoming an important market for Indonesian exports. ASEAN agreed to set up an FTA with China in 2002, and during the 2003 ASEAN Summit on Bali, the grouping further agreed to accelerate the realization of the FTA through an early harvest programme.

Pos said that since January 1, Indonesia had reduced import tariffs on some 600 of 11,000 products listed in the ASEAN-China FTA as part of the early harvest programme.

He said by 2010, when the FTA with China is fully established, ASEAN is expected to have cut down or removed import tariffs on up to 95 per cent of listed products.

Philippine import rises 8.3% in April

MANILA, 19 June — Philippine imports recorded 3.45 billion US dollars in April, or 8.3 per cent higher than the same period in last year, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said Friday. The NSO said in a statement that this was a sharp improvement from the 4.4-per-cent growth posted in March, cutting the total imports from January to April to 13.202 billion dollars or 6.9 per cent higher than the same period last year.

The country’s trade deficit reached 482 million dollars in that month to 482 million dollars in April, compared to 459 million dollars in the same period last year, the statement said. On the other hand, exports rose by 8.9 per cent to 2.969 billion dollars in April, leaving the trade deficit in the first four months of this year to 1.04 billion dollars from 971 million dollars in the same period in 2003, the statement added.
Inner Mongolia, N-E China hit by rare severe drought

BEIJING, 19 June — The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in north China and neighbouring northeastern provinces are sustaining the severest drought since New China was founded in 1949, according to China Meteorological Administration.

The drought has been lingering over Inner Mongolia, Liaoning, Jilin and Heilongjiang since this spring, and is intensifying and spreading, according to the latest report by the National Climate Centre under the administration. This was an extreme weather smaller in scale but severer in intensity to one that hit north China in 1965, and was one of the severest droughts in the past 100 years, said Zhang Qiang, director of the centre’s Climate Evaluation Office.

The 1965 drought stroke most parts of north China including Inner Mongolia, Hebei, Shanxi, Beijing and the three northeastern provinces, said Zhang. The centre forecasts that in the next 10 days, most northern regions may have showers or thunderstorms, which would help alleviate the drought. However, the situation in Inner Mongolia and northeastern provinces would not improve much as the rainfall quantity will be less than 20 millimetres.

The forecast also warned that the coastal areas in Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang provinces in the southern part of the country would be hit by possible drought in the next 10 days due to lack of rain.

20th Meeting of ASEAN National Tourism Organizations
5th Meeting of ASEAN, China, Japan and Korea National Tourism Organizations
3rd ASEAN-India Tourism Consultations

Taunggyi, Union of Myanmar
30 June — 1 July, 2004

China Southern Airlines opens new route to Dubai

Arun Dass, 19 June — China’s largest air carrier, China Southern Airlines, announced that it launched new Guangzhou-Beijing-Dubai service, starting from Thursday, the regional manager of the company in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) said Friday.

The new Boeing 777 service, flight numbers CZ331/332, depart each Tuesday and Thursday from Guangzhou at 18:20, arriving at Beijing at 21:05, then departing from Beijing at 22:20 and reaching Dubai next day at 3:40 a.m. local time, Guan Bing said.

On the new route, the airline uses Boeing aircraft with powerful transportation capability and greatly shortens the time for passengers to fly from China to the Middle East and Africa, he added.

China Southern Airlines launched twice weekly flights on the Beijing-Urumqi-Sharjah route in 1996 and weekly service on Beijing-Urumqi-Dubai in 2003. The brand-new Guangzhou-Beijing-Dubai service is the airline’s third route to the Middle East, further enhancing the carrier’s market share in the region.

With increasing trading exchanges between China, the Middle East and Africa, there is an increasing number of businessmen travelling on the route, Guan said.

Pakistan denies making any offer to send troops to Iraq

ISLAMABAD, 19 June — Pakistan Foreign Minister Khursheed Mahmud Kasuri Thursday denied having made any offer about sending Pakistani troops to Iraq, the official Associated Press of Pakistan reported.

Addressing a Press conference in southern Pakistani city Karachi, Kasuri referred to a report published in a section of the Press quoting him about making an offer of sending Pakistani troops to Iraq.

An Arab minister Tuesday told media on condition of anonymity that Pakistan, along with Tunisia and Morocco, is ready to send troops to Iraq to protect the UN personnel.

Expressing surprise over the report, Kasuri made it clear that sending troops to Iraq is an important issue and a decision in this regard can only be taken after endorsement from the Parliament and keeping the public opinion in view.

