Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt sends congratulations to Egyptian Prime Minister

Yangon, 16 July — General Khin Nyunt, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of congratulations to His Excellency Dr Ahmed Nazif, on his appointment as Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt. — MNA

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win receives Chairperson of Social Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of SRV Mrs Nguyen Thi Hoai Thu at Zeyarthiri Beikman. — MNA

Over 2m acres of monsoon paddy cultivated in Ayeyawady Division

Yangon, 16 July — In 2004-2005 cultivation season, 3,505,135 acres of land are targeted to put under monsoon paddy in Ayeyawady Division. Up to 15 July, 2,024,918 acres of monsoon paddy have been cultivated against the target and they are thriving in the division. — MNA

Lt-Gen Ye Myint attends opening of sports ground in Maha Aungmyay, archway of sports grounds and gymnasium in Kyaukse

Yangon, 16 July — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, accompanied by Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo and departmental heads, left Monywa this morning and arrived at Inwa Bridge at 8.30 am. Accompanied by Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party toured Mandalay City and the circular road of Kandawgyi Lake. Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint attended the opening ceremony of Yahaing sports grounds of Sports and Physical Education Department in Maha Aungmyay Township. Also present were Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint, MOC Vice-Chairman Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo, Mandalay Mayor Brig-Gen Yan Thein, local authorities, departmental officials and people. First, the commander and the minister formally opened the sports grounds. Lt-Gen Ye Myint unveiled the signboard of the sports grounds. (See page 9)

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Survey Dept, JICA hold technical seminar

YANGON, 16 July — A technical seminar jointly sponsored by the Survey Department of the Ministry of Forestry and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was held at the International Business Centre on Pyay Road here this morning.

Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung attended it and delivered an opening address. Director-Gen Sint of Survey Department and JICA study team leader Mr Koseki explained matters on drawing UTM maps and collecting GIS database.

Director-General of Survey Department U Maung Maung Tin presented souvenirs to Japanese experts.

The minister and officials then viewed the documentary photos on map drawing and data collecting process in the meeting room. — MNA

Plenary Meeting of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee held

YANGON, 16 July — The 11th 47-member Plenary Meeting of the Fifth State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee was held at Wazaya Mingala Bhumathabin on Kaba Aye Hill this morning.

Present on the occasion were member Sayadaws of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko, Adviser U Arnt Maung, Director-General U Sann Lwin of Department for Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana and officials. On behalf of Chairman of SSSMC Myaung Khoeusamngat Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rathu Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Bhaddanta Sobhita, Vice-Chairman Thayet Aungmingila Monastery Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadha Bhaddanta Kesara presided over the meeting.

Secretary-Sayadaw Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadha Bhaddanta Tejanya acted as master of ceremonies.

First, Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kesara read the Ovadakatha of the Chairman Sayadaw. It was stated that Sangha Nayaka course and Vinayadhara course were conducted for 56 member Sayadaws of the State Central Working Committee of the Sangha and State and Division Sangha Nayaka Committee member Sayadaws and 18 State and Division Religious Affairs Officers from 1 to 10 June. Now, arrangements are being made for giving lectures at township-level multiplier courses.

Sayadaws of Sangha organizations at different levels are urged to strictly follow rules and regulations prescribed at the Plenary Meeting. And, such training courses and seminars are to be held very often for enhancing quality of Sangha Nayaka Committee Sayadaws and Vinayadhara Sayadaws. Next, the minister supplicated on religious affairs that measures are being taken to issue identification cards to members of the Sangha, regulations for monastery, meditation centre and board of trustees for maintaining religious edifices. In addition, the State Peace and Development Council has been presenting

Vinnakaya and religious affairs. The plenary meeting will continue tomorrow.

In memory of the late Col Hla Phone and Daw Tin Tin, the family of No 2, Maykha Lane-2, Mayyangon Township offered ‘soon’ to the Sayadaws who attended the preliminary meeting of the Plenary Meeting on 5 July. Similarly, Daw Myint Myint Thein of No 26, Myasabei Road, Parami Yeiktha and No 25, Kanbauwa Road in Bahan Township donated ‘soon’ to members of the Sangha who attended the first-day session of the Plenary Meeting today. — MNA

Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Vice-President Daw Khin Lay Thet gives talks at the Population Department of the Ministry of Immigration & Population.

YANGON, 16 July — Talks on Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation were held at the Population Department of the Ministry of Immigration & Population on Maha Bandoola Street here this morning.

Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Vice-President Daw Khin Lay Thet gave talks on salient points of the MWAF.

Also present on the occasion were MWAF Secretary-General Mr Daw San Shwe and officials, Minister for SWRR Maj-Gen Sein Hwe’s wife MWAF nurturing religious titles to Sayadaws and opening Abbott Training Schools for flourishing the Sasana.

Moreover, Vinnakaya affairs are being undertaken for supporting religious titles of members of the Sangha by taking actions against those who offended the religious rules and regulations. In the religious education sector, it can be seen that outstanding members of the Sangha including those who passed Tipitakadhura Tipitaka Kovidha Selection Examination and Pariyatti Examinations have emerged. Moreover, State Parayitay Sasana Universities have been opened. Likewise, Buddhist Cultural Courses, Abhidhama and Visuddhimagga courses have been conducted all over the country. And, arrangements are being made to translate Tipitaka Pali-Myanmar Dictionaries to English version.

In particular, the Union of Myanmar being the most famous country in Theravada Buddhism in the world is making arrangements for holding the World Buddhist Summit this year in cooperation with Japanese Buddhist Association. In conclusion, the minister called for ensuring perpetual existence of the Buddhism joining hands between members of the Sangha and disciples.

Next, Joint-Secretary Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadha Bhaddanta Vijnanabhabhivamsa submitted the brief report of the second branch of SSSMC in its period. Members of the Sangha reported their respective sectors. They discussed Vinnakaya and religious affairs. The plenary meeting will continue tomorrow.

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Facts about Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation explained

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Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Vice-President Daw Khin Lay Thet gave talks at the Population Department of the Ministry of Immigration & Population. — MNA

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

Plenary Meeting of the Fifth State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Meeting in progress. — MNA

The The New Light of Myanmar Saturday, 17 July, 2004
Car bomb kills 10, most of them policemen, in northern Iraq

Baghdad, 15 July — A car bomb has killed 10 people in a town northwest of Baghdad, a day after a powerful blast tore through the capital and a top regional official was assassinated.

Health Ministry officials said 40 people were wounded in the attack near the main police station in Haditha. Two children and bank workers were among the dead but most were policemen.

The fresh violence follows other attacks in Baghdad on Wednesday which killed 11 people and wounded 30 outside a main entrance to the heavily defended “Green Zone” compound.

Within hours of Wednesday's blast, a grenade and gun attack in Mosul killed the governor of the northern city.

Saboteurs have attacked Iraq's oil industry again, this time setting fire to a pipeline near Kirkuk, the country's main export route.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Iyad Allawi is expected to announce plans to offer amnesty to insurgents if they lay down their weapons. Earlier he condemned the „naked aggression“ of those behind the Baghdad bombing.

Iraq launched a national security law last week under which the government can impose emergency law on specific areas of the country, but has yet to make such a move. — Internet

Iraq pipeline attacks halt Turkey exports

Baghdad, 15 July — Saboteurs attacked two oil pipelines Thursday, halting exports to Turkey, hours after guerrillas assassinated a guard with the state oil company in a renewed spate of attacks on Iraqi crude industry.

Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said Thursday the sabotage has cost the government $1 billion in oil sales over the past 10 days. The money is desperately needed to help rebuild Iraq in the wake of war and years of sanctions.

The most damaging attack Thursday a hit that feeds into the main export line to the Turkish port of Ceyhan, abruptly ending the roughly 250,000 barrels a day that Iraq exports from its northern oil fields.

Crews watched helplessly, unable to immediately control flames surging from the pipeline. North Oil Company officials said the damage was caused by an apparent bomb.

“Exports to Ceyhan have been halted for two days,” said Mustafa Mohammed, a company engineer.

The Kirkuk-to-Ceyhan pipeline is a favorite target of guerrillas, whom Iraqi officials say are intent on disrupting the country’s access to its main source of revenue: Partial exports through the line resumed June 23 after a series of attacks weeks earlier.

Guerrillas also set their sights further south, toward the pipelines that carry 90 percent of Iraq’s export oil.

Saboteurs punched out one of two key crude oil export pipelines in the south early Thursday, breaching a line that had been brought back up just over a week ago, after an almost five-day shutdown that halved exports from that region. The attacks occurred in the al-Askari district, about 12 miles southwest of Basra, said Staff Brig Gen Ali al-Mousawi, the head of Iraq Border Police.

GM’s car sales in China hit record high

Beijing, 15 July — General Motors, the world's largest automaker, has announced that its car sales in the first half of the year in China hit a record high of 259,653, up 57.6 percent from the same period a year ago.

Shanghai GM, the US automakers' largest joint venture in the country, sold 141,319 passenger cars in the first half of this year, an increase of 92.4 percent.

The sales of SAIC-GM-Wuling, GM's mini-vehicle joint venture in south China, rose by 32.5 percent from the same period last year to 115,938 in the first six months.

GM did not release first-half profits in the Chinese Mainland, but its net profits last year in the country stood at 437 million dollars and the figure is expected to grow with the company's expansion plans.

