Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Indian guests

YANGON, 17 Aug — Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received President Mr S P Goenka of Federation of Indian Plywood and Panel Industry of the Republic of India and party at the hall of Zeyathiri Beikman on Kommyinthta this evening.

Also present at the call were Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Director-General of the Government Office U Soe Tint and Director-General of Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet. Matters relating to investment in agricultural, forestry, mining, industrial, and energy sectors and border trade were discussed — MNA.

Subhasita ca ya vaca, to have words well spoken; this is the way to auspiciousness.
Minister inspects construction of UMFCCI office

Yangon, 17 Aug — Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan received Mr Kim Sung Wook, Managing Director of Hyosung Co Ltd in Myanmar, at the ministry at 5 pm yesterday. He also inspected the progress in constructing the office of the UMFCCI on Minyee Kyawswa Road in Lanmadaw Township here at 1 pm today.

Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry President U Win Myint and officials reported on progress of work and the minister gave necessary instructions.

UMFCCI President U Win Myint reports on progress of work to Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Psyone. — UMFCCI

Information Minister receives Korean guests

Yangon, 17 Aug — Information Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan received Mr HS Yoon, Managing Director of HC Enterprise Co Ltd of the Republic of Korea engaged in film production, and party at the ministry at 4 pm yesterday. Also present at the call were Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein, departmental heads, the head of office of the ministry and officials.

Minister receives Singaporean guest

Yangon, 17 Aug — Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan received Mr HS Yoon, Managing Director of Hyosung Singapore Pte Ltd and Myanmar Hyosung Co Ltd in Myanmar, at the ministry at 5 pm yesterday. Also present at the call were Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein, departmental heads, the head of office of the ministry and officials.

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

Minister receives Korean guests

Yangon, 17 Aug — Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan received Mr Kim Sung Wook, Managing Director of HC Enterprise Co Ltd of the Republic of Korea engaged in film production, and party at the ministry at 4 pm yesterday. Also present at the call were Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein, departmental heads, the head of office of the ministry and officials.

Wellwishers donate publications to IPRD

Yangon, 17 Aug — Wellwishers this morning donated publications to the Information and Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Information.

At the book donation ceremony held at the IPRD on Panodan Street here, Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein accepted the publications totalling 3098 including magazines and journals worth Ky 1,512,150 and spoke words of thanks.

Director-General of the IPRD U Chit Naing, Managing Director of the News and Periodicals Enterprise Co Ltd Soe Win, Managing Director of the Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise U Bo Kyi and officials also attended the ceremony. — MNA

African leaders slam ...

(from page 16)

“In democracy as in all other things, no one size fits all,” he said. “Multiparty democracy and its attendant elections must never be a cover for the destabilization of our countries” he added.

MNA/Reuters
**935 US troops killed since beginning of military operations in Iraq**

**Baghdad, 17 Aug—** As of Monday, 16 August, 935 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq in March 2003, according to the Defence Department. Of those, 697 died as a result of hostile action and 238 died of non-hostile causes.

The British military has reported 63 deaths; Italy, 18; Spain, 11; Poland, seven; Bulgaria, six; Ukraine, six; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; and Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and the Netherlands have reported one death each.

Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 797 US soldiers have died, 588 as a result of hostile action and 299 of non-hostile causes.

The latest deaths reported by the military:
- Three soldiers with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit were killed Sunday in Najaf province.
- A soldier was killed Sunday in an explosion in northern Baghdad.
- A Marine was killed Sunday in Anbar province, Iraq.—Internet

**Militia set fire to Iraqi oil well in new tactic**

**Baghdad, 16 Aug—** Shiite militia have set fire to an oil well in southern Iraq, Baghdad said Monday, adopting a new tactic in the uprising against US forces and the new Iraqi government.

“The well in a field near the city of Amara was targeted on Sunday,” an Iraqi government spokesman said.

While the attack on one of thousands of oil wells in Iraq’s southern fields will have negligible impact for production, it underlines the threat to Iraq’s oil infrastructure from the Mehdi Army, followers of anti-US cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

The militia is mostly active in central and southern Iraq and has threatened to attack oil facilities in response to the US offensive against Sadr and his followers in the city of Najaf, a centre of Shiite learning.

The uprising has already forced Iraq to close its main southern oil export pipeline, reducing the country’s export flow by almost half for the past week, oil officials and shippers monitoring the situation said.

The unrest has cut the country’s exports to about 900,000 barrels per day since last Monday, when saboteurs attacked the pipeline and a US offensive against Sadr’s followers spread to several Iraqi cities.

“The pipeline is not operating. We do not know when conditions would improve to re-open it,” said a South Oil Company official, who declined to be identified.

“Decisions are made on a day-to-day basis. It is not even known whether employees will show up to work tomorrow,” he said, adding that employees working from the headquarters have been ordered to stay at home for the past week.

**Bahrain calls for Iraq peace**

**Manama, 17 Aug—** Bahrain pledged yesterday to do all it can to help end the bloodshed in Iraq. It will also do everything possible to help save the country’s holy shrines, said Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa. The government is in contact with various international and regional bodies to try to avert further bloodshed, he said.

Shaikh Mohammed was speaking as the met MPs representing Parliament’s eight strong Islamic Bloc. The MPs, headed by bloc leader Ali Al Samaheji and including Shaikh Abdulla Al A’Ali, Mohammed Shaikhal Al Abbas and Abbas Hussain, handed Shaikh Mohammed a letter urging Bahrain to intervene over the continued fighting in Najaf and other areas.

It asked that Bahraini Ambassador to Iraq Hassan Malallah Al Ansari be instructed to meet Iraqi interim government and US officials to seek ways to protect lives and holy sites, said Mr Al Samaheji.

He said that an Islamic group it was the bloc’s duty to help protect innocent lives.

**Indian team surveys Sutlej and Pareechu river sites**

**Rampur, 16 Aug—** The high-level central team on Sunday surveyed Sutlej and Pareechu river sites to assess the flood threat in northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh from an artificial lake in Tibet and said the water level along the Sutlej appeared normal and there was no alarming rise in the level of Pareechu as well.

The team will also take stock of things that would help resume normal operations of the 1500 megawatts Nathpa-Jhakri Hydel Project (NJP) three units of which resumed operations on Saturday but were subsequently shut down following instructions from the Central Government.

Asked why the three units of the project had to be closed again, he said the Central government did not want to take any chances and wanted to be doubly sure that there was no threat to the project in the event of the flash floods caused by bursting of the artificial lake in Tibet.

“We will have a meeting in Delhi tomorrow to decide when we can start our normal operations,” he said. He said the aim of the survey was also to assess the feasibility of setting up a new monitoring station by the NJPC at Khb, close to the Indo-China border.

“We are thinking about setting up a permanent station at Khb and we even undertook the survey 35 kilometres ahead of Khb today,” Sharma said, adding, such a station will give them 3-4 hours of advance time to avoid damage to the project and its men just in case there are flash floods.

The Nathpa Jhakri project which suffered huge damage in the August 2000 floods, started operation in October last year and it was only in March this year that all the six units, with a capacity of 250 megawatts each had become functional. Meanwhile the data available from satellite images indicated that artificial lake had started overflowing and there was slight increase in discharge of water of Pareechu whose level has risen by over two feet.— MNA/PTI

**Three US soldiers killed during Iraq fighting**

**Baghdad, 16 Aug—** Three American soldiers were killed in action in Iraq, a military spokesperson said Monday.

Two of the soldiers were killed Sunday in Najaf when troops came under attack by militiamen loyal to firebrand Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, Marine Capt Carrie Batson said. The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit is responsible for the area, but soldiers from the Baghdad-based 1st Cavalry Division were deployed to Najaf after fighting erupted there on 5 August.

Batson said a third soldier attached to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, deployed in Anbar Province, was also killed Sunday. Anbar includes the volatile cities of Fallujah, Ramadi and Quin on the Syrian border.—Internet

**DM says Russia, US neither enemies nor allies**

**Moscow, 16 Aug—** Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov said Sunday that Russia and the United States are “certainly not enemies but probably, not allies yet,” said Ivanov, commenting on his meetings with US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld in Russia’s Saint Petersburg.

“Decisions are made on a day-to-day basis. It is not even known whether employees will show up to work tomorrow,” he said, adding that employees working from the headquarters have been ordered to stay at home for the past week.

The Russian minister noted that the threats of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to Russia and the United States bring the two countries closer together.

Rumsfeld arrived in St. Petersburg on Friday and held several meetings with Ivanov at the weekend on a variety of international and bilateral security issues, including the situations in Iraq and South Ossetia, a renegade region of Russia’s neighbour Georgia, and possible bilateral military cooperation.—MNA/Al shaah
Italy, Netherlands threatened over Iraq

CARO, 16 Aug—An online statement purportedly from an Islamic militant group threatened the Netherlands and Italy with “bloodbaths” if they do not withdraw their troops from Iraq.

There was no way to verify the authenticity of the statement, which appeared late Sunday on a Web site said to be a clearing house for militant-related material.