He pointed out that about a year or one and a half year back Pakistan was asked for sending troops. “But we had an objection and at that time we were opposed to attack on Iraq,” he said.

“No we have received a request to send troops for protection of the UN personnel, but we have not taken a decision as yet,” Kasuri said. — MNA/Xinhua

Saudi Arabia ranks 45th in e-readiness among world’s economies

Arun Dass, 19 June — Saudi Arabia ranks 45th in terms of e-readiness among the world’s 60 largest economies, according to a study conducted jointly by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EUI) and IBM, the Arab News daily reported Friday.

The study, on parameters of connectivity, business practices and legal environment, estimated that it is only a matter of time before Saudi Arabia figures among developed countries in terms of e-readiness because of its rapid growth in the field of information technology.

E-readiness will also ensure the growth of e-commerce in the kingdom, which is one of the three Arab countries on the EUI list along with Egypt in 51st and Algeria on the 58th position.

The EUI’s e-readiness rankings used quantitative and qualitative parameters organized into six categories, including connectivity infrastructure, business environment, consumer and business adoption of e-business practices, legal and policy environment, social and cultural infrastructure and supporting services.

The EUI ranking applied only to the world’s largest economies and did not take into consideration the status of some Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Kuwait, which already boast much higher e-readiness rankings.

Singapore, Jordanian leaders discuss ways to boost bilateral ties

SINGAPORE, 19 June — Singapore’s Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and visiting Jordanian Prime Minister Faisal El-Fayez on Thursday discussed ways to expand bilateral ties between the two countries.

According to a statement by the Prime Minister’s Office, the two leaders’ discussions focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation, in particular in the fields of tourism, trade and investments.

Jordan, the first country in the Middle East to sign a free trade agreement with Singapore last month, voiced its interest in learning from Singapore’s experience in public administration and recycling waste water for industrial use.

Both leaders also exchanged views on developments in the Middle East, including in Iraq.

During the Jordanian leader’s three-day visit here, he will also meet with Singapore President S R Nathan and visit several government agencies. — MNA/Xinhua
Two NZ Special Forces soldiers injured in Afghanistan

WELLINGTON, 19 June — Two New Zealand Special Forces soldiers were injured Friday in an operation in Afghanistan, the New Zealand Defence Force said in a brief statement.

The New Zealand soldiers were injured about midday (New Zealand Time) in central Afghanistan and were evacuated by helicopter to a medical facility, the statement said.

Their condition was “satisfactory” and their families had been informed, it added. However, New Zealand Defence Force spokeswoman Commander Sandy McKie refused to make any further comment.

The injuries were a result of an exchange of fire with local people, a New Zealand TV report said Friday.

Prime Minister Helen Clark and Defence Minister Mark Burton announced the deployment of about 50 Special Air Service (NZSAS) personnel to Afghanistan in March, for a term of up to 180 days.

Leaked defence documents reported in the New Zealand Herald in May revealed NZSAS troops would engage in combat missions with the US forces in Afghanistan.

China Daily” says US needs to face truth over Iraqi war

Beijing, 19 June — The United States should face the truth instead of playing around with the reality over the issue of Iraqi war, said China’s English-language newspaper China Daily in an article Friday.

“The United States would do itself and the world a huge favour by establishing a closer relationship with reality rather than wrestling with its own version of the truth, as the international credibility of American military intelligence is simply of zero value,” said the article.

“The truth is the United States used the threat of Iraq WMD (weapons of mass destruction) and a connection to al-Qaeda as justifications for launching the war against the regime of Saddam Hussein,” it stressed.

According to a report Wednesday by a US commission investigating the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, no credible evidence has been found that former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein aided al-Qaeda attempts to target the United States.

“We have no credible evidence that Iraq and al-Qaeda cooperated on attacks against the United States,” said the report, issued by the bipartisan commission after two days of public hearings into the September 11 attacks.

Meanwhile, the Bush Administration so far still could not collect enough evidence that Saddam Hussein would give whatever WMD he possessed to terrorists, although it treated as a proven fact, said the article.

As the US Government did not get support from the report for waging war in Iraq, “it is likely the Bush team will face more backlash both at home and abroad,” the article added—MNA/Xinhua

Longest tunnel project at Qinghai-Tibet Railway completed

LHASA, 19 June — Construction of the longest tunnel on the Qinghai-Tibet Railway Line has been completed.

The 3,345-metre-long tunnel, located about 80 kilometres from Lhasa, capital of southwest China’s Tibet Autonomous Region, was built at a place at an altitude of 4,264 metres above the sea level.