Last month, GM Chairman and CEO Rick Wagonner announced plans to relocate GM's Asia-Pacific regional headquarters from Singapore to Shanghai by January next year and to invest over 3 billion dollars more in China over the next three years. — MNA/Reuters

Iraqis survey the scene of a car bomb explosion in Haditha, 200km northwest of Baghdad, on 15 July, 2004. — Internet

Blair’s Labour party loses support in two UK regional polls

Baghdad, 15 July — UK voters in Leicester and Birmingham turned against Prime Minister Tony Blair’s Labour party in elections for two new members of parliament — his first test after a report cited flaws in assessing risks that led to the Iraq war.

Labour held the Birmingham seat with a reduced vote and lost the Leicester seat to the Liberal Democrats, who opposed the war. The Conservatives, who backed the war, were knocked into thirdplace in both the Midlands region seats.

“The Labour party is doing pretty badly,” John Curtice, professor of politics at Strathclyde University, told the British Broadcasting Corp. “They may face the prospect of a third term with not much more than 35 percent of the vote, and that might not be a very comfortable third term.”

In Birmingham, Labour’s vote fell to 38 percent from 64 percent in the 2001 general election, beating the Liberal Democrats, whose vote rose to 34 percent from 8 percent.

The Conservative vote fell to 17 percent from 20 percent. The turnout was 37 percent, down from 48 percent.

In Leicester, the Liberal Democrat vote rose to 35 percent from 17 percent. Labour’s share fell to 29 percent from 35 percent, and the Conservative vote fell to 20 percent from 23 percent. The turnout was 42 percent, down from 58 percent.

“If Labour hold Birmingham, that would be an immense boost for Blair,” pollster Rikki Nye of Populus Ltd said before the results. “If the Conservatives were on their way to victory, these are the kind of seats we’d expect them to be picking up.

“If the Conservatives finish third in both, all merry hell will break loose, and it’ll be another lousy summer for them.”

Labour’s popularity fell in May to its lowest in 17 years as a result of Blair’s backing for the US-led Iraq war, according to a Populus poll conducted on May 7-9. Labour’s backing was at 33 percent this month, up from 31 percent in June, according to a Populus poll conducted July 2-4, with a margin of error of 3 percentage points. — Internet

UN presses campaign to cut natural disaster risks

United Nations, 15 July — Governments should change their focus from aiding victims of natural disasters to lowering the risk of disasters before they can strike, a UN report said on Wednesday.

Earthquakes, floods, drought, storms, wildfires, volcanic eruptions and landslides are causing more economic and social disruption over the years as the world’s population becomes more concentrated in urban areas, said the report by the UN inter-agency International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. To counter these trends, the long-term reduction of the hazards of such disasters should become a guiding principle of communities everywhere, said the Geneva-based UN unit.

Successful strategies could range from pursuing environmental policies that lower the risk of flooding to locating cities away from earthquake zones to improving the technology for forecasting storms, the report said.

In 2003, an unusually bad year, more than 95,000 people were killed in 700 natural disasters, said a report by the UN inter-agency International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. To counter these trends, the long-term reduction of the hazards of such disasters should become a guiding principle of communities everywhere, said the Geneva-based UN unit.

UNICEF has launched a three-year $7.2 million project to build disaster risk management into school curricula in China. The project, called “Safeguarding Children Against Natural Disasters,” aims to educate children about disaster risk and the need to act before it strikes.

Meanwhile, aid groups in the Philippines are urging the government to improve disaster preparedness and warning systems.

A recent study by the Asian Disaster Reduction Center found that the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries to natural disasters, with an estimated 10 million people at risk of losing their homes in a single disaster.

Among the recommendations of the study is for the government to establish a national disaster management agency, improve early warning systems, and increase public awareness of disaster risks.

“We are not doing enough to prepare for the next disaster,” saidילדოו Colbert, a disaster management expert at the Asian Disaster Reduction Center.

“People need to know what to do before a disaster strikes, and they need to be prepared with basic survival supplies.”

The study also recommended that the government increase funding for disaster preparedness, particularly in rural areas where the risk is highest.

Population growth is another factor that makes the Philippines vulnerable to disasters, the study noted.

With a population of 97 million, the country is expected to grow to 120 million by 2025.

“The population growth is putting pressure on natural resources and increasing the risk of disasters,” said Mr. Colbert.

“As the population increases, the risk of disasters also increases.”

The study found that the Philippines is prone to a variety of disasters, including typhoons, floods, landslides, and volcanic eruptions.

In the last 50 years, the country has experienced more than 200 typhoons, resulting in over 50,000 deaths and billions of dollars in damage.

“Typhoons are the most frequent and damaging disasters in the Philippines,” said Mr. Colbert.

“People need to be prepared for these disasters, and the government needs to do more to protect vulnerable populations.”

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More Iraq prison abuse cases emerge

Baghdad, 15 July — New cases of prisoner abuse by US soldiers in Iraq have come to light, three months after the abuse-scandal first shocked the world.

Emerging from a closed-door meeting with Pentagon officials on Thursday, John Warner, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said there had been more violations of the Geneva Convention governing the treatment of detainees.

“We are still uncovering, as late as this morning, other incidents, other cases that will be promptly investigated by the Department of Defence,” Warner said.

The Pentagon officials at the meeting showed senators the Department of the Armed Services Committee 24 confidential documents from the International Committee of the Red Cross.

“We are still uncovering, as late as this morning, other incidents, other cases that will be promptly investigated by the Department of Defence,” Warner said.

The documents are part of a Red Cross report on prisoner treatment in Iraqi jails written before the scandal broke in April.

Warner has held three hearings on Abu Ghraib and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has testified before the committee.

He said his panel’s next public hearings will be held in September at the earliest.

The committee will not bother hearing with soldiers being investigated to avoid jeopardizing their legal rights, Warner said.

“They said they would give 48 hours extra in order to be sure (of the company leaving) before carrying out the just verdict,” Al Jazeera quoted a statement as saying.

“They also said that after the 48 hours they will not deal lightly with all those who fail to increase facilities in what they deal with what they called the ‘infidel occupiers’,” the channel said, showing a copy of a fax it received from the 1920 Battles, the military wing of the National Islamic Resistance.

The Saudi company said Wednesday it would pull out of Iraq to meet the demands of kidnappers who threatened Tuesday to kill Egyptian truck driver Mohammed Gharabawi within 72 hours if the firm did not withdraw.

The Faisal al-Neheti Transport Company had offered the kidnappers $15,000 for Gharabawi’s release but said it was unable to pay a $3 million ransom first demanded by the kidnappers.

Gharabawi, who has worked for the firm for eight years, was seized while transporting Saudi fuel to Iraq about two weeks ago.

The company is one of about 50 subcontractors operating with 400-500 tankers in Saudi Arabia to Iraq...

Edwards goes solo, attacks Bush’s leadership

Des Moines (Iowa), 16 July — John Edwards, opening his first solo campaign swing since becoming No 2 on the Democratic White House ticket, attacked US President George W Bush on Wednesday for his failure to take responsibility for flawed US intelligence on Iraq.

Edwards, at a rally on the steps of the Iowa State Capitol, contrasted Bush with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and presumptive Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry and said Bush did not understand what it means to lead.

“What we need in the White House is somebody who has the strength, courage and leadership to take responsibility and be accountable not only for what is good, but for what is bad. That’s what John Kerry will be,” the North Carolina senator said.

Edwards referred to a British report released on Wednesday that criticized the country’s intelligence failures in the run-up to the war in Iraq and noted that Blair had taken “full responsibility” for the breakdown.

“Tony Blair didn’t run from the report,” said Edwards, chosen by Kerry as his running mate a week ago.

“It’s because he understands what leadership is.”

The British report echoed a Senate Intelligence Committee report issued in Washington last week that said US intelligence used to justify the invasion of Iraq was riddled with flaws but found no sign Bush had pressured analysts.

Bush has not taken responsibility for the intelligence mistakes, and said again while campaigning in Michigan that “although we haven’t found the stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction we were right in our analysis to go into Iraq, and America is safer today because we did”.

Germany pledges more childcare to boost baby rate

Berlin, 15 July — The German Government agreed to a draft law on Wednesday to improve state-subsidized childcare facilities to try to support parents and boost birth rates as the country struggles with the burden of an ageing population.

Family Minister Renate Schmidt said ministers agreed to increase facilities so state-backed care places are available to all children under three whose parents work or are in training.

“Young people often decide either late or not at all to have children because their career and personal wishes don’t fit together. With flexible childcare facilities we want to make it easier for them to opt for children,” she said in a statement.

Schmidt said under the drive to reverse a decline in birth rates and raise childcare provision to standards elsewhere in western Europe care places for under-threes would be doubled by mid-2006 in western Germany.

Jordan-made Haier TVs to be exported to US

Amman, 15 July — A Jordanian company will start exporting Jordan-made Haier TV sets to the United States, local newspaper Jordan Times reported Wednesday.

The Haier Middle East Appliances Company (HMEAC), 72 per cent of whose capital owned by Jordanian investors while 28 per cent by Chinese, is currently in the final stage of negotiations with US buyers to sell 150,000 TV sets “Made in Jordan” that amounts to 30 million US dollars, said the report.

According to Moiz Imam, chairman of the company, this wholesale deal is only the first of its kind in terms of exporting TV sets to the US, noting that HMEAC has the capacity to produce and export larger quantities to the US.

“We are still uncovering, as late as this morning, other incidents, other cases that will be promptly investigated by the Department of the Armed Services Committee,” Warner said.

Not only to kill civilians and soldiers but also to destroy the nation’s infrastructure in a campaign of sabotage.