The statement addressed all European countries that have sent troops to Iraq and Afghanistan, but also specifically mentioned the Netherlands and Italy.

“Wart for the hell which will turn your nights into bloodbaths.”

The statement addressed Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi by name and said: “You have defied the sol- diers of Islam so wait for the Islamic quake.”

Italy has about 3,000 troops in Iraq.

Philippines stresses opposition to unilateralism

MANILA, 16 Aug—Philippine Foreign Secretary Delia Albert said on Sunday that Philippines opposes unilateralism in international relations and supports the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in trying to keep multilateralism alive and strong in the 21st Century.

Before leaving for Durban, South Africa, to attend a summit of ministers from NAM on August 19, Albert said that this year’s NAM, with the theme of “Challenges for Multilateralism in the 21st Century,” is very relevant in the face of increasing impres- sions that the relations be- tween states are being defined in terms of unilateralism.

“We must prevent any possible rise of unilateralism, particularly today’s increas- ingly interdependent world,” she told reporters at the De- partment of Foreign Affairs.

Albert also described NAM as the “unique place to be the vanguard of multilateralism.” “Universalismus is difficult to achieve on many pressing issues, but this should not be an excuse for unilateralism,” she said.

The Dutch Foreign Min- istry said Monday the Neth- erlands had no plans to with- draw its approximately 1,350 troops from Iraq. Spokesman Bart Jochems called the Internet threat a “foggy story,” adding that the gov- ernment repeatedly has said it will not be swayed by ter- rorists.

The online statement was signed by the Omar el- Mukhtar Brigade of the Jamaat al-Tawhid al-Islamiya, or Group of Islamic Militancy. Omar el- Mukhtar was a Libyan na- tionalist who fought against the Italian occupation and was hanged in 1931.

IAEA to set up forum on creating nuclear-free Mideast

Cairo, 16 Aug—Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit said on Sunday that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was preparing to set up a forum on creating a nuclear-free Middle East.

Speaking to reporters after talks with IAEA Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei, Abul Gheit said the forum, likely to be hosted by Austria next January, would bring together Middle East countries and the UN Security Council’s permanent members.

“The proposed forum would be a chance to exchange views between parties con- cerned and mark a step toward freeing the region of nuclear weapons,” the top Egyptian diplomat said.

He also reiterated Egypt’s readiness to offer necessary support to render the gathering a success.

Egypt says ready to promote ties with China

Cairo, 16 Aug—Egyptian Prime Minister Ahmed Nazief said on Sunday that his country is ready to further promote strategic and coopera- tive relations with China.

Nazief made the remarks during a meeting with visiting Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister Wang Yi, according to a Chinese Embassy source.

Nazief said that Egypt re- gards China as a reliable friend and is willing to deepen its cooperation with China in political, economic, trade, scientific, technologi- cal and educational fields.

Egypt welcome Chinese investment, and Chinese en- terprises could see Egypt as a springboard for expanding their businesses in Africa, the Middle East and Europe, the Prime Minister said.

Egypt is also interested in learning from China’s ex- perience in its reforms and development drive, Nazief added.

For his part, ElBaradei said he had ex- changed views with Abu Gheit on a number of issues, such as security in the Middle East, the IAEA’s efforts and an international call for a nuclear-free Middle East.

He said the envisaged forum would see the participation of all countries in the region, including Israel.

“A durable and comprehensive peace in the region cannot be realized unless parties concerned understand the importance of regional security and the issue of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear capa- cities,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

Three Lebanese, Syrian hostages freed in Iraq

BEIRUT, 17 Aug—Captors have been reportedly re- leased three Lebanese and Syrian truck-drivers who were kidnapped earlier in the month. The fate of the three Kenyan truck drivers is still unknown.

The four Kenyan truck drivers kidnapped in Iraq is still unknown. An Iraqi group, called “The Holders of the Black Banners,” kidnapped three Ken- yans, three Indians and an Egyptian on July 21.

For his part, Wang said that Egypt is one of the first group of developing coun- tries to establish strategic ties with China, and China is pre- pared to strengthen strategic dialogue with Egypt and further expand cooperation with Egypt. During his stay here, Wang also met with Egy- ptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit.—MNA/Xinhua

Iaike children look at a burning American armoured vehicle attacked by guerillas during clashes with American troops in the volatile Sabie City neighbourhood in Baghdad, Iraq, on 16 Aug, 2004.—INTERNET

Journalist, translator kidnapped in Iraq

BAIDUAH, 16 Aug—A Western journalist and his Iraqi translator were kidnapped by two armed men in a busy market in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriya, police said Monday.

Police began investigat- ing the incident after the translator’s family reported him missing, said police Captain Hadi Abuand.

According to witnesses in the market, the journalist, identified as Micah Garen, and the translator, Amir Doushi, were walking when two men in civilian clothes and armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles seized them, Abuand said.

Adnan al-Shorayify, deputy governor of Dhi Qar Province, said the incident occurred Friday. Al-Shorayify said Garen was a journalist with US-French citizenship who worked for the US- based Four Corners Media and was working on a project involving antiquities near Nasiriya, about 200 miles southeast of Baghdad.

According to the Web site, Four Corners is a “documen- tary news organization working in still photography, video and print media” that is working in Iraq. The Web site says Garen is one of the organization’s managers, and shows a portfolio of his photos in Iraq.

A French journalist holding an American passport has been kidnapped in the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriya, Al Jazeera television reported, on 16 August 2004. — Reuters

Five new polio cases found in northwestern Nigeria

LACOS, 16 Aug—Five new cases of polioymyelitis have been recorded in Nigeria’s northwestern state of Niger, the official News Agency of Nigeria reported Sunday.

Mallam Mohammed Killer, coordinator of Niger State of the National Programme on Immunization (NPN) of Ni- geria, was quoted as saying the five cases were discovered in the state’s four local government areas of Minna, Rijau, Mariga, Lavun and Kontagora. — MNA/Xinhua

For more information on creating a nuclear-free Middle East, the IAEA’s efforts and an international call for a nuclear-free Middle East, see the following:

- MNA/Xinhua

- MNA/Xinhua
Megawati pledges more Russian warplanes for Air Force

JAKARTA, 17 August — Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri, in her annual speech to the House of Representatives on Monday, said the government would buy more Russian warplanes in the near future.

Megawati, who visited Moscow in April last year to sign the 192 million US dollars purchase deal of four Sukhoi jet fighters and two Mi-35 military helicopters, planned to increase them into one squadron each.

“We hope that in the not-too-distant future, and in line with the increasing capability, we will be able to incorporate that air power so that they (Sukhoi and Mi-35) will respectively compose a squadron,” she said.

She stressed that “however great the fund that must be allocated to build and deploy a defence and security force, it must be realized that it is one of the consequences of statehood”.

The draft budget for fiscal year 2005, unveiled Monday, sets aside 22 trillion rupiah (around 2.4 billion US dollars) to the Ministry of Defence.

— MNA/Reuters

Conflict in Najaf dominates Iraq political meet

BAGHDAD, 17 Aug — Iraqi leaders met for a second day on Monday to pick an interim national assembly but fighting in Najaf dominated the event, piling pressure on Prime Minister Iyad Allawi to hold more talks with Shi'ite rebels.

Residents said the holy city was tense as US Marines probed the area around the Imam Ali Mosque and an ancient cemetery, from where they had attacked US and Iraqi forces during the 12-day conflict.

“I can tell you that the Najaf fighting is dominating the whole conference. We hope this issue can be solved so we can proceed with our work,” said Hamid al-Kifaey, one delegate.

 Guerrillas fired mortars at the meeting just hours after it opened on Sunday, killing at least two people on the edge of the fortified compound where the three-day gathering is being held.

The brazen attack starkly illustrated Iraq’s precarious security as politicians and armed groups plot the country’s road to democracy ahead of landmark elections in January.

The meeting will choose a 100-member assembly, or national council, to oversee Allawi’s interim government until elections are held in January.

Several blasts echoed across central Baghdad on Monday, but none appeared to come from the Green Zone compound. However, warning sirens sounded at one stage from the area. Fresh fighting between US forces and Sadr’s Mehdi milita broke out in a Shi'ite slum in Baghdad, witnesses said. They said US troops were sealing off the area, called Sadie City.

MNA/Reuters

Militants give El Salvador 20 days to leave Iraq

DUBAI, 16 Aug—An Islamist group has given El Salvador 20 days to pull out troops from Iraq or it would strike inside the Central American country and against its forces in Iraq, according to an Internet statement posted Monday.

“We give you 20 days to withdraw from Iraq. This is the last chance after which there will not be any more statements, only bloodshed,” said Mohamed Atta Brigaed, al Qaeda of Jihad.

“The aim of this deadline is to give you a chance to review yourselves and after that we wash our hands of the blood of every Salvadoran whether in Iraq or in El Salvador,” said the statement posted on a Web site which has carried Islam- ist militant statements in the past.

It was not possible to verify the statement’s authenticity.

The group previously threatened to attack El Sal- vador if it did not cancel its plans to send a new contin- gent of soldiers to Iraq this month.