The work of construction on the project started on November 1, 2001, and its longest tunnel was completed last Wednesday. The whole tunnel linked up last October and workers then dug ditches and cable troughs in the tunnel.

It is a hard job to build the tunnel as it is situated on the “roof of the world” with complex geological structures, plenty of water and frigid climate, noted Wang Shumping, an official-in-charge of the railway construction.

To tackle these knotty problems, workers have added water-proof planks, installed ventilation fans and erect oxygen machines at the entrance of the tunnel to protect workers’ health.

The Qinghai-Tibet railway, the highest rail route on earth, runs from the city of Golmud in western Qinghai Province to Lhasa in Tibet with a total length of 1,412 kilometres. About half of the railway tracks were laid on permanent frozen earth. The project is scheduled to be completed in six years at a total investment of 26.2 billion yuan (about 3.1 billion US dollars).

The track-laying project will commence in Tibet this month, enabling the region to end the history of no rail ways. — MNA/Xinhua

Chinese Minister calls for wider Sino-US cooperation in telecom sector

CHICAGO, 19 June — Chinese Minister of Information Industry, Wang Xudong, called for wider and higher-level Sino-US cooperation in telecom sector while urging the United States to ease its export control on China.

Addressing the two-day 2004 China-US Telecom Summit, which opened here Thursday, Wang said that China and the United States should have a strategic vision, which goes beyond the information industry to the economic and trade relations between the two countries.

Wang said the information and communication industry is a high-tech industry. In the migration to the next generation network, the two countries shall cooperate in wider areas and at higher levels.

“In particular, we wish to see the ease of export control at the US side to support the wider scope of cooperation,” the minister said. — MNA/Xinhua

Wellwishers invited for sinking tube-wells

YANGON, 19 June — The Development Affairs Committees under the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races Affairs Department are making concerted efforts in sinking tube-wells in order to get sufficient water in rural areas in states and divisions where water is scarce.

One 200 feet deep two-inch diameter tube-well costs K 250,000; one 400 feet deep two-inch diameter tube-well costs K 500,000; and one 200 feet deep four-inch diameter tube-well costs K 500,000.

Those wishing to donate cash for the tube-well sinking projects for rural areas may contact the Director-General (Tel: 01-245420 & 253088), the Deputy Director-General (Tel: 01-240101), the Director (Engineering) (Tel: 01-291967), the Directors (Sagami Division Development Affairs Committee (Tel: 063-2164) and the Director (Mandalay Division Development Affairs Committee) (Tel: 02-54657).

Drive safely
Bush seeks to depict Kerry as economic pessimist

WASHINGTON, 18 June — President George W Bush barked in a series of upbeat economic statistics and sought on Thursday to paint his rival, John Kerry, as an "economic pessimist" bent on building up the federal bureaucracy.

Under fire for his rationale for going to war in Iraq, Bush worked to shift the focus of the debate to the economy as his campaign grew more confident that that issue will work to the president’s favour in the November election.

"The economy has shifted into a higher gear," Bush told a small business summit. He said companies were churning out new jobs at a fast clip, factories were busy and households were earning more money.

But, in a clear reference to Kerry, a Massachusetts senator who certain to be his Democratic opponent in the November election, Bush said there were some in Washington who are ignoring the good news and who would offer "familial" solutions of increasing the size of government.

"There are modern day economic pessimists around who are quick to offer dire predictions and complaints," Bush told the gathering of the National Federation of Independent Business.

"But you know what they do not offer is pro-growth economic policies. They can find the dark cloud but they can’t see the sunshine. They don’t know where to take the country and they don’t know how to lead.

Although Bush did not mention Kerry by name, his speech hit on a theme central to one of Bush’s recent ad campaigns: the depiction of Kerry as having a doom-and-gloom view of the economy. The suggestion in Bush’s speech that Kerry would increase the size of the federal government was a reference to the senator’s plan to invest federal money into broadening health care coverage.

In a speech on Tuesday to the New Jersey branch of the AFL-CIO labour federation, Kerry said families were working harder and earning less while paying more for things like healthcare and college tuition.

While Bush gave credit to his massive tax cuts for jump-starting economic growth, Kerry has charged the cuts are skewed toward the wealthy and should be rolled back on those making more than 200,000 US dollars a year. Bush has touted the creation of 1.4 million new jobs since August but even with those job gains, a net 1.2 million jobs have been lost since he took office.