Iraq’s new government has talked increasingly tough about cracking down on insurgents. It passed emergency laws giving Allawi broad powers to combat violence; police have conducted sweeps of terror suspects in Baghdad and other cities.

Those actions may have spurred militants to launch their series of attacks in recent days, Allawi said.

“They know that they should not give us a chance to rebuild our capabilities security, police and the army. So they want to undermine Iraq’s new government are determined to take back control,” Imam was quoted as saying.

Iraq Premier expects tough weeks ahead

Baghdad, 15 July — Iraq’s interim Prime Minister said Thursday he expects insurgents to strike harder in the coming weeks and announced the creation of an intelligence service designed to combat terrorism.

Prime Minister Iyad Allawi’s comments to The Associated Press came amid a spate of new violence, including a car bomb Thursday that killed 10 people and wounded 40 others. Also, a decapitated body wearing an orange jumpsuit was found in the Tigris River, possibly that of a foreigner taken hostage.

Allawi said militants aiming to undermine Iraq’s new government are determined to take back control...

Kuwait plans to expand oil refining capacity

Kuwait City, 15 July — The Kuwait national Petroleum Company’s (KNPC) has voiced its strategy for the next 20 years to expand its oil refining capacity, the Kuwait News Agency reported on Tuesday.

Bader Al-Sumait, a KNPC director of planning, made the announcement in a seminar organized by the Petroleum Media and Public Relations Department of Kuwait Energy Ministry.

To realize the target, the company aims to improve the quality of petroleum products to comply with international standards and develop the oil export facilities, Al-Sumait added.

Saudi firm has 48 hrs to show quitting Iraq

Duba, 15 July — Iraqi kidnappers of an Egyptian said Thursday his Saudi employers had 48 hours to show that they would meet demands to leave Iraq, a statement on Arabic television station Al Jazeera said.

Tony Blair didn’t run from the report,” said Edwards, chosen by Kerry as his running mate a week ago.

“Their series of attacks in recent days, Allawi said.

“Currently we are heading towards increasing our exports to Africa,” he added. — MNA/Xinhua

Internet

A US Army soldier watches as detainees walk to a bus upon their release from Abu Ghraib Prison on the outskirts of Baghdad, Iraq, on Thursday, 15 July, 2004. Sixty-five detainees were released. — Reuters

Internet

MNA/Xinhua

Internet

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters
Saudi firm to quit Iraq to save Egyptian hostage

**aturity, 15 July — A Saudi company said on Wednesday it would pull out of Iraq to meet the demands of kidnappers holding an Egyptian truck driver hostage.**

“We are withdrawing from Iraq immediately to save the life of our driver Mr. (Mohammed) Gharabawi,” Faisal al-Neheit, owner of Faisal al-Neheit Transport Company told Reuters.

“We ask them to release him immediately,” Neheit earlier said in an appeal on Arabic satellite television Al-Jazeera.

On Tuesday, the channel showed a video tape of armed men threatening to kill Gharabawi within 72 hours if the Saudi firm did not pull out of Iraq.

It showed the Egyptian kneeling in front of two militants, urging fellow drivers not to head to Iraq.

The Saudi firm has offered the kidnappers 15,000 US dollars for Gharabawi’s release but said it was unable to pay the one-million-US-dollar ransom demanded by the kidnappers.

Gharabawi, who has worked for the firm for eight years, was seized while transporting Saudi fuel to Iraq about two weeks ago.

Neheit’s company is one of about 50 subcontractors operating with 1400 trucks from Saudi Arabia to Iraq.

Iraq has relied on fuel imports from neighbouring countries since US-led forces toppled Saddam Hussein last year in a war that destroyed much of the country’s infrastructure.

Much of Iraq’s daily needs have been coming from Jordan, Kuwait, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

A Saudi transport company contracted to ship fuel to Iraq has said exports could resume by Saturday if a private Iraqi security firm completed security arrangements including armed escort for the truck convoys.

Several militant groups have kidnapped foreigners in Iraq and have either released or killed hostages in recent months.

The Tawhid and Jihad Group of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi has killed a Bulgarian, an American and a South Korean hostage.

MNA/Reuters

Iraqi Govt requests UAE to write off all its debt

**Abu Dhabi, 15 July — The new Iraqi Government has asked the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to write off its 3.8-billion-US-dollar debt and help Iraq in rebuilding the country from the rubble, the Gulf News reported Wednesday.**

Adel Abdul Mahdi, Iraq’s Finance Minister, who is heading a 3-member delegation to attend a meeting with high officials of UAE to discuss the current political and economic situation in Iraq, told Gulf News in an exclusive interview that the country cannot carry back its entire debt.

“We are asking for some major forgiveness, to wipe off at least 95 per cent of the debt or 100 per cent. We will have hard discussions with the IMF and the Paris Club in the coming months,” said Mahdi.

He hoped that by the end of 2004, an agreement will be finalized in favour of Iraq and that the country will be cleared of the huge debt that according to Paris Club figures is about 120 billion US dollars.

Iraq is meeting its expenditure from oil export revenues and aid from donors, Mahdi said.

“Oil production is around 2.2 to 2.3 million barrel per day (bpd), even reached 2.4 million sometimes. We are exporting oil between 1.7 to 1.9 million bpd,” he said.

“We are planning and working to increase production of oil to at least 3 or 3.5 million bpd by the end of next year. This is the number that Iraq exported earlier,” the minister told the paper... MNA/Xinhua

Chirac says let French work more

**Paris, 15 July — President Jacques Chirac said on Wednesday French workers should be able to work more than 35 hours a week, answering calls by his ambitious Finance Minister for changes to boost the competitiveness of French industry.**

Chirac had been cautious until now because he is wary of upsetting trade unions who have vowed to resist changes.

But he has been under fierce pressure to make changes to ease the rules introduced by the Socia-

lists, who are now in opposi-

tion.

MNA/Reuters

Iraqi firm exports to the UAE

**Birmingham, 15 July — An Iraqi firm has warned that oil companies in Iraq are unable to work because of a lack of development money, the Arab News Agency reported Wednesday.**

The company, which is one of the largest oil exporters in Iraq, said that because of the lack of development money, they cannot work and are unable to sell oil.

MNA/News

Thais warned about high-risk jobs overseas

**Bangkok, 15 July — Thai Government has warned Thai labourers about applying for hazardous jobs overseas, reported the Thai News Agency Wednesday.**

The warning was made by the provincial labour office in the northeastern province of Nakhon Ratchasima because of a recent fatal accident in Malaysia.

A Thai working for a Malaysian timber company died from decompression illness while diving recently, the agency said.

MNA/Xinhua

Elusive WMD

**London, 15 July — Former chief UN arms inspector Hans Blix on Wednesday slammed the British Government’s dossier on Iraq weapons of mass destruction (WMD), claiming that it was “hyped.”**

“I think they hyped the report, evidently,” Blix said in an interview with the BBC.

“I think it was a spin that was not acceptable. They put exclamation marks where there had been question marks and I think that is a spin, a lead that leads the public to the wrong conclusions,” Blix said.

Blix’s comments come as an independent inquiry into the British Government’s pre-war Iraq intelligence published its report.

According to the report by Lord Butler, who headed the inquiry, the intelligence on Iraq’s banned weapons used by the British Government before the Iraq war was at times “seriously flawed” and “unreliable.” MNA/Xinhua

Irani Govt seeks UAE to write off all its debt

**Abu Dhabi, 15 July — The new Iranian Government has asked the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to write off its 3.8-billion-US-dollar debt and help Iraq in rebuilding the country from the rubble, the Gulf News reported Wednesday.**

Adel Abdul Mahdi, Iraq’s Finance Minister, who is heading a 3-member delegation to attend a meeting with high officials of UAE to discuss the current political and economic situation in Iraq, told Gulf News in an exclusive interview that the country cannot carry back its entire debt.

“We are asking for some major forgiveness, to wipe off at least 95 per cent of the debt or 100 per cent. We will have hard discussions with the IMF and the Paris Club in the coming months,” said Mahdi.

He hoped that by the end of 2004, an agreement will be finalized in favour of Iraq and that the country will be cleared of the huge debt that according to Paris Club figures is about 120 billion US dollars.

Iraq is meeting its expenditure from oil export revenues and aid from donors, Mahdi said.

“Oil production is around 2.2 to 2.3 million barrel per day (bpd), even reached 2.4 million sometimes. We are exporting oil between 1.7 to 1.9 million bpd,” he said.

“We are planning and working to in-

crease production of oil to at least 3 or 3.5 million bpd by the end of next year. This is the number that Iraq exported earlier,” the minister told the paper... MNA/Xinhua

Chirac says let French work more

**Paris, 15 July — President Jacques Chirac said on Wednesday French workers should be able to work more than 35 hours a week, answering calls by his ambitious Finance Minister for changes to boost the competitiveness of French industry.**

Chirac also sought to re-

assert his authority by warn-

ing Nicolas Sarkozy, a po-

tential presidential rival, that he will not let him remain Finance Minister if he also becomes the leader of the ruling conserva-

tive UMP Party.

Chirac, 71, made his com-

ments in a wide-ranging hour-

long television interview in which he outlined plans for the second half of his five-

year presidency and sought to revive his own political fortune and those of the conser-

vatve government.

He told the government to hold talks with unions and firms on easing restrictions on work time which Sarkozy says make French firms less competitive.