El Salvador has stepped up security but said it would go ahead with the new de- ployment, planned for around 17 Aug.

On 12 Aug, San Salva- dor told its diplomats around the world to seek additional security and warned its sol- diers already in Iraq to be vigilat after another Islam- ist group — Islamic Tawhid — vowed to turn Iraq into “hell” for Salvadoran troops.

SADC to create development fund

PORT LOUIS, 16 Aug — Council of Ministers of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has claimed here Saturday that it plans to create a regional development fund to serve development of the region’s economy.

Albert Muchanga, deputy executive secretary of SADC, said at a media briefing that the development fund is one of some outstanding tasks deliberated by the SADC Council of Ministers in the past two days.

SADC will also launch feasibility study of the fish- eries agency, staff develop- ment and training, perform- ance management as well as SADC properties.

Muchanga said that the council had fruitful and frank deliberations on the way for- ward for the region and it also made recommendations to the summit on a number of pertinent issues.

He told reporters that SADC member states have ratified 20 legal instruments, including protocol on trans- port, communications and meteorology, protocol on shared watercourse systems, protocol on combating illegal drugs and protocols on trade and mining.

— MNA/Reuters

Southern Africa’s regional anthem on the horizon

PORT LOUIS, 16 Aug — Council of Ministers of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has recommended a SADC anthem to the regional bloc’s annual meetings, a senior official said here Saturday.

“The anthem is based on an African rhythm, which was identified as commonly and traditionally practised by Afri- cans in the SADC region,” Albert Muchanga, deputy execu- tive secretary of the bloc, told reporters in a Press briefing.

A team of musicians from 12 SADC countries is engaged in putting music to the lyrics, which were authored by Angolan historian and guitarist, Manuel Gomez dos Santos, assisted by his fellow-countryman and ethnomusicologist, Jorge Macedo.

The words, written in English, combine the text with African rhythms and melodies, including the elements of the continent, exhortation and response, repetition, compassed rhythm, parallel tenor and inter-rhythms.

Muchanga said the anthem can reinforce a sense of regional belonging and identity, popularize objectives and common agenda, promote popular participation in the re- gion’s programme and activities. — MNA/Reuters

SADC mobile phone market set to grow

AM DHAIR, 16 Aug — The mobile phone market in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is set to grow 40 per cent annually, UAE’s official WAM news agency reported Sunday.

The increase of first-time mobile phone users and the growth of people who frequently upgrading phone models are two main driving forces behind the projected growth, an inside source was quoted as saying.

The life cycle of a mobile phone in the GCC region has reduced from two years in 1998 to less than nine months in 2003. The world’s highest phone replacement rate constitutes another force behind the regional market’s fast growing.

The launch of an “Islamic” mobile phone also contributed much to the growth.

— MNA/Reuters

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— MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

An Iraqi civilian looks at the debris left after US warplanes bombed the largely Sunni city of Samarra, about 60 miles north of Baghdad, after a series of clashes on 14 Aug, 2004. — Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

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MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters

MNA/Reuters
An Iraqi man walks past the crater left by a roadside bomb that killed six Iraqis near a market in Khan Ban Sad, near Baqouba, Iraq, on 11 August, 2004.

A plume of smoke rises from the site where one of five loud explosions shook central Baghdad, Iraq, on 15 August, 2004.

Images of Iraq

Samir Taha who was injured during a blast on al-Rashid Street, a commercial district in Baghdad, is transferred from the Medical city hospital emergency ward to another medical facility to treat his injuries in Baghdad, Iraq, on 17 August, 2004.

A badly wounded Iraqi man is treated at a Baghdad hospital after he was hurt in a mortar attack, which struck a bus station in the center of the capital, on 15 August, 2004.

An image of the face of an Iraqi man is seen on the shattered windshield of a car which was damaged when three mortars hit a commuter bus station in central Baghdad, Iraq, on 15 August, 2004.

An Iraqi man walks past the crater left by a roadside bomb that killed six Iraqis near a market in Khan Ban Sad, near Baqouba, Iraq, on 11 August, 2004.
Success achieved in the energy sector

Liquefied gas factory of the Ministry of Energy in Nyaungdon-Pantanaw-Maubin oil field. — MNA

Oil Field No-1 of Myanma Oil and Gas Enterprise in Thagyitaung oil and gas filed, Pauk Township, Pakokku District, Magway Division. — MNA

The Energy Searcher Drilling Machine at work at the Shwe-1 test well in Block No A-1, offshore Rakhine coast. — MNA
Opening of self-reliant libraries speeded up

YANGON, 17 Aug — The Ministry of Information held a coordination meeting at its meeting hall on Theinbyu Road here this afternoon to take steps for opening more self-reliant libraries in villages being undertaken by the Information and Public Relations Department.

It was attended by Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, directors-general and managing directors of departments and enterprises under the ministry, officials of Myawady Publishing House, the Press Scrutiny and Registration Department and private publishing houses.

The minister delivered an address on the occasion, saying that the government has been translating the four social objectives into reality, one of which is “Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation”. In the process, the Ministry of Information is taking responsibilities for disseminating of information the length and breadth of the nation including border areas, and ensuring the country’s current news to cover the international community, and excellent coverage of the issues, while respective ministries are boosting the health and education standards of the people across the nation.

At the same time, he said, the ministry is implementing the tasks for opening of self-reliant libraries in all the villages of the nation. So far, out of 13,478 village-tracts, 4,962 village-tracts have been facilitated with self-reliant libraries and there remains 8,516.

He said if wellwishers and local people make combined efforts with the assistance of the State, the project will hit the target earlier than scheduled. The Ministry of Information is implementing one of its goals — facilitating all the village-tracts of the nation with self-reliant libraries by 2005-2006. Only when rural people have access to publications daily, can they build up their knowledge of health, education and agriculture to cover the international community, and excellent coverage of the issues, while respective ministries are boosting the health and education standards of the people across the nation.

The minister called on those responsible to contribute assistance and suggestions as much as they can towards implementation of the tasks for speedy emergence of self-reliant libraries in all the villages.

Next, Director-General of the IPRD U Chi Naing reported on steps being taken for opening of self-reliant libraries in the villages and programmes to provide publications for the facilities. Those present gave their views.

Afterwards, private publishing houses and departments donated 14,180 publications worth K 5,411,340 to the libraries through the minister. U Ohn Maung (Yama) Pyinnya Alipnya Publishing House handed over K 90,000 for establishment of self-reliant libraries to the minister.

The minister remarked the reports and thanked the wellwishers.

Deputy FM leaves for South Africa

YANGON, 17 Aug — Leader of the Myanmar delegation, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win left here by air this afternoon to attend the XIV NAM Ministerial Conference and Asian-African Sub Regional Organizations Conference (AASROC II) to be held from 17 to 20 August 2004 in Durban, Republic of South Africa. The deputy foreign minister was seen off at the Yangon International Airport by U Win Aung, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Heads of Department and officials from the ministry.

U Ohn Thwin, Myanmar Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa, U Nyan Lynn, Director General of Consular and Legal Affairs Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U Hla Myint, Minister Counsellor of the Myanmar Embassy in South Africa and U Maung Maung, Director of the Political Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will also attend the meeting as members of the Myanmar delegation.

Members of Panel of Alternate Chairman of NC Plenary Meeting meet

YANGON, 17 Aug—The coordination meeting between members of Panel of Alternate Chairman of National Convention Plenary Meeting was held at the meeting hall of the National Convention Convening Work Committee on Kyaukkasan grounds here this morning. It was attended by members of PAC Daw Khin Nu, U Tun Yin Law, U Yaw Aye Hla, U Maung Hla (a) U Hla Myint, U Mya Aye, Dr Myo Thant Tin, Dr U Thein Oo Po Saw and U Tun Aung Chin, Joint Secretary-2 of NCCWC Dr U Thaung Myint, members U Hsan Tun and U Ba Han, Director of the Work Committee Office U Than Aung and deputy directors.

The meeting discussed matters related to presenting the findings of the Panel of Chairmen of National Convention Plenary Meeting on papers presented by eight delegate groups concerning the sharing of power on legislative affairs held from 17 May to 9 July, when the National Convention resumes.

Matters related to presenting the findings of the panel of chairmen of NPCM on papers presented by eight delegate groups concerning the sharing of power on legislative affairs were discussed.

International Education Expo kicks off in HK

HONG KONG, 17 Aug — An international education expo was kicked off here Monday, attracting a large number of middle school graduates who are interested in studying in the Chinese Mainland universities.

The Hong Kong International Expo features over 130 exhibitors from Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong, Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand etc. About 20 per cent of the Expo’s exhibitors were from Chinese Mainland including Jinan University, Qinghua University, Jiaotong University and Suzhou University etc., which are popular study destinations for Hong Kong students.

Representative of an education consultancy company Stanley Kong said that more Hong Kong students were seeking higher education in Chinese Mainland.

“Besides, parents are generally able to afford their children studying in Mainland as the tuition fee and living standard are relatively low comparing with those of foreign countries,” said Kong.