MNA/Reuters

Drug cultivation sharply lower in Andean region

Coca growers, 18 June — An aggressive eradication campaign in Colombia helped cut the combined coca cultivation in the Andean region to a 14-year low, allaying fears that output may be shifting from Colombia to neighbouring nations, a UN survey released on Thursday showed.

Coca cultivation dropped 11 per cent in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia to 153,800 hectares (380,000 acres), according to Vienna-based UNODC. "The importance of a steady decline of coca cultivation in the Andean region cannot be overestimated," said Antonio Maria Costa, the executive director for UNODC.

"The three countries combined produce virtually all of the world’s supply of coca leaves," he added.

But his upbeat assessment was tempered by what he called "worrisome trends": like an increased consumer preference for synthetic instead of planted drugs, a rise in cocaine consumption in Colombia and new planting techniques by coca farmers to avoid aerial spraying.

Columbia, which in 2002 supplied 75 per cent of the world’s coca, saw its crop cultivation area in 2003 fall 16 per cent, to 86,000 hectares (212,000 acres), its lowest levels since 1997.

MNA/Reuters

CIA contractor charged for beating Afghan prisoner to death

WASHINGTON, 18 June — A US federal grand jury charged on Thursday a contractor employed by the CIA for the death of a prisoner in Afghanistan, the first case against a civilian contractor since the Abu Ghraib scandal, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced.

David Passaro, 38, a former Army Ranger engaged in paramilitary activities in support of US military personnel, was charged in a four-count indictment by the grand jury in North Carolina, where he lives.

Passaro was accused of beating the inmate, identified as Abdul Wali, with his fists and a flashlight in June 2003 at a detention centre near the Pakistan border, according to the indictment.

MNA/News

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Donate blood
Asian Coast Guards agree to coordinate terror fight

**Tokyo, 19 June —** Coast Guards from 16 Asian countries and Hong Kong will work closely to combat possible terror attacks at sea in the region, including information sharing, Japanese officials said Friday after two days of talks.

The meeting of about 90 senior Coast Guard officials in Tokyo, the first of its kind involving such a large number of Asian countries, was held amid growing fears that ships sailing in the region could be targets of attacks. “In light of the situation we have been faced with in recent months, we all share the view that all countries involved should coordinate closely to combat terrorism at sea,” one of the officials said.

They also agreed to conduct joint drills in the foreseeable future, the official said.

The 16 Asian countries are Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China and Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

“We cannot tackle terrorism alone,” Kyodo news agency quoted Taizo Sato, Japan’s Senior Vice-Transport Minister, as saying in a speech to the meeting on Friday.

“This meeting is important for maintaining peace and security in the sea in and around Asia.”

Asia’s main marine safety body said in March that it would issue warnings to ships trading in its waters that fail to comply with new stringent security measures, due to come into force globally on 1 July and designed to protect the industry against terror attacks.

The Tokyo MoU, a ship and port inspection body in the Asia-Pacific Region, began issuing warning letters in April to ship owners whose vessels have not been certified to trade under new anti-terror measures hammered out in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks.

The International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS) is mandatory across the world and ships face being turned away from ports, effectively barring them from trading.

The Tokyo MoU consists of 18 maritime authorities charged with policing ports and ships in countries that include China, South Korea, Singapore, Australia and Chile.

MNA/Reuters

India invited to join civil aircraft project

**New Delhi, 18 June —** India has got an invitation from an aircraft consortium, led by America’s Boeing Corporation and Russia’s Sukhoi Design Bureau, to join its project to build a family of regional jet transport aircraft for civilian use.

“They are very keen that we (India) become a sharing partner,” the Press Trust of India quoted NR Mohanty, chairman of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), as saying on Thursday. He said the Russian Government had committed to buying about 60 civil aircraft and added that the manufacturers would also explore the global market for these airplanes.

Seattle-based Boeing and Sukhoi Design Bureau will produce the airplane and the engine will be jointly built by the European aero engine manufacturer Snecma and Russia’s Lyssya Saturn for the family of 60, 75 and 95-seat aircraft, with the first plane expected to take off by 2007-08.

India has not finalized plans to join the consortium, but Mohanty said that HAL could provide crucial parts of the engine and aircraft structure for the venture.

“It is a good opportunity to go global. If we become part of this type of consortium, our image will go up, capability and infrastructure will increase,” he said.