“The first principle is that the work time is and will stay 35 hours,” Chirac said in the interview marking Bastille Day, which commemorates the 1789 French Revolution.

“The second principle is that more flexibility is needed for workers, notably those who want to work more in order to earn more, and more freedom is needed for com-

panies.”

MNA/Xinhua

Iraqi Govt requests UAE to write off all its debt

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Hostage said safe after Manila prepares pull-out

MANILA, 15 July — A Filipino hostage in Iraq is safe and not in danger of beheading, a Foreign Ministry official said on Wednesday after the government began preparations to withdraw its troops in line with the hostage-takers’ demands.

Hostage Angelo de la Cruz might even return home as early as Thursday, an official in his hometown said.

Militants had threatened to kill de la Cruz unless Philippine troops left by July 20, a month ahead of schedule, leaving President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in a dilemma over saving his life or sticking to her firm backing of Washington.

"He is safe and there is no more risk of him being executed," the Foreign Ministry official told reporters, quoting a Philippine official in Baghdad close to the negotiations for the release of de la Cruz, but did not elaborate.

Philippine officials wrongly said de la Cruz was close to release on Saturday and his relatives have since been wary of celebrating hints of breakthroughs by negotiators.

In a televised announcement, Vice-President Noli de Castro appealed to people to "through your support and unity, we could resolve and settle this problem with dignity as a nation," the former newscaster said. "What is important now is the safety of Angelo."

The Foreign Ministry said earlier it was preparing to withdraw troops from Iraq but it was unclear what action it had taken because the military said it had not received orders.

The Air Force said it had put two transport planes on standby in Manila to begin an evacuation of troops if it is ordered.

A statement from Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert, following news a Bulgarian hostage in Iraq had been executed, said Filipino troops in Baghdad had fallen to 43 from 51. — MNA/Reuters

Iran says to return British boats at “right time”

TEHRAN, 15 July — Three British naval vessels which Iran promised to return two weeks ago after seizing them on the Iran-Iraq border will be handed back "at the right time," Iran’s President Mohammad Khatami said on Wednesday.

The delay in returning the boats, taken last month in the narrow Shatt al-Arab waterway along with their eight crew, is further em- barrassment for the British Government which is under pressure to take a tougher line with Teheran and documents signed by the boat’s crewmen were supposed to have been returned shortly afterwards.

"The British ships should be and will be released but when the right time comes," Khatami told reporters after a weekly Cabinet meet- ing.

Britain’s Defence Min- ister Geoff Hoon said that after the eight crewmen were interviewed, London concluded they had been intercepted in Iraqi waters and forcibly escorted into Iran. Iran refutes that charge.

"Based on the evidence and documents signed by British officials and their re- marks — those boats stayed into Iranian waters and it’s natural that they be seized by Iran," Khatami said.

Conservative deputy leader and shadow Foreign Secretary Michael Ancram on Tuesday rebuked For- eign Secretary Jack Straw for a timid approach over the issue and called for Iran to apologize and hand over the confiscated boats.

Straw, a strong prop- on of the European Union’s policy of engagement with Iran in contrast to Washington’s isolationist stance, said Ancram’s “megaphone and rant” ap- proach was not suitable when dealing with Iran.

EU, Israel sign deal on satellite navigation system

BRUSSELS, 15 July — The European Union (EU) and Israel have sealed an agreement on the European satellite radio navigation programme Galileo, the EU said Wednesday in a press release.

This agreement provides for their cooperation on satel- lite navigation and timing in a wide range of sectors, notably science and technology, industrial manufacturing, service and market develop- ment, as well as standardization, frequencies and certifi- cation.

Israel also will take part in the programme financially through a stakeholding in the Galileo Joint Undertaking, which is managing the pro- gramme. Galileo, a Euro- pean version of the already existing US Global Positioning System, will become operational in 2008. The sys- tem can be used in precision positioning in engineering projects as well as guiding cars and ships.

White House, CIA refuse to release pre-war intelligence document

WASHINGTON, 15 July — The White House and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) have refused to give the US Senate Intelligence Committee a one-page sum- marized pre-war intelligence on Iraq prepared for Presi- dent George W Bush, the New York Times reported Wednesday.

The document contains the contents of the NIE (National Intelligence Estimate) dealing with Iraq’s weapons of mass destruction, qualifiers and all, there is nothing clearer than this single page," Senator Richard J Durbin, a Democrat of Illinois, said in a 10-page "additional view" that was published as an ad- dendum to the Senate Intel- ligence Committee’s report released last Friday.

Congressional officials also said that notes taken by Senate staffers who were permitted to review the docu- ment showed the review eliminated references to dis- sent within the government about the National Intelli- gence Estimate’s conclu- sions. — MNA/Xinhua

Study says late childbirth lowers ovarian cancer risk

WASHINGTON, 15 July — At last, a health benefit to having children late in life — it seems to reduce the risk of ovarian cancer, US researchers reported on Wednesday.

They found that women who had their last children after the age of 35 had a 58 per cent lower risk of ovarian cancer compared with women who had never had a child.

Women who had children earlier in life also had a lower risk, but it was less dramatic — 16 per cent for women whose children were born before age 25, for example, and 45 per cent for women whose children were born before age 30.

"We asked what is true for women who only had one baby, was it true for women who had four or more children had a 64 per cent lower risk than women who had never given birth, for example,“ Pike said in a telephone inter- view. The number of children did not matter. "We found it was pretty consistent."

Earlier studies have shown that having children late in life also protects against can- cer of the endometrium — the lining of the uterus, said Pike.

He believes that the surge in the hormone progesterone that is seen in pregnancy may be a factor in both cancers.

"This level of progestins might very well be fatal to early disease," Pike said.

In addition, the uterus is "cleansed out" with birth and the delivery of the placenta, perhaps taking away aging cells that are more likely to become cancerous, Pike said.

Pike believes the findings could have implications for preventing ovarian cancer, which, while rare, is deadly.

"If you could work this out you could possibly do some prevention," he said. — MNA/Reuters

Controversial

British nuclear sub leaves Gibraltar

LIMA, 15 July — A British nuclear submarine that caused outrage in Spain when it docked in Gibraltar last week has left Britain’s tiny Mediterranean colony, the Spanish Foreign Minis- try said on Wednesday.

"The docking of the Time- less stirred controversy because the last time it visited, in 2000, it had a crash in the cooling system of its reactor and leaked a small amount of contaminated water into the sea. — MNA/Reuters

"In determining what the President was told about the
Booming border towns in the country

Booming town of Panwa in Kachin State. — PBANDA

Developing Tachilek in eastern Shan State. — MNA

Kawthoung Airport in Taninthayi Division. — MNA

With peace prevailing throughout the country, people living in border areas are now able to run their business with peace of mind. The photo shows magnificent Mongla market built in Mongla region. — MYANMA ALIN

The government is striving day in, day out for better transportation throughout the country and people are now enjoying fruitful results of these endeavours. The photo shows the Union Highway at the entrance to Kengtung, Shan State (East). — MYANMA ALIN
MEC Vice-Chairman Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win addresses opening ceremony of multimedia classrooms of Kamayut BEHS No 3. — MNA

Coffee growers hold coord meeting

Yangon, 16 July — The coordination meeting of private coffee growers and farmers in PynOolwin was held at Pwedaung Coffee Research Centre on PynOolwin on 10 July. Present were PynOolwin Station Commander Brig-Gen Min Aung Hlaing, Chairman of PynOolwin District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myo Myint, Managing Director Col Myint Shwe of Myanma Farms Enterprise, local authorities and departmental officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Brig-Gen Min Aung Hlaing said that the government is giving encouragement to produce new export items in addition to export crops.

And, the Head of State has given guidance to implement five-year plan for planting 50,000 acres each of coffee in PynOolwin and Nawngkio regions.

So, the growers are to carry out cultivation matters and requirements of the growers will be fulfilled.

Next, Managing Director Col Myint Shwe explained assistance being provided to growers for planting coffee.

The meeting ended in the afternoon. — MNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs sends congratulations to Egyptian counterpart

Yangon, 16 July — U Win Aung, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of congratulations to His Excellency Mr Ahmed Abul Alqheit, on his appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt. — MNA

All citizens to take part in tasks by doing their bit to build …

(from page 16)

them to become all-round qualified ones, on which the State can rely, he said.

The Secretary-1 stressed the importance of effective use of study aids installed in the school. In the knowledge age, the Secretary-1 called on the teachers to guide and nurture the students to become outstanding ones who can shape the brighter future of the nation and who are equipped with nationalistic fervour.

The Secretary-1 presented computers and cash assistance to the school through the minister.

The chairman of the school board of trustees reported on endeavours made for opening of the classrooms. The principal expressed his thanks for the facility.

After the ceremony, the Secretary-1 cordially greeted the teachers, parents of the students, members of the school board of trustees and students.

Next, the Secretary-1 and party posed for a documentary photo together with members of the school board of trustees, teachers and students. — MNA
Lt-Gen Ye Myint attends opening of …

(from page 1)

Next, the minister delivered an address, saying that as is known to all the government has been taking measures for promotion of the nation’s sports standard in accordance to nation-building tasks. Measures for raising the sports standard play the most effective role in enabling the nation to proudly host the State Flag among the world nations and to polish and elevate the national prestige and integrity. Now, endeavours are being exerted for significantly lifting the nation’s sports standard under the leadership of the Prime Minister and close supervision of the Myanmar National Olympic Council and the Myanmar Olympic Committee made up of officials. In conclusion, the minister expressed his belief that the sports events held at the Yahan Sports Grounds will constantly produce new sports generations who can bring honour to their motherland.