Kong also said that his company has received some 600 inquiries this year which is a double of last year’s number.

Visitors Chui Wai-lam and Hui Ha-tsze were this year’s matriculation graduates. Both of them failed to enter local universities and were thinking of studying in the Mainland.

“Although I have got an offer of an Associate Degree programme in Hong Kong, I would prefer studying a Bachelor’s degree programme in Chinese Mainland, which I believe would receive more international recognition than a Hong Kong non-bachelor’s degree qualification,” said Chui.

Hui also said that studying in the Mainland would give her a chance to understand more about the Motherland which would help pave the path for her future career in Mainland.

The Expo will be held for four days and is expected to attract about 100,000 visitors to attend.

The meeting of members of the Panel of Alternate Chairmen of the National Convention Plenary Meeting in progress. — MNA
COORD MEETING HELD: The Ministry of Construction held its first and second four-monthly work co-ordination meeting for 2004 on 14 August. Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun delivers an address at the meeting. — MNA

Wen Jiabao stresses importance of permanent China-Mexico commission

BEIJING, August 17 — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said here Monday the establishment of a permanent commission between the governments of China and Mexico marks a concrete step in the strategic partnership of the two countries. Wen made these remarks during his meeting with visiting Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Ernesto Derbez Bautista at the Great Hall of the People.

The founding ceremony of the permanent bi-national commission was held earlier Monday, with Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and Derbez attending.

The establishment of the commission was one of the consensus that had been reached by Wen and Mexican President Vicente Fox during his visit to Mexico last December. The two countries established diplomatic ties in February 1972. Since then great progress has been made in bilateral cooperation in all fields and Mexico has become China’s second largest trade partner in Latin America. China has also become the major trade partner of Mexico in Asia. Bilateral trade volume reached 3.11 billion US dollars in the first half of this year, up 34.8 per cent year-on-year.

During the meeting, Wen said the Chinese Government has attached great importance to the development of its relations with Mexico.

China and Mexico are both big developing countries, Wen said. To strengthen friendly bilateral cooperation will help benefit the social and economic development of the two countries, and increase their role in international affairs.

Wen praised the establishment of the commission, saying that he hoped the two sides can continue to cooperate and push the friendly cooperative relations forward.

Derbez said the strategic partnership is significant to both countries. During his visit to China, the two sides have exchanged views on politics, trade and economy, science and technology, education and culture, communications, agriculture and tourism, and reached a series of consensus. “This will benefit the mutually beneficial cooperation of the two countries,” he said. He said that there was a great potential for bilateral cooperation and the Mexican Government will work harder to improve it. — MNA/Xinhua

Gem & Jade Sale continues

YANGON, 17Aug—The 17th gem and jade sale for the year 2004 of the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd continued for the second day today at the Myanmar Gems Mart on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here from 9 am to 5 pm.

Altogether 164 jade lots and 323 gem lots will be sold through tender system and competitive bidding at the sale.

Gem merchants will continue to go through jade lots and gem lots from 9 am to 5 pm until 18 August, and jade lots and gem lots will be sold through bargain and auction systems. A total of 810 gem merchants—688 local gem merchants and 122 foreign gem merchants—have arrived here to attend the gem and jade sale, and they are observing gem lots and jade lots put on display. — MNA

Powdered milk for Defence Services Obstetric, Gynaecological and Paediatric Hospital

YANGON 17 Aug—Mo Asia Co Ltd-Dumex donated the bottles of powdered milk to the Defence Services Obstetric, Gynaecological and Paediatric Hospital (300-bed) here today. First, Dr Beauty of the Mo Asia Co Ltd-Dumex explained the purpose of the donation and presented the powdered milk tins worth K 250,000 through Commandant of the hospital Professor Lt-Col Kyaw Nyunt. — MNA

China, Nepal sign cooperative agreements

BEIJING, August 17 — China and Nepal signed four agreements on economic and technological cooperation and other areas in Beijing Monday afternoon.

The documents include the Agreement on Economic and Technological Cooperation between the governments of the two countries, an agreement on Nepal’s use of a road in Tibet to transport goods, an agreement on a bridge across the borders of the two countries and an agreement on automobile transportation.

Chinese Vice-Premier Huang Ju and visiting Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Nepal Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev attended the signing ceremony. During their meeting before the signing of the agreements, Huang said China places great importance on expanding mutually beneficial cooperation with Nepal and is willing to expand communication and cooperation between the enterprise and business circles of the two countries. He said China is ready to enhance friendly communication with Nepal and continue to explore new forms and ways of cooperation in all fields.

Huang said China and Nepal are close and friendly neighbours, noting that theirs is a model of a relationship between the two countries of different social systems. He said relations have developed smoothly since the two countries established diplomatic ties 49 years ago.

The two countries have supported each other on international occasions and maintained good communication and coordination.

Huang said China is willing to develop good-neighbourly, friendly and cooperative relations with all its neighbours, including Nepal.

Paras said the two countries have maintained a long-term sincere friendship and cooperative relations, with which Nepal is satisfied. He said Nepal is willing to further expand cooperation with China in all fields. He also expressed the wish that China will continue to support the economic development of Nepal.

Paras arrived in Beijing Saturday afternoon, continuing his 13-day official visit to China. Paras visited Guangzhou, Shanghai and Tibet before his Beijing tour, where he will conclude his visit Tuesday.

During his stay in Beijing, Paras attended a ceremony marking the setup of the China-Nepal Friendship Association Monday noon. — MNA/Xinhua
Section 1: Efficient use of electricity

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

Section 2: Cash donations invited for Maha Rattha Sameggi Pagoda in Panglong

- The second best time is now.

Section 3: Efficient use of fuel

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

Section 4: ‘Soon’ offered at State Pariyatti Sasana University

- Yangon, 17 Aug — As the symbol of unity and consolidation of national brethren of the Union of Myanmar, the Maha Rattha Samagi Pagoda has been built on Wikasini Hill in Panglong, Losel District, southern Shan State.

Section 5: Japan, the Republic of Korea and Thailand that are relying on imported oil have strategic reserves as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Stored volume (barrels in million)</th>
<th>Strategic reserve (barrels in million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ROK</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Section 6: Alternative fuels and their future prospects

- Maung Thuy (Energy)

Recently, I found a news report in the dailies which said that some drivers in England were using cooking oil, mixed with few methanol, as fuel for their diesel Subarus cars; that it was much cheaper than diesel; that as it was an illegal and untaxed fuel; and that police fined 500-500 pounds when they found a driver using it. After reading the news report, I wrote an article about fuels for diesel including petrol, diesel and kerosene after refining crude oil which is a kind of fossil fuel. Crude oil is also included in non-renewable energy resources. It takes millions of years to form fossil fuels. Trees, plants and animals that died over 300 million years ago were transformed into crude oil by high pressures and high temperatures deep down the earth. Man started to drill and used crude oil over 150 years ago. According to world history, the first commercial oil well was drilled near Titusville, Pennsylvania State, the US, in 1859. Although the process of the formation of crude oil takes millions of years, man needs only a hundred years or so to extract crude in large volumes.

For example, up to 1930, 17 billion barrels of crude oil were extracted. But in 1970, annual crude oil production reached 17 billion barrels, and up to 1997, 807 billion barrels of oil have been extracted. Experts have estimated that about 995 billion barrels of oil are still left underneath the earth. It is also estimated that if the annual consumption increases to 24 billion barrels, all the existing crude oil deposits underneath the earth will dry up by the year 2040. Oil consumption is increasing two per cent annually. But on the other hand, thanks to the new technologies, there are prospects to find new oil deposits.

Anyhow, it is sure that one day, all the crude oil of the world will be gone. Because of the unstable political situation in the Middle East, the main crude oil producing region on earth, constant flow of oil to the markets is not sure in the future. Thus, Asia which is depending on the Middle East for about 60 per cent of its oil needs is making plans to store crude oil as strategic reserve for emergency use.

Experts estimated that about 995 billion barrels of oil will still be left underneath the earth. If the annual consumption increases to 24 billion barrels, all crude oil deposits underneath the earth will dry up by the year 2040. Oil consumption is increasing 2% annually. Thanks to the new technologies, there are prospects to find new oil deposits.

Japan says that storing crude oil is just a temporary project, proposing the following ways for energy sufficiency.

1. Oil stockpiling.
2. Utilization of clean coal, natural gas and renewable energy resources.
3. Efficient use of energy.
4. Promotion of understanding between producers and consumers.

In Japan, it can be said that drivers in England who use cooking oil for diesel are using renewable fuel. But it is not a new idea. Dr Rudolf Diesel, who invented diesel engine, in 1895 tested the engine with various kinds of fuels in the World Trade Fair, held in Paris, France, in 1900. Dr Diesel ran the diesel engine with peanut oil. In 1911, Dr Diesel said that as his engine could run with various kinds of vegetable oils, it would help develop agro-based countries.