“The profit would be shared between the companies based on the size of investment they make,” Mohanty said. HAL has got 16 production units and nine research and design centres spread out in seven distinct locations in India. It has so far produced over 3,300 aircraft, 3,400 engines and overhauled over 7,700 aircraft and 26000 engines — MNA/Xinhua

**Anthrax found in dead elephant in Bangladesh**

**Dhaka, 19 June —** Anthrax, a killer virus was found in the carcass of an elephant in Bangladesh’s southeastern Bandarban hill district.

“We are very keen that India join the consortium to build a family of regional jet transport aircraft for civilian use,” NR Mohanty, chairman of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), has said.

It is the first time that anthrax was detected in animals in Bangladesh, an expert in Chittagong said on Friday.

The existence of anthrax in the body of the dead elephant, which was found in deep forest of Lama sub-district, was detected by veterinary experts in southeastern Chittagong — MNA/Xinhua

China offers $900m loans for Russia, Central Asia

**Beijing, 18 June —** Chinese President Hu Jintao has offered 900 million US dollars in loans in preferential treatment for Russia and four Central Asian neighbours to boost economic cooperation and trade, state media said on Friday.

Hu made the offer at the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tashkent on Thursday. The SCO, established in 2001 to fight terrorism, groups China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

“Russia should fully take advantage of the high complementary economy among members and the rich natural resources and start cooperation in various forms,” the official Xinhua news agency quoted the president as saying.

Economic cooperation and the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism are key areas the organization should work on, Hu said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan is vital to Central Asia’s stability and proposed the establishment of a liaison mechanism between the SCO and Afghanistan, it said.

Uzbek leader Islam Karimov proposed establishing a Central Asia Common Market, the agency said.

MNA/Reuters

Australia provides humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka

**Colombo, 19 June —** The Australian Government is providing an additional 10 million Australian dollars (about 6.37 milllion US dollars) to support peace building and rehabilitation efforts in war-torn Sri Lanka, the Australian High Commissioner here said in a statement on Friday.

The new fund which is being channelled through international organizations including the United Nations is intended to assist war-displaced Sri Lankans to reintegrate into their communities.

Among the total funding, the International Organization for Migration will receive three million Australian dollars (about 1.91 million US dollars) to assist with the return and resettlement of Sri Lankan refugees from neighbouring India. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will receive one million Australian dollars (about 637,300 US dollars) to help support the economic livelihoods of fishing communities in three districts in the country through improved access to micro-credit and infrastructure development.

UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund) will receive six million Australian dollars ($3.7 million US dollars) for a range of projects that promote the rights of children, encourage conflict prevention and resolution and provide education about the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance.

MNA/Xinhua

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MNA/Xinhua

Japan’s auto manufacturer Honda vehicles on display at AutoChina, the country’s flagship motor show in Beijing. The giants of the car world reaffirmed their confidence in the Chinese auto market, forecasting strong sales and brushing off concerns that supply will soon start to outpace demand as car sales in China rose 80 per cent to 2.04 million last year.—INTERNET

Early floods feared as heavy rains lash Bangladesh

**Dhaka, 19 June —** A sharp rise in water levels of major Bangladesh rivers due to torrential rains could cause flash floods and inundate many parts of the country, meteorologists said on Friday.

The three-month monsoon period officially began on Tuesday and flood-prone Bangladesh has since experienced virtually ceaseless rain.

“The current spell of rain, accompanied by winds, could last for a week more and might inundate vast areas across the country,” Asadur Rahman of Bangladesh Meteorological Department told Reuters.

The levels of all major rivers — Jamuna, Padma, Meghna and Brahmaputra that flow from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal via India and Bangladesh have risen alarmingly.

“The meteorologists said the rivers could burst their banks, cut road links in many areas and even wash away homes.

“In the event of more rain, we fear severe flash floods, especially in the country’s northeastern and southeastern hill belts, affecting over 22 million people,” said another meteorologist.

MNA/Reuters

Chinese farmers cropping vegetables. A new pest control device that employs the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis to attack and trap male insects is saving Bangladesh’s farmers money and reducing pesticide use.—Bloomberg

Economic cooperation and the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism are key areas the organization should work on, Hu said. Russian President Vladimir Putin said peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan is vital to Central Asia’s stability and proposed the establishment of a liaison mechanism between the SCO and Afghanistan, it said.

Uzbek leader Islam Karimov proposed establishing a Central Asia Common Market, the agency said.

**China offers $900m loans for Russia, Central Asia**

**Beijing, 18 June —** Chinese President Hu Jintao has offered 900 million US dollars in loans in preferential treatment for Russia and four Central Asian neighbours to boost economic cooperation and trade, state media said on Friday.