The minister presented sports gear to five townships in Mandalay Division through an official. Managing Director of Nwe Nwe Construction Co U Kyaw Thet Hlaung handed over the documents related to the sports ground to Deputy Director of the Sports and Physical Education Department (Mandalay Division) U Soe Nyunt. The Sports and Physical Education Institute team and the training team under the SPED (Mandalay Division) played a soccer demonstration match.

Next, they left Mandalay to attend the opening ceremony of the archway of Kyaukse Township Sports grounds and the Gymnasium. Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint and Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint formally opened the gymnasium. Lt-Gen Ye Myint unveiled the stone plaque. The minister said that the Government is implementing three major projects for harmonious development of the entire Myanmar. It is also striving for improvement of the national sports level as a national task. The Ministry of Sports was set up in 1997 for the athletes to win medals at the international competitions. The ministry has the duty to build new sports stadiums and gymnasiums and to upgrade the existing ones. Myanmar won 18 gold, 40 silver and 50 bronze totalling 108 medals in the XXII SEA Games, and that record is the highest in 22 years.

Next, chairmen and officials of respective sub-committees took part in the discussions. Panel of judges for the sports and officials presented reports on assessment to be made in accord with rules and regulations. Later, the commander attended to the needs and gave concluding remarks. — MNA

Minister receives delegation

VANGON, 16 July — Minister for Labour U Tin Wun received Chairperson of the Social Affairs Committee of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Mrs Nguyen Thi Hoai Thu and party at his office at 3 pm today. Present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Labour Brig-Gen Soe Nyunt, Director-General Col Yu Lwin Aung of the Central Inland Freight Handling Committee Office, Director-General U Tin Win of the Factories and General Labour Law Inspection Department, Director-General U Kyaw Nyunt of the Central Trade Disputes Committee Office, and Director U Myo Win of the Prime Minister’s Office. — MNA

The Vietnamese delegation and Deputy Minister U Khin Maung Win enjoy entertainment programme at the dinner. — MNA

Measures for organizing 12th Myanmar …

(from page 16)

announce songs chosen soon after it has confirmed them so that the participants can rehearse. Officials are to coordinate with maestros to be able to distribute tapes recorded songs, dance and music for contests as soon as possible. Soon after the tapes are recorded, those in-charge from states and divisions are to be called in for discussions.

Arrangements are to be made to broadcast an interview between maestros and officials of TV stations as soon as possible so that the participants can have sufficient time for practice. In assigning duties as members of the panel of judges, only those who are well-versed and highly-qualified in respective events are to be chosen. Arrangements have been made to send maestros to states and divisions to teach junior artistes there.

Like previous years, this year also, consolation prizes will be presented to national race participants who do not win the first, second and third prizes although they participate in the contests to the best of their ability. In conclusion, the commander urged those from the leading committee, the committees and sub-committees and maestros to make suggestions for holding the 12th Myanmar traditional cultural performing arts competitions this year on a grand scale.

Vice-Chairman of the Leading Committee Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung reported on preparations for successful holding of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions.

Chairman of the Work Committee No 3 Military Region Commander Col Tint Hsan reported on tasks of the respective sub-committees.

Chairman of the Security and Discipline Enforcement Committee Deputy Commander of Yangon Command Col Wai Lwin submitted reports on matters related to security and discipline. Chairman of the Competitions Organizing Sub-committee Director-General U Kyaw Win of Fine Arts Department reported on rules of contests, competition for Ramayana Drama Contest, venues, cash awards, the date for holding prize presentation ceremony and arrangements for sending 11 maestro groups to States and Divisions.

Next, chairmen and officials of respective sub-committees took part in the discussions.

Panel of judges for the contests and officials presented reports on assessment to be made in accord with rules and regulations. Later, the commander attended to the needs and gave concluding remarks. — MNA

SRV delegation calls on Deputy Minister

VANGON, 16 July — A visiting Chairperson of Social Affairs of the National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Mrs Nguyen Thi Hoai Thu called on Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 4 pm today.

Also present at the call were Director-General of the Department of Consular and Legal Affairs U Nyan Lynn, Deputy Director-General of the Department of ASEAN Affairs U Kyee Myint and officials concerned of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the evening, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win hosted a dinner in honour of the Vietnamese delegation at Karaweik Palace.
Myanmar Native Orchids

Dr Khin Maung Neung

The Department of Botany at the University of Yangon has recently published a beautifully illustrated booklet entitled Myanmar Native Orchids. It is the first publication of its kind by this department, although over a hundred master and PhD degree theses have been compiled by research students and since a quarter of a century ago, a tissue culture laboratory has been established at the department.

Myanmar’s unique geographical position is endowed with a rich variety of flora and fauna. Her forest ecosystems range from snow capped Hkaborazi mountain habitat with Himalayan flora in the north to tropical with Himalayan flora in the north to tropical evergreen forest habitat with Malayan flora in the south. Orchids are one of the most striking flowers among Myanmar indigenous flora. Due to their beauty, colours, fragrance and medicinal properties as well as rarety of certain species orchids enjoy pride of place in Myanmar culture and history. Thazin, Bulbophyllum orichorum hindii, is a very special orchid enlisted in the list of royal flowers in the days of Myanmar monarchy and the favourite flower of wide description in Myanmar literature and songs. Myanmar herbalists say all orchids are medicinal plants. But in Myanmar the academic knowledge of and scientific study in native orchids are limited, let alone those of their relatives in the world. The booklet aims to give knowledge and information of Myanmar orchids to the public and botanists is mentioned the establishment of A New Century Biotech Development Centre at Yangon University which is part of a thirty year long term education planning. Department of Botany is undertaking research activities concerning Myanmar orchids and other useful medicinal and crop plants which will be useful for the development of resources in the future.

Crammed with 107 beautiful coloured photographs of Myanmar native orchids, with their botanical names and scientific data provided by U Saw Lwin, CET member, Myanmar Floricultrist Association and Managing Director of Myanmar Flora Co Ltd, the booklet is a concise and compact informative work. U Saw Lwin himself is a noted botanist specializing in Myanmar orchids. He has made various field trips to the remote places of Myanmar to collect wild orchids and photograph them. The Botany Department gives credit to him for his assistance and contribution of his field knowledge and photographs.

The short introduction of the booklet gives us basic important facts about orchids in general and Myanmar native orchids in particular. Myanmar word “Thit-khwa” for orchid literally means flowering plants that grow on rocks or decomposed leaves and decaying dead bodies. Terrestrial or ground orchids are found in cold regions of Europe, Asia and America, whereas those that grow on trees, rocks and wire lines inhbit in rain forests.

The introduction, then goes on to scientific classification of orchid species according to their habitat type, characteristics and nature of pollination with botanical names. The booklet informs us of four different species on the basis of where they grow. Most orchids grow on trees and they are termed as “epiphytes” Those species that grow on rocks are Zitophytes”, those that grow on decaying or decomposing substances are saprophytes and those that grow on ground are “terrestrials.”

We now learn from the booklet that orchids do not pollinate by air or water. They pollinate with the help of insects like bees, bumble bees and butterflies which carry away and propagate the polinia from the sticky substance of stigmatic surface of orchid bloom. Thus flowers are pollinated and transformed into fruits.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in 1973 (CITES) has already prohibited from collecting and marketing orchids which are almost extinct Myanmar native orchids “Dendrobium cruentum” “Paphiopedium wardii” “Renanthera inc Amitana” and “Vanda coerulea” are listed in CITES Appendix 1. Other orchids are mentioned in Appendix 2. They can be sold legally only with the permission of the Government authority concerned. There is a growing public awareness of and interest in orchids especially the native orchids thanks to Myanmar floral tradition and educational and informative activities of Myanmar Floriculturist Association and orchid lovers. Especially Thazin orchid which grows wild in Shan State, Kayah State, Mon State, Kayin State, Rakhine State, Bago Division, Tanintharyi Division and Yangon Division and blooms once a year in the cold season December to February are now grown in the backyards and gardens not only in rural areas but also in towns. They fetch good price because of the growing demand. Thazin flowers are a must to adorn the coiffeur of a bride as well as for all Myanmar fairer gender.

Delegation calls on UMFFCCI officials

Yangon, 16 July — The board of trustees of Botataung Kyakda-ut Pagoda held a ceremony to seek Ovada from Sayadaws in conjunction with a ceremony to offer Woso robes to members of the Sangha at their meeting hall at the pagoda this morning.

Works carried out during 4 months’ period from 1-4, 2004 to 30-6-2004 and works being carried out were reported to Sayadaws by Trustee U Kin Swe. He also introduced Rtd Lt-Cmdr Hla Tun (Navy) (Retired Director (News) of the News and Periodicals Enterprise) to Ovada from Sayadaws in conjunction with a ceremony to offer Woso robes to members of the Sangha and the members of the Sangha.

It was followed by sharing of merits gained, and “soon” was also offered to members of the Sangha.

Woso robes offered at Botataung Pagoda

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Delegation calls on UMFFCCI officials

Yangon, 16 July — A three-member delegation from Sri Lanka led by Consultant of Gem and Jewellery Related Affairs of Ceylinein Consolidated Mr T Rasirapala called on Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry General Secretary U Sein Win Hlaing, Central Executive Committee members U Tun Aung (Myanmar Nyunt) and U Tun Aung (Tawwmin Tun) and officials of the Myanmar Tourism Entrepreneurs Association and Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association at the head office of UMFFCCI on Merchant Street here at 10 am yesterday.