In the later periods, scientists and engineers tested various kinds of fuels other than diesel to run the diesel engine. Some alternative fuels do not need adjustments to the diesel engine, but some require. The basic alternative fuels for diesel are:

1. Biodiesel
   - It is a mixture of 80 to 90 per cent vegetable oil, 10 to 20 per cent diesel and 0.35 to 1.5 per cent catalyst. It is a stable fuel, that is safe for diesel engines. It can be used in diesel engines. It can be easily and safely mixed with diesel fuel. It is also easy to produce. The diesel engine does not need any adjustment to use the fuel.

2. Vegetable Oil/Kerosene Mix
   - It is a mixture of vegetable oil and kerosene. It can be used in diesel engines. But special care is needed in mixing the fuel. Wrong ratio in mixing the ingredients may damage the diesel engine. An extra tank will be needed, if the fuel is used. Diesel must be used in igniting and stopping the engine. It is still at the testing stage. It may damage the diesel engine if something goes wrong.

3. Straight vegetable oil
   - After igniting with diesel, the diesel engines can be run with heated pure vegetable oil. Both used or unused vegetable oil can be utilized. An extra tank is needed for vegetable oil, and pipes, for heating it. After making the adjustments, the engine is ignited with diesel fuel or biodiesel. Then, the heated vegetable oil can be run to the engine. Diesel fuel is used to stop the engine. It is a safe fuel if used with care.

Man is trying to find alternative fuels as crude fuel will be exhausted in the future. The alternative fuels include solar energy, geothermal energy and nuclear energy. At present, Denmark is the forerunner in the alternative fuel programme. But its wind turbines can only generate 20 per cent of the country’s energy consumption at present. France produces 80 per cent of its electricity needs from nuclear power. Japan has the Kashiwakari Kariwa Nuclear Power Station, the largest in the world, located in the northwest part of the country. Its generation capacity is 8,212 megawatts. It has the world’s largest nuclear power station, and yet the country needs to import crude oil.

There are many kinds of cooking oils that can be used as alternative fuel. Of them, I would like to present the ten crops together with their oil yield rates.

1. Oil palm - 4,585
2. Coconut - 2,070
3. Jatropha - 1,460
4. Rapeseed - 915
5. Peanut - 815
6. Sunflower - 730
7. Safflower - 605
8. Soybean - 345
9. Hemp - 280
10. Corn - 135

An advantage of the cooking oil crops is that they can directly store the solar energy. Through the formation of fossil fuels including crude oil takes millions of years, cooking oil crops can be cultivated within few months. Thus, it is sure that in the near future (roughly, about 50 years from now) cooking oil fuels will become important alternative for fossil fuels.

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*(Translation: TMT)*

(Myawma Alin + Kyemon: 17-8-2004)
Tourists to Jordan increased 30% in first half of 2004

AMMAN, 17 Aug— Tourists to Jordan increased by 30.8 per cent in the first six months of 2004, compared with the same period of last year, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment said Monday.

The total of 723,328 tourists arrived in Jordan from January to June, compared with 553,289 last year. Foreign visitors for the same period of last year amounted to 570,399, an increase of 8.4 per cent. 88.7 per cent respectively.

Visitors from East Asia and the Pacific also rose by 79.5 per cent, compared with 55.7 per cent, the corresponding period, according to the official figures.

The country, which for years has been relying on foreign visitors for a large portion of its revenue, has continued to feel the pinch of the turmoil in the Middle East over the past three years.

The situation in the Palestinian territories, the war in Iraq and as a result, the SARS outbreak in Asia, and terror threats, have all kept global travel at a slowdown.

Despite these setbacks, Jordan’s tourism has looked to other positive ways to attract regional tourists.

Promotion efforts carried out by the Jordan Tourism Board over the past three years in the Gulf region has seen more tourists from the oil-rich states.

Around 338,023 Gulf tourists visited the country from January to June, an increase of 84.8 per cent up from 294,228 visitors in the same period of last year, according to the ministry’s figures.

Turists to Jordan increased 30% in the first half of 2004.

MENA/Xinhua

Zimbabwean business exploits opportunity in Uganda

HARARE, 17 Aug— The Cotton Company of Zimbabwe (CCZ) will soon establish a subsidiary company in Uganda as the locally listed company moves to strengthen its presence in the region, according to the Sunday Mail.

Managing Director Sylvester Nguni of the company was quoted as saying that the former parastatal has already seconded some of its skilled personnel to some of its regional operations as part of efforts aimed at ensuring the success of the regional projects.

“The Ugandan market presents us with a lot of opportunities that we can exploit to enhance shareholder value as the country’s authorities have pledged to support cotton farmers in that country with finance and grower extension services,” he said.

Nguni added that the former parastatal, which was successfully privatized in 1997, would continue looking at investment opportunities in the country and also in the region as part of measures aimed at diversifying its investment portfolio and enhancing shareholder value.

MENA/Xinhua

Malaysian Air Force helicopter missing in Sarawak

KULAI LUMPUR, 17 Aug— A Royal Malaysian Air Force (RAMAF) Mi-171 helicopter with 10 people on board was reported missing on Sunday near Ba Kelalan in Sarawak’s northwestern highlands region.

Miri Region acting police chief superintendent of police, Abang Abdullah Abang Othman said the helicopter was reported missing at 1:50 p.m. by the control tower in Kota Kinabalu, capital of Sabah State.

“His helicopter was on a normal flight from Miri to Ba Kelalan ferrying five soldiers who were due to replace their colleagues stationed at Ba Kelalan. The other five are the two pilots and three crew members,” he said.

The pilot of a Royal Malaysian Air Force helicopter has disappeared with all 11 people on board according to Malaysian newspapers.

MENA/Xinhua

Turkey issues flood warning for Istanbul

ANKARA, 17 Aug— Turkish meteorology authorities warned that Istanbul, the country’s largest city, is expected to experience its heaviest rainfalls in a decade within two days. Turkish private TV network reported Monday.

Turkish Meteorology Bureau General Manager Adnan Uslu said that heavy rainfall could cause flooding due to the increased water in the city.

The bureau also warned that heavy rainfalls are expected in Aksaray and in the northwestern region.

Temperatures are set to fall six degrees Celsius with wet winds from the Balkans, according to the bureau.

MENA/Xinhua

Bank of Indonesia optimistic to reach economic target

JAKARTA, 17 Aug— The governor of Bank of Indonesia, Mr. Budi Gunadi Sankasa, is optimistic to Monday to reach the target of 6.5 per cent rate of promissory note and 5.5 per cent inflation rate in 2005, despite the weakening global interest rate. “In the world nothing is impossible, those are the challenging targets that would become the programme of the BI,” he told reporters at the Parliament building.

The governor admitted that the trend of global interest rate had continuously increased, but the economic growth would not be as strong as in 2004. — MENA/Xinhua

Megawati defends achievements

JAKARTA, 17 Aug— Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnopati said on Monday her government had stabilized the economy and cracked down hard on militants and separatists.

Megawati has been lagging her run-off opponent, former security minister Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, in opinion polls, but received a boost over the weekend when she got the endorsement of one of the country’s most powerful parties, Golkar.

In an annual state of the nation address on Monday, Megawati said that despite shortcomings in the battle against rampant corruption, which has stunted much-needed foreign investment, her government had stabilized the economy following the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s.

MENA/Reuters

Indonesia projects higher economic growth in 2005

JAKARTA, 17 Aug— Indonesia’s economic growth is projected to reach 5.4 per cent in 2005 to fare better than the targeted 4.8 per cent this year, which is estimated to be achievable.

This growth is estimated to remain supported by the increase in domestic consumption, in addition to the increase in exports and the improving investment climate, President Megawati Soekarnopatri said addressing the House of Representatives on Monday.

She acknowledged that the growth is "still below the potential of the Indonesian economy and may not be sufficient to significantly lessen unemployment and poverty."

The draft budget, which makes up a major part in the President’s speech, sets the inflation rate at 5.5 per cent against the estimated 6.5 per cent this year, and the rupiah conversion rate at the average of 8,600 to the US dollar.

It assumes the benchmark interest rate of the three-month central bank’s promissory notes (SB1) at 6.5 per cent in 2005, lower than the assumed 7.6 per cent this year, and national oil output at 1.13 million barrels per day.

Finance Minister Bambang Brodjono said earlier that the world oil price was assumed at 24 dollars per barrel.

With the above assumptions, the draft budget sees revenues at around 41.99 billion US dollars, increasing by 3.1 billion dollars when compared to the current budget, and expenditure at 43.87 billion dollars.

Megawati said tax revenue will make up 78.7 per cent of total state revenues in 2005.

Megawati defended the budget will experience a deficit of 1.88 billion dollars or 0.8 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product.

“Ts figure is lower than targeted deficit in 2004 state budget, amounting to 24.4 trillion rupiah, or 1.2 per cent of the GDP,” she said.

MENA/Xinhua

Three missing in flash floods in southwestern England

LONDON, 17 Aug— Three people were officially declared missing while dozens were rescued after a heavy flood struck southwest England on Monday, local police said.

It was difficult to establish if there were any more missing, police added.