Hu made the offer at the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in Tashkent on Thursday. The SCO, established in 2001 to fight terrorism, groups China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

“We should fully take advantage of the high complementary economy among members and the rich natural resources and start cooperation in various forms,” the official Xinhua news agency quoted the president as saying.

Economic cooperation and the fight against terrorism, separatism and extremism are key areas the organization should work on, Hu said. Russian President Vladimir Putin said peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan is vital to Central Asia’s stability and proposed the establishment of a liaison mechanism between the SCO and Afghanistan, it said.

Uzbek leader Islam Karimov proposed establishing a Central Asia Common Market, the agency said.

**Anthrax found in dead elephant in Bangladesh**

**Dhaka, 19 June —** Anthrax, a killer virus was found in the carcass of an elephant in Bangladesh’s southeastern Bandarban hill district.

“This is the first time that anthrax was detected in animals in Bangladesh, an expert in Chittagong said on Friday.

The existence of anthrax in the body of the dead elephant, which was found in deep forest of Lama sub-district, was detected by veterinary experts in southeastern Chittagong. —MNA/Xinhua
**SPORTS**

**Hero Gronkjaer as Denmark send Bulgaria out**

Braga (Portugal), 19 June — Denmark saw off Bulgaria 2-0 in a ruffled Euro 2004 Group C match on Friday, sending the Bulgarians out of the tournament.

After Jon Dahl Tomasson had put the Danes ahead just before halftime, substitute Jesper Gronkjaer added a late second to mark his return to the team following the death of his mother.

Gronkjaer's teammates rushed to embrace the winger after the goal, which he celebrated with a clenched fist and screamed into a camera lens.

He wiped tears from his eyes with his red jersey when he walked back for the restart.

"Jesper wasn't fit to play a whole match," Denmark coach Morten Olsen said.

"When he went on it was too early for him but he showed fantastic character. That speaks for him, and speaks for the team."

Victory left Denmark top of Group C with four points from two games. Bulgaria, thrashed 5-0 by Sweden in their opening match, never threatened to score and followed a succession of bookings their frustration was complete when captain Stian Solbakken was sent off seven minutes from time. The Danes dominated the final half but had to wait until the 44th minute to break the deadlock. Tomasson tapping into an empty net after good approach work from Thomas Gravesen and Martin Jorgensen. The goal ensured Denmark did not notch up a record five successive matches at European Championships without scoring.

Gronkjaer, who joined the squad late because of his mother's sudden death from cancer last week and missed the 0-0 draw with Italy, started on the bench but came on for the injured Dennis Rommedahl in the 23rd minute. He also learned earlier on Friday that his club Chelsea had agreed to sell him to Premier League rivals Birmingham City.

The Danes created a string of chances which all went begging with Gronkjaer's low shot to the near post from the left the best. Goalkeeper Zdravko Zdravkov had to go down sharply to save it.

Gravesen, who missed the Italy game through suspension, had in the 29th minute put another good through ball to Tomasson but the striker, having rounded Zdravkov, shot into the side netting.

Bulgaria's best chance, at the end of the first half, ended with a Martin Petrov mishit straight to keeper Thomas Sorensen after a good one-two with Dimitar Berbatov.

Bulgaria coach Plamen Markov had said he wanted his team to show a different face although he probably did not mean their rather violent image at the end when they reacted after the referee disallowed a penalty appeals. Bulgarian frustrations mounted throughout the second half and Denmark finally got their deserved second goal two minutes into injury time.—MNA/Reuters

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**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

**ACROSS**

1. Extreme fear
2. More steadfast
3. Recipient of legacy
4. Motionless
5. Flat fish
6. Plank
7. East
8. Indian coin
9. Hot pursuit
10. Let
11. Actually
12. Mother or father

**DOWN**

1. Make use of
2. Easily broken
3. Plunder
4. Coast of France
5. Brown
6. Fire
7. Reminder notes
8. Luminous insect
9. Spoke sharply
10. Bridegrooms
11. Fruit of the oak
12. Inland waterway
13. Wanderer

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**SWEDEN**

**Sweden battle for draw with Italy**

PORTO, 19 June — Zlatan Ibrahimovic struck a late goal to give Sweden a battling 1-1 draw with a vastly-improved Italy side playing without suspended playmaker Francesco Totti in a storming Group C clash on Friday.