Delegation calls discussed matters on investment and promotion of bilateral trade opportunities to set up joint ventures in gem industry, participation of Myanmar entrepreneurs in the 14th Sri Lankan Gem & Jewellery Show to be held in Colombo from 6 to 8 September 2004. — MNA

Usable 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

All this needs to be known

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

Woso robes to be offered

Yangon, 16 July — The Sanatan Dharma Hindu Association will offer Woso robes to Sayadaws and members of the Sangha at Mogok Refectory on Kaba Aye Hilllock here at 9 am on 1-8-2004 and wellwishers are invited to participate.— MNA
New drug may offer new hope for leukemia patients

WASHINGTON, 16 July — A second-generation cancer drug offers one last shot at life for leukemia patients who have not been helped by the “miracle” drug Gleevec, doctors reported on Thursday.

By Tests on mice show the experimental drug overcomes virtually all of the genetic mutations that cause some cancers to resist treatment with Gleevec, the researchers report.

Gleevec, made by Swiss drug company Novartis AG and sold in Europe under the name Glivec, was the first “targeted” cancer drug.

The findings, published in Friday’s issue of the journal Science, add to evidence that precisely targeted cancer drugs can be designed quickly and rushed into testing for the most desperate cancer patients.

Deaths in Japan rain rise to 9, more storms ahead

NAGASAKISHIMA (Japan), 16 July — Torrential rains that have deluged towns in northern Japan had caused nine deaths by Thursday and two people were still missing as the region braced for more storms. Unprecedented downpours on Tuesday caused swollen rivers to burst their banks, touched off landslides that killed two in Niigata Prefecture, forced thousands to evacuate and left thousands more trapped in their homes awaiting rescue. People from more than 13,000 households were evacuated in Niigata, waiting tensely for the waters to recede in public halls and schools that had been turned into shelters. At one point, about 18,000 households in Niigata and neighbouring Fukushima were ordered to evacuate.

An elderly man who had been missing was found dead in a destroyed house in Nagonishima on Thursday afternoon, bringing the death toll to nine, a Niigata police spokesman said. Two more people are still missing in the prefecture. Over 17 inches of rain had fallen in some parts of the region since Monday night and the Meteorological Agency said as much as 6.3 inches more could fall by noon on Friday.

China ready to promote ties with Germany

BEIJING, 16 July — Developing the friendly cooperation between China and Germany is the common aspiration of two peoples and accords with the fundamental interests of the two countries, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said here Thursday.

At a meeting with visiting German Deputy Chancellor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Joschka Fischer, Wen said China and Germany trust each other politically and enjoy a high level of trade and economic cooperation, which still has a huge potential.

Consultation and cooperation between the two countries in international affairs have been strengthened constantly, the Premier said.

The Chinese side appreciates Germany for its adherence to the one-China policy and for its support to China’s peaceful reunification, Wen said.

Fischer, who arrived here Wednesday on a three-day official visit to China at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, said the German side speaks positively of Germany-China relations, and appreciates China’s policy of reform and opening up.

The German side is willing to continue pushing forward the bilateral relations, Fischer said, reiterating that the German Government will continue to uphold the one-China policy.

A whale is seen jumping above water. Animal welfare groups threatened to sue the US navy unless it stops using a type of sonar that they say could cause internal bleeding and even death in whales and other marine mammals. — Internet

Greece criticizes US comments, reassures Olympic security

ATHENS, 16 July — Greek Government on Thursday severely criticized US Pentagon spokesman’s comments on the security issue for Athens Olympic Games, reiterating that only Greek authorities are responsible for Olympic security and the games will be held safely.

“It is well known that Greece has done everything humanly possible for the Olympic Games to be held in a safe and peaceful setting,” Public Order Minister George Voulgarakis told reporters.

“We have repeatedly stated and it has been made clear to everyone that only Greek authorities are responsible for Olympic Games security and they have been working systematically towards this goal ever since Greece was elected to host the Olympic Games,” he stressed.

Earlier in the day, asked whether the United States might act unilaterally if the conditions demanded, US Pentagon spokesman Lawrence Di Rita said that the US is always ready to act to defend its national interests and American citizens throughout the world.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of Greece also reacted strongly to Di Rita’s statement. “It is well known that the US, with the ‘go-ahead’ of the governments of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and New Democracy (ND), has control over the Olympic Games,” it said in a statement.

“However, what’s new and provocative about the Pentagon spokesman’s comments is that if necessary, the US will intervene unilaterally with military forces during the Olympic Games in order to protect US citizens!” this statement goes beyond any previous provocative statement, a fact which calls for Greek people to stay alert and to express with every possible means their strong opposition,” it added.

Technical seminar on polyfelt geosynthetics application in civil engineering held

YANGON, 16 July — A technical seminar on polyfelt geosynthetics application in civil engineering 2004, sponsored by Agricultural & Industrial Development Co Ltd and Myanmar Traders Hotel, was held yesterday in Yangon.

Deputy Minister for Transport U Pe Than delivers an address at the technical seminar on polyfelt geosynthetics application in civil engineering. — MNA/Reuters

China-ASEAN FTA to bring great opportunities

BANGKOK, 16 July — The setting up of the Free Trade Area (FTA) between China and the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) will surely bring great opportunities to China and ASEAN nations, said Chinese State Councillor Tang Jiaxuan here Thursday at the third forum of the Chinese people around the world.

The forum, hosted by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Office of the State Council and the China Overseas Exchanges Association, is focused on China-ASEAN FTA as well as challenges and opportunities faced by Chinese business people.

The establishment of the China-ASEAN FTA will contribute to the stability and development of both the Asian and world economies, said Tang at the opening ceremony.

The Chinese Government will continue to devote itself to the strategic partnership with ASEAN countries, he said.

FTA between China, ASEAN to bring great opportunities

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The Chinese Government will continue to devote itself to the strategic partnership with ASEAN countries, he said.

Australian Govt renews travel warning to US

CANNABA, 16 July — The Australian Government on Thursday renewed its travel warning for Australians travelling to the United States after the US Government warned terrorists may be planning in attack to undermine the US presidential election in November.

US Secretary for Homeland Security Tom Ridge said last week that credible reporting indicated al-Qaeda, an international terrorist network, was moving forward with plans to launch a large-scale attack in the United States to undermine the presidential election.

In the updated travel advisory, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) said there was a significant ongoing terrorist threat to the United States.

“ Austarlians in the United States are advised to be alert to their own security,” the DFAT said.

“United States authorities have stated that attacks are possible over the coming United States summer months and could be aimed at large political and international events,” it said.

The Australian Government demanded that Australians planning to visit the United States closely monitor the development of the situation and follow the advice of local authorities.

Two injured in oil tanker fire in Shanghai

SHANGHAI, 16 July — Two workers, who were seriously burned in a fire that gutted an oil tanker Wednesday night, were in a critical condition, according to doctors with the No 7 People’s Hospital of Shanghai.

The fire broke out at around 7:30 pm in the dormitory area of Daqing No 254 oil tanker, belonging to China Shipping Group, formerly mistaken as China Ocean Shipping Corporation. One was killed and four others injured, including the two in critical condition, in the fire on the giant oil tanker blighted the wharf of Lixin Shipyard of Shanghai.

The fire was put out at about 10:45 pm, but the oil tanker was seriously damaged. — MNA/Xinhua
Cheaper medicines expected for Chinese AIDS patients

BANGKOK, 15 July — Chinese AIDS patients are expected to get much cheaper medicines following the signing of an agreement between China and US-based pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), the Beijing-based China Economic Times reported Wednesday.

In last April, China’s ministries of health and finance jointly issued a policy document pledging free treatment to poor AIDS patients in both urban and rural areas.

Six anti-virus medicines including Epivir, Zidovudine and Stavudine, all needed in the so-called “cocktail therapy” for AIDS patients, were picked as officially designated medicines to be purchased by the government and distributed free.

The Chinese Government had negotiated for years with foreign companies holding the patent and sales right. As a result, China started its home production of the anti-AIDS medicines last year and currently there are several domestic pharmaceutical companies in Shanghai and other cities making and selling medicines.

According to the latest deal with the Chinese Government, GSK will sell the Epivir on the Chinese market at a “preferential price” for the period between 2004 and 2006, sources with GSK China Investment Co. Ltd. said.

GSK is considering launching Epivir production in China, which will help further reduce the cost and price, the sources added.

Anti-virus medicines used to cost Chinese AIDS patients 30,000 to 50,000 yuan (US$3,600-6,000) a year as the country had no capability to produce such medicines and had to rely on imports.

Medical experts here are optimistic that the prices of medicines for AIDS, which have already dropped in recent months, will continue to fall. In the near future, they say, each AIDS patient might only have to pay 3,000 to 5,000 yuan (around 360 to 600 dollars) a year for treatmen.

MNA/Xinhua

Italy whaling talks seen extending hunting ban

OSLO, 15 July — The world is likely to renew a ban on whaling talks in Italy next week even though whalers argue that some species are plentiful and that killing methods are humane.

A pro-whaling group said Monday that the International Whaling Commission (IWC), meeting in Sorrento, Italy, on July 19-22, would ignore the whalers and vote to extend the ban. “The anti-whaling nations simply don’t want to lift the moratorium, and as a result, they might only have to pay 3,000 to 5,000 yuan (around 360 to 600 dollars) a year for treatmen,” said a letter to lawmakers.