Heavy storms on Monday afternoon brought 6 centimetres of rainfall in two hours in the Boscastle area in north Cornwall, washing cars and buildings into the sea and leaving people stranded on rooftops and trees, according to a BBC report.

Power supplies were switched off for safety reasons and hospitals put on standby after a torrential downpour hit the area.

Rescue workers described the situation as “horrendous” and Michael Mulford, spokesman for Royal Air Force (RAF) Kinloss which is coordinating the military rescue effort, said hundreds more people could need air lifting from the flood-stricken area.

“We have to consider the possibility we may have many hundreds, up to theoretically 1,000 people who may need rescuing,” he quoted by the BBC report as saying.

About six buildings had collapsed due to the force of the water, and an estimated 50 cars had been swept away, he added.

“This is the biggest combined incident we have had in many, many years. It is very seldom we have more than two helicopters at one scene,” he said.

At least seven helicopters were used to rescue residents and holidaymakers along a 32-kilometres stretch of the area. Devon and Cornwall police said the rescue operation would carry on all night.

As many as 13 flood warnings have been in place in the region, according to Britain’s Environment Agency.

MENA/Xinhua

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The organization’s 14th ministerial conference is a “mid-term review” of the last heads of state and government summit in Malaysia last year and the next in Cuba in 2006.

Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Wang Yi will lead a Chinese delegation to the meeting. China is one of 29 participants of the 195 Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, which led to the establishment of NAM in 1961.

MENA/Xinhua

NAM countries to focus on multilateralism at ministerial meeting

JOHANNESBURG, 17 Aug— Foreign ministers and officials of the 116-member Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) will discuss the issue of multilateralism and challenges of development during their meeting in South Africa’s port city of Durban this week.

The NAM originated in a 1955 meeting of 29 Asian and African countries, at which heads of state discussed common concerns including colonialism and the influence of the West.
**LAKELAND (Florida), 16 Aug — Hurricane Charley devastated Florida’s 9.1-billion-US-dollar citrus industry, uprooting trees and stripping off fruit that was ripeing for next season’s crop, the state’s largest citrus growers’ group said on Sunday.**

Florida Citrus Mutual said growers in three of the state’s largest citrus-producing counties, DeSoto, Hardee and Polk, saw their groves, barns and equipment destroyed. The unripe, golf-ball-sized orange crop was in the process of maturing for the 2005 harvest but was blown off the trees that remained, Florida Citrus Mutual said. Those three counties, in addition to nearby Manatee, Sarasota, Lee and Charlotte counties, bold more than 280,000 acres, or about 35 per cent, of Florida’s 800,000 acres of citrus groves.

The state was still assessing damage to its 9.1-billion-US-dollar citrus industry, which employs 90,000 people.

“That will certainly have a huge impact on their livelihood and this season’s citrus crop,” said Andy LaVigne, executive vice-president of the mutual group that represents 11,000 industry members. **MNA/Reuters**

**Zambia starts producing drugs for AIDS patients**

LUSAKA, 16 Aug — Zambia has started producing anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) for AIDS patients with assistance from Cuba, Health Minister Brian Chituwoto has said. “We have started the manufacture of ARVs in the country. Batches of the drug have been produced but we need a compulsory licence from the Ministry of Commerce to enable us put the drugs on the market,” he was quoted as saying by independent newspaper Sunday Post.

Chituwoto said various regulatory issues have to be sorted out before the drug could be put on the market, including certifications from the World Health Organization and the Poison Board. Zambia, with a population of 11 million, has seen its HIV/AIDS prevalence rate dropping from 26 per cent to 16 over recent years.

In related development, the health Minister also said that preparations have started for AIDS vaccine trials in Zambia, through the Zambian Emory AIDS Vaccine Project in association with International AIDS Vaccine Initiative.

“We hope we can start this year after we explore consultations with various stakeholders to review regulations that govern vaccine trials,” he said. **MNA/Xinhua**

**Death toll from Nigeria’s flood rises to 65**

LAGOS, 16 Aug — The death toll in a flash flood that swept through the eastern Nigerian village of Loko this week has risen to 65, The Guardian newspaper reported Saturday.

About 40 bodies were discovered between Wednesday and Thursday while 15 more were discovered Friday, the report said. The causality number was high because the flood, triggered by seasonal rains which were said to be the heaviest in 50 years there, occurred Tuesday midnight when everybody was in bed, some of the victims were quoted as saying. Willie Zalwalie, spokesman for the Adamawa state government, told reporters that a team of medical officials had been dispatched to the village in the Song local government area.

Also, a committee had been set up by the government to assess the level of damage caused by the flood and recommend how the government could assist the victims and check a recurrence of such a disaster in the state, he added.

“The area is prone to flood disaster because it is located in a valley and it is very close to a river bank, so any time that there is heavy down pour the residents of the village suffer flood disaster,” he said.

All the residents of Loko Village had been relocated to a primary school in Song local government headquarters, the spokesman said. **MNA/Xinhua**

**Thousands homeless as Florida begins storm clean-up**

PUNTA GORDA (Florida), 16 Aug — The death toll from Hurricane Charley climbed to 16 on Sunday as thousands of homeless in southwest Florida sorted through wreckage and President George W Bush rushed in to view the devastation.

The fiercest hurricane to strike Florida in 12 years, Charley’s 145mph winds destroyed mobile homes, ripped roofs off houses and damaged tens of thousands of other buildings when it smashed ashore on Friday.

The illicit drug of khat, also known as miraa or mirabe, has found its way to Tanzania from Kenya through passenger buses and pick-up trucks. The drug is then delivered to Tanzania’s Dar es-Salaam, Coast and Morogoro regions through highways.

One kilogram of khat is sold for 10,000 Tanzanian shillings (45 US dollars) in Tanzania.

Khat is among at least six tons of drugs seized in the country by law enforcers in the past two years. Other seized drugs include cocaine, heroin and marijuana. **MNA/Xinhua**

**Forest fire in eastern Spain brought under control**

MAESTRAS, 16 Aug — Firefighters have brought under control a forest fire that forced 6,000 people from their homes and scorched a part of a nature reserve in eastern Spain, officials said on Saturday.

The fire, which authorities said may have been started intentionally, claimed more than 700 hectares of the Sierra de Caldana nature reserve in the Valencia region since it started on Thursday evening.

“Everything indicates that the fire is under control and that it will be completely extinguished in the next few hours or days,” Public Administration Minister Jordi Sevilla said after meeting regional officials and fire services.

Residents of nearby towns, who were evacuated in case the flames spread, were allowed to return home on Friday evening. **MNA/Reuters**

**Zimbabwean youths to receive free HIV counselling**

Harare, 16 Aug — As part of the World Youth Day commemoration, Zimbabwean youths will receive free HIV counselling and testing in all the 18 voluntary counselling and testing centres, according to the Sunday Mail newspaper.

The campaign will run from Monday until August 28 at the 18 New Start Centres dotted across the country where youths will be offered friendly yet unequivocal advice on what one should do after testing either negative or positive, including tips on diet and mental well-being. **MNA/Xinhua**

“Charley” devastates Florida citrus groves

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Thailand plans
Press fair

Bangkok, 17 Aug — Thai journalists and media organizations are planning to hold the country’s first-ever Press fair next month.

The Thai Press Association is holding the event as part of the organization’s 50th anniversary celebrations, according to Phusadee Keetavaranont, President of the Press Association of Thailand.

The event will showcase the various popular news-television programmes and other media activities in print, radio, television, online news services and independent production houses.

The organizers hope that the event will also help foster good relations between the Press and the public, and between the various news media and production houses.

There will be various exhibits on display including one tracing the historical development of the Thai Press, its current activities and its future development plans. Award-winning news photographers will also be on show.

Some foreign media including Xinhua News Agency will be invited to enter the exhibition.

The Thailand Press Fair will be held on 2-5 September at the IMPACT Area Trade & Exhibition Centre in Muang Thong Thani, on the outskirts of Bangkok.

MNA/Xinhua

India to set up response team for natural, man-made emergencies

New Delhi, 17 Aug — The Indian Government is contemplating setting up a National Emergency Response Force (NERF) for dealing with calamities related to natural, biological and chemical disasters.

The government also proposes to strengthen one training centre for each of the four paramilitary forces and the states had been advised to have teams of specialists, it said and added that 10 states and federally administered Union Territories had already initiated action in this regard. The trainers of the state police force would be trained at the training institutes of paramilitary forces and the states had also been authorized to utilize 10 percent of the annual allocation made in the calamity relief fund for purchase of equipment, the report said. The report said that 14 Regional Response Centres were proposed to be set up in different parts of the country where essential rescue teams and relief materials would be stored so that the specialist response teams could respond to any disaster in the neighbouring state immediately.

A steering committee had been constituted in the Union Home Ministry to oversee the creation of capabilities for emergency response. The government also proposes to set up an Incident Command System (ICS) which will provide for specialized Incident Command Teams with an Incident Commander and Officers trained in different aspects of Incident Management.