The points seemed to be heading Italy's way when Ibrahimovic hooked the ball into the top corner with his back to goal from close-range after a scramble in the area in the 85th minute.

Italy had taken the lead after 37 minutes with a header from 21-year-old Antonio Cassano and out-played a determined Sweden team for long periods of an absorbing match.

Sweden next meet Scandinavian rivals Denmark in their final match with both teams on four points with Italy, who have two points, facing an easier match against eliminated Bulgaria.

Only some inspired goalkeeping from former Juventus youngster Andreas Isaksson in the Swedish goal had prevented Italy from extending their lead.

Totti, banned by UEFA for three matches for spitting at Denmark's Christian Poulsen during a 2-0 defeat to Bulgaria in the Group C opener in Braga on 18 June, 2004, is a great player.

Bulgaria's striker Dimitar Berbatov(L) is challenged by Denmark's midfielder Thomas Gravesen during their Euro 2004 first round clash in Braga on 18 June, 2004.—INTERNET

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**ITALIAN fans apologize for Totti's spit**

PORTO, June 19 — Italy fans at Friday's Euro 2004 match with Sweden offered an apology on behalf of Francesco Totti who was suspended for three matches for spitting.

A group of fans held aloft a homemade banner declaring "We apologize" while another read "Baggio doesn't spit" — reference to former European Player of the Year Roberto Baggio who has recently retired from the game.

Totti took his seat in the stand at the Dragao Stadium around 20 minutes before kickoff accompanied by his girlfriend, Italian television presenter Ilary Blasi.

The Italian Football Federation decided Friday not to appeal against the three-match ban imposed on Totti for spitting at Denmark's Christian Poulsen during Monday's 0-0 Group C draw.

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**SWEDEN**

**Sweden delighted by gritty draw**

PORTO, 19 June — Sweden striker Henrik Larsson said his side were very pleased after battling back to earn a 1-1 draw with Italy in Euro 2004 Group C on Friday.

Larsson's attacking partner Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored a brilliant late equaliser to earn the Swedes a point.

"It was a great goal he scored and we were very pleased with the draw," Larsson said.

"We are happy we got this point and it was a beautiful goal. Zlatan deserved it, he is a great player."

"They are a very skilful Italian side but we were able to put them under pressure in the second half and were able to get the equalizer."

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THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Sunday, 20 June, 2004

15

WEATHER

Saturday, 19 June, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been nearly cloudy in Kayah State and Magway Division, rain have been scattered in Yangon Division and widespread in the remaining areas with locally heavyfalls in Rakhine State, Taninbai and Bago Divisions, isolated heavyfalls in Mon and Kayin States, Bago, upper Sagaing and Ayeyawady Divisions. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall were Sittwe (9.21) inches, Maungdaw (6.81) inches, Thaton (6.50) inches, Bpa-an (5.51) inches, Thandwe (4.88) inches, Kyaukpyu (4.68) inches, Myeik (4.61) inches, Shweygin (4.25) inches, Zaungtu (3.86) inches, Dawei (3.50) inches, Hkamti (3.42) inches, Kyauktaw (3.31) inches, Gwa (3.23) inches and Henthada (3.03) inches.

Maximum temperature on 16-6-2004 was 29.2°C (85°F). Minimum temperature on 19-6-2004 was 19.4°C (67°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 19-6-2004 was 92%. Total sunshine hours on 18-6-2004 was nil. Rainfall in Mon on 19-6-2004 was 41.5 (1.62) inches at Yangon Airport, 69.2 (2.72) inches at Kaba-Aye and 76mm (2.99 inches) at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 966mm (38.03 inches) at Yangon Airport and 876mm (34.49 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 1012mm (39.84 inches) at central Yangon.

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Bay influence: According to the observations at 09:30 hours MST today, the low pressure area over North Bay and adjoining Central Bay becomes unimportant. Monssoon is vigorous in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of the 20-6-2004: Rainfall will be isolated in Kayah State and Magway Division, scattered rain in Shan State, Mandalay and lower Sagaing Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas with likelihood of locally heavyfalls in Rakhine State and isolated heavyfalls in Mon and Kayin States, Bago, upper Sagaing and Ayeyawady Divisions. Degree of certainty is (100%).