MNA/Xinhua

Zimbabwe to nurture performing talents among rural children

HARARE, 15 July — The Children’s Performing Arts Foundation of Zimbabwe (CHIPAWO) in Harare has penetrated remote areas in its bid to nurture talents among marginalized rural children.

CHIPAWO public relations officer Nyasha Kumbawa said here Tuesday.

She said 20 centres had been set up in different rural areas across the country.

“Our goal of spreading wings to all areas of the country is certainly being achieved as we have managed to set up 20 centres in rural areas. That shows we are really doing well,” she said.

The main mandate of CHIPAWO in Zimbabwe is to produce such medicines and vaccines and against bioterror, chemical, radiological and nuclear agents. It basically guarantees the buying and stocking up of the new drugs and vaccines in order to encourage the private sector investment.

The legislation also allows the emergency use by the government of experimental treatments still awaiting the final approval of the Food and Drug Administration.

The agents listed in the legislation include smallpox, anthrax, botulism toxin, plague and ebola.

MNA/Xinhua

for concession in September

LAGOS, 15 July — Nigerian ports would be handed over to preferred foreign and local bidders under concession arrangement in September this year in fulfillment of the government privatization programme, a high-ranking official from the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) said here Tuesday.

“The handover to the preferred bidders will be preceded by a bidders’ conference which would take place soon”, said Adebayo Sarumi, managing director of the NPA.

The Nigerian ports were slated for concession last year by the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), the organ of the Nigerian Government saddled with the responsibility of proscripting the nation’s privatization of public enterprises.

MNA/Xinhua
Apple’s online music store sells 100 million songs

Los Angeles, 15 July — The iTunes Music Store run by US computer company Apple has sold 100 million songs in about 15 months, the Hollywood Reporter reported Tuesday.

The 100 millionth song, "Sommersault (Dangermouse remix)" by Zero7, was purchased on Sunday by Kevin Britten of Hays, Kansas. According to Apple promotion, Britten is to receive a 17-inch PowerBooknotebook computer, a 40-gigabyte iPod and a gift certificate for 10,000 iTunes songs.

Apple chief executive and co-founder Steve Jobs telephoned Britten to congratulate him. But Apple, the maker of the iPod and Macintosh computer, has missed the goal set by Jobs when he launched the music store last April.

Although Jobs aimed to sell 100 million songs in one year, the company sold about 70 million songs only in the first 12 months.

The songs sold by iTunes Music cost 99 cents each and can only be played on Apple’s popular iPod and iPod mini digital music players.

Thais to launch AIDS drug for children in 2005

Bangkok, 15 July — Thailand will launch a children’s version of its three-in-one generic antiretroviral pill next year to simplify treatment of HIV-infected youngsters, the state drug agency said on Wednesday.

“The drug is in clinical trials now and we hope to complete that and make it available on the market by the middle of next year,” Government Pharmaceutical Organization (GPO) Managing Director Thongchai Thavichachat told reporters.

Thailand has produced some 40 million tablets of its GPO-VIR generic drug — which combines copies of stavudine, lamivudine, and nevirapine — since May 2002.

The current dosage, however, is only for suitable for those aged 10 years or over. Those aged below 10 have to either split the tablet or take powdered liquid formulations.

“For those kids living in the far north, doctors have to prescribe gallons of different liquid formulations to them, which make their lives even more difficult,” Thongchai said.

Thongchai said there were about 5,000 children in Thailand in need of antiretrovirals.

Drug-resistant germ spreading outside US hospitals

Washington, 15 July — A drug-resistant “superbug” found in hospitals has a close cousin that is affecting athletes, prisoners and small children in growing numbers across the United States, disease experts said on Wednesday.

MRSA can be treated with a range of antibiotics including Doxycycline and Rifampin but, they said, many of these drugs are ineffective against MRSA.

The community-acquired strain has some of its own nasty tricks. MRSA is akin to a sponge and soak up the form of an abscess or boil, and doctors routinely try to treat it with Penicillin-based antibiotics, Jernigan said. These will not work against MRSA.

In hospitals, MRSA resists almost everything but an intravenous antibiotic called vancomycin. But it is sold under the brand name Bactrim.

However, 70 per cent of the time doctors use ineffective drugs to treat MRSA, Jernigan said. And the community-acquired strain has some of its own nasty tricks.

SURVEY SAYS AMERICANS ABANDONING LOW-CARBOHYDRATE DIETS

New York, 15 July — So much for the low-carbohydrate lifestyle.

More than half of all US consumers that have tried following diets that eschew carbohydrates (carbs) such as bread and sugar have tried following diets that eschew carbohydrates (carbs) such as bread and sugar have tried following diets that eschew carbohydrates (carbs) such as bread and sugar have tried following diets that eschew carbohydrates (carbs) such as bread and sugar have tried following diets that eschew carbohydrates (carbs) such as bread and sugar have tried following diets that eschew carbohydrates (carbs) such as bread and sugar.

The latest InsightExpress poll of 500 Americans found that, at the time, 11 per cent of Americans were on low-carb diets. The largest number of people who became blind before the age of five, were no different from the control subjects,” he added.

The research, published in the science journal Nature, attributed the clear differences in performance to brain plasticity — the formative period when the infant brain is akin to a sponge and soak up the form of an abscess or boil, and doctors routinely try to treat it with Penicillin-based antibiotics, Jernigan said. These will not work against MRSA.

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Italian defender Castellini joins Betis on five-year deal

MADRID, 15 July — Italian defender Paolo Castellini has joined Real Betis from Torino on a five-year contract, the Primera Liga club said on Tuesday. “He was a player I had asked for,” said Betis coach Llorenç Serra Ferrer. “He is a good professional and we all knew that he was very keen to join us and that’s why we chose him.”

The 25-year-old left back, who played on loan at Serie A side Brescia last season, is the first player Betis have signed since the end of last season when they finished ninth in the Primera Liga. Betis are also reported to be on the verge of reaching an agreement to sign Brazilian striker Ricardo Oliveira from Valencia.

The club received some bad news too on Tuesday when routine pre-season medical tests carried out on the squad showed that Brazilian international forward Denilson was still suffering from serious knee pain despite undergoing surgery earlier in the year to deal with the problem. “It’s a real set-back to our plans,” said Serra Ferrer. “But we have to face up to it and there is certain to be another player who will be keen to take his place.” — MNA/Reuters

Barca set their sights on Cameroon striker Eto’o

MADRID, 15 July — Barcelona have made African Player of the Year Samuel Eto’o their next transfer target.

Club president Joan Laporta said Barca view the signing of the Cameroon international striker, who is part owned by both Real Madrid and his present club Real Mallorca, as a leading priority. “On our part we see no problem in signing a player that does not have a place at Real Madrid,” Laporta told reporters at the team’s training base in Peralada on Wednesday. “We think Eto’o is a great player.”

The Catalans will have a tough battle on their hands if they want to secure the services of the highly rated 23-year-old. Real president Florentino Perez said before he was re-elected on Sunday that he intended to buy back the full rights to the player from Mallorca and then loan him out to another club. But he ruled out a deal with Barcelona.

Laporta insisted, though, that he would not be deterred by Real’s plans. “Everything will now depend on how strong the desire of the players is to join Barcelona,” he said. “It is in our interest that he ends up playing with us.”

An additional problem for Barca is that Eto’o does not have a European Union passport and so would occupy one of three berths assigned for foreign players under Primera Liga regulations. Barca have already exceeded their quota of non-European Union players and have said that unless new signing Silvinon manages to obtain Spanish citizenship before the start of the season they will have to loan him out to another club.

As well as former the Celta Vigo left back, Barca have also signed fellow Brazilian defender Juliano Belleti, Portuguese playmaker Deco, Sweden striker Henrik Larsson and French midfielder Ludovic Giuly during the close season. — MNA/Reuters

Gazzayev returns as CSKA Moscow coach

MOSCOW, 15 July — Valery Gazzayev has been reappointed as chief coach of CSKA Moscow in place of Artur Jorge, officials said on Tuesday.

Portuguese coach Jorge was sacked on Monday after the team’s performance fell short of expectations.

Jorge’s dismissal paved the way for Gazzayev to return to the club he left last November after they won the Russian Premier League title.

“Gazzayev has been appointed and he is now taking over the team,” CSKA spokesman Sergei Aksyonov said by telephone.

Champions CSKA are fifth in the standings with 28 points from 16 games.

Debut-laden Napoli at risk of dropping out of Serie B

Rome, 15 July — Debut-laden Italian Serie B club Napoli missed a deadline on Tuesday to show its finances were in order, putting in jeopardy the former Italian champion’s chances of qualifying for the new season.

Napoli, at risk of being thrown out of the second division, needed to assure the Italian Football League it had met a shortfall of millions of euros in its accounts by midnight on Monday.

The league’s offices had remained open to receive the documentation, the first in a series of financial deadlines for Italian clubs to register for the 2004/05 season.

澤拉特科·克蘭卡爾，克羅地亞國家隊新任教練

ZAGREB, 15 July — Croatia appointed former player Zlatko Kranjcar as their new national coach on Tuesday to succeed Otto Baric who stepped down after a disappointing early exit from Euro 2004 in Portugal.

The Croatian FA voted unanimously for Baric, who led Croatia’s Euro 2004 campaign and whose contract expires on July 31, to resign and to be replaced by Kranjcar.