In order to further strengthen the capacity for response, the fire services are proposed to be developed into multi-hazard response units. A project had been drawn up and would be taken for implementation as soon as the resources were mobilized, the report said and added that it is proposed to provide multi-hazard response units under this project on the sub-divisional level.

MNA/PTI

Italy says number of illegal immigrants tumbles

Rome, 16 Aug — The number of illegal immigrants entering southern Italy fell by almost 50 percent over the past year, the Interior Ministry said on Saturday.

The figures gave a boost to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s government which introduced tough legislation in 2002 aimed at cracking down on people trafficking.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement that 9,995 immigrants reached Italy’s southern shores by boat between July 2003 and June 2004. In the previous 12-month period, that figure totalled 19,294.

“Notably, the flow of people ... coming via Albania and Turkey was sharply lower,” the ministry said.

The vast majority of immigrants landed on the Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Lampedusa — some 9,917 against a previous 17,830. Italy believes many of these people set sail from Libya and is seeking a deal with Tripoli to try to stem the flow.

Rome has struck one such deal with neighbouring Albania, helping the local Navy to patrol national waters and prevent boats laden with immigrants from heading to Italy.

Despite Saturday’s figures, Italian authorities say they have no intention of lowering their guard.

The Interior Ministry said on Saturday that Italy had chartered 50 planes over the past year to fly home illegal immigrants against just 23 flights in the previous 12 months.

MNA/Reuters

Acute diarrhoea tops illness of foreigners in Thailand

Bangkok, 17 Aug — Acute diarrhoea has become the number one cause of illness among foreigners in Thailand in the first seven months of this year, the local Press quoted an expert as saying.

Some 5,133 foreigners out of a total of 12,456 alien patients in the first seven months had been suffering from acute diarrhoea, said Pensri Chitnamsap, an epidemiologist of the Disease Control Department of the Public Health Ministry.

“Most foreign patients are working immigrants and their families,” Pensri was quoted by the Bangkok Post newspaper as saying.

Only 1,060 of the total foreign patients were tourists or those coming to seek medical services in Thailand.

Other common illnesses among foreigners were malaria, fever, pneumonia and food poisoning, she added. — MNA/Xinhua

Russian border guards seize heroin, opium on Tajik-Afghan border

Moscow, 17 Aug — Russian Border Guards seized more than 292 kilograms of heroin and opium on the Tajik-Afghan border, Russian Interfax news agency reported Monday.

The news agency quoted the Border Guards’ Press service as saying some 134.8 kilograms of heroin were seized from four armed smugglers attempting illegally to cross Pyandzh River from Afghanistan to Tajikistan on Saturday.

The smugglers opened fire at border guards when they were detected and ordered to surrender, the Press service said. The guards detained one of them while three others fled back to Afghanistan.

Three sacks containing 134.8 kilograms of heroin were discovered on the spot. On the same day, Russian Border Guards also seized 157.8 kilograms of drugs, including 25.8 kilograms of heroin and 132 kilograms of raw opium in another section of Tajik-Afghan border, according to the Press service.

Russia is a major transit country for Afghan opium and heroin flowing from Central Asia to Western Europe.

Most of the drugs produced in Afghanistan were smuggled into Russia and Western Europe via Tajikistan.

Russia keeps thousands of Border Guards and other troops in Tajikistan under a 1992 agreement signed by Moscow and Dushanbe to stem the flows of drugs and weapons from Afghanistan. — MNA/Xinhua
**Russian Alipov wins men’s trap gold**

**Athens, 17 Aug.—** Russia’s Alexei Alipov won the Olympic gold medal in the men’s trap shooting competition on Sunday with a nearly flawless performance on a windy range carved into a mountain top outside Athens.

The 29-year-old from Moscow scored 149 out of a possible 150, including a perfect 25 in the final round. He also did not miss on four of the five 25-shot rounds of qualifying on Saturday and Sunday morning.

“I was fortunate to have just one miss,” said Alipov. “The weather conditions were having a great effect on everyone. We managed to find an area similar to this in Russia and trained there for quite some time before the Olympics. That helped.”

Giovanni Pellielo of Italy took the silver medal with 146 points and Australia’s Adam Vella the bronze with 145.

Defending champion Michael Diamond of Australia was knocked out in the qualifying round despite the support of a big following of fans from his home country at the Markopoulo range.

**Beckham admits he was below par at Euro 2004**

**SALSTY (England), 17 Aug.—** England captain David Beckham said his performances at Euro 2004 were below what he expected of himself.

“I’ve set high standards and ... I don’t think I had a terrible championship but I can play a lot better,” Beckham said on Monday before England’s friendly against Ukraine at St James Park, Newcastle on Wednesday.

“I know I’ve been given a talent which can’t disappear just like that. For four games I didn’t perform like I can. I want to prove I’m good again.”

Beckham said a change to a more intensive weights programme in training at the end of last season may have contributed to his lacklustre performances in Portugal.

“I had done too many weights at the end of the season and didn’t realize it had affected me as it had and that’s an excuse,” he said.

“I was a little bored after training and ... I would go into the gym for an hour and work out but I’ve stopped doing weights now and I’ve lost weight and I feel good.”

The Real Madrid midfielder said he had been affected by the criticism after England’s quarterfinal loss to Portugal.

“I’ve been criticized over the years for endorsements but never before for my on-field play which upsets me, that’s why I sat down with my family to discuss things,” he said.

“There were a few doubts put in my mind but I didn’t doubt myself (and) ... after Euro 2004 I spent time and rested with my family, and just took three weeks off and did absolutely nothing.”

**Mutlu muscles way to third gold medal**

**Athens, 17 Aug.—** Turkey’s Halil Mutlu muscled into the Olympic record books on Sunday, claiming a third gold medal to confirm his comeback from a weightlifting ban.

The diminutive Turk, at 1.50 metres (4 feet 11 inches) too small for military service, once again towered supreme over opponents in the 56-kg weight class, hoisting 135 kilos in the snatch and 160 kilos in the clean and jerk for a winning total of 295 kilos.

Guns.Wait Mejin, who won world-championship titles in the division in 2002 and 2003 while Mutlu competed at a higher weight, was unable to halt the nine-year unbeaten run of the “Little Dynamo” and settled for silver with 287.5 kilos.

Sedat Aruc of Turkey completed the podium, taking the bronze with 280 kilos.

**Beckham added that the team would put the disappointment of Euro 2004 behind them and concentrate on the 2006 World Cup qualifying campaign, which begins with a European Group Six match in Austria on 4 September.**

“We were all disappointed in the summer because we felt we could have gone further but we’ve got to look at the World Cup,” he said.

“You’ve got to accept the pressure that people might criticize you if things aren’t going well, but I’m strong enough to take that.”

“The pressure will always be there at this level both on and off the field.”

**Relay flop ends Phelps’ medal quest**

**Athens, 17 Aug.—** American swimmer Michael Phelps’ quest to win a record eight Olympic gold medals ended on Sunday with his country’s worst ever showing in the men’s 4x100-metre freestyle relay.

Phelps had made a perfect start to his ambitious campaign when he won the 400 individual medley on Saturday but his hopes of winning eight were dashed as early as the second day.

The US were expected to win the relay but could only manage third as the South African quartet of Roland Schoeman, Lyndon Ferns, Darian Townsend and Ryk Neethling wiped half a second off the world record set by Australia at the last Olympics.

The bronze medal puts paid to Phelps’ goal of breaking Mark Spitz’ record of seven gold medals in a single Games but his coach Eddie Reese said the 19-year-old would be unmarked.

“He will not miss a beat if he doesn’t get seven gold medals,” Reese told a news conference.

**Manaudou wins first gold for France**

**Athens, 17 Aug.—** Teenager Laure Manaudou won the women’s 400-metre freestyle on Sunday, France’s first gold medal at the Athens Olympics.

The 17-year-old won with a time of four minutes 55.34 seconds, setting a European record and becoming the first Frenchwoman to win an Olympic swimming title.

Pole Olytja Jedrzejczak finished second less than an hour after she was third in the 100 butterfly final while American Kaitlin Sandeno grabbed the bronze.

**Turkey’s Halil Mutlu kisses his gold medal after winning the men under 56kg category in the weightlifting in Athens 2004 Olympics on 15 August, 2004.—Reuters**

**Australia fire first shots for gold**

**Athens, 17 Aug.—** Australia fired a solid first salvo in their battle to win an elusive men’s hockey gold on Sunday while fellow favourites Germany and the Netherlands also squeezed out wins.

The Australians have made the Olympic semifinals seven times and won six medals but despite having one of the strongest teams on the circuit they have never climbed all the way up the podium.

“We are unashamed in our determination to win the gold,” said coach Barry Barnes after his team beat New Zealand 4-1 with three flowing field goals from 25-year-old Jamie Dwyer.

It was harder work for world champions Germany whose trademark defensive style was tested in a tight fight with Pakistan, whose flair-filled attacks won deafening cheers from their thousands of supporters.

Top-ranked Germany spent little time in attacking territory but a couple of crosses found safe targets that knocked the balls into goal to take the game 2-1.