State of the sea: Occasional squalls with rough seas will be experienced off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (40) to (45) mph. Forecast for subsequent two days: Strong Monsoon.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 20-6-2004: Some rain. Degree of certainty is (100%). Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 20-6-2004: Isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (80%).
Prime Minister General Kyin Nyunt attends third certificate presentation ceremony of Dhammaçariya and Abhidhamma Courses

YANGON, 19 June— The ceremony for the third presentation of certificates for Summer Dhammaçariya and Abhidhamma Shwe Night Teachership Course to of Thadu Pariyatti Monastery in Kyimyindine Township was held at the monastery this afternoon, attended by Prime Minister General Kyin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were Joint-Secretary of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Cariñābhivamsa, member Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Sīrinda (Thaton Sayadaw), Nyaungdon Shwewhintha Tawya Pali Tekkatho Monastery Administrator Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Visabhivamsa and members of the Sangha, student monks, ministers, the Yangon Mayor, deputy ministers, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads, local authorities and wellwishers.

The Joint-Secretary Sayadaw administered the Five Precepts. The Prime Minister and party and wellwishers donated offerings to the Sayadaws.

Course in-charge Sayadaw Bhaddanta Parihassana presented certificates of Sasanapala Dhammaçariya of Shwe Night Teachership Course to U Vilasa of Seinban Dhamma Yeiktha Monastery of Bago and U Nandasi to of Sasana Mandaing Pali Tekkatho Monastery of Bago. The Sayadaw also presented prizes to outstanding members of the Sangha and nuns in Dhammaçariya Course, Pahtamagyi Course and Pahtamalat Course.

Next, the ministers and the Yangon Mayor accepted K 2 million for the course donated by U Ar Wah-Daw San San Maw; K 1.2 million by Kwunywedan Street (East) ‘Soon’ Offering Family; K 1 million by shopkeepers of Kyimyindine Central Sanyap Fish Market; K 1 million by Shwe Than Lwin Co Ltd; K 850,000 by Aungthukha Street ‘Soon’ Offering Family; K 1 million by K 2 million for the course donated by U Ar Wah-Daw and Pahtamalat Course.

The teachership course was opened from 22 April 2004 to 19 June. A total of 1,500 members of the Sangha, novices, nuns and lay persons attended the three courses.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects development of Thanbyuzayat Township

YANGON, 19 June— Member of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, accompanied by member of Mon State Peace and Development Coun- cil Commander of Mon State Police Force Police Col Thein Lin, Chairman of Mawlamyine District Peace and Develop- ment Council Lt-Col Tin Aung and officials, arrived at the office of Thanbyuzayat Township Peace and Development Coun- cil on 16 June afternoon.

They were welcomed there by Chair- man of Township Peace and Development Council U Thein Win and officials. Lt-Gen Kyaw Win met departmental officials and social organization members at the office and gave instructions on co-operation of departmental officials and local farmers in extension of summer and monsoon paddy cultivation for ensuring food sufficiency in the region, boosting pro- duction of rubber, regional development and Seven-Step Future Policy programme of the State. He then fulfilled the require- ments.

At 2 pm, he went to Kyakkkhama Ba- sic Education High School and inspected students at the multi-media classrooms. He instructed officials to attend to academic matters and looked into the needs.

On arrival at Kyakkkhama Station Hos- pital, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win visited the wards and inspected medical stores and operation theatre. Next, he met the doctor and health staff and instructed them to keep the hospital clean and hygienic, provide adequate health care and maintain building of the hospital. Later, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win fulfilled the requirements.

National Convention delegates go to pagodas, Kanbawzathadi Palace in Bago

YANGON, 19 June— Delegates to the National Convention paid homage to pagodas in Bago and visited Kanbawzathadi Palace of King Bayintnaung this morning.

Accompanied by officials of the National Convention Convening Invitation and Accommodation Sub-committee, the delegates left here by car and arrived at Shwehmawdaw Pagoda in Bago at 7.30 am. They were welcomed there by Chairman of Bago District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Aung Min, township officials and members of the pagoda board of trustees. The delegates paid homage to the pagoda.

At Myintya Dhammayon, member of the pagoda board of trustees U Tun Nyunt explained the history of the pagoda. The delegates donated K 123,015 toward the fund.

They then proceeded to Kanbawzathadi Palace of King Bayintnaung. They were welcomed there by Assistant Director U Myat Swi of Archaeology Department and officials. U Myat Swi explained the history of the palace. The delegates visited the royal audience hall, Bamayathana Throne and the Archaeological Museum.

They then went to Shwehmawdaw Railinging Buddha Image, and paid obeisance and donated K 84,090. Certificates of honour were given to them. The delegates left there at 10.30 am.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects Kyakkkhama Station Hospital.— MNA

With hands linked firm around the National Convention.