Kranjcar has been a coach and player for Croatia. The 47-year-old led Croatia’s Euro 2004 campaign and whose contract expires on July 31, was sacked after a British paper tried to buy it,” he said. “I also was rung up by several Irish daily papers saying they wanted to get hold of it in order to poke fun at Beckham and the English — it’s complete madness.”

The ball, embossed with the names of the teams, the date and match venue, will be up for sale until July 22. — MNA/Reuters

Beckham’s ball heads back down to earth

MADRID, 15 July — A 10 million-euro bid for the ball that David Beckham blasted into the stands during England’s Euro 2004 shootout defeat against Portugal has been ruled a fake.

After running cheques on the bids, the Spanish site of Internet auctioners ebuy (www.es.ebay.com) decided to reduce the top offer for the ball from 10 million to a mere 23,650 euros (29,270 US dollars).

The ball was put up for sale by the Spanish football fan who grabbed it while he was watching the Euro 2004 quarters-final from Row Q of the Luz Stadium in Lisbon.

A bidding war believed to involve genuine collectors and British newspapers, anxious to get their hands on the ultimate memorabilia, was also joined by pranksters who hiked the price to astronomical levels.

The interest in the ball has created a major headache for the eBay, who have had to try to recall it in order to establish the authenticity of the bids.

“Nothing like this has ever occurred in Spain before,” company spokesperson Inma Solis said on Wednesday. “We are having to check out each bid with our departments in other countries and are trying to cancel out those we believe to be false.”

Pablo Carril, the 25-year-old Deportivo Coruna fan who caught Beckham’s spot kick, said he only realized the interest the ball might generate after he had been contacted by a British newspaper who were anxious to get their hands on it.

“I decided to put the ball up for auction after a British paper tried to buy it,” he said. “I also was rung up by several Irish daily papers saying they wanted to get hold of it in order to poke fun at Beckham and the English — it’s complete madness.”

The ball, embossed with the names of the teams, the date and match venue, will be up for sale until July 22. — MNA/Reuters

Thailand beat Newcastle on penalties

Bangkok, 15 July — Thailand’s National Team beat Newcastle United 4-2 on penalties after the English Premier League club’s first match of their pre-season tour of Asia ended in a 1-1 draw on Wednesday.

Sarayot Chaikamdee gave Thailand the lead in the 16th minute, latching on to a through ball before lifting the ball over goalkeeper Shay Given, with midfielder Lee Bowyer blundering Newcastle’s equalizer midway through the second half on the trophy.

Bowyer missed in the shoot-out, however, sending his shot over the bar and new signing James Milner, who was impressive after coming on as a second-half substitute, also failed from the spot. Milner, 18, joined Newcastle from relegated Leeds United earlier this month.

“Milner came on for his first game for Newcastle — he was a complete stranger to this situation — but he looked good,” Newcastle manager Bobby Robson told reporters.

The team travel to Hong Kong for the second match of their tour against Kitchee on Sunday. — MNA/Reuters
THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR  Saturday, 17 July, 2004  15

Rainfall on 16-7-2004

- (nil) at Yangon Airport, (0.28 inch) at Kaba-Aye and (0.08 inch) at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 1443 mm (56.81 inches) at Yangon Airport and 1387 mm (54.61 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 1377 mm (54.21 inches) at central Yangon.

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kayin State, Tanintharyi Division, rain or thunderstorms has been isolated in lower Sagar Division and Kayah State and scattered across the area in the remaining areas with isolated heavy falls in Rakhine State. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Mannmarwady (3.23) inches, Mawlamyine (2.58) inches, Kyauktaw (2.44) inches and Sittway (2.05) inches.

Maximum temperature on 15-7-2004 was 30.5°C (87°F). Minimum temperature on 16-7-2004 was 20.5°C (69°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 16-7-2004 was 84%. Total sunshine hours on 15-7-2004 was (3.1) hours approx. Rainfall on 16-7-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, (0.28 inch) at Kaba-Aye and (0.08 inch) at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 1443 mm (56.81 inches) at Yangon Airport and 1387 mm (54.61 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 1377 mm (54.21 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 7 mph from South at 18:30 hours MST on 15-7-2004.

Bay inference: According to the observations at 09:30 hrs MST today, yesterday’s low pressure area over North Bay has become unimportant, but weak in the Andaman Sea and moderate to strong elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 17-7-2004: Rain or thunderstorms will be widespread in upper Sagar Division, Kachin and Rakhine States, scattered in Mandalay Division, Chin and Shan States isolated in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is 60%. State of the sea: Seas will be moderate off and along Rakhine Coast and slight elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: General decrease of rain are likely in the whole country. Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 17-7-2004: Sunny period with one or two rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is (80%). For Mandalay and neighbouring area for 17-7-2004: Likelihood of isolated rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is (50%).

Weather outlook for third weekend of July 2004: During the coming weekend, rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Yangon Division and scattered in Mandalay Division.

Flood Bulletin

Issued (at 1:00 hr MST on 16-7-2004)

According to the 06:30 hrs MST observations today, the water levels of Chindwin River may remain above their respective danger levels of Homa (2000) cm, Mawlaik (1230) cm and Kalewa (1550) cm during the next (4) dayscommencing noon today.

According to the 08:00 hrs observation today, the water level of Dokhtaway River at Myitkyina may remain above its danger level of (870) cm during the next (3) dayscommencing noon today.

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Measures for organizing 12th Myanma Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions coordinated

YANGON, 16 July—The Leading Committee for Organizing the 12th Myanma Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions held its first meeting at the National Theatre Kyuang Street in Dagon Township here this morning.

It was attended by Chairman of the Leading Committee Deputy Minister of Culture Brig-Gen Soe Min Maung and members, departmental heads, maestros, chairman of the Work Committee and subcommittees for the competitions, chairmen of respective scrutinizing work groups and officials.

The chairman of the Leading Committee delivered a speech, saying that the competitions have been held yearly since 1993 with a view to preserving and elevating Myanma traditional cultural arts, and enabling traditional cultural arts to catch up with the development of international level arts without damaging own styles after flourishing the spirit of love and cherish national traditions, culture and customs among the national youths. More-than-expected successes have been achieved year by year in organizing the competitions thanks to cooperation and contributions of the maestros, the Leading Committee, committees and subcommittees and arousing support of the people. The State Peace and Development Council Chairman’s Office formed the Panel of Patrons and the Leading Committee on 11 July for organizing the 12th competitions to be grander than the previous years. The meeting will form two committees and 10 subcommittees, and the formation will be reported at the meeting which will be attended by patrons.

It is needed to coordinate in advance matters related to organizing the competitions, cash earmarked for prizes and dates to be fixed for the competitions, he said.

The panel of patrons is to make arrangements to contribute amounts to the competitions, he added.

The combined efforts have achieved nearly 100 per cent of the plan for ensuring enrolment of all school-going-age children. Overall, the nation has been able to build good foundations for polishing and boosting its educational sector. Simultaneously, the government has been building other necessary foundations for all-round development such as in political, economic, health and transport spheres, reflecting the government’s diligence and zeal to ensure security of the people’s socio-economic life as well as perpetual existence of the nation.

In doing so, there have emerged prospects of continuous progress of the en- sured nation due to diligent implementation of projects by local authorities and service personnel and active participation of the people and social organizations under the correct leadership of the government, he said.

It is incumbent upon all citizens to take part in the tasks by doing their bit to build up a genuine democracy-flourishing nation through correct policies, he noted.

The teachers are to be convinced of the nature of their noble duties, to teach the students and to nurture (See page 8).

NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

YANGON, 16 July—Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, accompanied by officials of Public Works, left Gangaw Township on 13 July morning and inspected Gangaw-Kalay road and bridges on the way. The Minis- ter inspected the site for construction of Pae creek bridge. Superintendent Engineer of Magway Division U Tan Win reported on preparatory conditions for construction of the bridge. The Minister stressed that the chosen site for building the approach road must be free from bank ero-

Minister inspects roads and bridges

YANGON, 16 July—Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, accompanied by officials of Public Works, left Gangaw Township on 13 July morning and inspected Gangaw-Kalay road and bridges on the way. The Minis- ter inspected the site for construction of Pae creek bridge. Superintendent Engineer of Magway Division U Tan Win reported on preparatory conditions for construction of the bridge. The Minister stressed that the chosen site for building the approach road must be free from bank ero-

Afterwards, the Minister inspected newly built Taung creek bridge and Senior Engineer-in-Charge U Zaw Win Myint reported on matters related to the bridge.

At the briefing hall, the Senior Engineer reported on the completion of the bridge and the approach road. After hearing the reports, the Minister instructed engineers to construct the pilot channel, to build the retaining walls for prevention of bank erosion and to maintain the bridges.

The Minister and party inspected construction of Kyaykuhtu-Hulin road section and gave necessary instruc-

Afterwards, the Minister inspected durability and maintenance of the bridges on Kyaykhu-Saw Road and Seikphyu-Saw Road. Next, they arrived in Chauk Town-

The Minister and party left Chauk on 15 July and inspected repairing and maintenance of Yangon-Pyay-Mandalay Highway and Kyaukpaung-Yenangyoun- g-Magway road section and durability of the bridges along the roads. Afterwards, the Minister saw over Kopin-Sanmagyi-Thityakauk road.

On arrival at the site of Bwetryi bridge construction project, the engineer-in-charge reported on progress of works. Next, the Minister inspected driving of piles on the bank of Pyay and urged officials to take preventive measures against bank erosion. — MNA