But it could all have been very different if Pakistan’s star striker Sohail Abbas had goal to take the game 2-1.

**Kitajima upsets Hansen to grab gold**

**Athens, 17 Aug.—** Japan’s Kosuke Kitajima ru- nged Brendan Hansen’s birthday to win the men’s 100-metre breaststroke gold medal at the Athens Olympics on Sunday.

Hansen, who touched the wall in 56.25 seconds, was overhauled by the 23-year-old from Japan as he breezed into the Olympic record books on

**Hansens place among weightlifting’s all-time greats.**
15:45 National News
15:50 Muse Kha Khan Songs
15:55 Bagan Era Chorus Songs
16:00 National News
16:05 A Journey to Research Tarzon Race
16:10 Song “Those days of Bagan”
16:15 National News
16:20 Resort for Rest and Recreation (Inle Khaungtaing Village)
16:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Myanmar Panorama & Myan-
16:30 National News
16:35 Extravagant Eviden-
16:40 A Glimpse at the Mighty Long
16:45 National News
16:50 Silk Wear from Amarpura
16:55 An Ode to Love
17:00 National News
17:05 Lumber Buffaloes
17:10 Myanmar Modern
17:15 Myanmar Modern

Song “Let my first love know
17:15 National News
17:20 Ectasy of Life
17:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Come and See Myanmar”
18-8-2004 (Wednesday)
18:00 News/Slogan
18:05 National News
18:10 News/Slogan
18:15 National News
18:20 National News
18:25 News/Slogan
18:30 National News
18:35 News/Slogan
18:40 National News
18:45 News/Slogan
18:50 News/Slogan
18:55 News/Slogan
19:00 News/Slogan
19:05 News/Slogan
19:10 News/Slogan
19:15 News/Slogan
19:20 News/Slogan
19:25 News/Slogan
19:30 News/Slogan
19:35 National News
19:40 National News
19:45 National News
19:50 National News
19:55 Culture Stage “Bagan Duet Dance”
20:00 National News
20:05 Va Traditions & An

Engagement Cere-
20:10 Song “Mesmerize Your Longing with
20:15 National News
20:20 Splendour by the Sea, Ngwe Saung
20:25 Song on Screen “Love Slave”
20:30 National News
20:35 Cruise on Min Kyaw
20:40 Costumes for Myanmar
20:45 National News
20:50 Mythun (Counter-
pact of cattle)
20:55 A Rural Village
21:00 National News
21:05 The World of Mr
21:10 Myanmar Modern
21:15 National News
21:20 ASDO’s Tour of Northern Shan State
21:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”

CONDOLENCES

U MAUNG MAUNG KHA SWE (a) CARL
Aged 45
Managing Director, Integrated Marketing Ltd. Vice President, Focus Energy Ltd.

The Directors and Staff of Focus Energy Ltd wish to express their most sincere sympathy and heartfelt condolences to Daw Aye Aye Soe, her children, and all family members at the sudden and most unexpected passing of U Maung Maung Kha Swe (Carl) — a dear husband, father, and a most respected and well-regarded Vice-President of Focus. We will all miss him dearly. “Adieu” U Maung Maung Kha Swe — we wish you well in the life hereafter.

FEL Board of Directors and All Staff

WEATHER

Wednesday, August 18

View on today:
7:00 am
Recitation of Parititas by Missionary Saya-
daw U Omatamara
7:25 am
2. To be healthy exercise
7:30 am
3. Morning news
7:40 am
4. Nice and sweet song
7:55 am
5. Observation
8:00 am
6. The latest
8:15 am
7. The weather
8:30 am
8. International news
8:45 am
9. Learning English
E.
5:45 pm
8. ~and
9. ~and

Easy and Happy Way
For Children And
Beginners
4:00 pm
1. Marital song
2. Songs to uphold
National Spirit
3:30 pm
Practice in Reading
4:45 pm
Musical programme
5:00 pm
Strong and healthy
Myanmar
6:00 pm
Bus Stop
7:00 pm
12. Evening news
8:00 pm
17. News
19. Weather report
21. The next day’s programme

Rainfall on 17-8-2004
—0.99 inch at Yangoon Airport,
—0.79 inch at Kabar-Aye,
—1.22 inches at central Yangon.
Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 2208 mm
(86.93 inches) at Yangon Airport, 2160 mm
(85.04 inches) at Kabar-Aye and 2153 mm
(84.76 inches) at central Yangon

State of the seas
The seas with moderate to rough seas
are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coast.
Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) to (40) mph.
Outlook for subsequent two days: Generally strong monsoon.
Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 18-8-2004: Likelihood of isolated rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST:
17-8-2004. Rainfall: Moderately strong in the
Bay of Bengal. Forecast for 18-8-2004: Rain or thunderstorms will be scattered in Myan-
mar; isolated heavyfalls in Kachin and Rakhine States. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Patuakhali (3.66 inches), Thandwe (3.58 inches), Hpa-an (2.95 inches) and Thalain (2.44 inches). Maximum temperature on 16-8-2004 was 30.0˚C
(86.0°F). Minimum temperature on 17-8-2004 was 19.0˚C
(66.0°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 17-8-2004 was 100%. Total sunshine hours on 16-8-2004 was 12.9
hours. Rainfall on 17-8-2004 was 0.56 inch at Yangon Airport, 20 mm (0.79 inch) at Kabar-Aye, 31
mm (1.22 inches) at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 2208 mm (86.93 inches) at Yangon Airport,
2160 mm (85.04 inches) at Kabar-Aye and 2153 mm
(84.76 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind
speed in squalls (6-8) mph from the north.

Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring areas

Wednesday, August 18
Tune in today:
8:30 am
Brief news
8:35 am
Music: "Nature’s beauty and scenics AMER the world"
8:40 am
Music: "True to my heart"
8:50 am
National news/ Slogan
9:00 am
Music: Let’s say goodbye
9:05 am
International news
9:10 am
Music: Iron horse news
9:15 am News/Slogan
1:30 pm Lunch time music:
Everybody knows
2:00 pm News/Slogan
10:00 pm Variation on a tune
The power of love
9:15 am
Music: At your request
Right here waiting
Love me for a reason
9:45 pm News/Slogan
10:00 pm/TV

Tuesday, 17 August 2004

Forecast for 18-8-2004: Rain or thunderstorms will be scattered in Manda-
lay and Magway Divisions, scattered in lower Sagan-
ghai Division, and widespread in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 18-8-2004: Likelihood of isolated rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is (80%).
YANGON, 17 Aug — Under BIMSTEC energy cooperation programme, a workshop on sharing experience on demonstration project for SMIs using biomass gasifier systems and information exchange of gasifier application and technologies in the BIMSTEC region was held at Bagan Hotel in NyaungU, Mandalay Division yesterday morning, with an opening speech by Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi.

It was attended by directors general, managing directors and officials of departments and enterprises under the ministry, officials of the Ministries of Industry-1, Forestry, Electric Power and Science and Technology and the Industrial Development Committee, those of Myanmar Renewable Energy Association and NGOs and representatives of BIMSTEC member countries, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi delivered an opening speech. Energy Planning Department Director General U Soe Myint presided over the morning session and Deputy Director General U Thein Lwin the afternoon session, and those present at the workshop took part in the discussion at length.

This morning, the representatives of the workshop studied the functions of Biogasifier which was built in March 2004 in Kokke Village, Myingyan Township, Myingyan District. In the afternoon, the representatives discussed use of biogas produced from biogas wastes in generating electricity and undertaking river-water pumping projects, technological development of biogasifier and energy cooperation among the BIMSTEC countries.

YANGON, 17 Aug — The third meeting of ASEAN CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna)-Experts Working Group jointly conducted by the Ministry of Forestry and ASEAN Secretariat was launched this morning at Sedona Hotel here.

The experts attending the meeting are expected to focus on conservation and protection of endangered species of flora and fauna in ASEAN region and around the world. They will also discuss matters relating to trade in endangered species and implementation of the aims of the convention. The meeting will last till 19 August.

The opening of the meeting was attended by Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung, Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, Yangon City Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and deputy ministers, ambassadors of the ASEAN member countries and officials concerned.

Minister of Foreign Affairs U Win Aung and wife being greeted by Indonesian Ambassador Mr Wyoso Prodjowarsito and wife at the reception to mark Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia on 17-8-2004. — MNA

African leaders slam West’s lectures on democracy

GRANDE BAIE (Mauritius), August 17 — Southern African leaders rounded on Western powers on Monday, backing Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe and saying Africans were tired of preaching from countries who denied them democratic rights under colonial rule. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit opened in Mauritius on Monday and Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa launched a stinging attack on Western countries pressing SADC to ensure democracy.

“We are tired of being lectured on democracy by the very countries which, under colonialism, either directly denied us the rights of free citizens, or were indifferent to our suffering and yearnings to break free and be democratic.” Mkapa told fellow heads of state at the summit’s opening ceremony. Mkapa said the region should develop electoral laws in line with its political, social and cultural background.

(See page 2)